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ABSTRACT

This document is a guide to the use of alternative assessments (surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples) in a family literacy project. This resource guide focuses on using alternative approaches to identify learners' needs, determine learners' ongoing progress in meeting project objectives, ascertain overall success of the project, give staff immediate and relevant feedback, enable learners to assess their own development, and meet guidelines contained in Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Chapter 1 contains an introduction to family literacy and presents some of the special evaluation issues related to implementing literacy programs. Chapter 2 presents a model for integrating program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the three phases of assessment and evaluation. Chapter titles and authors are: (1) "Introduction to Alternative Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation" (D. D. Holt); (2) "Integrating Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation" (D. Ramirez); (3) "Initial Assessment: First Step to Success" (K. Graham); (4) "Assessing Ongoing Progress: Are We Progressing?" (H. S. Wrigley); and (5) "Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Alternative Assessment Results" (S. Gelardi). One figure and 29 sample handouts and survey forms are included. (SLD)

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES *to* ASSESSMENT *&* EVALUATION *in* FAMILY ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAMS

FIELD TEST EDITION

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ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES *to* ASSESSMENT *&* EVALUATION *in* FAMILY ENGLISH LITERACY PROGRAMS

EDITED BY
DANIEL D. HOLT

Publishing Information

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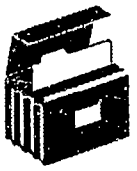
Paul Lee set the publication in PageMaker and created the cover design and graphics for the contents.

Costs of printing the guide were supported by the ESEA, Title VII, Family English Literacy Program, Florida International University; Delia C. Garcia, Director.

 The examples of alternative assessment instruments presented in the volume are not intended as ready-to-use assessment tools; rather, the authors understand that project staff members will modify these tools or create their own instruments and approaches based on the unique characteristics of the learners, staff, and program design.



The graphic, designed by Paul Lee, is a file that represents the importance of collecting and organizing alternative assessment data in ways that meet the needs of learners and staff. The open file has one folder in use, symbolic of the value of assessment information that is accessible to learners and staff.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

If we don't change directions, we will end up where we are headed.

— Chinese proverb

Assessment and evaluation strategies help staff members and learners identify what direction their project is taking. The strategies also provide information that can be used in case staff and learners want to change course to achieve different results. This resource guide was developed to assist staff members of Family English Literacy Programs (FELP) to design and use alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation. Most FELP projects use standardized as well as alternative measures. By using a variety of approaches, staff can obtain in depth information about the learners' backgrounds, the progress the learners are making, and the overall effectiveness of the project. The guide does not contain all of the information needed to design a comprehensive evaluation of a project; rather, it is intended as a supplemental resource for creating and using alternative approaches.

Development of the guide began in December, 1990 at a coordination meeting of fourteen FELP projects in California. The needs assessment for that event indicated that staff considered assessment and evaluation as among the most important challenges they faced. FELP staff emphasized that they needed suggestions for procedures and instruments that were tailored to the learners, curriculum, schedule, and other key characteristics of their projects. They stated that although standardized tests provide a partial view of their projects, they needed additional strategies for assessing language proficiency as well as hard-to-measure outcomes such as cultural adaptation, self-confidence, and literacy awareness.

Since 1990, the authors have continued to work closely with FELP staff to create an evaluation guide that meets their needs for alternative assessment. The authors met frequently with representatives of FELP projects and obtained feedback on drafts of their chapters. In general, FELP staff stated that the guide should:

1. Demystify assessment and evaluation. Staff members need to know how to make their own decisions about assessment and evaluation, in consultation with a professional evaluator.
2. Present concrete suggestions for designing and using alternative assessment instruments and procedures. Staff want information that is immediately useful and sample instruments that can be adapted for their projects.
3. Focus on a limited number of assessment approaches. Rather than presenting general information about many different alternative measures, the authors concentrated on four alternative approaches: surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples.

The chapters are organized according to the sequence in which alternative approaches are likely to be considered and used in a project. Chapter I contains an introduction to family literacy and presents some of the special evaluation issues related to implementing literacy programs. Next, Chapter II presents a model for integrating program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Finally, chapters III, IV, and V illustrate the three phases of assessment and evaluation: (1) determining learners' needs and establishing baseline data; (2) documenting learners' progress toward meeting project objectives; and (3) collecting, analyzing, using, and reporting data obtained with alternative approaches.

The authors consider this document unfinished. It is presented as a field test edition, awaiting feedback from individuals who are interested in trying out new ways of assessing the success of their projects. The examples of alternative assessment instruments presented in the volume are not intended as ready-to-use assessment tools; rather, the authors understand that FELP staff will modify these tools or create their own instruments and approaches based on the unique characteristics of the learners, staff, and program design. As the instruments and other information in the volume are adapted to the specific needs of individual FELP projects, assessment and evaluation of family literacy projects will become more beneficial to learners and staff.

The authors look forward to working with FELP staff members to assess and evaluate the contents of this volume. They invite readers to complete the surveys at the end of each chapter and become collaborators in the development of this publication. The feedback will be used to make revisions for a final edition that will be published in the future.

MARY T. MAHONY
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Development of this volume was a collaborative effort. I am most grateful to my fellow authors, Sal Gelardi, Kathy Graham, David Ramirez, and Heide Spruck Wrigley for maintaining their cooperative spirit as we labored over many drafts. They helped fuse the manuscripts into an integrated volume by giving and accepting feedback with grace and sensitivity. They provide strong evidence that diverse perspectives, experiences, and philosophies are indispensable resources for creating a unified product that is greater than the sum of its individual parts.

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I am personally indebted to David P. Dolson, Van Le, and Jan Mayer, colleagues in the Bilingual Education Office, California Department of Education, for their helpful comments and professional support during the development of the publication. Maggie Frost, support staff member, did a masterful job of helping me manage the many computer files that were generated during the production of the guide. Jennifer Bell, Consultant, Categorical Programs Division, contributed valuable ideas in the early stages of the project. I also want to thank William Adorno and Elena Vasquez, managers of the Bilingual Education Office, and Maria N. Trejo, Assistant Superintendent, Categorical Programs Division, for administrative support throughout the project.

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als reviewed drafts of the volume and offered many useful suggestions that improved the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the contents.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Sal Gelardi (M.A., Education, California State University, Humboldt, 1970) is the owner of Educational System Planning, an independent consultant firm serving small business and education. He specializes in the development and evaluation of bilingual education programs, and to a lesser degree, technology and parenting programs. As a former school teacher, school principal, and director of special projects, his life has been devoted to education. A family of four, competitive bass fishing, and gardening consume his time away from work.

Kathy Graham (M.A., English, University of Southern California, 1971) has worked in secondary education since 1971. She taught high school English and biology for 15 years, and for the past six years has been an ESEA, Title VII, ESL program coordinator for the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California. In 1990, Ms. Graham wrote the grant application for the Lincoln Unified School District's Family English Literacy project, a community-based model that was one of the three FELP projects awarded in the United States that year. In 1992, she became involved in the high school restructuring movement. In addition to working, she enjoys boating, reading, and cooking.

Daniel D. Holt (M.A., Bilingual Education, Stanford University, 1977) has been a consultant in the Bilingual Education Office, California Department of Education since 1977. His responsibilities include coordinating Family English Literacy Programs, developing publications, and assisting public school educators in responding to the needs of language-minority students. From 1970 to 1976, Mr. Holt worked as a volunteer and staff member for the Peace Corps in Korea. He is the co-author of *Korean At A Glance* (Barrons, 1988), a Korean language phrase book and travel guide. He enjoys oriental gardening, piano, and aerobic exercise.

J. David Ramirez (Ph.D., Child Development, Stanford University, 1982) conducts public policy research for local, state, and federal agencies in a broad range of areas that address the needs of minority children and adults in bilingual and migrant education, child development and preschool services, parent/community involvement, and special education. His experience as a teacher, school psychologist, researcher, and community organizer provides a practical foundation for his research as in the recently completed study of the effects of alternative instructional programs for limited-English-proficient students. He is interested in how schools can better address the needs of diverse student populations. He enjoys backpacking, music, and the theater.

Heide Spruck Wrigley (M.A., Linguistics, California State University, Long Beach, 1981) is a senior researcher with Aguirre International, a minority-owned research firm, where she specializes in issues related to language, literacy, and learning. She is completing her doctorate in curriculum and teaching. Ms. Wrigley has extensive experience in all areas of second language education, including research, program administration, staff development, and classroom teaching (ESL, cross-cultural communication, and English composition). The author of several ESL texts, she specializes in curriculum, program evaluation, and learner assessment. Ms. Wrigley also is the primary author of *Bringing Literacy to Life* (Aguirre International, 1992), a new handbook on innovative efforts and promising practices in adult ESL literacy. In her spare time, she collapses on the couch and listens to the blues.

The Family

It is a fragile place
In constant search of balance.

Where children look for love and safety
To explore life's wonders.
Where parents struggle
With holding on and letting go.

It flourishes when its members
Become everything they are and want to be.
When each one's needs are met
And each supports the others to meet theirs.

DANIEL D. HOLT
Sacramento, California
July 31, 1992

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

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Among the many responsibilities of staff members of a project funded under the Family English Literacy Program (FELP)* are the tasks of assessing and evaluating their project. Such responsibility involves developing a comprehensive evaluation design for determining the degree to which project goals and objectives are being met. The purpose of this guide is to assist FELP staff with implementing a key part of effective evaluation—that is, designing and implementing alternative approaches to assessment. By integrating alternative approaches with standardized measures, FELP staff can obtain more accurate and complete information for improving their project.

This chapter will first present the distinctions between standardized and alternative assessments. Next, the special evaluation needs of FELP projects will be highlighted. Finally, the chapter will provide overviews of chapters II-V of the guide.

* See the Glossary on pages 114–115 of this publication for definitions of key terms that appear in this chapter.

Standardized and Alternative Assessments

This resource guide is based on the assumption that successful assessment and evaluation depend on using a variety of approaches. Some approaches are standardized, such as the *Basic English Skills Test (BEST)* or the *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)*. In contrast, alternative approaches refer to procedures and instruments that are tailored specifically to the learners, curriculum, and overall design of the project. In this section, standardized and alternative approaches will be described.

Standardized Approaches

Standardized approaches rely on instruments that are created to allow for comparisons between individuals' current achievement and the average performance (norms) of selected participants (norming group). These approaches offer many advantages to FELP staff; the tests can be obtained readily, administered easily, and scored immediately and accurately in a cost-effective manner. Staff can use standardized instruments for comparing the performance of project participants with the norms established by the test.

Standardized approaches, however, provide only part of the information needed for documenting learners' progress. For example, the results of standardized measures may not be useful or meaningful to staff members if the content of the tests is not related to the goals and curriculum of the project. Also, the tests may measure discrete skills like word recognition, but the project may be designed to strengthen shared literacy activities between parents and children. In addition, standardized tests may be based on a norming group that differs from the participants in the project, thereby making it difficult to compare the participants' performance with the standard (norm group).

Alternative approaches allow FELP staff to identify what is important in their project and select assessment strategies that are tailored to the unique characteristics of the learners and the project.

Because standardized measures usually focus on *products* like responses to specific test items, they may fail to provide useful information about important *processes* like enjoying books or obtaining needed social services. Furthermore, many teachers may not fully understand how to interpret and use the scores. Even when staff are fully trained in the use of standardized tests, the scores may not provide information that is useful for making decisions about the next steps that should be taken for designing activities, selecting instructional materials, or refining project goals.

Alternative Approaches

Alternative approaches to standardized assessment and evaluation may be characterized as flexible, representative of the curriculum, meaningful to learners, and indicative of learners' acquired ability or knowledge (Navarrete, Wilde, Nelson, Martinez, and Hargett, 1990). Alternative approaches allow FELP staff to identify what is important

in their project and select assessment strategies that are tailored to the unique characteristics of the learners and the project. Unlike standardized tests, alternative approaches can identify the learners' strengths and needs without comparing results with an external standard or norming group. The approaches provide multidimensional, highly current views of the learners' progress in many different contexts. Because the contents of the instruments can be linked directly to the curriculum of the project, alternative approaches give staff members immediate access to feedback for planning subsequent learning activities.

Four alternative approaches are discussed in this volume: *surveys, interviews, observation measures,* and *performance samples.* To provide a consistent analysis in all of the chapters, the authors adopted definitions of the approaches that may differ somewhat from the way in which they are discussed elsewhere in the assessment literature. The following is a description of the four alternative approaches presented in this guide.

Surveys are used to obtain general information from large numbers of individuals.

Surveys are used to obtain general information from large numbers of individuals. Questions used in surveys may be open-ended, allowing subjects to provide their own responses, or closed-ended, requiring subjects to select only from the response choices provided. The answers may be recorded by the respondents or by the person(s) who administers the survey. Examples of surveys are presented in Chapter III.

Interviews are designed to collect detailed information.

Interviews are designed to collect detailed information. The interviewer asks questions orally and may make follow-up inquiries to clarify or amplify responses. The interviewer may document the results by taking notes or tape-recording responses (Bell, 1988). Although interviews are usually administered individually, they also may be conducted with groups of people. Chapters III and V describe how interviews can be used with focus groups.

Observation measures are used for collecting and recording information about various aspects of the program.

Observation measures are used for collecting and recording information about aspects of the project such as learner characteristics, group interactions, or literacy performance. They may be used for closed-ended assessments, such as indicating the learner's level of listening comprehension; or they may be more open-ended in which a staff member judges how confident a student appears when participating in a cooperative learning group. Chapter IV provides examples of observation measures.

Performance samples are examples of the learners' work in selected tasks.

Performance samples are examples of the learners' work in selected tasks. For instance, learners may be asked to write a story, give an oral presentation, participate in a role play, or read a poem. Staff members then determine how the task will be documented and how the learner's ability to carry out the task will be assessed. For example, stories could be collected in written form, role plays could

be video-taped, and poem readings could be audio-taped. Performance samples differ from observation measures in that observation measures record only the assessment of learners' behavior or performance. Performance samples include the learner's actual work and the results of the assessment. Examples of performance samples can be found in Chapter IV.

A variety of techniques may be used for recording the information that is collected in each of the four alternative assessments. For example, a checklist might be used for indicating responses made to questions in a survey. A frequency count could be taken of the answers obtained in an interview. A rating scale might be used for recording judgements in an observation measure.

Portfolios could be used for collecting and organizing samples of learners' writing, results of surveys and individual interviews, information collected through observations, and other examples of learners' accomplishments. What is included in the portfolio depends on the objectives of the project. Staff can make the contents highly personalized and meaningful by asking the learner to help decide what is placed in the portfolio.

The authors present examples of four alternative approaches with the understanding that project staff members will modify the examples or create their own instruments and approaches based on the unique characteristics of the learners, staff, and program design.

The authors present examples of four alternative approaches with the understanding that project staff members will modify the examples or create their own instruments and approaches based on the unique characteristics of the learners, staff, and program design. Project staff should consider many factors when selecting an alternative approach. For example, open-ended responses may give more flexibility to respondents but take more time and energy for staff to analyze. Observation measures are useful for documenting staff's judgements but may yield different data depending on which staff member is doing the observing. Any assessment approach has limitations, but by using a variety of instruments, staff can help ensure that they will obtain a comprehensive view of their project. They may find it helpful to seek the assistance of an experienced evaluator for designing and implementing alternative assessment approaches. An evaluator can help staff create instruments that are psychometrically sound, analyze the results of the assessments, and make recommendations for improving the project.

Any assessment approach has limitations, but by using a variety of instruments, staff can help ensure that they will obtain a comprehensive view of their project.

This resource guide focuses on using alternative approaches to (1) identify the learners' needs; (2) determine the learners' ongoing progress in meeting project objectives; (3) ascertain the overall success of the project; (4) give staff immediate and relevant feedback; (5) enable learners to assess their own development; and (6) meet the evaluation guidelines contained in Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The authors assume that staff members will implement alternative approaches in conjunction with standardized measures. By creating evaluation designs that integrate alternative and standardized approaches, FELP staff will have more information for making decisions about their projects.

Role of Evaluation

An effective evaluation design provides learners and staff members with accurate and useful information for designing, modifying, and improving their project. Such information also enables the staff to meet the evaluation requirements in the ESEA, Title VII, guidelines. In order to create effective assess-

A word about objectives . . .

This volume contains suggestions for how objectives can be used to help FELP project staff define the outcomes or changes that are expected as a result of the instructional program. The content of objectives is determined by what the learners need, what the staff members are prepared to teach, and what is possible to achieve within the time and budget constraints of the project.

During the initial planning of a project, staff members can use the development of objectives as a way to focus the direction of instruction based on the results of the needs assessment. For example, will the project concentrate on listening, speaking, reading, or writing skills—or some combination? To what extent will the learners' native language abilities be developed? How will the project help parents support their children's school achievement?

Some objectives may deal with clearly observable outcomes like reading and writing; others may specify changes that are more difficult to see such as self-confidence, group participation, or literacy awareness. Whatever the outcome, an objective should include assessment procedures and instruments that can be used to measure the extent to which the objective is being achieved.

Objectives should not be immutable, rigid directives from the staff to the learners. Nor should they be developed by staff without involving the learners or assessing their needs. Rather, objectives should be clear statements that represent a range of possible outcomes that are refined as the project is implemented. Among the myriad literacy-related activities that a project might address, objectives specify where the staff and learners could begin their collaborative effort toward building a successful project.

Objectives should be clear statements that represent a range of possible outcomes that are refined as the project is implemented.

ment and evaluation procedures, staff and learners need to (1) clarify the goals and objectives of the project; (2) develop indicators of progress in attaining the goals and objectives; and (3) identify the information they need to collect to determine the degree to which success has been achieved.

The focus of the evaluation should be based on the goals and objectives that learners and staff members have established.

The focus of the evaluation should be based on the goals and objectives that learners and staff members have established. For example, if the learners are composing stories that they will read to their children, the evaluation design should include the procedures for collecting information about the learners' compositions and the strategies they used for sharing them with their children.

Assessment versus Evaluation

In this volume, assessment refers to the use of instruments and procedures to gather data on a regular basis. Assessment may focus on identifying learners' needs, documenting the learners' progress toward meeting their own goals, and ascertaining the extent to which the project objectives are being met.

Evaluation, on the other hand, refers to the integration and analysis of assessment data at a given point in time for such purposes as (1) interpreting the learners' needs; (2) developing goals and objectives; (3) designing the content of the curriculum; (4) selecting instructional approaches; (5) monitoring the implementation of the project; (6) identifying obstacles to achieving objectives; and (7) determining the overall success of the project. An example of an evaluation activity is the annual evaluation report that is required of FELP and other ESEA, Title VII, projects by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), U.S. Department of Education.

Evaluation is an ongoing, collaborative effort by the learners, staff members, and evaluator to clarify learners' needs, refine project goals, design curriculum content, and develop instructional methodology.

This guide presents evaluation as part of a comprehensive process of planning, implementing, and improving a project (see Chapter II for a description of the planning process). Evaluation should not be an isolated event that is conducted at the end of each year. Rather, evaluation is an ongoing, collaborative effort by the learners, staff members, and evaluator to clarify learners' needs, refine project goals, design curriculum content, and develop instructional methodology. The essence of the evaluation is the participants' specification of what constitutes success in their project, what approaches they will use to assess the level of success that they have achieved, and how evaluation results will be used to improve the project.

Family English Literacy in ESEA, Title VII

Family English Literacy became part of ESEA, Title VII in 1984. This section outlines the services to be provided according to the ESEA, Title VII, statute and some examples of how individual projects have been designed.

Provisions of the Statute

The Family English Literacy Program is funded under Title VII (Bilingual Education) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. According to the federal statute:

> The term, 'family English literacy' means a program of instruction designed to help limited-English-proficient adults and out-of-school youth achieve competence in the English language. Such programs of instruction may be conducted exclusively in English or in English and the student's native language. Where appropriate, such programs may include instruction on how parents and family members can facilitate the educational achievement of limited-English-proficient children [20 USC 3283, Sec.7003(a)(7)].

Local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and private nonprofit organizations are eligible toapply for FELP funds. Projects are funded for three years. FELP projects are administered by OBEMLA, U.S. Department of Education.

Diversity in FELP Projects

Participants, location, and schedule. FELP projects are characterized by diversity in terms of participants, location, and schedule. Many different groups are served such as American Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Haitian, Hispanic, Hmong, Korean, Russian, Samoan, and Vietnamese. The ages of participants also vary among projects. Some projects focus on young adults who are not in school (out-of-school youth). Others enroll only adults, some of whom may be parents. Still other FELP projects include opportunities for parents and children to learn together in intergenerational activities. Projects may be located in large cities or rural areas, operated during the day or evening, or conducted in schools, community centers, or the participants' homes.

FELP projects may be located in large cities or rural areas, operated during the day or evening, or conducted in schools, community centers, or the participants' homes.

Program design. The projects also differ in the way in which they have responded to the program requirements of the ESEA, Title VII, statute. All FELP projects include activities that promote the learners' acquisition of English. Some projects may focus on language development, while others integrate language and life skills. Other projects focus on oral communication as a prelude to literacy while others address explicitly the development of reading and writing. Some projects include activities to help learners develop their abilities in English and their native languages. Other projects assist participants to improve their knowledge of topics such as mathematics, nutrition, the U.S. educational system, and social services. Subject matter may be taught through English or a combination of English and the learners' native language.

Home-school linkage. The projects are further distinguished by the degree to which they "include instruction on how parents and family members can facilitate the educational achievement of limited-

English-proficient children" (see FELP definition at the beginning of this section). Some projects attempt to create a close link between the parents' learning activities and the educational experiences of their children. For example, a project might be designed to help parents learn skills that would enable them to serve as volunteers at school or to work with their children at home in school-related activities.

The special characteristics of FELP projects necessitate the use of approaches to assessment and evaluation that are specifically tailored to the needs of FELP learners and staff.

Evaluation Issues in FELP Projects

The special characteristics of FELP projects necessitate the use of approaches to assessment and evaluation that are specifically tailored to the needs of FELP learners and staff. Alternative approaches yield information that learners and staff can use to set project goals, decide on instructional priorities, document successes and failures, and improve future activities. In December, 1990, staff members from FELP projects in California held a coordination meeting in which they analyzed the unique aspects of family literacy projects and considered innovative approaches to evaluation that would meet their needs. This section is based in part on the discussions at the seminar. (See *Proceedings from the Family English Literacy Seminar*, 1991, for a summary of the results of the seminar.)

Enrollment and Attendance

Unlike students in elementary and secondary schools, learners in FELP projects enroll voluntarily. However, before they can enroll and benefit from FELP services, they must know that a project exists. Because participants may enroll in a project at any time, staff members must be prepared to collect baseline data whenever new participants enroll. After enrollment, many adult learners may have difficulty attending project activities because of scheduling conflicts caused by personal, family, or job-related issues.

Learners come to the FELP project with different goals and needs for acquiring language and literacy.

Assessment and evaluation strategies need to take into account the uneven enrollment and attendance patterns that characterize many FELP projects. Alternative approaches, used on an ongoing basis, are more effective than infrequent pre- and post-measures for enabling FELP staff to identify obstacles to the learners' participation and make adjustments that will facilitate enrollment and attendance.

Multiple Contexts, Goals, and Needs

Adult learners face demands in the home, community, school, and work place. Depending on the requirements of these contexts, learners come to the FELP project with different goals and needs for acquiring language and literacy. Some adults may want to learn English to work in a restaurant. Others may be interested in opening a business. Some may need to learn English for a job interview, while others may want to help their children write folk tales in their native language. Still others may have more general goals such as learning English to communicate and negotiate with native speakers.

Adult learners also have different levels of knowledge about the school, community, and work place. Staff members need assessment instruments to obtain accurate information about the learners' needs in order to plan appropriate instruction. Alternative approaches, which can be tailored specifically to the learners' language and cultural backgrounds, provide staff with highly specialized and useful information. Staff members can use the assessment results for designing objectives and selecting instructional content and methodology that will validate the learners' prior experiences and facilitate their success in the project.

Literacy and Biliteracy

Most participants in FELP projects have a native language other than English. However, families differ according to the purposes for which they use their native language and English, and the degree to which they depend on each language to carry out daily tasks. For example, in some families, spouses may use their native language with each other but use a mixture of English and their native language with their children. Learners also have different levels of proficiency and educational experiences in their native language. Some learners may have received a high school diploma, while others may have come from countries in which no formal schooling was available.

Families differ according to the purposes for which they use their native language and English, and the degree to which they depend on each language to carry out daily tasks.

According to Quintero and Huerta-Macias (1990), to provide appropriate instruction, staff need to know the parents' and children's proficiency levels and uses of their native language and English. The lack of standardized instruments for assessing proficiency in languages other than English makes the use of alternative approaches essential for determining the participants' needs, competencies, and growth ir their native languages. Chapters III and IV contain suggestions for assessing native language proficiency.

Parent and Child Outcomes

When FELP projects create objectives and instructional activities for parents and children, staff members need to monitor changes based on the special characteristics of two very different kinds of participants. If parents and children are learning together in intergenerational activities, the evaluation design needs to examine the effects that parents and children have on each other's success in language learning, literacy development, academic achievement, and other outcomes identified by the projects. Alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation allow staff to collect information that can provide answers to important questions about the progress that parents and children are making in teaching and learning from each other.

Staff Knowledge

Staff need to know about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of adult learners to design and implement effective strategies for recruiting participants, identifying learners' needs, and designing

appropriate instructional activities. Staff members may need training in second language acquisition and bilingual development so that they can create effective learning activities for language-minority adult learners.

Alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation allow staff to collect information that can provide answers to important questions about the progress that parents and children are making in teaching and learning from each other.

Because alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation are developed in close consultation with staff and learners, they are effective for helping staff improve their knowledge of learners and assessing the ongoing progress of the project. Chapter II emphasizes the importance of the development of a literacy framework: that is, staff members' and learners' shared understanding of the learners' literacy needs, program goals, curriculum and methodology, and approaches for assessing and evaluating literacy-related activities.

Evaluation Requirements in ESEA, Title VII

Projects that are funded under ESEA, Title VII are guided by the evaluation requirements contained in federal program regulations (see 34 CFR Ch.V [11-1-89 edition], Sec. 500.50 through 500.51 and 525.31[f]). The requirements apply to the evaluation of all ESEA, Title VII, programs and do not have special provisions for assessing the adult learners who are the primary participants in FELP projects. By reviewing these regulations, staff members can determine how they can construct an evaluation design that meets the requirements and provides useful information for assessing and evaluating their project. The regulations do not prohibit the use of alternative approaches to evaluation, nor do they require the use of formal, standardized measures. By combining alternative and standardized measures, staff members and learners will improve their access to useful and accurate information for making decisions about their project.

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In general, the regulations specify that three areas be considered in designing the evaluation: (1) student outcome data; (2) technical standards; and (3) implementation data. Outcome data refer to what the students are supposed to learn during the project. The students in FELP projects may be adults, parents, parents and their children, or out-of-school youth. Project staff need to examine the regulations and determine how the required data can be obtained for all of the participants in the project. Chapters II through V of this volume emphasize the importance of collecting and analyzing outcome data based on the special features of the project. Issues regarding the evaluation of implementation data that are unrelated to student outcomes (for example, staff development) are not addressed in this volume.

Some of the evaluation requirements contained in the ESEA, Title VII, regulations are presented in the following sections. When designing their evaluation, FELP staff should consult the actual ESEA, Title VII, regulations. They also should seek assistance from their program officer at OBEMLA, staff of the ESEA, Title VII-funded Evaluation Assistance Center in their region, and their project evaluator.

Comparison Group

The regulations require that at least part of a project's evaluation design include the assessment of the educational progress of project participants against an appropriate non-project comparison group. FELP staff members can meet this requirement with a standardized test by comparing the participants' progress with the test's norming group. To complement the results of the standardized test, staff could use alternative approaches for assessing the learners' progress without having to compare their performance with a nonproject comparison group.

Instead of standardized tests, or in addition to them, FELP staff may use alternative assessment approaches with a nonproject comparison group. For example, the current participants' performance can be compared with (1) the performance of individuals who are not participating in the project and have similar characteristics to the participants or (2) baseline data that had been collected at an earlier point in the project on the current participants *and* all other participants who had enrolled at an earlier time. FELP staff should note that ESEA, Title VII, regulations do not require staff to compare the results of every assessment in the project with a nonproject comparison group. Chapter V presents suggestions for using alternative approaches with a nonproject comparison group.

Staff should obtain information about the learners' performance in the major components of the project such as language development, literacy, parenting, and cultural adaptation.

Representativeness of the Findings

Evaluation findings should apply to the participants, schools, or agencies served by the project. In other words, the conclusions made in an evaluation report should be derived from data on learners served by the project and on the full range of services provided by the project. Although absenteeism and transiency may prevent staff from obtaining assessment data on all learners, data should be collected from a sample of learners that is representative of the learners served by the project. Similarly, staff should obtain information about the learners' performance in the major components of the project such as language development, literacy, parenting, and cultural adaptation. Alternative approaches enable staff to tailor assessment and evaluation to the characteristics of the learners and the services of the project, thereby helping staff to ensure that the evaluation findings are indicative of what is actually happening in the project.

Validity and Reliability

Alternative instruments and procedures should be valid; that is, they should measure what they claim to measure. Assessments also should be reliable; in other words, they should produce similar results consistently. Staff members need to devote time and resources to develop and field test alternative approaches in order to document their validity and reliability (see "Guidelines for Developing Reliable and Valid Alternative Assessments," 1991). Chapter V addresses issues of validity and reliability in the evaluation design.

Multiple Measures

Although not required by ESEA, Title VII, regulations, a variety of alternative approaches should be used for conducting intake and initial assessments, monitoring progress, and assessing the overall success of the project. Multiple instruments and procedures will provide staff with a comprehensive view of the learners, the progress they are making, and the effectiveness of the activities of the project.

Overview of the Resource Guide

This resource guide is intended to assist FELP staff members to design and implement alternative approaches to assessing and evaluating their project. Each chapter addresses a different aspect of assessment and evaluation.

Chapter II contains a model for integrating program planning, implementation, and evaluation activities. A central element of a successful project is a conceptual framework for literacy that is shared among the staff and learners. The framework represents the staff's collective thinking regarding the definition of literacy, appropriate instructional approaches, the respective roles of staff and learners, and other factors that influence the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project. The author points out how the program planning and evaluation processes operate in synchrony when all participants share a common understanding of the design and focus of the project.

Chapter III addresses initial assessment, including needs assessment, intake, and placement. The chapter contains examples of alternative approaches that have been used successfully for initial assessment: surveys, interviews, and writing samples. The author suggests strategies for using initial assessments to yield accurate baseline information about the learners so that staff can design appropriate learning activities and determine the extent to which the learners are making progress in the project.

A variety of alternative approaches should be used for conducting intake and initial assessments, monitoring progress, and assessing the overall success of the project.

Chapter IV describes how alternative assessment and evaluation approaches can be used for documenting learners' progress toward meeting instructional objectives. Three alternative approaches are presented in detail: observation measures, interviews, and writing samples. The author emphasizes the importance of ongoing assessment for (1) helping staff members determine the extent to which their instructional efforts are leading to positive results and (2) showing learners that they are making progress toward meeting their own goals.

Chapter V provides suggestions for using surveys, performance samples, focus groups, and observation measures to demonstrate progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the project. The author presents strategies for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data obtained with each of the alternative approaches. The chapter underscores the importance of staff members' and learners' using the

evaluation data for (1) making decisions that will refine the goals, objectives, curriculum, and overall design of the project and (2) determining the progress made toward attaining the goals of the project.

By integrating alternative approaches with standardized measures, FELP staff can obtain accurate and complete information for evaluating their project.

Summary

This volume responds to the need expressed by FELP staff for alternative approaches to assessing and evaluating their projects. No single approach to assessment can provide a comprehensive view of what is happening in a literacy project. By integrating alternative approaches with standardized measures, FELP staff can obtain accurate and complete information for evaluating their project. Four alternative approaches are discussed in this volume: surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples. Each chapter presents strategies for designing and implementing alternative approaches that are tailored to the needs of individual FELP projects. The chapters follow a sequence that might be used by staff in addressing assessment and evaluation issues: (1) planning the project and creating the evaluation design; (2) determining learners' needs and establishing baseline data; (3) assessing learners' progress toward meeting project objectives; and (4) collecting, analyzing, using, and reporting data obtained with alternative approaches.

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SURVEY OF USAGE

Chapter I. Introduction to Alternative Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation

This resource guide must be helpful to you, the FELP director or evaluator, in order to be considered a success. In accepting the field test edition of the guide, we hope that you agree to participate in this usage survey. We plan to revise the guide based on your comments and criticisms; it then will be published for a broader audience. Please share with us your critical comments. After reviewing the chapter, use the scale below to indicate whether the guide is written clearly; the scale indicates that it is

1. Clearly written and understandable, the format is clean;
2. Generally clear, but some wordings or format could be improved;
3. Not particularly clear, written with too much detail or too much jargon; or
4. Not at all clear, not at all understandable.

In addition to being written clearly, the guide also must provide enough information for you to be able to implement the ideas. In each of the same areas, please use the scale to indicate that the guide has

1. Valuable information in the right amount of detail for me really to use it;
2. Good information, but needs more detail for me really to use it;
3. Information that is tangential to my needs, so it won't help a great deal; or
4. Information that I don't need and won't use.

Rate clarity	Area to be rated	Rate information
1 2 3 4	Format of the chapter	Not applicable
1 2 3 4	Wording of the chapter	Not applicable
Not applicable	The general ideas and information presented	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Types of assessments (e.g., alternative, standardized)	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Role of evaluation	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	FELP statute and explanations	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Evaluation issues for FELP projects	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	ESEA, Title VII, evaluation requirements	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Overview of the guide	1 2 3 4

Thank you for your assistance. If there are other comments, criticisms, or assistance you would like to offer, please feel free to do so; you do not need to list your name.

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☞ *Please return your completed survey. You may fold, staple, and stamp this page -- the address is on the back side. If you prefer, you may FAX it to Daniel D. Holt, Bilingual Education Office at (916) 657-2928. We also would appreciate receiving a copy of any alternative assessments you create as a result of this guide.*

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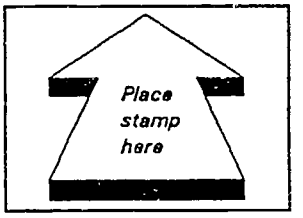

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CHAPTER II

INTEGRATING PROGRAM PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

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"If you ever want anything done right, do it yourself" best expresses the theme of this chapter. Much has been written regarding the shortcomings and failures of traditional assessment* and evaluation to meet the needs of adult literacy projects. Current research and practice in adult literacy suggests ways of improving the utility and relevance of assessment and research efforts. However, the most effective alternatives to traditional approaches are created by staff members and adult learners as they collaborate to improve their own literacy projects.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe a process for planning, implementing, and evaluating literacy programs for limited-English-proficient adults, parents, and children. The process emphasizes the importance of using alternative approaches for designing and evaluating literacy programs. Although this chapter focuses on projects funded under ESEA, Title VII, Family English Literacy Programs (FELP), the information could be adapted for other literacy projects for language-minority adults.

The chapter is divided into four sections: (1) an explanation of how assessment and evaluation procedures are determined in part by how learning is defined; (2) a discussion of the requirements for an alternative assessment and evaluation design; (3) a description of the importance of a well-defined literacy framework for the project; and (4) a presentation of the planning process that project staff can use as a guide for developing the instructional program and an appropriate assessment and evaluation design.

* See the Glossary on pages 114-115 of this publication for definitions of important terms that appear in this chapter.

Views of Learning

How learning is defined helps determine how literacy is defined and evaluated. The way staff members define learning influences what assessment information they collect, how they collected it, and how they use it in the project. Currently there are two views of learning with decidedly different implications for data collection and use. The first is a traditional view of learning that has dominated education since the turn of the century. The second view, bolstered by research in cognitive psychology, is helping to redefine evaluation.

Traditional View of Learning

Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, and Gardner (1991) explain how the field of evaluation has come to rely almost exclusively on standardized tests. Since the turn of the century, intelligence has been viewed as a fixed attribute (unchangeable, like skin color), able to be ranked (somewhere on a normal curve), and genetically determined. Educators who hold this view of intelligence classify students into specific groups based on the assumption that they have different abilities and therefore need a special curriculum. Such approaches can lead educators to assign students permanently to groups according to their perceived abilities. Because intelligence is defined as a single attribute that is distributed along a continuum, learning is viewed as one-dimensional, with individuals progressing through a series of discrete steps from simple entry level skills to full mastery. The perception of learning as molecular and hierarchical has guided the development and use of standardized tests.

Limitations of standardized tests. "Standardized tests . . . are constructed so that only a few can score high; they have yielded artifacts rather than authentic samples, promoted an isolated view of learning, and treated assessment as a matter of pure measurement" (Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, and Gardner, 1991, p. 47). The tests contribute to the view that assessment results are end products and that cognition is an individual, isolated activity. Test developers have often created instruments that are more effective at ranking students than identifying where they are developmentally. The ranking of students results in various negative consequences, not the least of which is that those who rank at or near the bottom are ignored in the learning process or otherwise stigmatized. Contemporary research in developmental and cognitive psychology, however, has questioned traditional assumptions about learning and suggests decidedly different directions for data collection.

The ranking of students results in various negative consequences, not the least of which is that those who rank at or near the bottom are ignored in the learning process or otherwise stigmatized.

Learning Redefined

Current research suggests that intelligence is not a fixed phenomenon, but is a dynamic, global capacity. All human activity requires that "the learner actively develop knowledge by observing, inferring, generating rules, and building theories" (Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, and

Gardner, 1991, p. 48). Learning should be viewed not as the development of a series of discrete skills, but as a process involving "qualitative and uneven shifts in understanding" (Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, and Gardner, 1991, p. 50). Learning represents a series of ever increasing, complex understandings as an individual observes, theorizes, tests, observes further, and readjusts the theory.

Learning is not only the acquisition of discrete information; it is also the organization of information as a basis for further learning. Furthermore, learning does not occur in isolation. It is affected profoundly by external stimulation from other individuals, environmental pressures, or resources. The redefinition of learning suggests that staff members need to carefully consider the kind of evaluation data that is collected and the methods of gathering data. Assessment procedures should be used to determine the learner's ability to construct and apply knowledge for a variety of purposes.

Importance of a Literacy Framework

Assessment, evaluation, and other components of a literacy project need to work together in a mutually supportive manner.

Assessment, evaluation, and other components of a literacy project need to work together in a mutually supportive manner. One way to coordinate the components is to create a literacy framework. A project's literacy framework may be described as the staff members' and learners' shared understanding of learners' literacy needs, program goals, curriculum and methodology, and approaches for assessing and evaluating literacy development.

To design and implement alternative assessment instruments, staff need to identify outcomes and changes that constitute the learners' success in the project. In other words, how will the staff and learners know that progress is being made in attaining the objectives of the project? The staff members' and learners' shared understanding of the nature of literacy and the specific outcomes that the participants are working toward represents a key part of the project's literacy framework.

As was pointed out in Chapter I, FELP projects have different program designs. Some projects may help parents improve their individual language abilities, while others focus on shared literacy activities between parents and their children. Developing a literacy framework is one of the first steps that the staff and adult learners can take to create a common understanding of the role of literacy in the project and in the learners' lives.

A Collaborative Approach to Planning and Evaluation

One of the keys to linking the literacy framework, program design, and assessment and evaluation procedures used

in a project is a collaborative approach to planning and evaluation. This section presents a rationale and process for creating a literacy framework for the project and describes the steps involved in a collaborative approach to planning and evaluation using examples taken from actual FELP projects in California.

Contexts for Literacy

Individuals and language groups differ according to the ways in which they use language and literacy and the settings or contexts in which they read and write (Lytle, Belzer, Schultz, and Vannozzi, 1989). Thus, adult learners have different goals and needs for literacy development. Learners may need to be able to write notes to their children's teacher, interpret monthly bills and bus schedules, decipher product labels, help their children with school work, read a repair manual, or complete an application for admission to a training program. Alternative assessments offer staff the advantage of being able to measure the learners' ability to use literacy in contexts that are relevant to their daily lives.

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Literacy is best viewed as a range of practices or activities (Scribner, 1987). In a recent research study conducted by Wrigley and Guth (1992, p. 7), ESL literacy instruction was defined as "supporting language-minority adults with little English and little formal education in their efforts to understand and use English in its many forms (oral and written, including prose, document, and quantitative literacy), in a variety of contexts (family, community, school, work), so that they can reach their fullest potential and achieve their own goals (personal, professional, academic)." Chapter IV provides detailed suggestions for how curriculum and assessment can be matched with this holistic view of literacy.

Project staff need to work closely with adult learners to design assessment procedures that will identify the types of reading and writing the learners are doing and their individual "purposes and aspirations" (Lytle, Belzer, Schultz, and Vannozzi, 1989, p. 55). The procedures should help staff and learners examine their own views of learning, literacy, and how literacy is used in their daily lives. Staff and learners also can collaborate in designing and implementing evaluation activities including analyzing and interpreting evaluation data. Auerbach (1990) emphasizes that adult learners bring to the project their own goals, prior literacy experiences, and attitudes towards reading, writing, and learning, all of which interact and affect what and how they will learn. Such background information needs to be used to create meaningful assessment and evaluation activities in the project.

Learners bring to the project their own goals, prior literacy experiences, and attitudes towards reading, writing, and learning, all of which interact and affect what and how they will learn.

Lytle, Belzer, Schultz, and Vannozzi (1989) designed a framework to guide the development of assessments and evaluations that consider the diverse needs and contexts of adult learners. Their framework has four dimensions: 1) literacy practices; 2) reading, writing, and learning strategies and interests; 3) perceptions of reading

and writing, teaching and learning; and 4) goals. Literacy practices or activities refer to how, when, and why learners use literacy in their lives. After the staff and learners have identified the role of literacy in various contexts, assessment and evaluation approaches can be used to measure changes in the way learners use literacy as the project is implemented.

Collaboration among staff and adult learners in developing a literacy framework enables all participants in the project to increase their understanding of literacy and improve their ability to use literacy to achieve their own goals.

The framework outlined by Lytle, Belzer, Schultz, and Vannozzi (1989) may be helpful to FELP participants who are designing their own literacy framework. For example, the literacy framework should include a definition of literacy; an identification of the role that literacy plays in learners' lives in various contexts; documentation of the learners' goals for literacy development; the focus of curriculum content and activities; and the basic direction of the assessment and evaluation procedures. Collaboration among staff and adult learners in developing a literacy framework enables all participants in the project to increase their understanding of literacy and improve their ability to use literacy to achieve their own goals.

The next section presents suggestions for designing a literacy framework that is based on the learners' needs. The literacy framework and planning process contain elements that were borrowed from the work of Lytle, Auerbach, and others. The information is presented to encourage projects to begin the process of creating learner-centered, participatory approaches to literacy development. The reader should understand, however, that this chapter and others in the volume contain suggestions, such as developing project objectives and using ready-made curriculum, that some advocates of participatory literacy approaches might consider inconsistent with authentic learner-centered programs.

One of the assumptions of an effective literacy framework is that adult learners acquire abilities and knowledge in a spiral versus sequential fashion, with increasing levels of proficiency and understanding emerging over time.

Developing A Literacy Framework Through Collaborative Planning

The development of a literacy framework is the first step in designing alternative assessment and evaluation procedures. The literacy framework is comparable to model curriculum standards that educators can use as a foundation for developing programs that meet local needs (see *Model Standards for Adult English-as-a-Second Language Programs*, 1992).

One of the assumptions of an effective literacy framework is that adult learners acquire abilities and knowledge in a spiral versus sequential fashion, with increasing levels of proficiency and understanding emerging over time. As staff and learners work together to create the framework and related curriculum, they also can develop project-based assessment and evaluation procedures for documenting progress toward meeting objectives and making improvements in the program. The importance of the literacy framework as a foundation for assessment is echoed by Lytle, Marmor, and Penner (1986, p. 22): "Our starting point was the understanding that assessment must correspond to program philosophy and goals, since assessment procedures embody and thus convey particular concepts about literacy."

At a meeting of selected California FELP projects, staff members attempted to reach consensus on a definition of literacy. The results of their discussion are summarized in the seven points listed below ("Results of the Focus Group Meeting," 1991, p. 4).

1. Literacy is finding meaning from print in order to fulfill the learners' academic, psychological, political, and social goals.
2. Literacy includes a range of activities or practices in multiple contexts with a variety of people. It may involve the use of more than one language.
3. Contexts differ with respect to the complexity of literacy demands.
4. Literacy activities include reading, writing, and learning strategies.
5. Literacy in more than one language strengthens learners' linguistic and cognitive development and increases their sociocultural knowledge.
6. The development of literacy is influenced by the language, culture, status, experiences, and perceptions of learners and teachers.
7. The concept of literacy is based on the teachers' and learners' values and beliefs.

Literacy in more than one language strengthens learners' linguistic and cognitive development and increases their sociocultural knowledge.

The seven statements reflect the staff members' underlying assumptions about literacy. From this initial framework, several implications can be drawn. First, literacy should be developed in ways that are meaningful to learners. Second, the literacy curriculum needs to address the ways in which learners want to use literacy. Third, learners should be deeply involved in the development of the curriculum content. Fourth, literacy instruction is a collaborative effort between the learner and instructor.

In an actual project, the literacy framework would be refined as the project is implemented and evaluated. Initial aspects of the framework might be quite general; however, as the staff and learners continue to work together, they will improve their understanding of the nature of literacy and how it can be fostered in the project.

To support a literacy framework like the one described above, assessment and evaluation procedures should:

1. Focus on the learners—that is, accurately identify learners' strengths and needs and assess learners' progress in the project;
2. Document how improvement in learners' literacy development affects their children, work responsibilities, and community activities;
3. Rely on a variety of instruments and strategies for collecting data;
4. Reflect changes in learners' perceptions, attitudes, and behavior inside *and* outside the classroom;
5. Collect and analyze data on a continuous basis throughout the project.

Process and Product Evaluation

Alternative assessment and evaluation procedures raise a number of questions related to process and product evaluation. A *process evaluation* focuses on how a project is implemented. A question that

might be addressed in a process evaluation would be the following: How and to what extent are learners involved in identifying their literacy goals and objectives, designing the learning activities of the project, and assessing their progress in attaining their goals?

A *product evaluation* is concerned with the effect of the project on the adult learners. A product evaluation addresses such questions as: To what extent have adult learners increased their language proficiency? To what degree have they attained their personal literacy goals? To what extent does increased literacy development affect how learners (1) perceive themselves; (2) relate to their spouses or other family members; (3) respond to friends and co-workers; and/or (4) use their literacy skills in new settings or different purposes?

To answer these and other questions, learners need to be assessed in diferent ways. The alternative approaches presented in chapters III, IV, and V include surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples. Surveys and interviews of family members, friends, co-workers, employers, and classmates can provide valuable information regarding learners' needs, goals, and preferences for curriculum content. Observation measures can be used by staff to assess the learners' progress in acquiring language and literacy. Performance samples of learners' work, such as writing samples, tape recordings of oral readings, and journals, are useful for documenting learners' language development. By using a variety of alternative approaches, staff and learners can develop a comprehensive picture of what is happening in the project and satisfy the needs of both process and product evaluation.

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A Planning Process Model

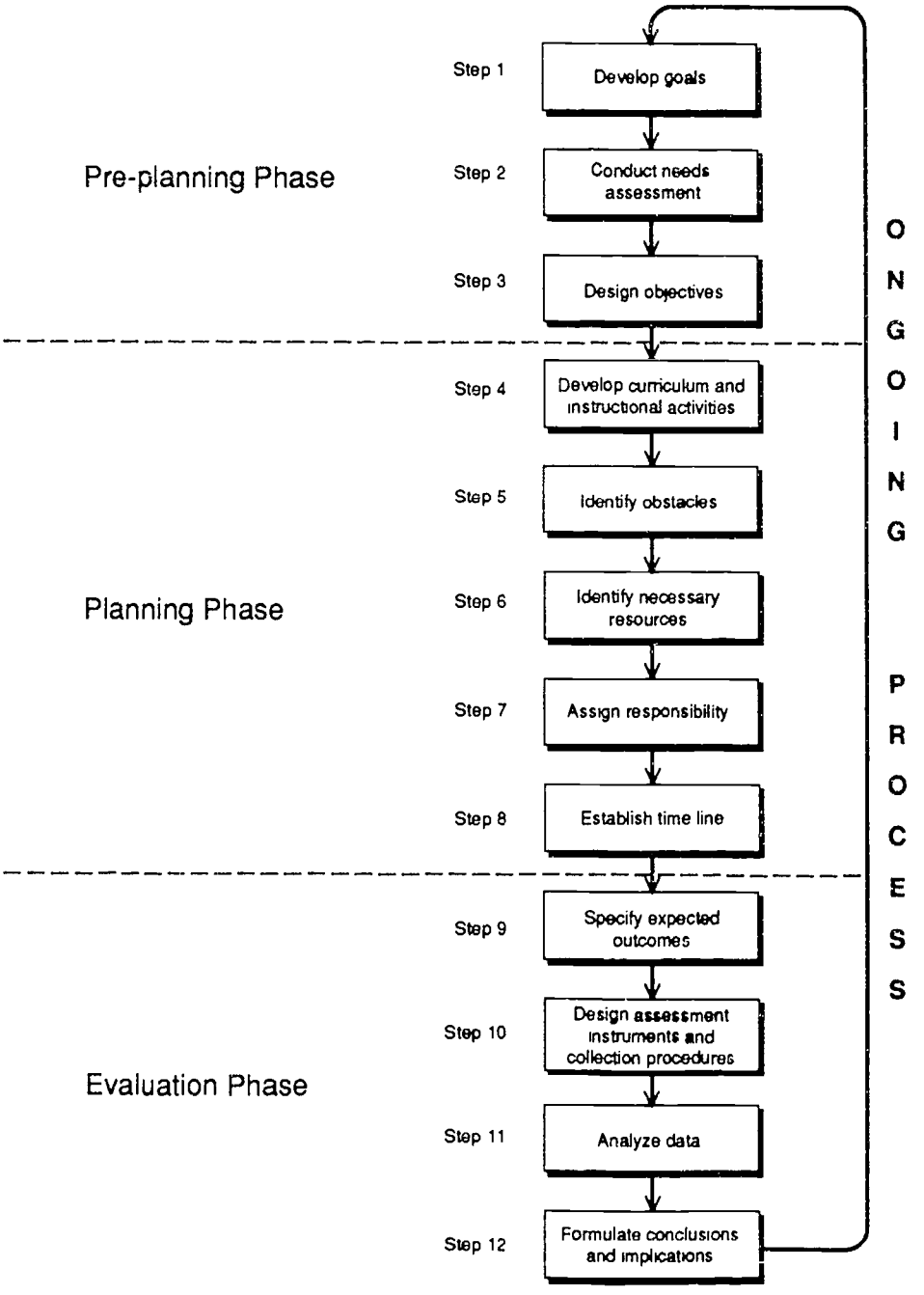
Developing a quality instructional program and evaluation design requires a thorough planning process involving the collaboration of staff members and adult learners. Figure 1 illustrates each of the steps of the process. The model is heuristic; that is, it is shown as an idealized guide for planning. In actual practice, the tasks are not always implemented in sequence. Sometimes steps are skipped and then gone back to. At other times, steps are addressed simultaneously. Most importantly, the steps are interdependent; that is, what happens in implementing one step influences activities in other steps.

The planning process is cyclical; the knowledge gained by implementing one step is used to inform decisions related to other steps. The implementation of the steps should be a collaborative effort between staff and adult learners. Figure 1 illustrates that effective planning is not a one-time effort, but rather a series of activities that occurs throughout the life of the project. By continuously examining the needs of the learners, staff, and the community in general, staff members can create instructional activities, assessment strategies, and evaluation procedures that are highly responsive to the learners and the conditions under which the project is being implemented.

Developing a quality instructional program and evaluation design requires a thorough planning process involving the collaboration of staff members and adult learners.

Figure 1

STEPS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS MODEL



Effective planning is not a one-time effort, but rather a series of activities that occurs throughout the life of the project.

The steps in the model take time for staff and learners to organize and implement. Although the entire process cannot be implemented fully in any one year, staff and learners should work through as many steps as possible, implementing fully when feasible, and laying the groundwork for other steps that might be addressed later.

The process is designed to give staff and learners a blueprint for continuously collaborating to design and refine their project. Visualizing the entire process enables staff to schedule time and resources for dealing with each step. For example, teachers may devote class time to activities in which learners would discuss the relevance of instructional content to their personal goals and the extent to which they believe they are making progress. Ideally, staff members should be able to meet weekly or biweekly to assess and clarify goals, objectives, instructional activities, and other issues.

Staff members will benefit from planning activities that result in (1) clarifying adult learners' needs; (2) defining the dimensions of literacy addressed by the project; (3) refining curriculum content; and (4) selecting appropriate instructional methods. By establishing a consensus about the important aspects of the project, staff members can coordinate their responsibilities more successfully. They also can provide a clear orientation to new staff members and adult learners who join the project in midstream. A literacy framework becomes a useful reference for communicating the program's philosophy, goals, and procedures to others. Specifying clear goals and objectives helps participants collaborate to create a consistent, coherent instructional program that responds to learners' needs and supports their continued growth. A collaborative planning process enables participants to identify changes that will improve the project based on the collective resources of staff and learners.

Applying the Planning Process Model

Positive interpersonal relations can be enhanced by creating activities designed to build a cooperative spirit among staff and adult learners.

Collaboration is facilitated when individuals establish a trusting, supportive relationship with each other. The success of the planning process rests on the quality of the relationships among the participants. Positive interpersonal relations can be enhanced by creating activities designed to build a cooperative spirit among staff and adult learners. Team building exercises are useful for developing participants' ability to recognize each person for his/her contribution and realize the value of helping and receiving help from one another. Developing cooperative skills will improve the participants' ability to implement the planning process model. (For more on improving human relations in the work place, see Johnson, 1987.) Chapter IV contains procedures for assessing adult learners' group participation skills.

The following are descriptions of each step of the planning process model and examples of how the step has been addressed by FELP projects in California. These descriptions represent only some of

the many approaches that are possible for designing, implementing, and evaluating FELP projects.

1 Develop the goals of the project.

Goals are broad, general statements of the intent, purpose, or expected outcome of a project. The goals of a FELP project should be derived in part from the purposes of the program as delineated in the ESEA, Title VII, statute for FELP. (See Chapter I for a description of FELP as defined by ESEA, Title VII.)

The goals represent the focus of the project and reflect the choices that the project staff have made within the flexibility of the FELP statute and the needs of the participants as anticipated by the staff.

Goal statements help staff members design the needs assessment activities that take place in Step 2 of the planning process. In the initial stages, goals are tentative, because they may need to be adjusted based on what the staff learn from assessing the needs of the learners. As the project is implemented (steps 4-12), the staff may need to adjust further the goals of the project.

The goals developed by the FELP project at the Santa Clara County Office of Education (1989-92) address the major purposes of FELP; that is, developing the participants' English language and the parents' ability to help their children succeed in school. The goals were designed to reflect the unique interests of the learners and staff in the Santa Clara area (*Proceedings from the Family English Literacy Seminar*, 1991, p. 62).

1. Assist LEP Hispanic and Southeast Asian parents and family members to achieve literacy and competence in the English language;
2. Provide parents and family members with knowledge of techniques designed to assist their children in developing literacy skills in English and appreciation of reading;
3. Involve parents and family members in direct instructional and support roles related to their children's skill development and participation in English literacy; and
4. Support parent/community/school communication and the development of parents' leadership, advisory, and advocacy roles.

The goals represent the focus of the project and reflect the choices that the project staff have made within the flexibility of the FELP statute and the needs of the participants as anticipated by the staff.

2 Conduct the needs assessment.

The first phase of the needs assessment is usually conducted as part of the proposal for FELP funding.

Assessing the needs of prospective learners is a vital step in the planning process. During this step, staff obtain valuable information about the learners, their families, and their communities. The first phase of the needs assessment is usually conducted as part of the proposal for FELP funding. The questions asked of learners are based on the goals that staff intend to pursue in response to authorized activities outlined in ESEA, Title VII. Upon funding, staff members need to conduct more in-depth needs assessments, the results of which may cause staff to clarify or modify the goals.

Information gathered through needs assessment activities can help staff to design project objectives (Step 3) and develop curriculum and instructional activities (Step 4).

Before the FELP project in the Lincoln Unified School District (1990-93) designed its objectives and instructional activities, staff administered a survey (alternative assessment instrument) to a representative sample of the Southeast Asian families that the district intended to serve. (Chapter III contains a more detailed explanation of the needs assessments that were conducted by staff at Lincoln.) The results of the survey indicated that the parents wanted services to be available near their apartment complex. Therefore, the staff established a family education center in a vacant apartment unit located in the middle of a two-block area of five apartment complexes occupied by Cambodian and other Southeast Asian families.

The staff of the FELP project at the National Council of La Raza (1988-91) used writing samples produced by project participants as part of its needs assessment. The adult learners wrote the sample in Spanish or English, depending on their language proficiency. The staff used a holistic technique to score the learners' writing. The samples provided important information for refining objectives, developing instructional activities, and generating baseline data for comparing and evaluating changes in the learners' writing ability at a later time in the program. Chapter IV contains more information about using writing samples for assessment.

The FELP project in the Whittier Union High School District (1990-93) used data obtained from the academic records of the adult learners' children to design objectives and instructional activities. This data enabled staff to identify high school students who were experiencing academic problems and to design project activities that would help parents improve their children's academic performance. Information gathered through needs assessment activities can help staff to design project objectives (Step 3) and develop curriculum and instructional activities (Step 4).

3 Design instructional objectives.

Each objective should include procedures and instruments that can be used to measure the extent to which the objectives are being achieved.

Objectives can help staff specify changes or outcomes that learners may experience in their language abilities, parenting strategies, cultural adaptation, or other important areas as a result of the instructional program. Some objectives may deal with clearly observable outcomes like speaking and writing; others, however, may specify changes that are more difficult to see such as self-confidence, group participation, or literacy awareness. Each objective should include procedures and instruments that can be used to measure the extent to which the objectives are being achieved. (Chapter I contains additional information about objectives.)

Initially, objectives are based on information collected during the needs assessment. As the planning process unfolds and more information is collected from the learners, objectives and related assessment instruments may need to be refined. Ultimately, objectives are determined by what the learners need, what the staff are prepared to teach,

and what is possible to achieve within the time and budget constraints of the project.

The following are examples of objectives that use alternative, non-standardized assessment measures ("Family English Literacy Program: ESEA, Title VII Application," 1991, pp. 26-29).

1. By the end of each project year, participants will improve their receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills at least one level as assessed by an observation measure and writing sample.
2. By the end of each project year, participants will increase by at least four the number of literacy activities they do with their children as assessed by individual interviews.

Objectives are determined by what the learners need, what the staff are prepared to teach, and what is possible to achieve within the time and budget constraints of the project.

4 Develop the curriculum and instructional activities.

Instructional activities are based on the learners' needs and the project's goals and objectives. For example, the staff of the FELP project in the Parlier Unified School District (1989-92) responded to the large numbers of Spanish-speaking families in the district by designing activities in which parents use original stories from Latin American countries for story-telling activities with their children.

The FELP staff of the Fremont Unified School District (1988-91) organized instructional activities for parents that used children's stories from the district's adopted list of core literature. By becoming aware of the literature that their children studied in school, the parents gained confidence in talking with their children about school activities. Chapter IV contains more suggestions for developing instructional activities and designing ongoing assessment instruments and procedures.

5 Identify obstacles.

"Forewarned is forearmed" accurately describes the value of anticipating potential obstacles to planned activities. Knowing about possible impediments helps staff and learners anticipate and refine future activities by modifying plans and elaborating strategies to overcome hurdles. At a coordination meeting of fourteen California FELP projects in December, 1990, participants identified obstacles they faced with regard to: 1) recruitment of participants; 2) maintaining enrollment; and 3) staff recruitment and training. Next, they shared strategies they had found successful in addressing these problems. The following are results of their discussions (*Proceedings from the Family English Literacy Seminar*, 1991, pp. 15-20).

1. Obstacles to recruiting participants:
   a. Schools have incomplete or inaccurate lists of limited-English-proficient students.
   b. Printed flyers for advertising classes are ineffective because parents may not be literate in English or their native language.
   c. Attending school may be a new experience for parents who have little or no education in their native countries.

d. Parents are reluctant to visit the school because they are not knowledgeable about the educational system.
e. Students who qualify for the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program may not participate in the project if classes do not meet GAIN requirements.
f. Some parents face cultural barriers that restrict their participation. For example, in some cultures, wives cannot attend class without their husband's permission.
g. Child care is not available.

2. Obstacles to maintaining enrollment:
   a. Participants must move frequently because of seasonal jobs.
   b. Participants' overtime work prevents them from attending classes.
   c. Responsibilities at home prevent regular attendance—for example, child care, family problems, and transportation.
   d. Participants may become discouraged if the project activities do not meet their needs.
3. Obstacles to staff recruitment and training:
   a. Staff who are knowledgeable about adult ESL, parenting, and language-minority issues are in short supply.
   b. Qualified bilingual teachers are in limited supply.
   c. Some staff are reluctant to work in the evening.
   d. Budgets are insufficient to support staff salaries.

By identifying obstacles and discussing possible solutions, participants are better able to increase the number of alternatives that they can consider for overcoming significant barriers to improving their projects.

6 Identify resources needed for addressing each objective and obstacle.

Staff need to identify the resources necessary for addressing objectives and obstacles. Resources include personnel, time, materials, and funding. This step helps staff analyze the scope of the project and establish realistic expectations for what can be accomplished in the project.

Accountability is especially important in collaborative efforts to ensure that each team member contributes his/her fair share.

7 Assign staff members responsibility for designing and implementing each task or activity.

When staff members are responsible for particular tasks, they become stakeholders who regard their contributions as important factors in the success of the project. Accountability is especially important in collaborative efforts to ensure that each team member contributes his/her fair share.

8 Establish time line for each task or activity.

Because FELP projects offer a broad array of services and activities over an extended period of time, staff members need to specify a time line to ensure that all steps of the planning process are

implemented. Steps 6-8 are essential because they provide the parameters for developing each activity.

Examples of Steps 6-8.

When staff members of the FELP project located at California State University, Sacramento (1986-89) identified resources needed for improving the project (Step 6), they determined that having their own curriculum would significantly facilitate the learners' achievement of the project's objectives. During the first year of implementation, the staff compiled curriculum content and activities that the learners especially liked. Each staff member assumed a specific role for designing, compiling, and evaluating the curriculum materials (Step 7). The adult learners also had responsibilities such as identifying content that they believed was important to learn and giving feedback regarding the effectiveness of learning activities. After deciding on the scope of the curriculum, the staff created a time line for developing the curriculum for the project (Step 8).

The adult learners also had responsibilities such as identifying content that they believed was important to learn and giving feedback regarding the effectiveness of learning activities.

During the second year, the staff field tested and refined the curriculum materials. By the end of the third year, the curriculum was printed and used at all sites in the project. Titled *Parenting Curriculum for Language Minority Parents* (Holt, 1988), the text was developed in English, Chinese, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A teacher's activity guide also was developed. The curriculum is an example of how staff can collaborate with learners to identify and develop resources that enhance the implementation of the project. The success of the effort was dependent on (1) staff members' having an intimate knowledge of the adult learners' needs; (2) staff and adult learners' sharing responsibilities for tasks; and (3) the staff members' adhering to a time line for completing the tasks.

Parenting Curriculum for Language Minority Parents has also been a valuable resource for FELP project staff of the Stockton Unified School District (1988-91). Staff used the curriculum to improve parents' knowledge of such topics as parent-child communication, child development, techniques of discipline, and the U.S. educational system. Each topic, however, was addressed only after the staff and learners agreed that it was important.

Staff of the FELP project in the Ravenswood City Elementary School District (1989-92) found that computers were an important resource for enhancing the implementation of the project (Step 6). During the project the parents learned to use the same kinds of computers that their children used at school. The computers became a resource for motivating parents to participate in project activities and for strengthening the relationship between parents and their children.

9 Specify expected outcomes.

During this step of the planning process, staff and learners identify the type and amount of change or growth that they expect at the end of a given time period. This step represents what the project

participants regard as success in the project. Growth can be expressed in terms of academic growth (for example, a specified increase in positive ratings on a project-developed reading test); social, cognitive, or affective development; organizational skills; or parenting skills. The outcome statements are more detailed than the objectives that were developed earlier in the process (Step 3). They should specify the assessment measures to be used and the amount of growth that seems realistic. Staff members and learners may want to develop outcomes that are short-term (the ability to explain one's needs to an apartment manager) and long-term (obtaining a teaching job).

Staff members and learners may want to develop outcomes that are short-term (the ability to explain one's needs to an apartment manager) and long-term (obtaining a teaching job).

10 Design assessment instruments and procedures for collecting data.

Staff and adult learners need to identify the data that will document progress toward attaining the outcomes specified in Step 9. For example, taking a frequency count of the number of times children read to parents per month might be an indicator of parents' encouragement of children's literacy development.

Outcomes may be assessed with various types of assessment strategies. For instance, an outcome such as growth in listening comprehension could be assessed through a single measure such as a standardized test, an interview, an observation measure, or performance sample. However, an outcome that deals with reading strategies that an adult learner uses to obtain information might be assessed through a combination of an interview, an observation measure, and a performance sample to capture fully all of the strategies that the reader might be using. To gather data accurately, it is important that a match be established between the type(s) of assessment and the nature of the outcome. A variety of alternative procedures for assessing specific outcomes are discussed more fully in chapters III, IV, and V.

11 Analyze data.

Data become meaningful when they are analyzed. Various approaches can be used for data analysis. Staff may want to represent assessment data in numerical scores so that they can generate percentages, means, and standard deviations. On the other hand, staff may wish to describe learner outcomes by summarizing assessment results in narrative form. To interpret and analyze data effectively, staff members need to understand thoroughly the outcomes that were assessed. Chapter V contains detailed suggestions for analyzing data.

The results of the data analyses should be reviewed by staff and learners to determine the extent to which they accomplished what they set out to do.

12 Formulate conclusions and implications.

The results of the data analyses should be reviewed by staff and learners to determine the extent to which they accomplished what they set out to do. That is, were the objectives of the program attained? Were the outcomes specified in the objectives realistic? Were they matched to the learners' needs? Should instructional activities be changed? Should objectives be modified? This step provides staff and learners with the opportunity to make what are often hard choices

about the project. What has been successful? What needs to be strengthened? What ought to be eliminated? What needs to be changed?

Conclusions about the outcomes of project activities should influence the development of objectives that will be pursued in the future.

As shown in Figure 1, the decisions made in Step 12 should be used to refine the activities associated with steps 1, 2, 3, and others. Conclusions about the outcomes of project activities should influence the development of objectives that will be pursued in the future. That is, the planning process model represents a cycle of interdependent steps. When any aspect of the program is changed, all of the related aspects should be reviewed to determine if they also need to be modified. Chapter V provides a variety of strategies for using and reporting data.

Designing Alternative Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation: Where Do You Begin?

The preceding section presented a process for planning, implementing, and evaluating a FELP project. The model emphasizes the importance of collaboration among the staff members and learners for creating a successful project. The planning process also underscored the value of alternative assessment procedures for helping staff ascertain the needs of adult learners and the progress they are making in the project.

The final section of this chapter presents suggestions for implementing the planning process model and related alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation. Implementing the model involves deciding (1) who will be involved in the planning process; (2) how the planners will work together; and (3) what issues the planners will address in assessment and evaluation.

A planning team that is made up of staff members and learners will help ensure that decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the needs of all participants.

Members of the Planning Team

The first and perhaps most important step in initiating a comprehensive planning process is to decide who will be involved in the process. A planning team that is made up of staff members and learners will help ensure that decisions are based on a thorough understanding of the needs of all participants. The project evaluator might also be included in the planning team to assist the staff and learners with designing the evaluation.

To the extent possible, all instructional staff should have the opportunity to participate in the planning process. Community liaisons also should participate because of their knowledge of the learners' language and cultural backgrounds. When deciding on the content of the curriculum and specifying learner outcomes, it may be helpful to include suggestions from prospective employers, teachers of the participants' children, representatives from local government agencies (for example, employment and social service offices), and staff from community colleges and universities.

Approaches to Planning

After the planning team has been formed, team members need to consider how they can work together effectively. Because of the diversity of individuals and the range of perspectives that need to be blended into a consensus, it is vital that the facilitator of the planning team be both willing and able to promote a cooperative spirit among team members. The facilitator needs to ensure that each team member's contributions are invited, expressed, valued, and integrated into the decisions that are made in each step of the planning process.

Because of the diversity of individuals and the range of perspectives that need to be blended into a consensus, it is vital that the facilitator of the planning team be both willing and able to promote a cooperative spirit among team members.

The facilitator has the responsibility of ensuring that meetings and tasks are structured so that the project benefits from the experiences of all team members. A collaborative approach to planning enables staff and learners to become more knowledgeable about each other's needs and the value of cooperation itself. According to Freire (1973, p. 48), "acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe—but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context." Collaboration helps team members develop a sense of responsibility for helping others and the feeling of satisfaction that comes from a successful team effort. The act of planning and implementing together can provide significant opportunities for learning how to assess what one needs and how to take steps to improve one's context, whether it be at home, at school, or at work.

Issues in Assessment and Evaluation

The primary purpose of the planning team is to take the necessary steps for designing, implementing, and evaluating the project. This section presents questions that the planning team needs to answer related to designing the assessment and evaluation of the project.

1. What should be evaluated?

The planning team needs to decide what data should be collected, analyzed, used, and reported to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the project.

Staff members need to consider how they will collect data for assessing the implementation of the project (process evaluation) and the effects of the project upon the learners' lives (product evaluation). To design the process evaluation, the planning team should deal with such issues as the role of the staff members and learners in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. Other points to examine might be the extent to which the goals of the project are consistent with the goals of the learners. The planning team needs to decide what data should be collected, analyzed, used, and reported to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the project.

Product evaluation, on the other hand, deals with issues related to the effects of the project on adult learners (and their children if the objectives of the project include children). To design the product evaluation, the most important point for the planning team to address is the specification of what constitutes success in the project. In other words, how will the staff and learners know the extent to which the objectives of the project are being met? How will participants determine that learners have increased their ability to use language for various purposes or their self-confidence in working with others? What data will be used to make these determinations? How will the data be collected?

To design the product evaluation, the most important point for the planning team to address is the specification of what constitutes success in the project.

To determine the value of collecting any piece of data, the planning team needs to clarify the purpose of the data and analyze whether the cost of collection is worth the required time and resources. For example, will the data be used to improve initial assessment; to enhance the curriculum; to show learners the progress they are making; to develop staff members' teaching ability; to document progress for outside agencies; or to improve the administration of the project?

2. When should data collection take place?

After determining what data will be collected, the planning team needs to decide when the data will be gathered. Questions to address include: Are the data needed before the learners enroll in the project? How many times should data be collected to show progress? Chapters III and IV contain information about the timing of initial and ongoing assessment procedures.

3. How will adult learners, staff members, the project evaluator, members of the community, and others be involved in conducting the evaluation?

The planning process model emphasizes the importance of collaboration in helping to ensure an evaluation design that is comprehensive and meaningful. The planning team needs to consider who should be involved in the evaluation, the role of each individual, and strategies for facilitating a cooperative effort.

The planning team needs to consider who should be involved in the evaluation, the role of each individual, and strategies for facilitating a cooperative effort.

4. What data collection procedures will be used?

The planning team should decide what procedures will be used to collect the data. For example, what data will be gathered via alternative instruments such as surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples? How will standardized measures be used? Factors to consider in these decisions are the comparative effectiveness of each procedure in providing accurate and reliable data; resources needed for developing the procedures; staff members' knowledge or prior experience in using the procedures; time and resources necessary for collecting and analyzing the data.

5. How will staff members know that progress is being made?

Objectives and expected outcomes of the project represent the staff members' criteria for project success. For FELP projects, criteria

include a range of outcomes such as gains in listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities; improved self-confidence; enhanced use of literacy in different contexts; increased abilities of parents to help their children in school; improved involvement of parents in their children's school activities; and greater use of community resources. Chapter IV provides examples of other learner outcomes and related alternative assessment procedures.

6. How will learners, teachers, administrators, other project staff, community representatives, employers, family members, representatives from the funding agencies, and others become knowledgeable about the results of the evaluation?

The planning team needs to determine the most effective strategies for conveying the evaluation results to interested audiences. A variety of strategies should be utilized so that each group is provided sufficient and comprehensible information about the evaluation. Strategies may include oral presentations, written reports, and graphic illustrations. Chapter V provides examples of strategies for reporting the results of the evaluation.

Summary

When assessment and evaluation are integrated with instruction, they produce results that can be used to document success and plan improvements in the project.

Traditional standardized assessment and evaluation procedures provide only some of the answers to the questions that staff and others may have about FELP projects. The standards on which traditional procedures are based are not always tailored to the needs, goals, and characteristics of the diverse adult learners who participate in literacy projects. In contrast, alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation enable project staff to create instruments and procedures that provide highly useful and meaningful information for improving their project.

To be effective, alternative approaches should be linked carefully to the needs of the adult learners, literacy framework, objectives, and curriculum content of the project. Such linkage can be achieved by utilizing a planning model that is designed and implemented through the collaborative efforts of staff and learners. The collective commitment of all project participants to a comprehensive planning process will help ensure that assessment and evaluation activities are implemented as an integral part of planning and implementing the project. When assessment and evaluation are integrated with instruction, they produce results that can be used to document success and plan improvements in the project.

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SURVEY OF USAGE

Chapter II. Integrating Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation

This resource guide must be helpful to you, the FELP director or evaluator, in order to be considered a success. In accepting the field test edition of the guide, we hope that you agree to participate in this usage survey. We plan to revise the guide based on your comments and criticisms; it then will be published for a broader audience. Please share with us your critical comments. After reviewing the chapter, use the scale below to indicate whether the guide is written clearly; the scale indicates that it is

1. Clearly written and understandable, the format is clean;
2. Generally clear, but some wordings or format could be improved;
3. Not particularly clear, written with too much detail or too much jargon; or
4. Not at all clear, not at all understandable.

In addition to being written clearly, the guide also must provide enough information for you to be able to implement the ideas. In each of the same areas, please use the scale to indicate that the guide has

1. Valuable information in the right amount of detail for me really to use it;
2. Good information, but needs more detail for me really to use it;
3. Information that is tangential to my needs, so it won't help a great deal; or
4. Information that I don't need and won't use.

Rate clarity	Area to be rated	Rate information
1 2 3 4	Format of the chapter	Not applicable
1 2 3 4	Wording of the chapter	Not applicable
Not applicable	The general ideas and information presented	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Views of learning	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Literacy framework	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Planning process model: Developing goals	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Conducting needs assessment	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Designing objectives	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Developing curriculum and instructional activities	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Identifying obstacles	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Identifying resources needed	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Assigning responsibilities to individuals	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Establishing timelines for each task or activity	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Specifying expected outcomes	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Designing data collection instruments and procedures	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Analyzing data	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Determining conclusions and implications	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Planning team	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Approaches to planning assessment and evaluation	1 2 3 4

Thank you for your assistance; please add any other comments you feel appropriate.

☞ *Please return your completed survey. You may fold, staple, and stamp this page -- the address is on the back side. If you prefer, you may FAX it to Daniel D. Holt, Bilingual Education Office at (916) 657-2928. We also would appreciate receiving a copy of any alternative assessments you create as a result of this guide.*

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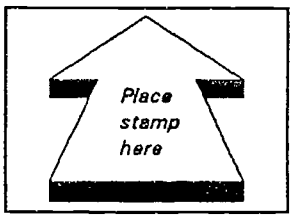

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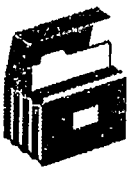
CHAPTER III

INITIAL ASSESSMENT: FIRST STEP TO SUCCESS



Kathy Graham
Lincoln Unified School District
Stockton, California

Assessment plays an important role in the successful operation of adult literacy projects, from the initial to the final stages of implementation. Initial assessment is particularly significant in literacy projects because of the importance of linking instructional services to the learners' needs.

This chapter presents strategies related to the use of initial assessment to (1) identify the needs of potential participants before instruction begins; (2) assess the needs of actual project participants in order to refine the goals, develop the objectives*, and plan instructional activities; and (3) collect baseline data for assessing ongoing progress and evaluating program outcomes. Although the chapter focuses on projects funded under ESEA, Title VII, Family English Literacy Programs (FELP), the information could be adapted for other literacy projects for language-minority adults.

* See the Glossary on pages 114-115 of this publication for definitions of important terms that appear in this chapter.

Role of Assessment in Planning a Project

The design of a FELP project should be based on the assessed needs of prospective participants.

Initial assessment is successful when it results in the development of a project that is tailored to the specific needs of project participants. For the Lincoln Unified School District, located in Stockton, California, assessment began when a group of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) teachers became interested in the needs of Southeast Asian elementary and secondary students and their families. Teachers recognized that parents were desirous of knowing more about their children's activities in school. Parents wanted to find out how they could help their children with difficulties they faced in school and in the community. They expressed an interest in knowing more about the cultural differences between the United States and their native countries. They wanted their children to develop an understanding of their native language and culture. Staff recognized a match between the interests of parents and the purposes of a FELP project. The staff decided to examine the parents' needs more closely and document them for the needs assessment required for a FELP grant proposal.

Needs Assessment Survey

A survey is an effective approach for assessing the needs of potential project participants. It can be administered at the beginning of the project to a large group of individuals in order to create a general picture of the needs of adults and other family members who may be interested in project services. It may consist of a written questionnaire or checklist that is completed by prospective participants or administered orally by staff members to individual respondents. Responses may be easier to tally on a checklist, but a questionnaire can give staff a more complete understanding of the respondents, especially when open-ended questions are used.

Staff of the Lincoln Unified School District developed a survey for collecting basic information from prospective participants regarding their need for a literacy project (see Example 1*, "Needs Assessment Survey"). The survey addresses such issues as the number of adults and children residing in each housing unit; their native language; the number of adults who would like additional English instruction; preferred location and time of literacy classes; parents' need for child care and transportation; desired curriculum topics; self-assessment of English language proficiency; the number of years' residence in the United States; and the number of children who are enrolled in ESEA, Title VII, programs. Staff in other FELP projects should adapt the survey shown as Example 1 to fit their own purposes for collecting initial information from their prospective participants.

To get the most comprehensive and valid results, four bilingual staff members of the Lincoln Unified School District spent three weeks visiting 300 apartment units to administer the survey to individual residents. Results of the survey indicated that Cambodians and other

* Examples of assessment instruments may be found at the end of this chapter.

Southeast Asian families were especially interested in services that a FELP project could provide. Staff also realized that the parents' limited access to transportation made it necessary to have FELP classes located near their apartments. This finding would lead eventually to the FELP project's establishing a *family education center* in a vacant apartment unit located in the middle of a two-block area of five apartment complexes occupied by Cambodian and other Southeast Asian families.

The survey results also helped staff determine the most convenient times for literacy classes, the literacy needs of the prospective participants, and related needs such as counseling and cultural adaptation. The survey was part of a comprehensive needs assessment process that is described in the next section.

The survey results helped staff determine the most convenient times for literacy classes, the literacy needs of the prospective participants, and related needs such as counseling and cultural adaptation.

Related Needs Assessment Activities

Before administering the survey, the ESL coordinator in the Lincoln Unified School District had discussed the needs of the Southeast Asian community and the merits of a FELP project with members of the district's bilingual advisory council. She consulted with them as she developed the program design and considered their comments about the components of the proposed instructional program. In addition to meeting with the advisory council, she had frequent discussions with other district staff, bilingual aides, and parents to identify needs and consider various aspects of the project. This information was useful in developing the questions for the survey.

To gather information about agencies involved in literacy-related activities, the ESL coordinator interviewed individuals in charge of community service agencies and visited other FELP projects located in northern California. These activities enabled her to determine how some of the adults' literacy and social needs were being addressed by various service providers in the community and the relative effectiveness of the services. The coordinator used this information to identify content and methodology for FELP classes and strategies for coordinating project services with other community agencies.

To corroborate the findings of the needs assessments, the ESL coordinator analyzed demographic data and statistical reports regarding Southeast Asian families. For example, she identified the number of Cambodian and other Southeast Asian families living in San Joaquin County and the projected number that would be residing in the Lincoln Unified School District in the future. In addition, research findings on adult literacy indicated that reading and employment levels of Cambodian adults were significantly below the national averages of other Southeast Asians (*Report to the Congress—Refugee Resettlement Program*, 1989).

The combined results of surveys, interviews, observations, meetings, and reports constituted a thorough assessment of the need for a FELP project. The results were used to formulate the general

direction of the project, including the goals and objectives (for more information on objectives, see chapters I and II). Before developing the detailed program objectives and instructional design, the staff and prospective learners shared ideas about how literacy and literacy-related content would be dealt with in the project. In other words, they began to develop the project's literacy framework.

Participants can improve their ability to cooperate and their knowledge of the issues by making a commitment to working together and drawing on each other's expertise.

Developing a Literacy Framework

Chapter II emphasized the importance of a literacy framework—that is, the staff members' and learners' shared understanding of the learners' literacy needs, program goals, curriculum and methodology, and approaches for assessing and evaluating literacy development. Developing consensus on such complex issues is a challenging task, and staff and learners may vary in the extent to which they are able or willing to collaborate to address them. However, participants can improve their ability to cooperate and their knowledge of the issues by making a commitment to working together and drawing on each other's expertise.

Some of the issues that could be pursued in developing the literacy framework include the following:

1. Identifying the role that literacy plays in the learners' lives;
2. Refining the goals and objectives of the project;
3. Designing the curriculum content and instructional methodologies (including the role of the native language and English in the project);
4. Establishing the basic direction of assessment and evaluation procedures; and
5. Identifying strategies that will help ensure that the literacy framework is dynamic, flexible, and responsive to the learners' needs.

The learners' literacy experiences in their native language need to be analyzed and considered when designing the instructional program.

Staff should establish the status, significance, and role of the learners' native language within the literacy framework. The learners' literacy experiences in their native language need to be analyzed and considered when designing the instructional program. Depending on the learners' needs, FELP projects may provide learners with opportunities for further literacy development in their native language; activities in which they acquire challenging content through their native language; and strategies for using their native language to support their children's development. Initial assessment procedures should be designed so that they yield useful information for helping staff incorporate the learners' native languages and cultures in their projects.

An Expanded View of Literacy

A sound literacy framework is based on an expanded definition of literacy that includes the social context in which language and literacy are used. Literacy occurs everywhere in the adult learner's world: at home, in the work place, at school, and throughout the community.

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Furthermore, the very nature of literacy goes beyond communicating meaning through speaking, reading, and writing. As suggested by Eisner (1991, p. 11), literacy can be considered "the ability to encode or decode meaning in any of the forms used in a culture to represent meaning." Language, according to Eisner, is just one form of literacy; meaning is also conveyed through music, dance, and visual forms.

The importance of Eisner's expanded view of literacy became apparent to the Lincoln Unified School District staff after their FELP project was funded. The results of the survey (Example 1) revealed that, although the majority of the Cambodian participants never attended school in their native country and could not read or write in their native language (Khmer), they were experts at communicating meaning through other media such as painting, music, classical dance, woodcarving, and cooking. By recognizing the participants' life-long achievements and their unique levels of literacy, staff were more able to enhance the learners' self-esteem and validate their individual abilities. Consequently, part of the program design for the FELP project included activities in which adult learners' shared their areas of expertise with others (for example, native cuisine, folk dance, music, and sewing). Participation was open to all interested adults and children, including members of the English-speaking mainstream community. (Chapter IV presents other activities in which learners teach and learn from each other.)

Importance of Initial Assessment in Implementing a Project

This section will consider the integral role that assessment plays in successfully refining the preliminary plans for the project into actual instructional activities and curriculum content. Initial assessment is critically important to the implementation of any project because it allows project staff to (1) reshape and refine their literacy framework; (2) place adult learners' at the appropriate literacy level; and (3) establish important baseline data for assessment and evaluation.

From the very beginning of a project, appropriate assessment ensures a project's relevance and effectiveness in meeting the learners' needs.

Literacy Framework: A Dynamic Continuum

A project's literacy framework should be synchronized with the needs, goals, past experiences, and cultural values of the participants. From the very beginning of a project, appropriate assessment ensures a project's relevance and effectiveness in meeting the learners' needs.

After staff begin implementing the FELP project, they can use a survey again, this time to obtain more detailed information from prospective adult learners. The survey is an effective way for staff members to gather information about potential participants and to publicize the availability of project services. The results of the survey can be used to identify curriculum content and align project goals and objectives with learners' needs, interests, and past literacy experiences.

During the initial stages of implementing the FELP project at the Lincoln Unified School District, the project teacher and her bilingual assistant went to individual apartments to administer the "Parent Survey" (Example 2) to prospective participants. In addition to providing important data about the participants and the community, the survey enabled project staff to develop an in-depth awareness of the personal and educational needs and goals of the Cambodian immigrants. The Parent Survey contains open-ended questions that are designed to elicit more comprehensive responses. The administration of the survey helped staff and learners to begin to build the bond of mutual trust and respect that is essential to the success of any project.

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Intake Assessment: the Personal Interview

After publicizing its existence through surveys, flyers, meetings, rallies, and other promotional activities, staff need to establish an intake assessment procedure. This phase of initial assessment is designed to help staff collect important background information on actual project participants including language proficiency, previous educational experiences, and length of residency in the United States. Instruments for collecting basic intake information are shown in examples 3 and 4.

Because it is often the learners' first in-depth experience with the project, the intake process lays the foundation for establishing a good working relationship between staff and learners. Therefore, intake procedures need to give learners a positive introduction to the project and provide staff with useful information for planning instructional activities.

The intake process lays the foundation for establishing a good working relationship between staff and learners.

Most FELP projects no longer rely solely on standardized tests for intake assessment. Alternative approaches, such as interviews and writing samples, can provide staff with meaningful, highly personalized insights into the learners' background. The interview is a versatile assessment approach for obtaining many kinds of information and can range in length from a five-minute informal exchange to an elaborate two-hour version of the kind described by Lytle (1989, p. 59) as "an array of questions and activities designed to engage adults in self-exploration of their literacy practices and abilities."

Auerbach (1990) developed an abbreviated list of Lytle's interview questions, dividing them into the following categories: students' background, employment, education, conceptions about literacy, reading, writing, support systems, and needs. Auerbach emphasizes that the interviewer should make the interviewee feel as comfortable as possible. Project staff should be prepared to conduct the interview in English or in the interviewee's native language. A bilingual interviewer can facilitate communication and put the interviewee at ease.

To create a non-threatening atmosphere for the participant, interviewers should avoid taking notes during the interview. Important information or evaluative comments should be recorded after the

interview is concluded. Interviewers may need to be trained in the use of effective interpersonal communication techniques so that a positive climate is established for the interview. Chapter V contains more information on the effective use of interviews. In the Lincoln FELP project, intake interviews are usually conducted at the project site. In addition to providing staff important background information about the learners, intake sessions familiarize learners with project services and enable staff members and learners to get acquainted.

Lytle (1989) and Auerbach (1990) suggest that, in addition to direct questions, interviews may also include opportunities for adult learners to explore their abilities to read and write in their native language and in English. A reading sample might be used during the interview to assess the person's reading ability. For example, an adult learner could be presented with a variety of reading materials written in both languages: newspapers, story books, labels from food, greeting cards, rental agreements, letters from school, or prescription labels. Learners could be asked to select items they would like to read while staff assessed their reading ability.

Interviewers may need to be trained in the use of effective interpersonal communication techniques so that a positive climate is established for the interview.

To assess writing ability in their native language or English, learners might be asked to produce writing samples as shown in Example 5. Chapter IV contains alternative instruments and other suggestions for assessing reading and writing abilities.

Intake Assessment: When Time is a Factor

Because of a shortage of staff and time, many FELP projects have combined interviews with performance samples. For instance, an intake procedure might begin with an interview in which staff members ask questions in the learner's native language. Next, the learners could develop writing samples in response to specific prompts. The final part of the assessment could include informal questions and conversations between the staff members and adult learners. Project staff need to make assessments as non-threatening as possible because some adult learners may not have participated extensively in formal educational activities.

Project staff need to make assessments as non-threatening as possible because some adult learners may not have participated extensively in formal educational activities.

Another practical approach to intake assessment is to use some time during the first few days of class to obtain placement and other background data from the learners (Auerbach, 1990). For example, during an introductory lesson, staff could include a writing exercise in which learners are given such writing prompts as: "Describe a favorite place in your country." "Describe a favorite food." "Explain why you are happy (or not happy) about living in the United States." The responses could provide staff with valuable information about the learners' previous experiences, current needs, and language abilities.

A series of at least three writing samples is useful for determining where to place learners in a multi-level program. Staff may want to ask participants to write about selected topics in their native language as well as in English. Writing samples are not only an effective means

of placing participants at a particular literacy level; they also provide useful initial examples of writing ability. The samples could be placed in a portfolio for comparison with examples of learners' work later in the project. For learners who have not yet learned to write, staff members could transcribe stories that learners tell in their native language or English.

Reading proficiency also can be assessed with alternative approaches during regular class activities. FELP staff could provide various reading materials in the learners' native language and in English such as stories, newspapers, poems, recipes, and personal letters. Participants could then choose an item and read it to the class. For more in-depth assessment, a staff member could use a similar procedure with an individual learner while another staff member works on other activities with the rest of the class. The results of such assessments are not only useful for program placement; they also can be used as baseline data.

Collecting Baseline Data

The most effective alternative assessment instruments are those that are custom made or adapted to address the specific objectives and curriculum of the project.

Initial assessment procedures are useful for collecting baseline data that establish a starting point regarding a learner's literacy development, parenting experience, knowledge of community resources, self-esteem, confidence, interaction with children, and other outcomes that the staff would like to assess. Some FELP projects use standardized tests to establish baseline data. If such formal assessments are used, learners may need a few days to feel comfortable with class before they are tested.

Although standardized tests can be used for part of a project's overall evaluation design, alternative approaches are especially useful for initial assessment. Surveys, interviews, writing samples, and observation measures should be selected early in the project before significant learning has occurred. The most effective alternative assessment instruments are those that are custom made or adapted to address the specific objectives and curriculum of the project. (Project-designed instruments are shown in examples 6, 7, and 8.)

Planning Initial Assessments

This section presents a plan of action for helping FELP staff design and administer alternative instruments for initial assessment. The first step of the plan is for staff members and their evaluator to work together to design or adapt instruments and procedures for addressing the particular goals and objectives of the project. For this step to be successful, staff members should have a clear understanding of the project's literacy framework—that is, the philosophy that directs the focus of the project and drives it toward the achievement of its goals. Without a literacy framework, the evaluation design will lack direction, continuity, and meaning.

As a second step, project staff need to be creative and innovative

Staff members and their evaluator should work together to design or adapt instruments and procedures for addressing the particular goals and objectives of the project.

in developing initial assessment strategies. In addition to using assessment to identify the needs of learners, staff should use initial assessment to develop project objectives and curriculum content. Assessment results also can be used by staff as baseline data for comparing the learners' growth during the project. Alternative approaches to assessment enable staff to create their own procedures for documenting and representing the positive effects that the project is having in meeting the learners' needs. Such documentation validates the collaborative efforts of project staff and learners; it also helps secure support from other stakeholders for the improvement, continuation, and expansion of the project.

The third step of the plan involves the use of initial assessment data by staff members, learners, and project evaluator. Assessment instruments and procedures provide information that is too valuable and motivating simply to be sent to the project evaluator or filed away in an evaluation report. The results of surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples should be analyzed and used immediately by staff members, learners, and the project evaluator to determine if the project's goals, objectives, curriculum content, and activities reflect the learners' own needs and goals.

Adult educators, unlike their counterparts at the elementary and secondary levels, do not have students who are compelled by law to attend classes. Programs should not be imposed on adults; instead, they need to be shaped and reshaped to fit the learners' needs. In effective projects, adults do not attend classes because they have to; they participate because the project meets their needs. By providing a match between the learners' goals and instructional content, staff members can look forward to regular attendance and stable enrollments.

Programs should not be imposed on adults; instead, they need to be shaped and reshaped to fit the learners' needs.

Staff members may use the results of initial assessments to demonstrate to learners that their responses were used to plan program activities. For example, after administering an initial needs assessment survey, staff members can explain to learners that their expressed areas of interest were used as the basis for choosing the curriculum content of the project. Sharing such information shows participants that their feedback had a direct effect on the development of the curriculum content. The results of initial assessment strategies provide a basis for collaborating with adult learners to develop key parts of the project such as the literacy framework. By expressing their literacy needs and describing their own goals at the initial stages of the project, learners can monitor their personal growth and take pride in their progress. They also can identify and appreciate the effects of the project on their families and community.

Summary

Assessment and evaluation are not procedures tagged onto the responsibilities of project staff members simply to satisfy the interests

of a funding agency or other stakeholders. Instead, they are important strategies for ensuring the successful implementation of a FELP project. Sensitivity to and awareness of the needs, literacy levels, goals, and attitudes of students, whether they are adult learners, adolescents, or children, are essential if learning and personal growth are to occur. Alternative assessment approaches are especially useful for enabling staff to stay in touch with the successes and failures of participants and ultimately to make improvements in the project.

The project evaluator is an important contributor to the assessment process. The evaluator needs to work closely with project staff to develop alternative instruments and procedures for initial assessment. Staff will benefit from the assistance of the evaluator in designing instruments that are valid, reliable, and linked to project objectives. Such instruments promise to generate useful and meaningful data that can be analyzed and summarized periodically for learners, staff, and other audiences.

Assessment and evaluation are important strategies for ensuring the successful implementation of a FELP project.

Chapter IV of this document provides a detailed description of instruments and procedures for assessing ongoing progress, and Chapter V explains how the results of initial and ongoing assessment procedures can be collected, analyzed, used, and reported for various purposes. Annual evaluation reports that combine the results of formal and informal, qualitative and quantitative, and authentic and standardized measures will provide a comprehensive, credible picture of the level of success achieved by all participants in a literacy project.

Acknowledgment

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Example 1

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Name _____ Telephone ( ) _____

Address _____

Native Language _____

1. How many adults live in your apartment? 1. _____
2. How many children in your apartment attend Lincoln Unified School District? (Identify individual schools by name) 2. _____
3. How many adults currently attend GAIN program English classes? 3. _____
4. Where do they attend classes? (e.g., Delta College, adult school) 4. _____
5. If there are adults living in this apartment who are *not* attending GAIN English classes, would they attend GAIN English classes if they were held in your apartment complex? 5. _____
6. How many men would go? 6. _____
7. How many women would go? 7. _____
8. Would these adults agree to attend class 4 hours a day, 5 days a week? 8. _____
9. Would they need to have someone outside of the family take care of their children during class? 9. _____
10. How many children need child care? 10. _____
11. Should class be held in the morning or in the afternoon? 11. _____
12. Is it a good idea for us to try to get our classes approved for GAIN, or should we have our own literacy program? 12. _____
13. If we cannot get our English classes approved for GAIN, would you attend anyway? 13. _____
14. How many hours per day should classes be held? 14. _____
15. How many days a week should classes be held? 15. _____
16. What would you like to learn? 16. _____
    a. English
    b. How to get a job
    c. How to be a good parent
    d. How the schools operates
    e. How to become a citizen
17. What is your level of English language skills?
    a. Oral skills: (1) Low (2) Medium (3) High 17a. _____
    b. Reading and writing skills: (1) Low (2) Medium (3) High 17b. _____
18. How long have you been in the United States? 18. _____
19. How many children in this family are participating in ESEA, Title VII, programs? 19. _____

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Example 2

PARENT SURVEY

Name	Telephone
Address	
Native language	Native country
Can you read in you native language?	Can you write in your native language?

Year of arrival in U.S.	Single mother	Single father	Married

	Name of Children	*Grade*	*Name of School*
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

1. Are you presently attending a GAIN class? ☐ Yes ☐ No Where? _____
2. What time is best for you to attend FELP classes? ☐ morning ☐ afternoon ☐ evenings
3. What days are best for you to attend class?
   ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday
4. What do you need to help you attend classes? ☐ Child care ☐ Translator
   ☐ Friend to come with you ☐ Other _____
5. What would you like to learn?
   ☐ Apartment management (how to work with the apartment manager, get something repaired, ask about rent, look for an apartment)
   ☐ Citizenship (how to become a U.S. citizen)
   ☐ Communication with legal authorities (attorneys, police, legal support, legal aid, neighborhood watch)
   ☐ Education (registration, how to notify the school of illness, talk to the teacher/principal, visit your child's school, understand grades and progress reports)
   ☐ English-as-a-second-language (oral communication, reading, and writing)

- ☐ Health (immunizations, hygiene, medical and dental check-ups, how to talk to the doctor and dentist, fill out medical forms)
- ☐ Mathematics (money, banking, numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- ☐ Nutrition (common foods in the U.S., healthful eating)
- ☐ Parenting/child-rearing (developmental stages, suggestions on how to help your child at home, how to communicate effectively with your child)
- ☐ Safety (emergencies, car seats, fire prevention, water safety, first-aid)
- ☐ Other _____

_____

_____

6. What kind of help do your children need? _____

_____

_____

_____

Example 3

APPLICATION FOR FELP CLASSES

Name (Last) (First) (Middle)

Address (Street) (City) (State) (ZIP Code)

Telephone number ( ) | Birthdate | ☐ Male ☐ Female

Native country | Date of arrival in U.S.

Did you go to school in your country? ☐ Yes ☐ No How long?

Do you read in your native language? ☐ Limited ☐ Fluent

Do you write in your native language? ☐ Limited ☐ Fluent

What other languages do you speak?

What other languages do you read?

What other languages do you write?

Have you taken English classes before? ☐ Yes ☐ No How long?

Where?

Are you: ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow
☐ Single ☐ Separated ☐ Widower

Name of husband/wife?

Number of children Ages

Health problems

Social Security number

Alien registration number

Office use only—Please do not write below this line.

Date application received:

Date of test/s:

Example 4

REGISTRATION FORM

Family name _____

Father _____

Mother _____

	Name of Children	*Name of School*	*Grade/Room No.*
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Address _____ Telephone ( )

What country do you come from?

How long have you been in the U.S.? In Solana Beach?

What level of education did your father complete? Your mother?

Did your children go to school in your country?

Father's work Mother's work

Are you enrolled in any other ESL class? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have books at home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many books do you have at home? ☐ 1–10 ☐ 11–20 ☐ 21–39 ☐ More than 40

Are they in English or Spanish? ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both

Do you have a library card? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a television in your home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you watch television programs in English or Spanish? ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both

Registration Form *(continued)*

Do you listen to radio programs in English or Spanish? ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both

Do you read newspapers in English or Spanish? ☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Both

Do you correspond with your family in Mexico? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your father:

Understand spoken English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Speak English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your mother:

Understand spoken English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Speak English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do the children:

Understand spoken English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Speak English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write English? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Read Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Write Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What problems have you encountered in the United States that you would like to discuss in class?

Example 5

INTAKE ASSESSMENT FORM

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____ (Age) _____

Write numbers 1–27.

1 _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ 27

Write the alphabet.

A _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

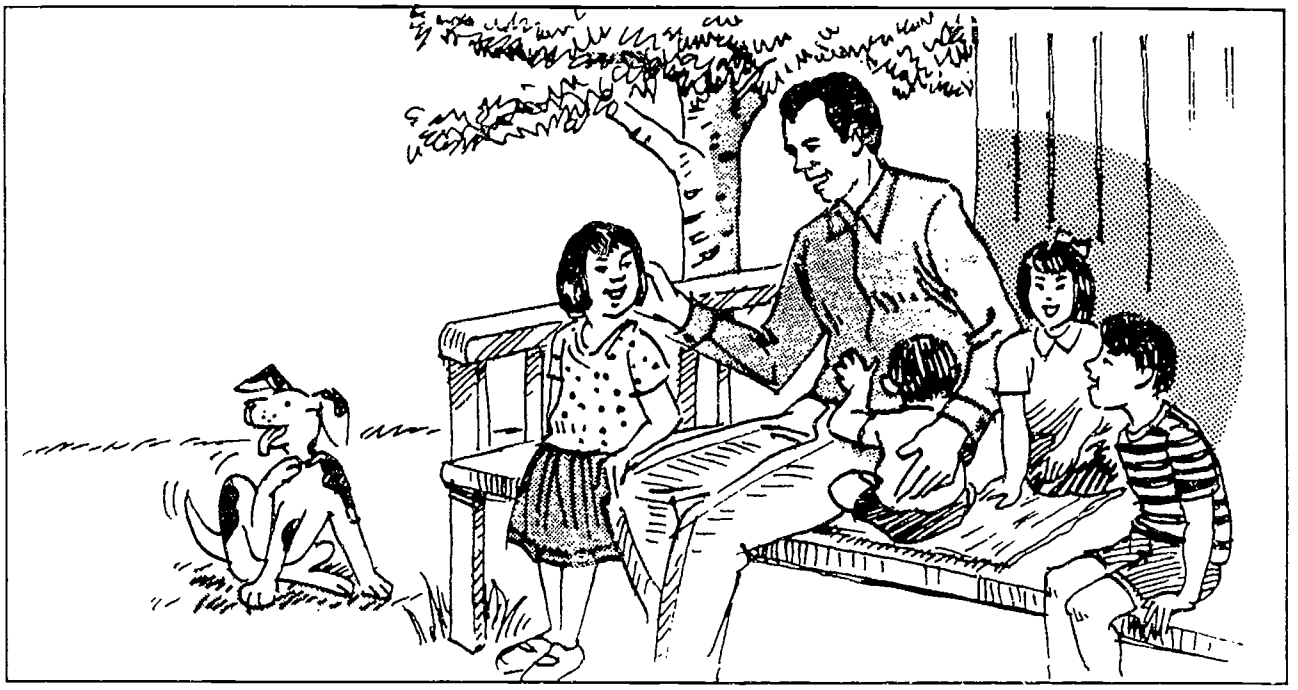
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ Z

Read the sentences and circle the correct word.

1. He [go at went] to work.
2. She [am is are] thirty-five.
3. How old [am is are] you?
4. I [go going went] to buy food yesterday.
5. We [came come came from] to the United States five years ago.
6. They [has have got] five children.
7. I [has had have been] studying English for six months.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE WRITING SAMPLE



Write about the picture in your native language.

Example 6

INITIAL ASSESSMENT FORM

Name _____ Date _____

How many children do you have? _____

	Name of Children	Name of School	Grade
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Please mark the appropriate answer:

1. How many hours per week have you spent helping your child (children) with homework?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
2. How many times have you met with the teacher or other school personnel?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
3. How many times have you attended PTA meetings?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
4. How many times have you attended meetings of the Bilingual Advisory Committee?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
5. How many times have you attended sports activities offered by the school?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
6. How many times have you participated in some school activity such as a trip to a museum?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
7. How many times have you done volunteer work at the school?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more
8. How many times have you participated in other school activities such as conferences for parents?	1 or less	2	3	4 or more

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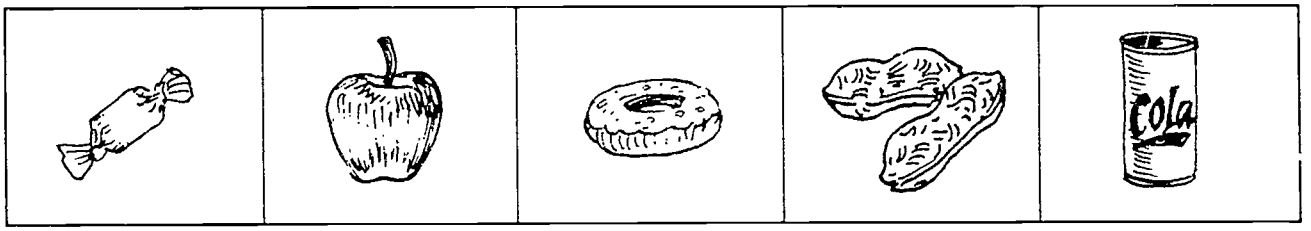
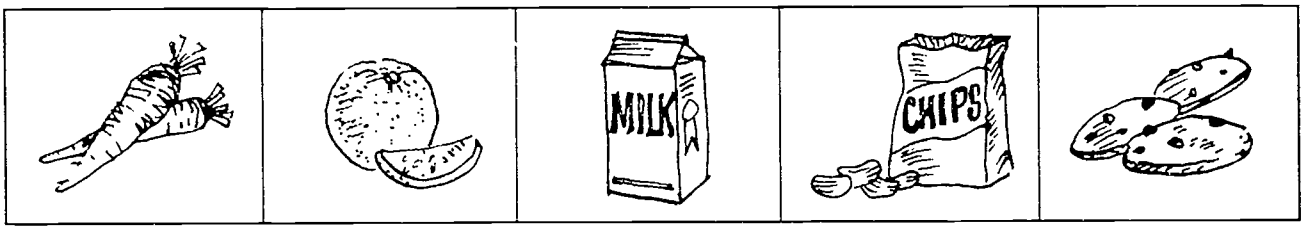
Example 7

PRE/POST TEST: COOKING AND NUTRITION

Circle the foods that are good snacks.

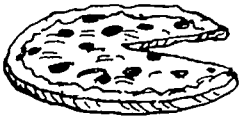


candy | apple | doughnut | peanuts | soda

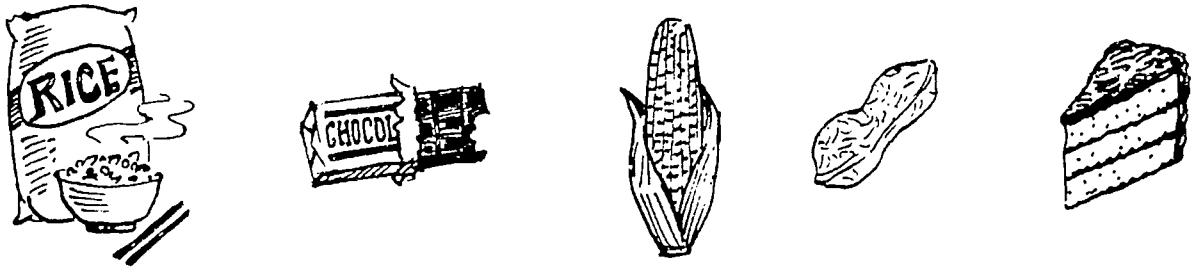


carrots | orange | milk | potato chips | cookies

Circle the correct answer.

1. What's this?	2. What's this?	3. What's this?	4. What's this?
			
doughnut	cake	cheese	hamburger
pie	cookies	sandwich	salad
hamburger	hot dog	meatloaf	pizza

Make an X on the foods which are not good snacks.



Adapted from Holt, Grace D. *Parenting Curriculum for Language Minority Parents*. Sacramento: Cross Cultural Resource Center, California State University, 1988

Example 8

PRE/POST TEST: THE U.S. SCHOOL SYSTEM

Circle the one correct answer for the questions below.

1. The report a school sends home to tell about a student's progress in school is called a
   A. Cinch notice
   B. Emergency card
   C. Report card
   D. Absence report

2. The top person in an elementary school is called a
   A. Librarian
   B. Principal
   C. Teacher
   D. Vice-principal

3. High school starts from grade
   A. Six
   B. One
   C. Nine
   D. Twelve

4. A student checks out books from the
   A Cafeteria
   B. Playground
   C. Office
   D. Library

5. When a child is too sick to go to school, he or she should
   A. Stay home and play outside
   B. Rest inside the house
   C. Watch TV all day
   D. None of these

6. What things are needed for a child when registering for school?
   A. Birth certificate
   B. Shot records
   C. Physical examination
   D. All of the above

Answer the following questions true (yes) or false (no).

7. Children need more sleep than adults. _____
8. A parent cannot help a child in school if the parent does not speak English. _____
9. Schools do not want the parents to help their children with school work. _____
10. Teenagers go to elementary school. _____
11. Have you visited a public school since your arrival in the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have a child in school, answer the following questions.

12. What grades are your children in? _____

13. What schools do your children attend? _____

14. Where are your children's schools located? _____

15. What are the names of your children's teachers? _____

SURVEY OF USAGE

Chapter III. Initial Assessment: First Step to Success

This resource guide must be helpful to you, the FELP director or evaluator, in order to be considered a success. In accepting the field test edition of the guide, we hope that you agree to participate in this usage survey. We plan to revise the guide based on your comments and criticisms; it then will be published for a broader audience. Please share with us your critical comments. After reviewing the chapter, use the scale below to indicate whether the guide is written clearly; the scale indicates that it is

1. Clearly written and understandable, the format is clean;
2. Generally clear, but some wordings or format could be improved;
3. Not particularly clear, written with too much detail or too much jargon; or
4. Not at all clear, not at all understandable.

In addition to being written clearly, the guide also must provide enough information for you to be able to implement the ideas. In each of the same areas, please use the scale to indicate that the GUIDE has

1. Valuable information in the right amount of detail for me really to use it;
2. Good information, but needs more detail for me really to use it;
3. Information that is tangential to my needs, so it won't help a great deal; or
4. Information that I don't need and won't use.

Rate clarity	Area to be rated		Rate information
1 2 3 4	Format of the chapter		Not applicable
1 2 3 4	Wording of the chapter		Not applicable
Not applicable	The general ideas and information presented		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	The role of assessment:	Needs assessment survey	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Related needs assessment activities	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Expanded view of literacy	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Initial assessment:	Dynamic continuum - Parent survey	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Intake assessment - Personal interview	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Intake assessment - Performance samples	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Collecting baseline data	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Planning initial assessments - Designing alternative instruments		1 2 3 4

Thank you for your help. If there are other areas that you feel should be included in this chapter, or other comments about the chapter that you would like to make, please feel free to do so. You do not need to provide your name.

_____

_____

_____

☞ *Please return your completed survey. You may fold, staple, and stamp this page -- the address is on the back side. If you prefer, you may FAX it to Daniel D. Holt, Bilingual Education Office at (916) 657-2928. We also would appreciate receiving a copy of any alternative assessments you create as a result of this guide.*

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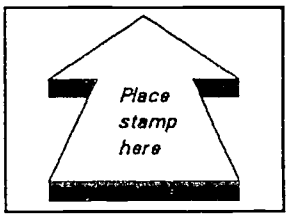

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CHAPTER IV

ASSESSING ONGOING PROGRESS: ARE WE PROGRESSING?

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To judge how well a project is working, staff members need to take the educational pulse of the program periodically and assess learners' progress. Progress assessment can help staff determine the extent to which their instructional efforts are leading to beneficial results and having positive effects on the learners' lives. The assessments also give participants a sense of accomplishment by showing them that they are making headway toward attaining their goals. To be effective, progress assessments need to include several components:

1. Baseline data* that show what participants presently know;
2. Indicators of progress or descriptors of what counts as success;
3. Methods for gathering information on a continuous basis; and
4. Plans for synthesizing and analyzing the data that are collected.

* See the Glossary on pages 114–115 of this publication for definitions of important terms that appear in this chapter.

This chapter shows how staff can develop progress indicators based on the objectives of their project (see chapters I and II for more on objectives). Although the chapter focuses on projects funded under ESEA, Title [illegible], Family English Literacy Programs (FELP), the information could be adapted for other literacy projects for language-minority adults.

Six sets of instructional activities are presented, each of which focuses on particular learner outcomes and provides examples of alternative approaches for assessing the learners' progress toward the outcomes. The sections are titled (1) Helping Learners and Staff Get Acquainted; (2) Linking Project Activities with Family Life; (3) Learning to Read to Operate Machines; (4) Learning to Write Directions; (5) Building Self-Esteem and Taking Literacy Beyond the Classroom Walls; and (6) Developing Literacy Through Telling and Writing Stories.

The chapter illustrates how learners' performances in these activities can be assessed with observation measures, interviews, questionnaires, and performance samples. The examples of alternative assessment instruments presented in this chapter are not intended as ready-to-use assessment tools. FELP staff should adapt the instruments and procedures based on the unique characteristics and objectives of their project. Before presenting the activities and instruments, a rationale will be provided for using alternative approaches for assessing learners' ongoing progress.

Characteristics of Alternative Approaches to Assessing Ongoing Progress

Conventional assessments often use pre- and post-tests to compare how much learners know before and after an instructional unit. Alternative assessments can go one step further: rather than focusing only on knowledge and skills, they seek to show changes in learners' attitudes, social interactions, and communication patterns that may be attributed to their participation in the program. In contrast to many standardized assessments, alternative approaches can link instructional content with assessment. In addition, alternative assessments are often participatory, involving learners as partners in the assessment process.

Alternative assessments can focus on the way learners *use* language and literacy as opposed to how much they know about grammar, phonics, or spelling.

Linking Curriculum with Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessments can focus on the way learners *use* language and literacy as opposed to how much they know about grammar, phonics, or spelling. For example, a traditional test might assess whether students know irregular verb tenses, can find words that rhyme with *cat*, label the parts of the body, or answer comprehension questions about a paragraph. An alternative assessment, on the other hand, might seek to examine how well a learner can explain a problem, read a report card, or write a note to a neighbor. Alternative assessments also can be used to report on the role that literacy plays in

learners' lives and to document the life changes that take place as learners become involved in family literacy.

Alternative assessments are particularly useful with a language and literacy curriculum that emphasizes meaning over form and communication over structure. Such assessments are also effective for learner-centered approaches to teaching English-as-a-second-language (ESL) literacy. One recent research study on successful programs and promising practices defined a learner-centered approach to ESL literacy as "supporting language-minority adults with little English and little formal education in their efforts to understand and use English in its many forms (oral and written, including prose, document, and quantitative literacy), in a variety of contexts (family, community, school, work), so that they can reach their fullest potential and achieve their own goals (personal, professional, academic)" (Wrigley and Guth, 1992, p. 7).

Because a learner-centered curriculum tries to be responsive to the participants' changing needs and goals, learner-centered assessment also needs to be dynamic and flexible. Such assessment should be capable of capturing incidental learning and unforeseen problems and of demonstrating the extent to which program objectives have been met. A collaborative effort among teaching staff, learners, and those evaluating the project helps to ensure effective planning and implementation of alternative assessment (see Chapter II for a detailed description of the planning process).

During the early stages of a project, it is important for learners to have opportunities to discuss the role that literacy plays in their lives.

The next section is the first of six sets of instructional activities that provide a context for illustrating a variety of alternative approaches to assessing ongoing progress. Linking instructional activities with alternative assessment provides a multi-faceted view of the learners' involvement and progress in a project.

Helping Learners and Staff Get Acquainted

During the early stages of a project, it is important for learners to have opportunities to discuss the role that literacy plays in their lives. Through a series of exploratory activities, learners may identify their goals for literacy, describe the way they use literacy at home and in the community, explain their hopes and dreams for their children, and talk about their interests in acquiring literacy in their native language and their goals for learning English. This section presents activities and assessment procedures that can be used at the beginning of a project to obtain information about the learners' needs that might be addressed in the program. (Chapter III also provides initial assessment strategies for obtaining information for developing instructional objectives and curriculum content.)

Surveys and questionnaires can be used just before classes begin to assess the learners' needs. After instruction is underway, additional information can be gathered effectively in small group activities that are implemented during the first two weeks and recycled in various

To develop useful learner-centered assessments, staff members need to gain and maintain the trust of the learners so that they feel free to share their experiences, ideas, and aspirations with their peers.

ways throughout the remainder of the project. To develop useful learner-centered assessments, staff members need to gain and maintain the trust of the learners so that they feel free to share their experiences, ideas, and aspirations with their peers.

Small group and pair activities are especially helpful in allowing staff to (1) note how learners interact with each other; (2) observe the learning strategies they use; (3) gain insights into the learners' communication skills and literacy practices (in English and in their native language); and (4) recognize the skills and abilities that learners bring to class.

Here's What to Do

To find out more about the learners and help them get to know one another, staff members can use (1) grids in which participants match information about a classmate with the person's name: for example, "Who has two children and comes from Vietnam?"; (2) maps and pictures that allow learners to talk about their native countries; (3) family photographs brought from home; and (4) language experience stories in which learners tell about a significant event such as, "My First Day in the United States."

Learners also can get acquainted by interviewing each other. Gillespie (1990) suggests that teachers cut pictures in half; ask learners to choose half a picture out of a box; find the person who has the other half; and interview that person. Interview topics could include questions about the learners'

1. Interests, likes, and dislikes;
2. Background knowledge, skills, and occupation;
3. Reasons for enrolling in the FELP project;
4. Family life and parent-child activities; and
5. Experiences with schooling in their native country and the United States.

Follow-up activities can address such questions as, "When and where do you use English and why?" "When do you use your native language?" "What are your educational goals for yourself and for your children?" Learners also can be asked about the role of *literacy brokers* in the community—individuals who translate for others and help them negotiate paths through the maze of U.S. bureaucracies and other obstacles (Weinstein-Shr, 1990). Of particular interest for family literacy might be the role that children play in mediating language for their parents and grandparents. FELP staff can use such investigations to create in-class discussions about cross-cultural differences in communication, schooling, or home health care. These discussions could then lead to instructional activities that provide opportunities for sharing feelings and ideas and for acquiring other knowledge and information.

Assessment Strategies

Activities in which participants interact, learn together, and teach each other provide staff with opportunities to assess what learners know, what role literacy plays in their lives, when and where they use English and their native language, and what educational values they hold. Collaborations among participants help to create a community of learners and allow staff to assess the learners along various dimensions of literacy such as:

1. Levels of self-esteem and confidence in interacting with others;
2. Ability to understand spoken and written English;
3. Ability to express ideas orally and in writing;
4. Patterns of native language use at home and in the community;
5. Knowledge about cross-cultural differences in institutions, services, and life-skill areas; and
6. Levels of independence and degree of transfer of skills and knowledge beyond the classroom, including changes in behavior desired by participants.

Collaborations among participants help to create a community of learners and allow staff to assess the learners along various dimensions of literacy.

Staff members who are uncertain about which of these dimensions to focus on initially can design an observation measure for each learner that captures information in each of the areas until categories worth pursuing begin to emerge. Or staff can create a more simplified version that would focus on fewer areas. Example 1 is an observation measure that can be used for obtaining basic information about the learners.

Information from the observation measure in Example 1 can be used to:

1. Generate baseline data for monitoring learners' progress over time;
2. Provide information for staff members to share regarding individual learners and to detect common patterns in the learners' responses to classroom activities; and
3. Create classroom activities that address learners' needs.

Staff members can use questions such as the following to guide their discussion and to develop descriptors for various levels of progress:

1. What differences do we see between more advanced and lower-level learners in reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities?
2. What evidence of coping skills do we observe? What do we know about the strateg' 'hat learners use to solve problems and communicate in English even though they have only minimal English and are just barely literate?
3. How much do individual learners already know about laws, regulations, and institutions that affect their community (for

Example 1

Learner Profile/Observation Card

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To record information about the knowledge, skills, and strategies that learners possess and the level of confidence they display in interacting with each other and to collect anecdotal evidence that shows the extent to which participants are using the information gained in class in their lives outside the classroom.

Method: Open-ended charts allow teachers to take notes on what learners do and say.

Learner Profile/Observation Card

Date	Teacher
Unit	Class

Learner's name

Learner goals and interests:

- *Communication skills*
  listening and reading
  speaking and writing

- *Coping strategies and problem solving*
  linguistic
  non-verbal/social

- *Content knowledge*
  institutions
  services
  life skills

- *Levels of confidence*
  self
  one-on-one
  small group
  large group

Transfer of skills and knowledge beyond the classroom:

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example, schools, health care providers, and social service agencies)?

4. What evidence do we have that learners are applying in their personal lives what we are teaching in the project?
5. What are the characteristics displayed by independent learners? How are such learners different from those who are overly dependent on their peers or the teacher?

By developing descriptors of learners' behavior at various stages of development, staff are able to identify changes in learners' performance over the course of the project.

By developing descriptors of learners' behavior at various stages of development, staff are able to identify changes in learners' performance over the course of the project. Staff members can continue to add meaningful information to learner profiles as the project is implemented. When assessment and instructional activities work in tandem, learners' needs and their progress are illuminated, enabling staff to gain clearer insights into how the project can be tailored more appropriately to the learners.

Linking Project Activities with Family Life

This section shows examples of how instructional activities, goal setting, and assessment can be linked with family life. First, learners work together to create some kind of joint project. Next, parents talk about the kinds of activities they do with their children at home and discuss how these activities can support children in their own learning. Parents then decide what they would like to do with their children during the next class sessions. Finally, parents talk about the time they spent with their children and what their experiences have meant to them.

Initial program activities need to encourage participants to learn from and teach each other by observing and doing.

Here's What to Do

Initial program activities need to encourage participants to learn from and teach each other by observing and doing. For example, staff members, parents, and children can work and play together to create collages, holiday greetings, announcements, or birthday cards. Staff might start by showing some interesting examples and by demonstrating a particular technique for creating the materials. While they work with paper and scissors, participants learn the English names for colors, shapes, and actions such as cutting, folding, and tearing.

In subsequent activities, participants share information, describe their materials, or teach each other a particular technique. Similar activities can include making paper airplanes, *origami* (paper folding), or party decorations. (For an example of a lesson on making and playing traditional instruments, see Quintero and Huerta-Macias, 1990.) Next, parents can discuss some of the activities they do with their children at home and talk about the kinds of reading and writing they do in their native language or in English.

Assessment Strategies

Activities that involve parents and children working together offer staff a starting point for discussing the social interactions among family members and to understand the literacy practices used in the home.

Activities that involve parents and children working together offer staff a starting point for discussing the social interactions among family members and to understand the literacy practices used in the home. To learn more about the participants' families, staff can develop questionnaires in which parents, working individually, in pairs, or in groups, list the activities they do at home with their children.

Example 2 is an illustration of a questionnaire for generating a list of activities that parents and children do together. The list generated by the learners can become baseline data for documenting changes over time in parent-child interactions (see Example 3). The assessments shown in examples 2 and 3 could be conducted in the learners' native language or in English.

In ensuing activities, staff members can provide information to parents about learning strategies used by children and present examples of how parents can support their children's learning at home. For example, parents can give children opportunities to observe others, learn new things with siblings, ask questions, or discuss cause and effect relationships. Using a questionnaire like the one shown in Example 4, parents can discuss activities they consider useful for helping their children.

Next, parents can identify the kinds of activities they plan to undertake with their children and the frequency with which they might conduct each activity (see Example 5). These activities could become part of an individualized plan that helps learners document progress toward meeting their own goals and the objectives of the project. Parents could use a questionnaire such as Example 6 for reporting the activities they try with their children and for determining to what extent they have met the goals in their plan.

Questionnaires are useful for finding out about literacy practices that parents use at home.

Examples 4–6 can be adapted to meet the specific purposes of a FELP project. For example, the complexity of the English vocabulary and structures used in the instruments could be tailored to the learners' ability. In addition, the instruments could be translated and administered in the learners' native language. Some projects also might have staff members or learners use the instruments for individual interviews in English or the native language.

Learning to Read to Operate Machines

The activities in this section are designed to help participants develop their receptive skills of listening and reading. The focus of the activities is on introducing beginning learners to reading through environmental print (signs and symbols in the community) and imperative print (messages that tell citizens what to do and not to do). An observation measure is presented for assessing listening and reading abilities.

Example 2

Questionnaire

Type of assessment: Self-assessment; questionnaire

Purpose: To identify literacy practices in the home and record parent-child interactions. Information provides baseline data for documenting changes over time.

Method: A list of activities is generated as part of whole-group or small-group discussions or after learners interview each other. If learners are not proficient in English, the activity can take place in their native language. In cases where the learners are not literate, the teacher or a literate partner can record responses.

Prompt to learners: Parents and children can do many things together. They go to the park on Sunday, go fishing, cook food, clean the house, go shopping, watch TV, or look at magazines. In many families, parents help their children with homework or check their assignments. What do you do together with members of your family?

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Example 3

Self-assessment Instrument

Type of assessment: Self-assessment of literacy activities by freqency count

Purpose: To identify family activities that learners engage in at home. The instrument can be used for generating baseline data and documenting changes during the implementation of the project.

Prompt to learners: You do many things together as a family. Tell us how often you do these activities. (Be sure to list any activities you do that are not on the list.)

Family activity	*Almost every day*	*Once or twice a week*	*Several times a month*	*Once or twice a month*	*Seldom*
Go to the park					
Watch TV together					
Cook or clean house together					
Fix things that are broken					
Go fishing					
Do homework together					
Look at a book or magazine					
Play games					
Other activities					

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Example 4

Questionnaire

Type of assessment: Self-assessment; open-ended questionnaire

Purpose: To record home literacy events and activities that parents regard as essential and to gain insights into educational values and opinions about learning.

Method: As part of whole- or small-group discussions or through pair activities, learners discuss their views of how children learn and how parents can help their children learn.

In my opinion, these activities help children learn:

Talking about (e.g., field trips and birthday parties) _____

_____

Teaching children to (e.g., ride a bicycle and bake cookies) _____

_____

Helping children with (e.g., writing a letter and doing math problems) _____

_____

Asking children questions about (e.g., their friends, favorite teacher, and personal problems) _____

_____

Telling children that (e.g., everyone makes mistakes and doing homework is important) _____

_____

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Example 5

Self-assessment Instrument

Type of assessment: Self-assessment; frequency count

Purpose: To set personal goals and develop an individualized plan for documenting progress.

Prompt to learners: Based on the home literacy activities identified in the questionnaire (Example 4), list activities that you plan to undertake with your children and indicate how often you might do each.

Family activity	*Almost every day*	*Once or twice a week*	*Several times a month*	*Once or twice a month*	*Seldom*
My children and I plan to . . .					
go to the library					

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Example 6

Questionnaire

Type of assessment: Self-assessment; open-ended questionnaire

Purpose: To record literacy events and learner's accomplishments related to literacy and to compare goals in the learner's individualized plan with actual activities.

Method: Learners talk about the kinds of activities they did together with their children and discuss the literacy events that have taken place. The learner or a literate partner records responses. At key points in the cycle the list is compared with the learner's individualized plan. The plan is then discussed anew and goals are renegotiated based on the learner's current perspectives.

Learner's name _____

Date _____

This week, I helped my son with his math.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Here's What to Do

Field trips can be used to give adult learners opportunities to operate a variety of machines such as those for making photocopies or obtaining soft drinks and change. Participants also can learn how to use a public telephone or operate an automatic teller machine.

Working in pairs or small groups, learners discuss the instructions for the machines and practice what is required to operate them. Learners might use a polaroid camera for taking pictures of instructions that they find hard to understand. During a field trip, they also can write down examples of imperative print, such as Exit, Stop, and No Turn on Red. Staff members could select several sets of the instructions for additional practice in class.

During classroom activities, learners can identify the machines that they found particularly useful, interesting, or difficult to operate. They might decide which instructions they would like to study further in literacy activities such as reading simple imperatives, matching instructions with appropriate machines, or putting instructions in sequence. For example, the sequence of instructions for using a public telephone phone would be: (1) Lift receiver; (2) Listen for the dial tone; (3) Deposit 20 cents; and (4) Dial the number.

Follow up: Learners can develop the language abilities related to operating other machines such as an audio tape recorder, video cassette recorder, stapler, three-hole punch, or computer. As learners become more proficient, they might work with longer and more complex instructions for such tasks as assembling simple toys, making crafts, following recipes, or completing job application forms.

With practice, learners can develop their own understanding of the meanings of the descriptors and begin to evaluate their own performance. At more advanced stages, they can evaluate their peers and give constructive feedback about their performance.

Assessment Strategies

Activities on how things work give staff the opportunity to assess the learners' reading and listening skills. To generalize from the assessment data, similar activities should be repeated throughout the instructional cycle. Instructions can be given orally to test listening comprehension or in writing to assess reading skills. In both cases, the instructions used for assessment should be somewhat familiar to learners so that they do not become overwhelmed or discouraged by the task. Example 7 is an illustration of an observation measure for assessing listening and reading abilities.

To develop a consensus on the meanings of the descriptors ("With ease," "With some support," and so forth) and establish the reliability of the observation measure, staff members should use the instrument with similar adult learners under a variety of circumstances. With practice, learners can develop their own understanding of the meanings of the descriptors and begin to evaluate their own performance. At more advanced stages, they can evaluate their peers and give constructive feedback about their performance.

Example 7

Observation Measure for Listening and Reading

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To assess listening and reading skills

Prompt to students: As learners listen to or read instructions, staff members assess their performance and check the appropriate box in the chart.

Method: After learners listen to or read instructions, staff members assess their performance and check the appropriate box in the chart.

For example: After learning how to make instant chocolate pudding for a class party, learners are asked to follow oral or written instructions for making vanilla pudding (familiar instructions) and gelatin dessert (new instructions).

Learners who can comprehend and read instructions without asking questions or looking terribly puzzled are rated "With ease." Those who occasionally ask to have a word provided, a sentence modeled, or seek help from peers are rated "With some support." Learners who need to consult a dictionary, ask peers for translation, or constantly observe others are checked "With great difficulty."

	Receptive skills	*With ease*	*With some support*	*With great difficulty*	*Not at all*
Listening	Follows *familiar* instructions				
	Follows *new* instructions				
Reading	Reads *familiar* instructions				
	Reads *new* instructions				

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Learning to Write Directions

This section presents cooperative activities in which participants teach and learn from each other by talking about a particular skill or ability that they possess. The activities work well in a multi-level class because they give less proficient learners a chance to develop knowledge by observing and responding non-verbally while more advanced learners enjoy the special challenge of teaching others. An observation measure is presented for assessing learners' speaking and writing abilities.

Here's What to Do

In cooperative activities, participants realize that each member of the group can be a teacher and a learner.

In cooperative activities, participants realize that each member of the group can be a teacher and a learner. To introduce the activity, staff members can ask parents what they teach their children and what their children teach them. It may be interesting for adult learners to talk about what they learned from their parents. Learners might also discuss how they help their neighbors and friends. These activities allow staff members to identify skills that participants have, such as repairing a flat tire, preparing a home remedy for a sick child, fixing a broken window, getting rid of stains, or braiding long hair.

During these activities, staff members can validate knowledge that learners possess such as knowing how to find a bilingual doctor; where to get free legal advice; how to talk to a social worker; and where to find a video store that stocks films in the learners' native language. Staff members might make a list of skills represented in the group and ask learners to decide which ones they would like to develop further. Staff can also discuss the possibility of bringing in outside speakers from legal aid and public health agencies, the Red Cross, or the community relations unit of the police department. Presenters can talk about topics such as fighting an eviction notice, practicing safe sex, giving blood, or protecting a home against burglaries.

Staff members can ask participants to choose a particular task that interests them such as making tamales or a fruit salad; sorting coupons to use at the grocery store; demonstrating first-aid; playing the kazoo; making popcorn; putting up a bulletin board; or taking polaroid pictures. Group members might work together to write instructions for others to carry out. After discussing and demonstrating the instructions in small groups, individual learners can demonstrate the task to the class using both verbal and non-verbal cues to illustrate their points. To evaluate the learners' speaking and writing abilities related to using instructions, staff members can use an observation measure similar to the one shown in Example 8.

Assessment Strategies

The observation measure shown in Example 8 demonstrates how an instrument can be developed for specific purposes in a project. In

Example 8

Observation Measure for Speaking and Writing

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To assess speaking and writing skills

Method: As learners talk about or write down instructions, staff members assess their performance and check the appropriate box in the chart.

For example: After learning how to make buttered toast, learners are asked to follow oral or written instructions for making toast with peanut butter and jelly (familiar instructions) and bagels and cream cheese (new instructions).

Learners who can produce and write instructions without asking questions or looking terribly puzzled are rated "With ease." Those who occasionally ask to have a word provided, a sentence modeled, or seek help from peers are rated "With some support." Learners who need to consult a dictionary, ask peers for translation, or constantly observe others are checked "With great difficulty."

	Productive skills	*With ease*	*With some support*	*With great difficulty*	*Not at all*
Speaking	Produces *familiar* spoken instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
	Produces *new* spoken instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
Writing	Produces *familiar* written instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
	Produces *new written* instructions that are clear and comprehensible				

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this case, the instrument was designed to measure learners' progress in improving their speaking and writing abilities related to using instructions for particular tasks.

Another assessment strategy would be to put each learner's written instructions in a portfolio for comparison with future writing samples. Copies of the instructions could be given to other learners to try to follow. Staff might use selected sets of instructions for subsequent literacy activities such as doing fill-in-the-blank or *cloze* exercises, completing sentences that require longer phrases, unscrambling words in sentences, sequencing instructions, and matching instructional steps with pictures.

For intermediate learners, the types of activities described here can be extended to teach functional literacy skills such as filling out school registration forms, understanding immunization records, and telephoning the school for information. (For other examples of literacy activities for intermediate students, see Holt's *Parenting Curriculum for Language Minority Parents: Teacher's Activities Guide*, 1988.)

In preparation for a party or a holiday, learners might work together to prepare a meal, provide entertainment, write invitations, and make decorations for the room.

Staff members also can design writing activities for the whole class. For example, in preparation for a party or a holiday, learners might work together to prepare a meal, provide entertainment, write invitations, and make decorations for the room. The activities could then be written up, either as work plans, narratives, or items for a class newsletter. The written work could become the basis for further language and literacy development.

Building Self-Esteem and Taking Literacy Beyond the Classroom Walls

The alternative assessment instruments discussed thus far focus on language use; that is, they seek to assess how well learners can perform specific language-related tasks. Although these instruments can document changes in language abilities, they do not provide information on affective factors such as self-confidence, self-esteem, or motivation. Neither do the instruments provide data that would indicate how well learners work together or to what extent they transfer knowledge gained in the classroom to their lives beyond the school.

Research has shown that learners who interact with and use others as resources make significantly greater gains in learning than do students who work alone.

Affective factors deserve the attention of FELP project staff because of the importance of self-confidence and self-esteem in influencing not only the learners' language development but also their general level of success in adapting to the cultural challenges they face at home, in the community, and at work. Research has shown that learners who interact with and use others as resources make significantly greater gains in learning than do students who work alone (Kagan, 1986; McGroarty, in press). Similarly, studies in cognition demonstrate that language and literacy development is increased if learners can link classroom knowledge to real-life contexts (Anderson and Pearson, 1988; Anderson, 1988; Smith, 1975).

Here's What to Do

Project staff can use a variety of activities for helping learners develop self-esteem and improve their interaction with others. Activities should enable learners to demonstrate the knowledge, insights, and abilities they have developed in responding to the real-life challenges they have faced. The following are activities that FELP staff might try in their project, or they may want to design their own.

1. Case studies in which learners are presented with a familiar problem and asked to brainstorm possible solutions. For example, a case might involve a daughter who wants to play on the volleyball team, but the mother, a single parent, is worried about her daughter's being away from home for practice and out-of-town games.
2. Situations that illustrate a significant economic, social, or cultural issue, such as lack of affordable housing, street crime, and racial discrimination. The situations, sometimes called *codes*, can be represented through short readings, dialogues, and pictures. They can provide starting points for the learners to discuss their concerns and to brainstorm solutions. Codes are based on problem-posing pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire (see Wallerstein [1983] for similar activities).
3. Simulations and role plays in which learners play themselves in situations such as shopping at a store, participating in a parent-teacher conference, or dealing with uncooperative landlords;
4. Projects such as developing a class biography, producing a resource guide for newcomers to the community, setting up a flea market or crafts fair at the school, or producing a puppet show for the children;
5. Lists and charts of individual accomplishments that are posted on classroom walls. Learners use their own words to describe achievements related to language, literacy, and learning that they are proud of.
6. Language experience stories in which learners tell of the struggles in their lives and celebrate their successes in becoming biliterate and bicultural (for examples of learner-generated stories, see Weinstein-Shr, 1992).

Assessment Strategies

The observation measure shown in Example 9 can be used to (1) record changes in the learners' confidence; (2) document levels of participation in pair or group activities; and (3) show transfer of skills to actual life experiences. By recording information about the three affective areas in one chart, staff members can analyze relationships among the domains. For example, the data might indicate that as an individual learner becomes more confident, he/she participates more freely and transfers the knowledge gained in class more readily to real

life. Results of the measure might also illustrate that levels of self-confidence are related to levels of participation, as in the case of learners who collaborate more freely as they become more self-confident. When interpreting the results, staff members need to be aware that factors outside the FELP project also may influence the learners' level of self-confidence.

When interpreting the results, staff members need to be aware that factors outside the FELP project also may influence the learners' level of self-confidence.

Example 9

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To assess learners' performance in non-linguistic domains related to learning and literacy development. The instrument can be used for generating baseline data for documenting changes during the implementation of the project.

Method: Staff members write comments in the appropriate columns as they listen to learners talk about their abilities and work together in pairs or in small groups. Anecdotes about learners' lives outside the classroom are also used as sources of assessment data.

The following are detailed descriptors for the domain *Confidence* that appears in the observation measure. Staff can develop their own descriptors based on the specific objectives of their project. Numerical values can be attached to the descriptors to facilitate data analysis (see Chapter V for strategies for analyzing data).

Descriptors for ***Confidence***

Level 1

Appears shy and unsure of own abilities; does not volunteer information; reluctant to answer if called on; seems overwhelmed by most new tasks; very pleasant person who needs a lot of support.

Level 2

Acts confidently when handling familiar information and seems willing to take risks; freely talks about himself/herself and shares information with the class; needs additional challenges to grow and learn.

Level 3

Extremely confident; has a tendency to take over the class and sometimes shows off, causing slight resentment in the other students; requires challenging tasks and needs to be in groups where he/she cannot dominate easily.

Similar descriptors can be developed for the other two non-linguistic domains in the measure, *Participation* and *Transfer to real life.*

Example 9

Observation Measure for Non-linguistic Domains

Date	Teacher
Unit	Class

	Confidence	***Participation***	***Transfer to real life***
	Descriptors: • Appears shy and unsure of own abilities *or* • Acts somewhat confident when on familiar ground but is reluctant to take risks *or* • Sometimes acts overly confident, intimidating other learners	Descriptors: • Participates and interacts with other members of the group *or* • Appears overly dependent on one or two friends *or* • Uses the group as a resource and acts as a resource *or* • Likes to work independently most of the time; does not enjoy group work	Descriptors: • Does not yet use literacy skills outside the class *or* • Practices at home *or* • Integrates new information and skills into daily life *or* • Brings questions from home to the class

Name	***Comments***

Assessing Success. California Department of Education

Developing Literacy Through Telling and Writing Stories

Adults who are non-literate in English as well as in their own language need a great deal of time and special support so they can comprehend printed materials and express their views in writing.

One of the most challenging tasks faced by literacy project staff is introducing non-readers to literacy. Adults who are non-literate in English as well as in their own language need a great deal of time and special support so they can comprehend printed materials and express their views in writing. This section shows examples of activities designed to facilitate the learners' literacy development. Instruments and procedures are presented for holistic assessment of writing samples.

Here's What to Do

Many useful strategies are available for helping learners acquire literacy. Teaching the alphabet and moving to whole words through phonics is only one way—and not the best way according to most educators. A more effective approach would be to begin by helping learners read words they already know such as their own names, the names of their children, traffic signs, store marquees (K-Mart), and product logos (Coca-Cola). Activities based on environmental print can provide an excellent starting point for developing literacy.

For teachers who believe that instruction in phonics is an important part of introducing learners to literacy, phonics activities can be integrated easily into authentic reading and writing activities. For example, to help her students move from oral language to literacy, Dean (1992) suggests using popular songs as a starting point for literacy activities. She uses the Mexican song "La Bamba" to help learners associate sounds with print and to demonstrate that many syllables in Spanish consist of similar letter combinations (for example, *la*; *bam-ba*; *ma-ri-ne-ro*) .

Another promising way to introduce reading to non-literate learners is the Language Experience Approach (LEA). LEA represents both a philosophy of teaching and learning and a method for connecting oral language to literacy. It involves a literate person, such as a staff member or another learner, transcribing a story that a learner or a group of learners has created based on an individual or shared experience. The stories are then read aloud and shared with group members. After the learners become comfortable with the content and language, the stories can provide the basis for group discussions, additional reading and writing activities, or in some cases, language practice. Because the language used in these stories comes from the learners, the vocabulary is familiar, the stories are reflective of the learners' experience, and the sentence structures are comprehensible. Some literacy projects evaluate the learners' progress in acquiring language by assessing the LEA stories they generate.

Language experience stories can be used as starting points for assessing reading and writing for learners at lower levels of proficiency.

Assessment Strategies

Language experience stories can be used as starting points for assessing reading and writing for learners at lower levels of profi-

ciency. Other assessment strategies may include interviews that ask readers to talk about what they like to read and how they derive meaning from print. Also helpful are surveys in which learners are asked to list the kind of reading and writing they do in the course of their daily lives (for example, making grocery lists, checking television viewing schedules, reading the *Bible*, observing traffic signs, and scanning school notices).

As learners new to literacy make progress in the project, assessment may focus on showing how the range of literacy materials increases as learners become more efficient readers and writers.

As learners new to literacy make progress in the project, assessment may focus on showing how the range of literacy materials increases as learners become more efficient readers and writers. At the end of an instructional cycle, even beginners may be able to read signs and ads as well as simple notes, cards, stories, and poems. By observing reading behavior and asking learners to describe the strategies they use for deriving meaning, staff can document increases in the range of literacy practices in which learners engage.

Learners also will increase their range of writing abilities. Slowly they will write letters more easily and require less effort to get words down on paper. For example, a learner may move from writing her name in big letters on a name card to signing a birthday card to be sent to a friend. As learners become more comfortable expressing their ideas, their writing may show a strong voice that evokes the reader's emotion. A mother may write "My children far away. I very sad. I wish we together." Although the structure of these sentences is not grammatically correct, the piece has a focus, shows logical coherence, and clearly communicates the loss the writer feels. To assess writing ability, many projects use holistic writing assessments that evaluate the learners' work from a variety of perspectives.

To assess writing ability, many projects use holistic writing assessments that evaluate the learners' work from a variety of perspectives.

For holistic scoring to be reliable, each piece of writing needs to be judged independently by at least two raters who provide reasons for their scores. If staff members have limited experience in assessing writing, they may need several opportunities to reflect on and discuss their judgements before they can reach a consensus.

Example 10 is an assessment instrument designed to evaluate writing samples according to the dimensions of (1) authenticity, voice, and engagement of the reader; (2) focus, organization, and development; and (3) sentence mechanics and language. The example was adapted from an instrument that appears in Soifer and others (1990). Chapter V presents strategies for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data collected with Example 10.

Because progress in writing is often difficult to observe from day to day, FELP staff may want to keep a collection of learners' work in individual portfolios.

Because progress in writing is often difficult to observe from day to day, FELP staff may want to keep a collection of learners' work in individual portfolios. Writing samples for the portfolio may be chosen and evaluated at key points during the instructional cycle. At specified intervals (for example, once every three weeks), staff members might identify several examples of the learners' writing that were produced during that time period. Staff could share their impressions as they review the writing samples. Staff members might invite learners to

Example 10

Writing Assessment Instrument

A. Authenticity/voice/engagement of the reader Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Expression strongly reflects the writer's emotional and/or intellectual involvement in the topic. Strongly engages the attention of the reader.
	3 = The writer is engaged in the topic and engages the reader.
	2 = Uninteresting; not engaging; perfunctory.
	1 = Writing seems to be a mechanical exercise. Marked by cliches, hazy generalizations, meaningless expressions.
B. Focus/organization/development Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Focuses on one main idea. Has clear beginning, middle, and end. Well-organized and well-developed through examples.
	3 = Focused and organized but may have a flaw in coherence or incomplete closure. Incomplete development. Explanation is strongly implicit.
	2 = Lack of clear focus, organization, or development. Narrative, but no explanation.
	1 = Disorganized; underdeveloped; unconnected generalizations.
C. Sentence mechanics/language Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Few mechanical, usage, or sentence errors. Language used with fluency and variety.
	3 = Some minor mechanical usage or sentence errors. Language used competently to express ideas.
	2 = Enough usage errors to attract attention away from the content. Sentences understandable, but unconventional.
	1 = Language and mechanical errors impair meaning.

Source: Adapted from Soifer, Rena et al. *The Complete Theory to Practice Handbook of Adult Literacy: Curriculum Design and Teaching Approaches.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1990, pp. 178–179.

Assessing Success. California Department of Education

select what they regard as their best or favorite piece of writing and talk about their progress in one-on-one conferences with staff.

Assessing the Progress of New Readers and Writers. Assessing the progress of beginning readers and writers can be a tricky undertaking. Three things need to be kept in mind: First, because reading and writing involve thinking processes that are not always observable, teachers need to be open to surprises and develop strategies for finding out how learners are thinking as they read and write. Second, reading and writing development are not linear processes; rather, literacy develops in fits and spurts. As a result, a learner might appear to be fairly high on a reading and writing scale one week and lower the next. Third, learning how to read and write are complex processes that require special skills and strategies—for example, being able to connect meaning to print and understanding that writing represents speech.

Because reading and writing involve thinking processes that are not always observable, teachers need to be open to surprises and develop strategies for finding out how learners are thinking as they read and write.

Literacy also involves sub-skills such as understanding the relationship between letters and sounds (phonics) and the ability to form the letters of the alphabet. Another important literacy skill is sometimes referred to as *making meaning*—that is, the ability to make sense of written words or to express thoughts in writing. The checklist shown in Example 11 is designed to assess the meaning-making strategies associated with literacy.

In assessing the progress of beginning literacy students, it is important for staff to be aware of the cyclical and recursive nature of literacy development. Staff members should not be surprised if a new reader understands quite a bit of one story but becomes confused or stymied by another. Similarly, a writer may feel inspired by a particular topic, yet have nothing to say on a different theme.

In assessing the progress of beginning literacy students, it is important for staff to be aware of the cyclical and recursive nature of literacy development.

Understanding some of the factors that help or hinder comprehension and writing proficiency helps staff to assess literacy progress. The learners' background knowledge, goals, and interests influence how well they are able to deal with a particular text. Thus, staff need to observe and listen to the learners to get a sense of the kinds of topics they may want to read and write about. Similarly, staff should provide a wide range of literacy activities (for example, listening to songs, labeling photographs, illustrating a story, or reading about others in the class) so that they can respond effectively to the students' different learning styles. Staff also should look at many different examples of what learners are able to read and write so they can get a more complete picture of the students' literacy development.

The checklist (Example 11) provides descriptions of some of the strengths that learners exhibit as they go about making meaning in reading and writing. It illustrates some of the learners' characteristics as they move from being relatively unfamiliar with literacy to becoming independent readers and writers. Not all learners will exhibit all of the descriptors in the instrument. As staff members read and write with their learners, they should check the descriptors that characterize

Example 11

Checklist for Assessing Beginning Literacy and Emerging Literacy

Learner's name: _____ Date: _____

Part I: Assessing Reading

A. As literacy starts to emerge, the new reader:

1. ☐ Is aware that print carries meaning but only in a very vague sense.
2. ☐ Can tell print from non-print (e.g., decoration) but insists that she cannot read anything.
3. ☐ Can tell the shape and form of English writing from other types of writing but resists making a guess about the meaning of a word.
4. ☐ Recognizes her own name and a few sight words but resists predicting what a new word might mean.

B. As literacy continues to develop, the new reader:

1. ☐ Can interpret print that is part of the environment, such as reading a stop sign, recognizing a Coca-Cola can, pointing out the McDonald's logo, or interpreting a No Smoking sign, as long as a great deal of support is given.
2. ☐ Is able to read familiar signs, labels, and logos as long as they appear in their natural form (e.g., *rice* printed on bag of rice); is willing to experiment and venture some guesses.
3. ☐ Recognizes familiar words when written on paper, as long as some context is provided (e.g., a picture of a bag of rice with *rice* written next to it).
4. ☐ Can read short familiar texts, such as simple language experience stories that are read in a group.
5. ☐ Employs reading strategies that allow her to move through familiar text independently.

Part II: Assessing Writing

A. As literacy emerges, the new writer:

1. ☐ Is not yet aware of the functions and uses of writing.
2. ☐ Is aware that writing carries meaning, but is not yet ready to try to write.
3. ☐ Copies letters and words but is not able to read what she writes.
4. ☐ Tries to write something, even if only a few scribbles; talks about what she has written; understands that writing is used to express ideas.
5. ☐ Writes her own name independently, as well as some other key words; however, writing still seems like a mechanical exercise.

B. As literacy continues to develop, the new writer:

1. ☐ Writes or copies words and is interested in what the words mean; tries out some of her own ideas as long as some support is given; may copy a word and use it to label a picture or photograph.
2. ☐ Writes a few words or sentences independently without copying; writing may be uneven and meaning not always clear.
3. ☐ Experiments with writing on her own; may write a few words about herself or may write about what she sees in a photograph.
4. ☐ Experiments further with expressing ideas; writes a few words in dialogue journals or attempts to write parts of a language experience story; may need a great deal of support.
5. ☐ Continues to write notes in dialogue journals and writes some parts of language experience stories independently; writing shows beginning elements of organization.
6. ☐ Connects ideas and thoughts in writing; may write short description of a picture or an event; writes short description of self or of family; spelling and sentence structure still very uneven.

a particular learner. They can then compare the checklists of several learners to determine how the learners as a group are developing from emerging to independent literacy. Staff members also can compare checklists on several learners and summarize the data at the end of an instructional cycle.

Summary

Effective assessment approaches need to take into account the learners' needs and goals and develop ways of showing them that they are making progress.

Adult learners have their own reasons for coming to class, only some of which have to do with acquiring English and developing literacy skills. Effective assessment approaches need to take into account the learners' needs and goals and develop ways of showing them that they are making progress.

Alternative approaches to assessment enable staff to create project-based instruments and involve learners in developing the curriculum and designing the evaluation. The instruments may include observation measures, protocols for interviews and focus groups, learner profiles, and performance samples. Staff will want to use and field test these instruments so that they can measure progress reliably over time. The data gathered with the instruments can then be aggregated into summary formats and, where appropriate, quantified so that the information can be used to answer a variety of questions about the project.

FELP staff who use alternative assessments that are project-based and learner-focused have access to more valid and useful information than that which can be obtained from most standardized tests. To improve the use of alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation, project staff face the challenge of defining their vision of success and developing instruments that capture the changes that take place as language-minority adults and their children become involved in family literacy.

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SURVEY OF USAGE

Chapter IV. Assessing Ongoing Progress: Are We Progressing?

This resource guide must be helpful to you, the FELP director or evaluator, in order to be considered a success. In accepting the field test edition of the guide, we hope that you agree to participate in this usage survey. We plan to revise the guide based on your comments and criticisms; it then will be published for a broader audience. Please share with us your critical comments. After reviewing the chapter, use the scale below to indicate whether the guide is written clearly; the scale indicates that it is

1. Clearly written and understandable, the format is clean;
2. Generally clear, but some wordings or format could be improved;
3. Not particularly clear, written with too much detail or too much jargon; or
4. Not at all clear, not at all understandable.

In addition to being written clearly, the guide also must provide enough information for you to be able to implement the ideas. In each of the same areas, please use the scale to indicate that the guide has

1. Valuable information in the right amount of detail for me really to use it;
2. Good information, but needs more detail for me really to use it;
3. Information that is tangential to my needs, so it won't help a great deal; or
4. Information that I don't need and won't use.

Rate clarity	Area to be rated		Rate information
1 2 3 4	Format of the chapter		Not applicable
1 2 3 4	Wording of the chapter		Not applicable
Not applicable	The general ideas and information presented		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Characteristics of alternative assessment		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Getting acquainted: Learner profile/observation card		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Family life:	Questionnaire to identify home literacy	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Self-assessment of literacy activities	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Questionnaire recording home literacy	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Self-assessment for setting goals	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Questionnaire to assess behavior changes	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Learning to read: Observation measure		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Learning to write: Observation measure		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Self-esteem and literacy: Performance chart		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Telling and writing stories: Writing assessment		1 2 3 4

Thank you for your help. If there are other areas that you feel should be included in this chapter, or other comments about the chapter that you would like to make, please feel free to do so. You do not need to provide your name.

☞ *Please return your completed survey. You may fold, staple, and stamp this page -- the address is on the back side. If you prefer, you may FAX it to Daniel D. Holt, Bilingual Education Office at (916) 657-2928. We also would appreciate receiving a copy of any alternative assessments you create as a result of this guide.*

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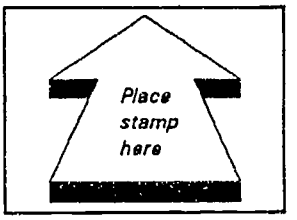

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CHAPTER V

COLLECTING, ANALYZING, AND REPORTING ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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This chapter deals with collecting, analyzing, using, and reporting data obtained with four alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation: surveys*, performance samples, interviews, and observation measures. A variety of different analyses, techniques, and procedures are presented which can be used with each of the alternative approaches. However, the strategies presented for the four instruments also may be utilized with other types of alternative assessments. The chapter illustrates how alternative assessment data can be analyzed, interpreted, and reported according to the evaluation requirements of ESEA, Title VII and the special characteristics of the Family English Literacy Program (FELP). Although the chapter focuses on FELP projects, the information could be adapted for other literacy projects for language-minority adults.

The chapter is divided into four sections, each of which addresses a different alternative approach. Each section deals with the four key aspects of

* See the Glossary on pages 114–115 of this publication for definitions of important terms that appear in this chapter.

managing the data obtained from the alternative approaches: (1) collecting the data; (2) analyzing the data; (3) using the data; and (4) reporting the data and findings. Strategies for data collection are provided for each approach.

Techniques for analyzing, interpreting, and reporting alternative assessment data are presented in the chapter with increasing levels of sophistication. The first section of the chapter deals with basic techniques for dealing with the results of surveys. More complex strategies are illustrated in the last section on observation measures. In general, however, techniques presented in one section may be used with the other alternative assessment instruments presented in the chapter.

Three audiences are considered in the use and reporting of alternative assessment data: FELP project directors, FELP staff members, and the staff in the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), U.S. Department of Education. Project directors may use the data for planning and improving program activities. FELP staff members may be interested in diagnostic and monitoring uses; OBEMLA staff might be interested in how the data can be summarized in the annual evaluation report and final performance report required by ESEA, Title VII.

FELP staff who are interested in more information about alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation are encouraged to consult with staff of the ESEA, Title VII-funded Evaluation Assistance Center in their region.

FELP staff who want more information about alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation are encouraged to consult with staff of the ESEA, Title VII-funded Evaluation Assistance Center in their region. They may also wish to review other resources such as *Qualitative Evaluation Methods* by Patton (1980).

Consistent with the Planning Process Model presented in Figure 1, Chapter II, data obtained through alternative assessment approaches are useful in the pre-planning, planning, and evaluation phases of FELP projects. Alternative assessment instruments are particularly useful in giving staff information necessary for (1) planning a program based on the needs of adult learners; (2) aligning curriculum according to the results of learner assessments; (3) monitoring learners' progress towards attaining project objectives; and (4) involving learners in determining their progress toward mutually agreed upon goals. (See chapters I and II for more on objectives.)

One of the important advantages of alternative assessment approaches is that they offer staff the opportunity to involve learners in the assessment process.

One of the important advantages of alternative assessment approaches is that they offer staff the opportunity to involve learners in the assessment process. Learners may be involved in such tasks as identifying topics that will be assessed, monitoring their progress toward attaining project goals, or negotiating their rating on a performance sample. As parents collaborate in the assessment process, they take more responsibility for their own learning and the project in general.

Surveys

Surveys may be used to collect information for the pre-planning, planning, and evaluation phases of the planning model presented in

Chapter II. In the pre-planning phase, survey data are used to identify the needs of potential participants and to design objectives for the project. During the planning phase, survey data may be used to develop curriculum and instructional activities. This section addresses the use of survey results in the evaluation phase of the project. The information presented is based on the Needs Assessment Survey presented in Chapter III.

Example 1

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Name _____ Telephone ( ) _____

Address _____

Native Language _____

1	How many adults live in your apartment?	1 _____
2	How many children in your apartment attend Lincoln Unified School District? (Identify individual schools by name)	2 _____
3	How many adults currently attend GAIN program English classes?	3 _____
4	Where do they attend classes? (e.g., Delta College, adult school)	4 _____
5	If there are adults living in this apartment who are *not* attending GAIN English classes, would they attend GAIN English classes if they were held in your apartment complex?	5 _____
6	How many men would go?	6 _____
7	How many women would go?	7 _____
8	Would these adults agree to attend class 4 hours a day, 5 days a week?	8 _____
9	Would they need to have someone outside of the family take care of their children during class?	9 _____
10	How many children need child care?	10 _____
11	Should class be held in the morning or in the afternoon?	11 _____
12	Is it a good idea for us to try to get our classes approved for GAIN, or should we have our own literacy program?	12 _____
13	If we cannot get our English classes approved for GAIN, would you attend anyway?	13 _____
14	How many hours per day should classes be held?	14 _____
15	How many days a week should classes be held?	15 _____
16	What would you like to learn?	16 _____
	a. English b. How to get a job c. How to be a good parent d. How the schools operates e. How to become a citizen	
17	What is your level of English language skills?	
	a. Oral skills. (1) Low (2) Medium (3) High	17a _____
	b. Reading and writing skills (1) Low (2) Medium (3) High	17b. _____
18.	How long have you been in the United States?	18. _____
19	How many children in this family are participating in ESEA, Title VII, programs?	19 _____

Family English Literacy Project • Lincoln Unified School District • Stockton, California

Collecting Survey Data for Evaluation

The responses to each question on the survey should be tabulated to determine the range of responses and the number of respondents who selected each response. For example, the first question on the survey asks the respondent to indicate the number of adults who live in

his/her apartment. The range of responses for this question would consist of the smallest and largest number of adults living in one apartment. A frequency count would indicate how many respondents selected each response. Data should be tabulated similarly for each item in the survey. The range of responses should be tailored for each question according to the type of response choices (for example, yes/no, names of schools, or morning/afternoon). After the data have been compiled, the total frequency count should equal the number of people who responded to the survey.

Analyzing Survey Data

Staff may find it helpful to organize the data analysis by posing questions that focus on key aspects of the project.

The results of the needs assessment can be analyzed to answer questions related to planning or evaluating the project. The process of analysis consists of reviewing the compiled data and making judgments about the needs of the learners or about how the project can be improved. Staff may find it helpful to organize the data analysis by posing questions that focus on key aspects of the project. Example 1 contains sample questions that staff members might use for organizing, analyzing, and using data that are collected with a survey. The corresponding questions from the Needs Assessment Survey are identified in parentheses.

Example 1

Sample Questions for Data Analysis

1. How many adults living in this community (male and female) are eligible to participate in the project but are not enrolled currently in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes? (questions 1, 2, 6, and 7)
2. How many adults living in this community are interested in attending ESL classes? (question 5)
3. What are current and potential participants' needs for child care? (questions 9 and 10)
4. What are current and potential participants' preferences regarding the scheduling of classes? (questions 8, 11, 14, and 15)
5. What are current and potential participants' preferences regarding the content of instruction? (question 16)
6. What are current and potential participants' speaking,reading,and writing skills? (questions 17a and 17b)

Staff Use of Survey Data

Survey data may be used by staff to determine how well the project is meeting the learners' needs. Given the high turnover of participants in many FELP projects, a survey such as the Needs Assess-

ment Survey should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that project services are based on current learners' needs. For example, the findings from questions 1-7 can be used to identify important background information about the participants. This information also can be used to help staff determine the effectiveness of their recruitment efforts in various neighborhoods. In addition, it can help staff evaluate the suitability of current class locations and identify more convenient sites such as community centers or apartment complexes.

Given the high turnover of participants in many FELP projects, a survey such as the Needs Assessment Survey should be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that project services are based on current learners' needs.

During regular project meetings, staff can consider the results of surveys to determine the extent to which they are addressing the learners' needs and to deal with other issues that might have been identified when the survey was conducted. Such discussions enable staff to improve current services and plan future activities. Survey data, collected annually or more frequently, can be used to answer questions related to developing annual evaluation reports (for example, "What needs have been met?" "What new needs have been identified?" "What progress has been made in meeting project objectives?").

Reporting Survey Results According to Questions

Methods of reporting the results of surveys depend on how the data will be used. If the results are to be used for project evaluation, they could be organized around the evaluation questions shown in Example 1 in the preceding section. The data corresponding to each survey question may be (1) described in brief sentences (for example, "Over half (55 percent) of the respondents indicated that they need to have someone outside the family take care of their children while they attend class" or "Approximately 30 children will need child care") or (2) illustrated in tables depicting the range of responses and number or percentage of responses.

During regular project meetings, staff can consider the results of surveys to determine the extent to which they are addressing the learners' needs and to deal with other issues that might have been identified when the survey was conducted.

Example 2 (Table A) illustrates how data from Question 1 of the Needs Assessment Survey may be presented in a table as part of an annual evaluation report or final performance report. The data may

Example 2

TABLE A

Number of Adults Living in One Apartment

Number of Adults	*Number/Percentage Responses Total Responses=25*
3	8 (32%)
4	11 (44%)
5	6 (24%)

The reporting of survey results should focus on how staff can improve the project.

show evidence that the project is successful or is in need of modifications. Table A verifies that a majority of adult participants live close to each other in apartments, which suggests that holding classes in or near the apartment complex would be convenient for the participants.

The reporting of survey results should focus on how staff can improve the project. The conclusions or recommendations should provide answers to questions that staff and learners have posed about the project. Example 3 contains a table and narrative that summarize the responses to Question 3 in Example 1 ("What are the current and potential participants' requirements for child care?") and present findings and recommendations.

Performance Samples

Performance samples are illustrations of learners' work in selected tasks. As one kind of performance sample, a writing sample can provide valid, authentic representations of learners' progress in attaining project objectives. Because they can be linked directly to project activities, writing samples become natural extensions of the instructional process. Learners can produce writing samples in English

Example 3

TABLE B

Summary of Respondents' Child Care Needs

Item	*Currently Serving*	*Need to be Served*	*Conclusions*
Number of adults who need child care to attend class	25	35	Ten additional adults require child care services.
Number of children of adult participants	30	45	The current child care program at Delta College is designed to serve 25 children. It is already overcrowded.

The original survey identified 25 adults who needed child care services in order to attend classes. Although the Delta College Child Care Facility could accommodate only 25 children, 30 children received services during the first week of the project with the help of volunteers recruited by the project staff. After four weeks, ten new learners requested child care services in order to attend class. Because the Delta College facility is unable to handle additional children, staff recommends that another classroom be found for the additional children.

or their native language. As learners develop examples of their written work throughout the year, they and the staff can identify writing samples that demonstrate strengths as well as areas that need improvement.

This section presents strategies for collecting, analyzing, using, and reporting the results of alternative approaches to assessing writing samples. Strategies refer to the Writing Assessment Instrument shown in Chapter IV.

Example 10

Writing Assessment Instrument

A. Authenticity/voice/engagement of the reader Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Expression strongly reflects the writer's emotional and or intellectual involvement in the topic. Strongly engages the attention of the reader.
	3 = The writer is engaged in the topic and engages the reader.
	2 = Uninteresting; not engaging; perfunctory.
	1 = Writing seems to be a mechanical exercise. Marked by cliches, hazy generalizations, meaningless expressions.
B. Focus/organization/development Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Focuses on one main idea. Has clear beginning, middle, and end. Well-organized and well-developed through examples.
	3 = Focused and organized but may have a flaw in coherence or incomplete closure. Incomplete development. Explanation is strongly implicit.
	2 = Lack of clear focus, organization, or development. Narrative, but no explanation.
	1 = Disorganized; underdeveloped; unconnected generalizations.
C. Sentence mechanics/language Score: _____ Comments:	4 = Few mechanical, usage, or sentence errors. Language used with fluency and variety.
	3 = Some minor mechanical usage or sentence errors. Language used competently to express ideas.
	2 = Enough usage errors to attract attention away from the content. Sentences understandable, but unconventional.
	1 = Language and mechanical errors impair meaning.

Source: Adapted from Soifer, Rena et al. *The Complete Theory to Practice Handbook of Adult Literacy: Curriculum Design and Teaching Approaches.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1990, pp. 178–179.

The Writing Assessment Instrument uses a rating scale to evaluate the learner's performance. A rating scale is a technique for assessing an area of interest (for example, reading ability or self-confidence) on a scale of intervals usually designated by numbers or descriptors or both. Rating scales are frequently employed with alternative assessment instruments to differentiate ability or performance levels. Ratings are based on the learner's performance relative to narrative explana-

By developing project-based descriptors and associated rating scales, staff can improve the validity and reliability of the instrument and enhance the accuracy and consistency of assessment and data collection.

tions (descriptors) of each individual rating on the scale. Numerical values can be attached to the descriptors to facilitate data analysis. Sometimes ratings are combined with narrative comments and placed in a performance chart to provide for a more comprehensive analysis (see Example 9 in Chapter IV).

The Writing Assessment Instrument allows staff to judge a writing sample using four-point (1-4) rating scales. A descriptor is provided for each of the four ratings. A set of ratings was designed for each of three aspects of writing: authenticity, focus, and mechanics. For example, a rating of 1 for authenticity has a different meaning from a rating of 1 for focus or sentence mechanics.

FELP staff could adapt the instrument by developing descriptors that would be appropriate for the learners and curriculum in their project. By developing project-based descriptors and associated rating scales, staff can improve the validity and reliability of the instrument and enhance the accuracy and consistency of assessment and data collection. The descriptors should be arranged in logical sequence with clear definitions for each rating.

As a natural extension of a learning activity, a writing sample serves both instructional and assessment purposes, thereby eliminating the time and energy required for separate tests. By collecting and assessing writing samples according to predetermined intervals and with agreed-upon rating scales, staff members can make judgements about the learners' growth as well as progress that they are making towards attaining the objectives of the project. To use rating scales effectively, staff members need to have a thorough understanding of the descriptors. Staff members can achieve this understanding by receiving training in the rating procedure and by coliaborating to design the descriptors for the ratings.

Collecting Data from Writing Samples

As a natural extension of a learning activity, a writing sample serves both instructional and assessment purposes, thereby eliminating the time and energy required for separate tests.

Example 4, Table C, shows how data on learners' writing samples can be collected systematically. Data obtained through this procedure can be used to monitor learners' progress in attaining the objectives of the project.

The Class List helps staff to record assessment results of writing samples according to predetermined intervals such as weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Staff can use the rating scale to judge learners' writing or ask learners' to judge their own work. To accommodate the learners' language proficiency levels, staff can simplify the descriptors so that learners can read and use the rating scale for their self-assessments. In this way, assessment becomes an instructional tool that enables learners to recognize and judge effective writing. Portfolios can be used for keeping a record of selected examples of learners' writing. Although learners may write on a daily basis, staff can have learners select on a specified schedule their best work for inclusion in the portfolios.

Portfolios can be used for keeping a record of selected examples of learners' writing. Although learners may write on a daily basis, staff can have learners select on a specified schedule their best work for inclusion in the portfolios.

Analyzing Data with Frequency Counts

Simple frequency counts provide a useful way to analyze data collected with rating scales. For more sophisticated data analysis, staff should seek the assistance of a professional evaluator. The analysis of ratings of writing samples can be facilitated by using a class list like the one shown in Example 4. Used with the Writing Assessment Instrument, the list helps staff document the ratings according to the four descriptors (1-4) in each of the three aspects of writing: authenticity, focus, and mechanics. The list provides space for ratings taken at three different times, First Testing, Second Testing, and Third Testing. This format enables staff to monitor the progress of each individual as well as the total class.

The Class List contains the ratings of a partial number (10) of participants in a FELP class. The data represent the three assessments conducted in October, January, and April. The numbers under A, B, and C represent the assigned ratings according to the descriptors specified in the instrument. The list can be used internally by the staff or provided as a table in an annual evaluation report or final performance report.

Example 4

TABLE C

Class List: Results of Assessments of Writing Samples

Instructions: Record date of the assessment and enter the rating (1–4) under each letter:

A = Authenticity/Voice /Engagement of the Reader; B = Focus/Organization/Development;
C = Sentence Mechanics/Language

		First Testing				Second Testing				Third Testing		
Name or I.D. No.	*Date*	*A*	*B*	*C*	*Date*	*A*	*B*	*C*	*Date*	*A*	*B*	*C*
B. Lopez	10/25	1	1	2	1/15	1	2	2	4/2	1	2	3
J. Garcia	10/15	1	1	1	1/15	1	1	1	4/2	1	1	1
M. Matello	10/15	1	1	1	1/15	1	2	2	4/2	1	2	3
K. Turner	10/15	1	2	3	1/15	2	3	4	4/2	2	1	2
R. Diaz	10/15	2	1	2	1/15	2	1	2	4/2	2	1	2
B. Ruiz	10/15	1	2	1	1/15	2	2	2	4/2	2	2	3
A. Rodriguez	10/15	1	1	1	1/15	2	1	2	4/2	1	3	3
J. Fernandez	10/15	2	1	1	1/15	2	2	2	4/2	3	4	3
C. Lopez	10/15	1	2	1	1/15	2	4	2	4/2	2	4	3
B. Nunez	10/15	3	4	3	1/15	3	4	4	4/2	4	4	4

The data in the Class List may be analyzed further by counting how many learners receive each rating for each aspect at each data collection point. The tallies are converted to percentages because the number of learners generally varies from one testing interval to the next. Staff can interpret the impact of the project by examining the degree of change in percentages across the three testing intervals. This change can be illustrated graphically and documented in a matrix like the one shown in Example 5 (Table D).

Table D provides a summary of the results of writing assessments conducted at three testing intervals (October, January, and April). It displays ratings for three aspects writing: authenticity, focus, and sentence mechanics. If this summary were included in an evaluation report, it should be accompanied by a narrative description of the progress and trends toward accomplishing project goals such as:

> The table reflects an increase in the percentage of learners who score at higher levels with each assessment, suggesting progress in attaining project objectives. The greatest growth took place in "authenticity."

Using the Results of Assessments of Writing Samples

Staff can use the results of writing assessments for planning instruction, monitoring progress, determining the degree to which objectives have been achieved, and refining the curriculum and instruction. The results can help staff members form groups of learners with similar needs and design appropriate instructional activities. Data can be analyzed to indicate the progress of individual learners as well as trends of the whole class. Assessment results also can show the relative effectiveness of various components of the project.

Example 5

TABLE D

Summary of Three Writing Assessments

	Sentence Mechanics				*Focus*				*Authenticity*			
Testing	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
First=Oct. (n=125)	80%	18%	2%	0	68%	20%	12%	0	66%	22%	12%	0
Second=Jan. (n=118)	43%	24%	22%	11%	14%	44%	25%	17%	2%	38%	34%	26%
Third=April (n=105)	20%	53%	23%	4%	0	17%	49%	34%	0	17%	29%	54%

Staff may choose to involve the learner in developing descriptors, selecting writings to be assessed, and ultimately evaluating their own writing.

Staff may review several writing samples by one learner to identify changes and trends in the learner's writing strengths. Such analysis can be accomplished with or without formal ratings. Learners' writing samples may also be shared among staff to gain insights into the overall effectiveness of instructional activities. When learners are promoted to higher levels, their writing samples can be passed on to their instructors to ensure that instruction is appropriate and uninterrupted.

Writing assessments are instructional tools as well as vehicles for appraising the learners' progress. When shared with the learner, the results provide immediate feedback that can lead to improved writing performance. Staff may choose to involve the learner in developing descriptors, selecting writings to be assessed, and ultimately evaluating their own writing. Such self-assessments can help learners acquire an awareness of the characteristics of effective writing.

When parents appreciate the importance of writing and other literacy behaviors, they can become more confident in supporting their children's language development. When parents experience success at writing creatively about meaningful topics, they can transfer their joy of writing to their children. They may share their writing with their children, encourage their children to write about their own experiences, and even write stories together.

When parents experience success at writing creatively about meaningful topics, they can transfer their joy of writing to their children.

Summarizing Writing Sample Assessments for Evaluation Reports

Methods of reporting the results of writing assessments vary according to the purpose of the reports. One approach may be to present the Class List (Example 4) with an accompanying narrative in an evaluation report. The report could be part of an application for a continuation grant or used by project staff to plan additional classes and services. The data summarized in Table D (Example 5) could be included in a final performance report. To provide an interpretation of the data, staff can develop a narrative that summarizes changes that resulted from the project and progress made by the learners in achieving the objectives of the project.

Example 6 illustrates how staff might report the results of three assessments of writing samples. The example, containing a table and narrative explanation, is based on the Writing Assessment Instrument.

Example 6

TABLE E

Learner's Growth in Writing (Authenticity)

Testing	*Authenticity*			
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*
First Testing (Oct.)	66%	22%	12%	0
Second Testing (Jan.)	2%	38%	34%	26%
Third Testing (April)	0	17%	29%	54%

Sample Narrative

Table E identifies the percentage of FELP participants scoring at each level (1, 2, 3, 4) for each of the three assessment intervals (October, January, April). The percentage of learners who made progress from low levels (1 and 2) to high levels (3 and 4) increased substantially over the three testing intervals. The initial assessment in October identified 66 percent of learners at Level 1 and no learners at Level 4. By the second testing in January, however, only 2 percent of the learners scored at Level 1 and 26 percent scored at Level 4. By the end of classes in April, the third-interval testing indicated that no learners scored at Level 1, 17 percent scored at Level 2, 29 percent at Level 3 and 54 percent at Level 4. Learners participated in an average of three hours per week of writing instruction and associated activities for a total of 72 hours during the 24 weeks of classes. The assessment results demonstrate that learners have made progress in writing content that is authentic and engaging.

Because interviews can be conducted in the learners' native language, participants may be more willing and able to provide information to staff.

Interviews

Interviews can be used to collect detailed information for assessing and evaluating the project. An interview procedure may be utilized with individuals or adapted for small groups of people such as focus groups. This section will deal with the collection, analysis, staff use, and reporting of data obtained from focus groups.

Interviews are particularly appropriate for FELP projects because participants may not have the literacy skills necessary for paper-and-pencil assessments. Furthermore, because interviews can be conducted in the learners' native language, participants may be more willing and able to provide information to staff.

Interviews may be used independently or together with other measures to generate data for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional programs and identifying successful components of the project. They can be conducted by an instructor, project coordinator, or professional evaluator. This section of the chapter is based on interviews conducted with small groups according to a protocol which focuses on specific topics; hence, the title focus group. Protocol is defined as a specified set of procedures and questions designed to achieve the purposes of the assessment activity.

Interviews are a particularly appropriate for FELP projects because participants may not have the literacy skills necessary for paper-and-pencil assessments.

Collecting Interview Data Through Focus Groups

Focus group data can be collected with a question-and-answer procedure in which a facilitator addresses questions to group members. The responses are documented in writing or recorded on audio or video tape. Although the proceedings may be recorded by the facilitator, staff members may want to assign this responsibility to a separate individual to avoid burdening the facilitator. An important element of the focus group is the nature of the communication (verbal and non-verbal) between the facilitator and the respondents as questions, answers, and comments are stated and clarified. Therefore, the facilitator should be sensitive to the cross-cultural and other interpersonal dimensions that characterize group activities.

The protocol for a focus group should be established in advance and linked carefully to the goals and objectives of the activity. However, the facilitator should not discourage responses that may deviate from the main purpose of the session. Such flexibility creates opportunities for the facilitator to assess a variety of related learner needs and outcomes such as language, social interaction, confidence, and critical thinking, which are very difficult to assess through paper-and-pencil measures. These issues may be recorded in anecdotal form and analyzed later when the tapes are reviewed.

An important element of the focus group is the nature of the communication (verbal and non-verbal) between the facilitator and the respondents as questions, answers, and comments are stated and clarified.

Interview data may be collected at intervals throughout the year, on a pre/post basis, or at the end of instructional units. The data can be analyzed and interpreted in terms of longitudinal progress, pre/post changes, and project implementation and accomplishments. Generally, focus group data are collected and reported on the entire group, although data gathered on individuals during the session also may be useful.

Analyzing Focus Group Data

Analyzing focus group data can be a challenging task. Staff should strive for a balance between conducting elaborate analyses of trivial points and ensuring that adequate attention is given to significant information that is generated. The importance attached to specific findings is determined by the evaluation questions, project objectives, and the intended audiences (for example, the school board, project staff, and OBEMLA). Ultimately, decisions regarding the complexity of the analyses should be guided by how the results are going to be

used. Thus, the analysis could focus primarily on addressing the information needs of program decision-makers, yet be sufficiently flexible to identify issues that were not anticipated.

The goal of analyzing focus group data is to examine systematically the participants' comments in order to identify trends or patterns that recur among different individuals or groups (Krueger, 1988). The outcome of the analysis may be a report that summarizes relevant trends, presents conclusions about the project's effectiveness, and offers suggestions for improvement. To accomplish these tasks, the analyst must sort through an array of statements and identify opinions, feelings, or perceptions that are common to several participants, even though they may be expressed in different words or styles. Some attention needs to be paid to determining the range and diversity of participants' perceptions. Less emphasis is given to singular opinions not supported by others in the group. The use of numbers or percentages may help illustrate participants' responses, although they are not necessary for describing trends or supporting conclusions drawn from the analysis.

The goal of analyzing focus group data is to examine systematically the participants' comments in order to identify trends or patterns that recur among different individuals or groups.

A common misconception is that the analysis of focus group data is a simple process of finding a few good quotes that support the analyst's point of view. To produce valid conclusions, however, the analysis needs to be conducted systematically according to a prescribed sequence of procedures (see the three-stage process below). The process should allow staff to analyze a large amount of qualitative data and draw practical conclusions about the effectiveness of the project.

Ideally, the person who conducts the focus group also should analyze the results. The results can be interpreted in part based on the first-hand experiences of the facilitator who actually witnessed the interpersonal dynamics, body language, and affective factors that influenced the activity. Sometimes, however, it may not be possible for individuals who collected the data to be involved in the analysis. For example, an instructor may conduct an interview with a small group of learners with the assistance of a bilingual staff member. Audio tapes of the interview, translated into English if necessary, might be reviewed and summarized by a professional evaluator for an evaluation report. Comments by those who conducted the focus group could be added to the transcript, providing the evaluator with valuable additional information.

According to Krueger (1988), the process of analyzing focus group data can be divided into three stages: (1) reviewing the raw data; (2) creating descriptive statements; and (3) interpreting the results.

Reviewing the raw data. At this stage, staff members analyze the tapes or notes taken during the focus group. The raw data consist of the participants' actual statements recorded in writing or on audio or video tape. Also included in the raw data are the facilitator's descrip-

tions of the participants, such as their attitudes and body language and the general ambience of the session.

During this stage, the analyst should focus on becoming as familiar as possible with the range of data collected and then begin organizing participants' responses by categories or topics. Data may be organized by (1) marking all related topics in the transcript with the same colored marking pen; (2) extracting comments that deal with the same issue and writing them on a single page; or (3) rearranging the text according to specific categories.

To draw valid inferences from the data, the analyst should consider such factors as commonly used words or phrases, the frequency of certain responses, and the tone and intensity of the speaker's voice.

Creating descriptive statements. The next stage in the analysis involves reducing and organizing the raw data by creating descriptive statements that summarize the participants' responses according to topics. The summary also can include illustrative quotes that are especially insightful or indicative of the participants' comments. Comments need not be transcribed verbatim; rather, staff may prefer to use alternative statements that capture the speakers' intended meaning. The analyst should begin reducing the data and preparing the descriptive summary as soon as possible after each focus group session.

Interpreting the results. At the final stage, the analyst needs to enhance the descriptive statements by drawing conclusions and interpretations from the data. The analyst should form conclusions about trends or patterns based on the purpose of the focus group session (for example, answers to staff's evaluation questions or evidence of progress toward meeting project objectives). Unexpected outcomes of the session also should be noted. To draw valid inferences from the data, the analyst should consider such factors as commonly used words or phrases, the frequency of certain responses, and the tone and intensity of the speaker's voice. It is also important to examine the context of participants' responses—that is, whether the comments occurred in response to a specific question or were spontaneously triggered by an open-ended question.

By probing specific topics, the facilitator can uncover causes of a problem and identify potential strategies for refining and improving the project.

The analyst may give more weight to comments based on some criteria; for example, statements based on personal experience may be accorded more importance than something the speaker heard someone else say. Other factors to consider are the consistency of particular statements and whether individuals change their minds based on others' comments. Analyzing such factors will enhance the validity and reliability of the findings.

Using Focus Group Data

Staff can use focus groups to gather information that is not easily obtained through written assessments. The interactive nature of the focus group process allows staff to shape the direction of the session and to delve into selected responses. By probing specific topics, the facilitator can uncover causes of a problem and identify potential strategies for refining and improving the project. Focus groups enable

staff to explore aspects of the project from the participants' perspectives, thereby enhancing the linkage between the learners' needs and the project's objectives.

Focus group data can be used to identify new needs of participants as well as clarify needs that were obtained earlier through surveys or individual interviews. By learning more about the participants—their attitudes, the cultural barriers they face, their patterns of social interaction, and their levels of confidence—staff can make more informed choices about curriculum content, instructional approaches, and the overall design of the project.

To use focus group data effectively, staff need to identify trends and patterns among the group's responses. In general, the significance of a given issue is determined by the frequency of comments about it. For example, a single comment such as "The book is too hard" would not carry as much weight in the data analysis as five or ten statements about the difficulty of the instructional materials. If several comments were made, the staff might want to examine how appropriate the materials are for the learners' literacy levels.

Staff also can use focus groups to obtain information about literacy-related events in the learners' families. For example, a prompt such as "Tell me how you are using the home learning kits with your children" may help staff determine the effects of project activities on the learners' families. Comments may range from "Using the materials weekly and enjoy them very much" (10 respondents) to "Not using the booklets because we don't have any crayons" (2 respondents). The first response helps confirm the success of the project; the second suggests that the staff need to help some parents obtain what is necessary to use the home learning kits.

Reports of focus groups should be designed according to the needs of the audience, the purpose of the report, and the goals and objectives of the project.

Using focus groups enables staff to generate more detailed information than is possible through some other assessment procedures. For example, parenting skills, attitudes, confidence, and other hard-to-assess domains can be explored through focus groups. Because feedback is gathered directly and spontaneously from the participants, results are often highly indicative of the participants' perspectives.

Summarizing Focus Group Data in a Narrative Report

Reports of focus groups should be designed according to the needs of the audience, the purpose of the report, and the goals and objectives of the project. The results of focus groups can be communicated orally or in writing. According to Krueger (1988), focus group reports can be written following three different models:

1. Raw data model which presents the question or topic that the focus group addressed and a list of the participants' responses;
2. Summary description model which summarizes the results of the focus group and includes selected quotations from participants; or

3. Interpretive model which provides a descriptive summary, illustrative quotes, and a narrative interpretation of the results.

A focus group report should include a statement describing the purpose of the session, an outline of the key questions addressed by the group, and a summary of the way the session was set up.

The raw data model is the fastest and easiest to develop and is most appropriate for an audience that is interested in reviewing all of the participants' responses. This model, however, requires that readers do their own analysis of the data. The descriptive and interpretive models are usually more effective because they provide examples of the data as well as detailed analyses of the findings.

A focus group report should include a statement describing the purpose of the session, an outline of the key questions addressed by the group, and a summary of the way the session was set up (for example, number of people interviewed and method of selecting participants). The results of the report should be organized and presented according to the key questions that the focus group addressed. It may be helpful to describe aspects of the session that may limit the usefulness of the data or prevent conclusive statements about the project. A section for conclusions and recommendations is useful for integrating the key findings into a concise summary and providing suggestions for modifying the project based on the results. An appendix to the report may include the focus group protocol and additional quotes from the participants.

Example 7 shows how to document the purpose, protocol, and results of a focus group session that addressed parenting workshops held during a FELP project. The sample narrative might appear in an annual evaluation report or final performance report.

Example 7

Sample Summary of Focus Group Results

The purpose of the focus group was to determine the effectiveness of the five parenting workshops held on Saturdays and the degree to which the workshops had met the needs of the adult learners and the objectives of the project. Thirty-five learners participated in the focus group.

Protocol for the Focus Group

Staff asked the parents to describe the parenting workshops they attended. Questions included: Describe how you were involved in selecting the topics. Were you unable to attend any of the workshops? Why? Do you feel you are more confident as a parent because of the workshops? Why? Do you help your children with their homework? What did you learn that you did not know before? What are you doing differently as a result of the workshops?

At least half of the parents attended three or more of the five parenting workshops. They reported that they had an opportu-

Example 7 (Continued)

nity to work with staff to plan the workshops but were unable to recall any specific topics they had requested. All agreed that the workshops helped them as parents and enabled them to work more confidently with their children at home. A majority of parents indicated that they reviewed homework assignments, while only a small number actually helped their children with reading and writing assignments.

The parents expressed general agreement about the ill effects of television viewing and indicated that they had been successful in reducing the amount of television that their children watched at home. Most stated that they communicated with their children in their native language, while only two parents indicated that they interacted with their children in English on a regular basis. The staff noted that, compared with the focus group held earlier in the year, the parents in this session seemed more communicative and confident when discussing parenting issues.

In summary, the parents enjoyed the workshops and enthusiastically volunteered information during the sessions. Staff noted that parents who participated in both focus group sessions appeared more competent and confident when expressing their ideas in English than those who attended one session. Approximately half of the participants could respond in English while the other half required the assistance of an interpreter. In general, the workshops were well attended and seemed to provide parents with information that made them feel more confident about helping their children at home. Staff agreed that future workshops could be more effective by dealing with topics that are (1) related to parent-child learning activities at home and (2) linked to the curriculum used in weekly FELP classes.

Observation measures can be used to collect and record various kinds of information. They may focus on such features as learners' characteristics, group interactions, or language and literacy performance.

Observation Measures

Observation measures can be used to collect and record various kinds of information. They may focus on such features as learners' characteristics, group interactions, or language and literacy performance. Observations may be used as closed-ended assessments, such as indicating the learner's level of listening comprehension. Or, they may be more open-ended as when staff members judge how confident a learner appears when participating in a cooperative learning group.

This section deals with the collection, analysis, staff use, and reporting of data obtained with observation measures. References are made to the measures that appear in Chapter IV as Example 7 (listening and reading) and Example 8 (speaking and writing). A modified cohort evaluation design is presented to illustrate how projects can analyze assessment data in a manner consistent with ESEA, Title VII, requirements for comparison group data.

Collecting Observation Data with Rating Scales

The observation measures found in Chapter IV can be used to collect data about the learners' progress in acquiring receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills. The instruments use rating scales for indicating the learner's degree of proficiency.

Example 7

Observation Measure for Listening and Reading

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To assess listening and reading skills

	Receptive skills	*With ease*	*With some support*	*With great difficulty*	*Not at all*
Listening	Follows *familiar* instructions				
	Follows *new* instructions				
Reading	Reads *familiar* instructions				
	Reads *new* instructions				

Example 8

Observation Measure for Speaking and Writing

Type of assessment: Observation measure

Purpose: To assess speaking and writing skills

	Productive skills	*With ease*	*With some support*	*With great difficulty*	*Not at all*
Speaking	Produces *familiar* spoken instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
	Produces *new* spoken instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
Writing	Produces *familiar* written instructions that are clear and comprehensible				
	Produces *new written* instructions that are clear and comprehensible				

The data collected with the observation measures can be used to make statements about the performance of an individual or group according to descriptors that are associated with each of the ratings, "With ease," "With some support," "With great difficulty," and "Not at all." The instruments are depicted as examples that FELP staff can adapt to reflect the objectives of their project. Staff can modify the instruments by designing their own descriptors and establishing their own protocol for rating their learners in a consistent, reliable manner.

The descriptors reflect staff's expectations about how learners will perform at various stages of development. The descriptors should provide clear distinctions among developmental levels on the rating scale and represent appropriate growth according to the project's literacy framework (see chapters II and III for more on the literacy framework). The lowest rating and its descriptor should reflect what the staff has determined to be the lowest level of language proficiency exhibited by new enrollees. The highest rating and its descriptor should indicate mastery or the highest level of proficiency that the staff consider attainable for the learners in the project. Each item on the scale should be mutually exclusive and part of an even number of selections (for example, four or six), thereby eliminating middle-ground options and requiring observers to make clear choices. Creating well-developed descriptors and training staff to use the observation measures will enhance the reliability and validity of the instruments.

The descriptors should provide clear distinctions among developmental levels on the rating scale and represent appropriate growth according to the project's literacy framework.

Assessment through observation means watching learners perform various tasks related to the project. Such assessment can be done without having to set aside additional time in the project for testing. The observations should be based on the project's objectives and conducted systematically and consistently at predetermined time intervals.

The following is a summary of strategies that FELP staff can use for obtaining accurate and meaningful data with observation measures.

1. Establish descriptors that define different levels of performance that can be agreed upon by similarly qualified raters who are familiar with the instructional design of the project. The descriptors should be (a) aligned with the curriculum and objectives of the project and (b) reflective of the lowest and highest performance levels of the learners.
2. Create protocols and record observations at regular intervals (for example, monthly, quarterly, or annually). The frequency is determined by how the data will be used and the length of instructional units (lesson, course, or class).
3. Develop an instrument for collecting and managing the data such as the two observation measures shown earlier in this chapter.

Methods for collecting observational data should ensure that the form for collecting the data is completed for each learner according to established intervals and that each learner's level of performance is recorded for each descriptor. The time intervals for assessment are determined by the techniques that will be used to analyze the results.

For example, a pre/post analysis requires that data be collected at the beginning and end of an instructional unit or specified period of time. To do a longitudinal analysis, staff need to collect data at more frequent intervals and over longer periods of time. Collecting data at frequent intervals for longitudinal analysis helps staff identify patterns and trends in the learners' performance. Such data are useful for comparing the performance of the project participants with individuals who have similar characteristics or who have not received project services.

Collecting data at frequent intervals for longitudinal analysis helps staff identify patterns and trends in the learners' performance.

Analyzing Observation Data with a Modified Cohort Design

Staff can analyze data obtained with the observation measures by reviewing the results and determining the extent to which the learners are making progress in attaining project objectives. Data should be analyzed separately for each language group served by the project. Based on their analysis, staff can modify instructional activities to enhance learner outcomes in the future. Additional analysis and interpretation can be conducted by assigning numerical values to the descriptors on the rating scale. Staff can report how many learners received what rating at each prescribed interval. If the number of learners differs for each observation, the data can be presented as percentages of the total number of learners observed. Comparisons should be made through percentages because the number of learners usually varies for each year of the project and for each collection interval.

Data collected through observation measures may be analyzed according to a *modified cohort design;* that is, growth of project participants can be measured against a comparison group (cohort), thereby satisfying one of the requirements of ESEA, Title VII.

Data collected through observation measures may be analyzed according to a *modified cohort design*; that is, growth of project participants can be measured against a comparison group (cohort), thereby satisfying one of the requirements of ESEA, Title VII. This design is adapted from research by McConnell (1982). (See Chapter I for more on the comparison group requirement in ESEA, Title VII.)

The modified cohort design provides an alternative to comparing the project participants' growth with adult learners who are not part of the project. If the cohort design is implemented at the beginning of the first year of a FELP project, staff would establish comparison group data by collecting data on new enrollees before instruction begins. As new learners enroll during the project, staff would add information about them to the comparison group data. At a predetermined interval, perhaps after completing an instructional unit, a semester, or the first year, staff would collect observational data and measure it against the comparison group data to assess the learners' progress toward meeting project objectives. For an extended longitudinal analysis, assessment data could be collected during the second or third year and measured against the comparison group data that had been compiled to that point.

ESEA, Title VII, requirements specify that at least part of the evaluation be based on data collected at twelve-month intervals. Staff can meet this requirement by assessing project participants' performance after twelve months of instruction and comparing the results with the comparison group. Data on new enrollees who are added to the comparison group should be collected within two weeks of enroll-

ment, after the staff has become somewhat familiar with their background. The data become comparison group data, collected whenever new learners enroll during the year, thereby accommodating open enrollment policies adopted by many FELP projects.

The modified cohort design is based on the assumption that the comparison group data represent levels of performance that would have been demonstrated by individuals who had not benefitted from services of the FELP project.

The modified cohort design is based on the assumption that the comparison group data represent levels of performance that would have been demonstrated by individuals who had not benefitted from services of the FELP project—a population referred to in the ESEA, Title VII evaluation requirements as a "nonproject comparison group." (Additional assistance for implementing a modified cohort design is available from the Evaluation Assistance Centers funded by ESEA, Title VII.)

After the comparison group data have been established, staff can compare differences between the comparison group and the project participants in terms of the number and percentage of individuals who received each rating on the observation measures. Differences between the two groups can be illustrated through bar or line graphs that identify each group according to time in the project (see Example 8, Table F, below). Illustrations should be accompanied by a narrative that describes the relationship between the learners' performance and the services provided by the project.

The observation measures found in Chapter IV contain two performance descriptors for each of the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. By counting and reporting the number (or percentage) of learners observed performing at each level during each observation, staff can make global statements about the group's abilities in each skill. The observations may show that the learners were uniformly low in every skill at the beginning of instruction or that they exhibited great diversity in their abilities. Longitudinal or post-test data may show that most of the learners were performing at more proficient levels or that there was considerable variation in ability.

The modified cohort design may show that learners who have participated in the project are performing at higher levels than members of the comparison group who have not yet benefited from program services, thereby validating the positive effects of the project. Longitudinal data collected over several years may reveal relationships between the learners' growth in performance and length of time they were enrolled in the project (see graphic illustration of such relationships in Example 8, Table F).

To provide useful information, observation measures should be (1) tied directly to the objectives and instructional activities of the project and (2) conducted on a regular basis.

Using the Results of Observation Measures

To provide useful information, observation measures should be (1) tied directly to the objectives and instructional activities of the project and (2) conducted on a regular basis. By linking the descriptors and progression of ratings to instructional priorities, staff can obtain valuable data for assessing the learners' ongoing progress and

for improving the instructional program. The observation measures also can be used as initial assessment tools for determining learners' needs. For example, learners who are initially observed performing tasks "With ease" probably would need instruction that is different from those who are rated as "Not at all."

Staff can use data obtained with observation measures for modifying curriculum content and instructional methodology. For instance, if the data indicate that many of the learners are performing listening tasks "With ease" but writing assignments "With great difficulty," staff may want to devote more time and effort to writing instruction. Similarly, if several learners are observed performing a certain task "With great difficulty," even after it has been presented and practiced many times, staff may want to consider how instructional activities could be modified to help learners gain mastery of the task.

To make the best use of data collected with observation measures, staff members need to examine individual learners' performance and create aggregated profiles of the whole class.

To make the best use of data collected with observation measures, staff members need to examine individual learners' performance and create aggregated profiles of the whole class. These findings can be discussed regularly at staff meetings to determine how the project can be more responsive to learners' needs. For example, learners whose individual data contain several ratings of "Not at all" or "With great difficulty" may have special needs that warrant more personal attention. If the aggregated data show ratings that are spread across many performance levels, staff members may want to discuss how they can address multi-level classes more effectively.

Individual learners' performance records may be used to determine whether current instructional groupings are appropriate and how new groups might be formed. Significant variation in ratings may be due to discrepancies in the staff members' knowledge of how to use the observation measures. Staff may need to clarify the protocols for using the measures and the definitions of the performance descriptors. Observation measures should be used systematically according to predetermined criteria that are related to the project's objectives. During the observations, however, staff may identify other relevant information that should be documented. For example, staff may note that some learners are frustrated, socially isolated, or have auditory, speech, or visual impairments. Staff also may document special talents and interests shown by learners. Such findings will help staff create activities that are more closely linked to learners' needs and make other improvements to the project.

Like other alternative assessments, the purpose of observation measures should be clearly established before an instrument is developed or used.

Like other alternative assessments, the purpose of observation measures should be clearly established before an instrument is developed or used. Observation measures can be used for planning instruction and placing learners in appropriate groups or activities. As discussed in Chapter IV, observational data can provide staff with information about the learners' ongoing progress in attaining project objectives. Observation measures also can yield data for the annual evaluation reports or the final performance report.

Reporting the Results of Observation Measures

Reporting observational data involves summarizing the results of the observations and developing interpretations of the data. Data collected from observational measures can be used to make descriptive statements about what individual learners or groups of learners can do relative to project goals, objectives, and instructional services.

Open enrollment and uneven attendance in many FELP projects often prevent staff from assessing the same learners every time an observation is conducted.

The observation measures found in Chapter IV are used to rate learners according to their receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills in handling new or familiar instructions. What is new or familiar depends on the learners' prior experiences and the topics addressed in the FELP project. Thus, the reporting of observation data should include descriptions or examples of the content or activities to which learners were responding when the observation ratings were made.

Bar graphs are especially useful for presenting summaries of observational data. For example, each bar could represent the number of learners who performed a specific skill at a given level (that is, the number of learners who read new instructions "With great difficulty"). The construction of the bar graph depends on what specific information the staff want to emphasize. Example 9 (Table G) shown below illustrates growth in the learners' ability to produce written instructions that are clear and comprehensible.

Table G summarizes hypothetical data for a class of 25 participants who were rated at quarterly intervals. The table is followed by a narrative explanation. The numbers and narrative address only one of the eight areas assessed by the two observation measures. Staff could develop similar illustrations for data obtained for the other seven skill areas. When the numbers (n) vary greatly between groups of learners or years of implementation, percentages can be used instead of numbers.

Table G summarizes data collected on the same group of 25 learners. However, as was pointed out in Chapter I, open enrollment and uneven attendance in many FELP projects often prevent staff from assessing the same learners every time an observation is conducted. Therefore, staff should explain this phenomenon in the evaluation report and present assessment results only for the learners who attended regularly. Staff also may want to include in the report some of the causes of attrition and the strategies that are being used to improve retention.

If a project has open enrollment, a second quarterly observation conducted in one class may be the first observation for new enrollees and the second observation for experienced participants. In this case, data gathered on several learners should be aggregated only if each set of data represents approximately equal amounts of instructional time. Data on learners who started at different times may need to be reported separately, or if all learners' data are combined, the first observation should in fact be the first for each learner.

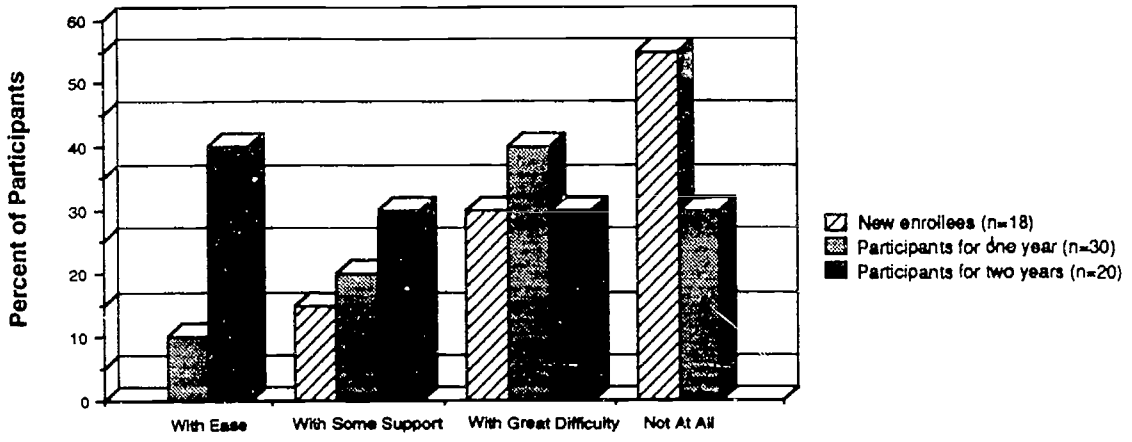
Example 8 (Table F) illustrates the findings of a modified cohort design in which progress of learners who have participated in the project

Example 8

TABLE F

Summary of Data Collected with Observation Measure (Modified Cohort Design)

"Produces new written instructions that are clear and comprehensible"



Sample Narrative: Evaluation results based on a modified cohort design indicate that the project had a positive impact on the development of literacy skills among adults. Furthermore, the data suggest that learners who have participated for two years show substantially greater gains than those who have been in the project for only one year. Staff suggested that differences in performance between the two groups were attributed in part to the learners' needing a full year of participation in order to make more rapid progress in subsequent years.

Example 9

TABLE G

Summary of Ratings of Four Observations (n=25)

Quarterly Ratings on "Produces new written instructions that are clear and comprehensible"

Rating	***September*** *First Observation*	***December*** *Second Observation*	***March*** *Third Observation*	***June*** *Fourth Observation*
With Ease	0	0	3	10
With Some Support	0	5	12	8
With Great Difficulty	5	5	10	7
Not at All	20	15	0	0

Sample Narrative: Table G shows an increase in the percentage of higher ratings from the first to the fourth observation and a decrease in the less-proficient ratings. For the first observation in September, none of the learners was able to write new instructions that were clear and comprehensible. However, by the fourth observation in June, after nine months of instruction, 18 of the 25 learners could write new instructions with ease or with some support.

for one and two years is measured against the performance of a comparison group of learners who did not receive project services.

Each of the eight receptive and productive skills identified on the two observation measures should be illustrated and reported separately. A table that illustrated all eight skills might confuse the reader and fail to delineate important details. Staff should include a narrative interpretation of the results with each table as shown in the examples in this section, or they could describe the results in narrative form and place it with the related goal or objective as shown in Example 10.

Example 10

Report of Learners' Progress in Attaining Objective for Receptive and Productive Language Skills

Objective - Literacy: By the end of each year of the project, participants will improve their receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills at least one level as measured by observation measures developed by the project.

Sample Narrative

The objective was achieved during the second year of the project. Based on the observation measures, learners experienced growth in all eight literacy skill areas. The greatest growth occurred in listening skills with 72 percent of the learners rated "With ease" for that category. Fifty-seven percent received the same rating for speaking, 29 percent for reading, and 16 percent for writing. The results of the observation measures are consistent with the comments of staff who indicated that listening and speaking skills were emphasized during the first two years of the project in response to the learners' identified needs and requests.

Based on the results of data analysis according to a modified cohort design, the project has had positive effects on the learners' literacy development. The language classes, which integrate literacy instruction with basic life skills, represent a potentially successful component of the FELP project.

Summary

Alternative approaches to assessment and evaluation are especially useful for meeting the needs of participants in a FELP project. The results of alternative approaches can be used to (1) determine the extent to which a project is attaining its goals; (2) ascertain changes that will improve the overall effectiveness of a project; and (3) identify successful components of a project.

By considering authentic representations of what learners and staff are doing, alternative assessments can provide clear insights into the effects of the project on adult learners and their children.

Staff can strengthen the use of alternative approaches by (1) collecting data systematically; (2) analyzing the data to provide meaningful interpretations of the results of assessments; (3) using the data to answer questions that staff, learners, and others have about the project; and (4) creating informative reports that summarize the results of the assessments.

Surveys, performance samples, interviews, and observation measures are four kinds of alternative assessments which, together with standardized measures, can be used to create a comprehensive evaluation design for FELP projects. To maximize their effectiveness, alternative assessments need to be tailored to the unique goals, objectives, and program design of a FELP project. By considering authentic representations of what learners and staff are doing, alternative assessments can provide clear insights into the effects of the project on adult learners and their children. As an integral part of identifying needs, assessing ongoing progress, and determining project effectiveness, alternative approaches play an indispensable role in enabling staff and learners to collaborate in designing a FELP project that is responsive to the needs of language-minority learners, families, and communities.

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Patton, Michael Q. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1980.

SURVEY OF USAGE

Chapter V: Collecting, Analyzing and Reporting Alternative Assessment Results

This resource guide must be helpful to you, the FELP director or evaluator, in order to be considered a success. In accepting the field test edition of the guide, we hope that you agree to participate in this usage survey. We plan to revise the guide based on your comments and criticisms; it then will be published for a broader audience. Please share with us your critical comments. After reviewing the chapter, use the scale below to indicate whether the guide is written clearly; the scale indicates that it is

1. Clearly written and understandable, the format is clean;
2. Generally clear, but some wordings or format could be improved;
3. Not particularly clear, written with too much detail or too much jargon; or
4. Not at all clear, not at all understandable.

In addition to being written clearly, the guide also must provide enough information for you to be able to implement the ideas. For the information in this chapter, you probably will be working with your evaluator. In each of these areas, please use the scale to indicate whether you can now talk with your evaluator in an informed manner because the guide has

1. Valuable information in the right amount of detail for me really to use it;
2. Good information, but needs more detail for me really to use it;
3. Information that is tangential to my needs, so it won't help a great deal; or
4. Information that I don't need and won't use.

Rate clarity	Area to be rated		Rate information
1 2 3 4	Format of the chapter		Not applicable
1 2 3 4	Wording of the chapter		Not applicable
Not applicable	The general ideas and information presented		1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Surveys:	Data collection	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Data analysis	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Staff utilization of results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Reporting the results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Performance samples:	Data collection	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Data analysis	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Staff utilization of results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Reporting the results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Interviews:	Data collection	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Data analysis	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Staff utilization of results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Reporting the results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4	Observation measures:	Data collection	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Data analysis	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Staff utilization of results	1 2 3 4
1 2 3 4		Reporting the results	1 2 3 4

Thank you for your assistance in this review of the guide. If there are other areas you would like to see added to this chapter, or other comments you would like to make, please feel free.

☞ *Please return your completed survey. You may fold, staple, and stamp this page -- the address is on the back side. If you prefer, you may FAX it to Daniel D. Holt, Bilingual Education Office at (916) 657-2928. We also would appreciate receiving a copy of any alternative assessments you create as a result of this guide.*

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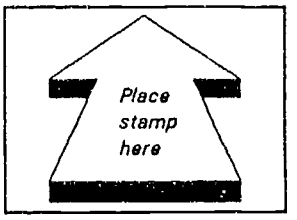

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GLOSSARY

Alternative assessment. A flexible assessment approach that is representative of the curriculum, meaningful to learners, and indicative of the learners' acquired ability or knowledge. Examples are surveys, interviews, observation measures, and performance samples.

Annual evaluation report. Submitted yearly to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), U.S. Department of Education, to summarize the accomplishments of a project.

Assessment. The use of instruments and procedures to gather data on a regular basis. Assessment may focus on identifying learners' needs, documenting the learners' progress toward meeting their own goals, and ascertaining the extent to which the project objectives are being met.

Baseline data. Data that are collected before project activities are implemented. For example, baseline data collected on new enrollees may be used for comparison with data obtained from learners at a later point in the project.

Descriptor. An explanation of an individual rating on a scale. For example, on a 0-5 scale for assessing reading, a descriptor for 0 may be "Cannot read instructions" and the descriptor for 5 might be "Reads instructions with ease."

English-as-a-second-language. English acquired by individuals whose native language is a language other than English.

Evaluation. The process of integrating and analyzing assessment data at a given point in time for such purposes as developing and refining goals and objectives; documenting the learners' progress; and determining the overall success of the project.

Family English Literacy Program (FELP). A program authorized in 1984 as part of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. FELP is defined as "a program of instruction designed to help limited-English-proficient adults and out-of-school youth achieve competence in the English language. . . . Such programs may include instruction on how parents and family members can facilitate the educational achievement of limited-English-proficient children." [20 USC 3283, Sec.7003(a)(7)]

Final performance report. Submitted to the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), U.S. Department of Education, to summarize the accomplishments of a project during the entire grant period.

Focus group. A group that is formed for the purpose of providing input. Group members are interviewed according to a protocol that has been previously established.

Frequency count. A technique for tallying information, usually from survey responses. A frequency count may provide information such as how many parents need child care or how often participants visit the library.

Holistic scoring. A strategy for assessing performance by summarizing individual features to obtain an overall view of learners' progress or some other dimension of the project.

Interview. An alternative assessment approach for obtaining detailed information. An interview may be administered to individuals or to groups with respondents answering orally or in writing. Interviews may be used with focus groups.

Literacy. The ability to use language and language-related strategies, especially those associated

with reading and writing, in a variety of settings (family, community, school, work) to achieve one's own goals (personal, professional, academic).

Literacy framework. Staff members' and learners' shared understanding of the learners' literacy needs, program goals, curriculum and methodology, and approaches for assessing and evaluating literacy development. The elements of the framework should be coordinated so that they are interdependent and mutually-supportive.

Literacy practices. The ways individuals use literacy in their daily lives.

Modified cohort design. A method of analyzing data by comparing the performance of project participants with comparable individuals who have not yet benefitted from project services.

Norm-referenced assessment. See Standardized assessment.

Objective. A description of an outcome or change that is expected as a result of implementing a project. The content of objectives is determined by what the learners need, what the staff are prepared to teach, and what is possible to achieve within the time and budget constraints of the project.

Observation measure. An alternative assessment instrument for obtaining various kinds of information. Observations may focus on such features as learners' characteristics, group interactions, or language and literacy performance.

Portfolio. A collection of examples of a learner's accomplishments such as reading logs, language experience stories, and writing samples. The contents of the portfolio can be used to show a learner's progress over time.

Performance sample. An example of a learner's work in selected tasks. Performance samples include writing samples, oral readings, role plays, and oral presentations.

(Instructional) program. A coordinated set of activities that represent the curriculum and instructional components of a project.

Project. Refers to all components to be implemented, including those described in the instructional program.

Protocol. A specified set of procedures and questions designed to achieve the purposes of an assessment activity.

Rating scale. A technique for assessing an area of interest (for example, reading ability or self-confidence) on a scale of intervals usually designated by numbers or descriptors.

Reliable. Refers to the capacity of an assessment instrument or procedure to produce approximately the same results consistently on different occasions when the conditions of the assessment remain the same. For example, will the instrument provide the same results if learners are tested on Thursday instead of Wednesday, or if two or more competent judges scored the test independently?

Standardized assessment. An instrument that is created to allow for comparisons between individuals' current achievement and the average performance (norms) of selected participants (norming group). An example is the Basic English Skills Test (BEST), available from the Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C. In this volume, the terms standardized assessment and norm-referenced assessment are used interchangeably.

Survey. An alternative assessment approach for obtaining information. A survey may be administered to individuals or groups with respondents answering orally or in writing.

Valid. Refers to the capacity of an assessment instrument or procedure to measure what it claims to measure. For example, does the reading test actually measure reading comprehension, or does success on the test also depend on the learners' knowledge of U.S. culture?