

Section C: Planning the Evaluation

This section provides additional guidance on planning for the evaluation. It is important to bear in mind that evaluation of Migrant Education Programs (MEPs) takes place at two levels. State performance targets and MEP performance measures are used to monitor the progress and success of the entire program statewide. Measurable Program Outcomes (MPOs) are used to gauge the success of specific instructional and support services at the local level.

- At the state or program level, you will monitor the results of all MEP activities and services combined by disaggregating state performance targets for migrant students who are Priority for Services (PFS) eligible, all other migrant students, and all non-migrant students.
- At the level of specific services, you must craft one or more MPOs that state the results you expect to achieve if services are implemented effectively. MPOs for instructional services should relate to improvements in academic performance, while MPOs for other support services should reflect the changes you expect in migrant students' ability to effectively engage in their schooling.

In this section, the *Program Evaluation Toolkit* picks up where the *Service Delivery Plan Toolkit* left off (See *Section E* of the *Service Delivery Plan Toolkit*) at the point of deciding how to evaluate the implementation and results of specific educational and educationally related services outlined as part of the Service Delivery Plan (SDP).

C.1 Evaluating Implementation

Implementation evaluation, also known as formative evaluation, focuses on the extent to which programs are delivered as intended. The results of the implementation evaluation improve programs. Throughout the needs assessment and service delivery planning processes, you have already made numerous decisions about what services to provide for migrant students and how to implement them. For example, members of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) committee considered the greatest needs of migrant students in your state and evidence-based strategies for meeting those needs. The SDP planning committee then decided how best to deliver these services, balanced with their knowledge of the practicalities of providing these services to a specific group of people. The following questions might have guided these decisions:

- For planning decisions related to instructional services
 - What teaching strategies are most effective with migrant students?
 - What qualifications, training, and experience do teachers need to use these strategies effectively?
 - With what content and skills do migrant students need the most help?

- What instructional and assessment materials are most appropriate to address these particular needs?
- How much time is needed to adequately instruct students in the areas they need most?
- For planning decisions related to support services:
 - Which students need additional help with English language acquisition, transportation, basic nutrition, medical and dental care, and mental health services?
 - Which of these needs are the greatest?
 - What is the best way to communicate information about available services to parents who do not speak English as their first language?
 - What are the best times and locations for providing services to the greatest number of students in need?

These and other decisions related to these questions or these and other similar questions represent the specific intentions of the services you provide. Evaluating program implementation, that is, whether a service was delivered as intended involves determining whether your intentions were actually carried out in practice. Table C.1 shows how planning decisions relate to implementation evaluation.

Table C.1 Sample Planning Questions and Possible Strategies

Sample Planning Questions – Instructional Services	Possible Implementation Evaluation Strategies
What teaching strategies are most effective with migrant students?	Observation: Use a list of effective teaching strategies to create an observation protocol or checklist. Include specific teaching behaviors or activities that are consistent with these strategies. Have an internal or external evaluator use the protocol to periodically observe instructional activities (supplemental, after-school, summer sessions) and determine the extent to which the most effective strategies are being used and how effectively they are used.
What qualifications, training, and experience do teachers need to use these strategies effectively?	Interview: Make a list of the ideal qualifications, training, and relevant experience(s) that you feel teachers need in order to be effective in the instructional program. Have an internal or external evaluator interview teachers, ask them to describe their qualifications, training, and experience working with migrant students and using the teaching strategies for this program. The evaluator can then compare teachers’ answers to the list of ideal qualifications, etc. to determine the extent to which they are qualified to implement the instructional program.
With what content and skills do migrant students need the most help? What instructional and assessment materials are most appropriate to address these particular needs?	Document Review: Review needs assessment data, lesson plans, curriculum materials, and assessments. Determine the extent to which the materials being used in the program are aligned with identified needs. Also confirm that the needs of the students being served by the program are the same as the needs the

	program was intended to address.
How much time is needed to adequately instruct students in the areas with which they need the most help?	Attendance Records: Compare the time individual students actually spend in the program with the amount of time that is recommended in order to achieve progress.

C.2 Evaluating Results

Services are expected to have a positive impact on migrant students' ability to achieve academic success. Evaluating program results, also known as summative evaluation, involves two key steps:

Step 1: Determine how much change is both necessary and realistic in order to make the related investments of time, money, and other resources worthwhile

Step 2: Determine how much change actually occurred as a result of these investments.

MPOs, based on identified needs and appropriate services, should express the amount and type of change that will make it worthwhile to continue offering a specific service in a particular way helping to complete Step 1. Remember, MPOs are focused, detailed, and quantifiable, and they should clearly define "success" in meeting a particular need of migrant students. An appropriate MPO is one that articulates the difference that participation in the MEP will make for migrant students. Key components of an MPO define:

- Which students participate
- What happens in the program
- What is expected to happen as a result of participation in the migrant program
- The timeframe in which activities occur

Setting specific and quantifiable MPOs in Step 1 will make it easier to achieve Step 2, which involves measuring the changes specified in order to determine how much change actually occurred. For example, review the following need, related strategy, and MPO:

- Need: Less than half of migrant students in the 3rd grade score at or above the proficient level on the state reading assessment. Most of these students (82%) are also Limited English Proficient (LEP).
- Strategy: For migrant LEP students who are reading below grade level, research supports the use of structured phonetics programs that emphasize language development in both native-language and English instruction. A minimum of 108 hours of supplemental instruction is recommended.
- MPO: 85% of migrant LEP students in 3rd grade who read below grade level at the beginning of the year and who complete supplemental instruction will demonstrate progress equivalent to at least one grade level in their use of phonics knowledge and

word parts to decode unfamiliar words as measured by the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE).

This sample MPO provides clear direction to evaluate or determine the value of a supplemental reading program for 3rd grade English language learner (ELL) students. At the beginning of the school year, ELL migrant students in 3rd grade who read below grade level take the TOWRE as a pre-test of their ability to recognize sight words and decode unfamiliar words phonetically. Following completion of a supplemental instructional program, these same students will take the TOWRE as a post-test to determine how much progress they have made. More exercises on developing MPOs can be found in *Appendix C.1 Setting Measureable Program Outcomes (MPOs)*.

The data from pre and post tests can be used in different ways to measure how much change actually occurred as a result of these investments (Step 2). For example:

- Pre-test and post-test assessments of students can be used to measure students' gains in comparison to themselves. In this case, the value of the supplemental reading program can be measured by the number or percentage of students who show gains or by the increase between average pretest and average posttest scores for all students who completed the program.
- The value of the program can also be measured by comparing the percentage of students who gain a full grade level in word recognition and decoding skills to the performance target that is stated in the MPO.

C.3 Generating Evaluation Questions

Having considered the essential elements of the service to be delivered, as well as the type and extent of change that will make the service worthwhile, it is time to pose a set of specific questions related to the implementation and results of the program.

- Evaluation questions about program implementation relate to the presence or absence of the essential features of the program or service that is being delivered.
- Evaluation questions about program results relate to the achievement of MPOs.

A credible evaluation can be based on as few as three to five good evaluation questions. For example, below are evaluation questions about the implementation and results of the supplemental reading program described above.

- Evaluation questions about implementation:
 - What training or experience does the teacher have to provide phonics instruction in English as well as the students' native language?
 - Are students focused and engaged when receiving instruction? What tasks or exercises appear to hold their attention most, or least?

- Are students able to complete the minimum number of hours recommended? If not, what prevents them from receiving the recommended amount of instruction?
- Evaluation questions about results:
 - Do students who complete the program make gains in their ability to recognize sight words or decode unfamiliar words? Are these gains substantively significant?
 - How many, or what percentage of, students gain the equivalent of one full grade level in word recognition and decoding? How does this percentage compare to the expected outcome?

C.4 Evaluation Timeline

An evaluation timeline can help to organize evaluation questions and identify key dates and deadlines. As you begin to consider methods for collecting and analyzing evaluation data, a timeline can also track when you need to conduct specific evaluation activities in order to generate timely information for decision making and reporting. An evaluation timeline template can be found in *Appendix C.2 Evaluation Timeline Template*.

Keep in mind the following when developing an evaluation timeline:

- Before you plan how to evaluate your program, you already know some important dates to include in your timeline. These include service delivery dates, specific dates on the school calendar (e.g., beginning and end of marking periods, testing dates), and state and local report deadlines.
- Start by entering these dates, as they can either limit your evaluation activities at certain times or provide you with benchmarks for beginning or completing these activities.
- Keeping an eye on your timeline as you develop your evaluation plan will help you to think critically about what you can reasonably accomplish by the program and its evaluation in the time available to you.

Consider the following example: Program staff will offer the parents of migrant students a variety of services to make them more knowledgeable about how they can support their child's schooling and academic achievement. Having considered their data collection options and modest evaluation budget, they believe they can adequately address their evaluation questions using a combination of parent focus group(s), one-on-one interviews with service providers, and state test data.

- In the case of the parent involvement program described above, putting established dates on the timeline allowed program staff to see that preliminary state test data would not be available until after the end-of-year district budget meeting (see Table C.2). In order to report on outcomes at this meeting, they decided to examine results on district benchmark tests instead of state test results.

Table C.2 Program Evaluation Timeline

Program and Evaluation Activities	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Program Dates												
Workshop: How to read with your child		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Workshop: How your child is learning math		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Workshop: How to encourage and support homework time		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		
Evaluation Dates												
Parent Focus Groups						X				X		
Service Provider Interviews						X				X		
District benchmark tests				X		X		X		X		
Report of benchmark test results										X		
Preliminary state test results												X
District budget meeting											X	

C.5 Summary of Key Points

- State performance targets are used to assess the impact of all MEP programs and services combined.
- MPOs define the type and extent of success you expect to achieve through the delivery of specific instructional and support services.
- Implementation evaluation, also known as formative evaluation, focuses on the extent to which programs are delivered as intended and how this information can be used to improve programs.
- Evaluating program results, also known as summative evaluation, involves making meaningful comparisons to assess the value or worth of a program according to the terms stated in the MPOs.
- Summarizing expectations for program implementation and results in a set of specific evaluation questions helps focus the evaluation on what you most want to know about your program.
- A timeline of program activities, evaluation data collection, and reporting or decision making deadlines helps you think critically about what can and should be accomplished in the time available for your program.

C.6 Reflection Questions

1. Do our MPOs define the type and extent of success we expect to achieve through the delivery of specific instructional and support services?

2. Do the evaluation questions focus on what we most want to know about our program?
3. Do we have a timeline of program activities that helps us think critically about what can and should be accomplished and evaluated in the time available for our program?

C.7 Online Resources

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *Reading First Implementation Evaluation: Interim Report*. Executive Summary retrieved August 23, 2012, from <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/readingfirst-interim/readingfirst.pdf>

World Health Organization. (2000). *Workbook7: Outcome Evaluations*. Retrieved August 23, 2012, from http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachments.cfm/att_5869_EN_7_outcome_evaluations.pdf

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (2004). Implementation evaluation: understanding how the project was implemented. In *Program Evaluation Handbook* (24-27). Retrieved August 23, 2012, from <http://www.wkf.org/knowledge-center/resources/2010/W-K-Kellogg-Foundation-Evaluation-Handbook.aspx>

C.8 Resources and Tools Appendix C

Appendix C.1 Setting Measurable Program Outcomes (MPOs)

Appendix C.2 Evaluation Timeline Template

Appendix C.1 Setting Measurable Program Outcomes

Now that you know more about what useful Measurable Program Outcomes (MPOs) should entail, you can practice setting appropriate MPOs below. After you have worked through both of these exercises, you can find helpful suggestions on the following page.

Exercise 1: Let's say that your planning committee developed the following MPO:

Measurable Program Outcome: By the end of the 2013–2014 school year, and each year thereafter, the gap between migrant students and all students will be reduced in reading/language arts in grades 3–8.

How would you rework this MPO to be more useful?

Articulate in the box below a more useful MPO.

Reworked Measurable Program Outcome:

Exercise 2: Now let's say that your planning committee identified the following need:

Need: By the end of grade 9, only 40% of migrant students pass Algebra 1, as compared to 70% of non-migrant students.

Propose at least one corresponding strategy and MPO that will address this need?

Strategy:

Measurable Program Outcome:

Exercise 1: Helpful Hints

There are several ways to make this MPO more effective, including:

- Establishing the assessment or measure of reading/language arts you will measure change
- Establishing by what percentage of migrant students to establish incremental success in closing the “gap”
- Establishing better comparison groups to measure progress – (ideally broken out by 3 mutually exclusive groups: Priority for Services migrant students, other migrant students, and non-migrant students)
- Establishing either explicitly or implicitly through program logic that such incremental successes should occur as a result of what specific services or supports

Exercise 2: Helpful Hints

There are a wide range of strategies and MPOs you could have proposed here. See Section E of the Service Delivery Plan Toolkit for examples of working through program logic.

Appendix C.2 Evaluation Timeline Template

Program and Evaluation Activities	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Program Activities (Service Delivery Plans)												
Evaluation Activities (Data Collection & Reporting)												