



Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Report on the Assessment of Government Evaluations

The status of the Language of Learning and Teaching in South African Public Schools

Date Evaluation was completed: 2010

Name of assessor: Stephen Rule

Evaluation Number: 135

Date Assessment Completed: 7th February 2013

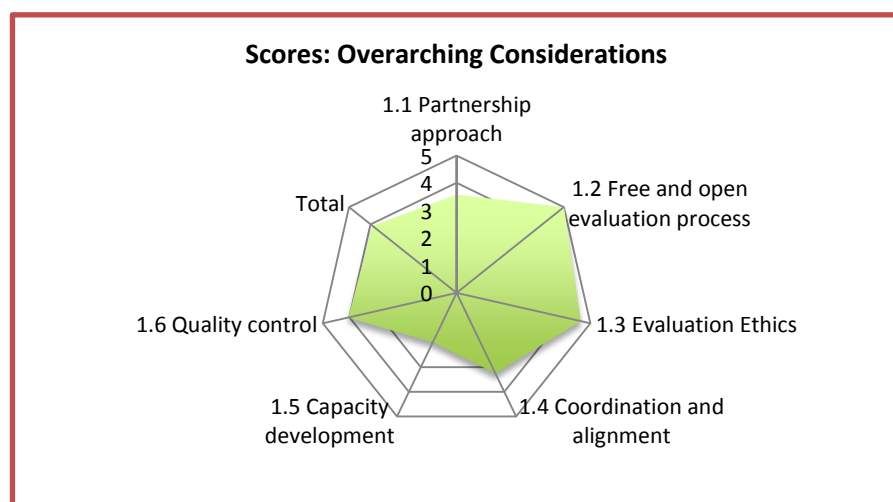
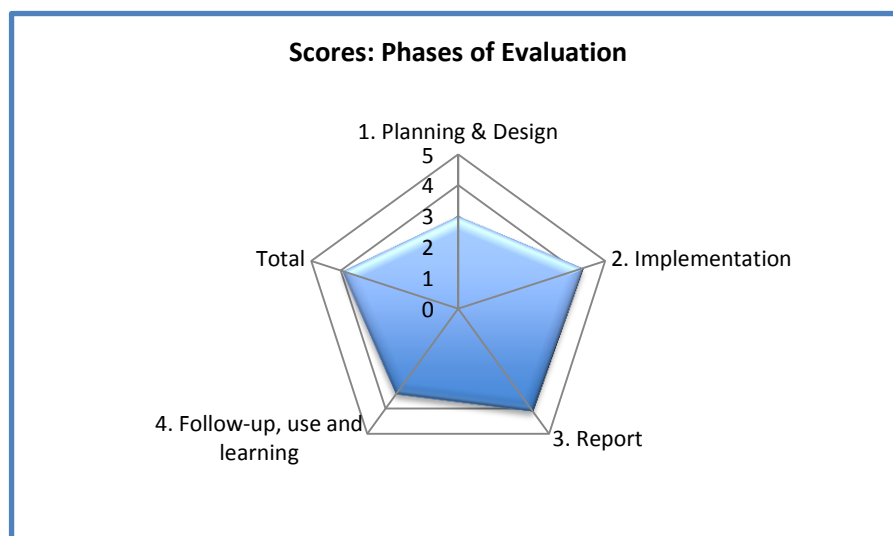
Evaluation Assessment Details

Title of evaluation report	The status of the Language of Learning and Teaching in South African Public Schools
Completion Date of Evaluation	2010
Name of Assessor	Stephen Rule
Evaluation Number	135
Completion Date of Assessment	7th February 2013
Initiated by	Department of Basic Education
Evaluation undertaken by	Witwatersrand
Evaluation area / sector	Education
	Additional
National Outcome	Outcome 1
	Additional
Type of Evaluation	Diagnostic
	Additional
What is being evaluated	Usage of languages in schools
	Additional
Geographic Scope	National
Period of Evaluation	2010
Known Cost of Evaluation	Unknown

Quality Assessment Scores

Phase of Evaluation	Score
Planning & Design	3.00
Implementation	4.24
Report	4.10
Follow-up, use and learning	3.41
Total	3.96

Overarching Consideration	Score
Partnership approach	3.58
Free and open evaluation process	5.00
Evaluation Ethics	4.64
Coordination and alignment	3.25
Capacity Development	2.00
Quality control	4.05



1. Planning & Design

1.1. Clarity of Purpose and Scope in TOR

STANDARD: *The evaluation was guided by a TOR with at least the following sections explicit: purpose, scope and objectives; expectations regarding design and methodology; resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; expectations regarding evaluation process and products.*

Comment and Analysis

The purpose was clearly articulated as provision of a trend analysis of LoLT data for 1997/98 to 2007, however the service provider did not have a clear understanding of the triggers behind the ToR, and complained of scope creep for which the budget was not adequate.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The purpose of the evaluation was clear and explicit in the TOR*

Comment and Analysis

There was some scope creep as the project progressed.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The evaluation questions were clearly stated in the TOR and appropriate to addressing the evaluation purpose*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The approach and type of evaluation was suited to the purpose and scope of the evaluation TOR**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Intended users and their information needs were identified in the TOR**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were involved in the scoping of the TOR and determining the purpose of the evaluation**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

1.2. Evaluation was adequately resourced

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of time allocated

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of original budget

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation was adequately resourced in terms of staffing and skills sets

Comment and Analysis

The service providers appeared to be well-resourced, but the DBE less so.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *Where appropriate, the evaluation planned to incorporate an element of capacity building of partners/staff responsible for the evaluand*

Comment and Analysis

Evidence that staff capacity building was to be incorporated in the evaluation was not forthcoming.

Rating 1

1.3. Alignment to Policy Context and Background Literature

STANDARD: *There was evidence that a review of the relevant policy and programme environments had been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

Comment and Analysis

A concise and well-constructed review of the relevant policy environment was used to preface the trend analysis. The DoE's Research Coordination, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate indicated that it had consulted other relevant Branches in the DoE, particularly the Curriculum Implementation Branch to gather information in this regard.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *There was evidence of a review of appropriate literature having been conducted and used in the planning of the evaluation by the evaluators*

Comment and Analysis

Evidence of a literature review having been used in the planning of the evaluation was not clear.

Rating 2

1.4. The evaluation methods planned were appropriate to the project

STANDARD: There was explicit reference to the intervention logic or the theory of change of the evaluand in the planning of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted on the design and methodology of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The planned methodology was appropriate to the questions being asked

Comment and Analysis

The planned methodology was highly appropriate to the questions that were asked.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Planned sampling was appropriate and adequate given the focus and purpose of evaluation***Comment and Analysis***

No sampling was required, because all available data was included, but excluding the unavailable Limpopo data. However, generally the data were of an inconsistent quality.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: There was a planned process for using the findings of the evaluation prior to undertaking the evaluation***Comment and Analysis***

A planned process for use of the findings was not explicit.

Rating 2

1.5. Inception phase***STANDARD: The inception phase was used to develop a common agreement on how the evaluation would be implemented******Comment and Analysis***

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

2. Implementation

2.1. Ethical Review and Considerations

STANDARD: *Where data was gathered in contexts where ethical sensitivity is high, appropriate clearance was obtained through an ethics review board; e.g. in evaluation involving minors, institutions where access usually requires ethical or bureaucratic clearance, and situations where assurances of confidentiality was offered to participants*

Comment and Analysis

This was not relevant as the data were non-sensitive and already in the public domain.

Rating N/A

2.2. Evaluator independence

STANDARD: *Where external, evaluation team was able to work freely without significant interference*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: The evaluation team was impartial and there was no evidence of conflict of interest

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation team appeared to have been impartial.

Rating 5

2.3. Key stakeholder involvement

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were consulted through a formalised mechanism or institutional arrangement during the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Branches in the DBE were consulted and a Steering Committee was established, inclusive of the DBE, PRAESA, PEDs, Trade Unions and National Association of School Governing Bodies and Higher Education Institutions.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Where appropriate, an element of capacity building of partners responsible for the evaluand was incorporated into the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Evidence of capacity development in the DBE could not be discerned, indeed the service provider mentioned a high turnover of EMIS expertise and therefore lack of support coming from the DBE.

Rating 2

2.4. Methodology

STANDARD: The methods employed in the process of the evaluation were consistent with those planned

Comment and Analysis

Changes were made during the process.

Rating 2

STANDARD: Data collection was not compromised by fieldwork-level problems or unplanned diversions from original intentions

Comment and Analysis

No fieldwork was required.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: Forms of data gathering were appropriate given the scope of evaluation

Comment and Analysis

Data were simply acquired electronically from existing databases.

Rating 5

STANDARD: The data analysis approach and methods were appropriate and sufficient given the purposes of the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The data were satisfactorily analysed for the stated purposes.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Key stakeholders were significantly engaged as part of the methodology

Comment and Analysis

Stakeholders in the service providers organisation (Wits EPU) and the DBE's Steering Committee provided inputs.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The methodology included engaging beneficiaries appropriately as a key source of data and information

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

2.5. Project management

STANDARD: The evaluation was conducted without shifts to scheduled project milestones and timeframes

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

3. Report

3.1. Report was well-structured and presentation was clear and complete in each of these areas

STANDARD: Executive summary captured key components of the report appropriately

Comment and Analysis

There was not an executive summary.

Rating 1

STANDARD: The context of the development intervention was explicit and presented as relevant to the evaluation

Comment and Analysis

The importance of education was appropriately highlighted.

Rating 3

STANDARD: There was a clear rationale for the evaluation questions**Comment and Analysis**

The client seemed to have expressed this clearly.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The scope or focus of the evaluation was apparent in the report**Comment and Analysis**

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: A detailed methodology was outlined in the relevant section of a report (full report or 1/3/25) to the point that a reader could understand the data collection, analysis and interpretation**Comment and Analysis**

The evaluation methodology was clearly articulated.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Key findings were presented in a clear way; they were made distinct from uncertain or speculative findings; and unused data was not presented in the body of the report**Comment and Analysis**

The findings were clearly outlined and qualified.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Conclusions and recommendations were clear and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

The conclusions were clear and concise.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Acknowledgement of limitations of all aspects of the methodology and findings were clearly and succinctly articulated

Comment and Analysis

Limitations about the data quality were clearly expressed.

Rating 5

3.2. Writing and presentation

STANDARD: *Quality of writing and presentation was adequate for publication including: adequate layout and consistent formatting; complete sentences and no widespread grammatical or typographical errors; consistency of style and writing conventions (e.g. tense, perspective (first person, third person); levels of formality; references complete and consistent with cited references in reference list and vice versa; etc)*

Comment and Analysis

It was a good quality report overall.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *Appropriate conventions were used in presentation of data (e.g. use of appropriate statistical language; reporting of p-values where appropriate; not reporting statistically insignificant findings as significant; clarifying disaggregation categories in constructing percentages; not using quantitative language in reporting qualitative data, etc.)*

Comment and Analysis

Reporting of statistics is clear and user-friendly and clearly targeted at facilitating changes where required.

Rating 4

3.3. Presentation of findings

STANDARD: *The use of figures and tables was such that it supported communication and comprehension of results; and data reported in figures and tables was readily discernible and useful to a reader familiar with data presentation conventions*

Comment and Analysis

Nine tables and nine figures expounded the text appropriately.

Rating 5

STANDARD: Data analysis appeared to have been well executed

Comment and Analysis

High quality analysis was evident, although the quality of the data was reported to be poor and the process a "nightmare"!

Rating 4

STANDARD: Findings were supported by available evidence

Comment and Analysis

Findings were supported by the evidence.

Rating 4

STANDARD: The evidence gathered was sufficiently and appropriately analysed to support the argument

Comment and Analysis

The evidence gathered was sufficient and appropriately analysed to support the findings.

Rating 4

STANDARD: There was appropriate recognition of the possibility of alternative interpretations

Comment and Analysis

Various interpretations were given at certain points in the report.

Rating 3

STANDARD: The report appeared free of significant methodological and analytic flaws

Comment and Analysis

No methodological or analytical flaws were observed.

Rating 5

3.4. Conclusions

STANDARD: Conclusions were derived from evidence**Comment and Analysis**

Conclusions were explicitly derived from statistical trends.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Conclusions took into account relevant empirical and/or analytic work from related research studies and evaluations**Comment and Analysis**

Although limited, the references to the literature were targeted and appropriate.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions addressed the original evaluation purpose and questions**Comment and Analysis**

The conclusions reflected on the trends identified, as required, with some reservations by the client.

Rating 3

STANDARD: Conclusions were drawn with explicit reference to the intervention logic or theory of change

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating **N/A**

3.5. Recommendations

STANDARD: Recommendations were made in consultation with appropriate sectoral partners or experts

Comment and Analysis

The project Advisory Group provided inputs prior to finalisation of the report.

Rating **4**

STANDARD: Recommendations were shaped following input or review by relevant government officials and other relevant stakeholders

Comment and Analysis

The Advisory Group that provided inputs, comprised officials from the DoE (national and the provincial departments), trade unions, PRAESA, the national association of School Governing Bodies and higher education institutions.

Rating **5**

STANDARD: Recommendations were relevant to the policy context**Comment and Analysis**

The recommendations were relevant to the developmental policy context.

Rating 4

STANDARD: Recommendations were targetted to a specific audience sufficiently - were specific, feasible, affordable and acceptable**Comment and Analysis**

The recommendations were clearly aimed at government and the DBE, but they were not costed and their feasibility was not interrogated.

Rating 3

3.6. Relevant limitations of the evaluation have been noted**STANDARD: Relevant limitations of the evaluation were noted****Comment and Analysis**

Limitations were clearly expressed in terms of the lack of availability of individual learner level data and the varied quality of self-reported data collected from schools and not sufficiently verified at provincial level.

Rating 5

3.7 Protection of participants and risk considerations

STANDARD: *The full report documented procedures intended to ensure confidentiality and to secure informed consent where this was needed (in some cases this is not needed - e.g. evaluation synthesis - in which case N/A should be recorded)*

Comment and Analysis

Participant protection was not required in this instance.

Rating N/A

STANDARD: *There were no risks to participants in disseminating the original report on a public website*

Comment and Analysis

The utilisation of secondary data obviated the need for new respondents.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *There were no unfair risks to institutions in disseminating the original report on a public website*

Comment and Analysis

No risks to institutions were discernible.

Rating 5

4. Follow-up, use and learning

4.1. Presentation to stakeholders

STANDARD: *Results were presented to all relevant stakeholders*

Comment and Analysis

Evidence of presentations was lacking, although a wide range of stakeholders had accessed the results.

Rating 1

4.2. Resource utilisation

STANDARD: *The evaluation was completed within the planned timeframes*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation took somewhat longer than planned owing to data and resource constraints.

Rating 2

STANDARD: *The evaluation was completed within the agreed budget*

Comment and Analysis

Not applicable.

Rating N/A

4.3. Transparency

STANDARD: *The report was publicly available (website or otherwise published document), except where there were legitimate security concerns*

Comment and Analysis

Available on the DBE website at
<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=LIfRGMZxPRg%3D&tabid=422&mid=1261>

Rating 5

4.4. Lessons learnt

STANDARD: *After completion of the evaluation, a reflective process was undertaken by staff responsible for the evaluation to reflect on what could be done to strengthen future evaluations*

Comment and Analysis

There was no evidence that the study was followed by a reflective process in the DBE.

Rating N/A

4.5. Symbolic and conceptual value

STANDARD: *The evaluation study was seen by interviewed stakeholders as having added significant symbolic value to the policy or programme (eg raised its profile)*

Comment and Analysis

The interviewed stakeholders acknowledged that the study added some value to the policy and programme.

Rating 3

STANDARD: *The evaluation study was of conceptual value in understanding what has happened and possibly in shaping policy and practice*

Comment and Analysis

The study was of conceptual value in understanding what has occurred and in the future shaping of policy and practice.

Rating 5

4.6. Utilisation of findings and recommendations

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence of instrumental use - that the recommendations of the evaluation were implemented to a significant extent*

Comment and Analysis

The DBE indicated that the findings had been incorporated into the revised Curriculum Policy Statement. UWC expressed a high level of interest in the findings.

Rating 4

STANDARD: *There was clear evidence that the evaluation has had a positive influence on the evaluand, its stakeholders and beneficiaries over the medium to long term*

Comment and Analysis

The evaluation appeared to have influenced the promotion of use of black African languages in schools.

Rating 3

References

The Status of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in South African Public Schools: A Quantitative Review, DBE, 2010.

List of Interviewees

Ms Rirhandzu Baloyi, Department of Basic Education, telephone interview, 15/1/2013.

Mario Pillay, formerly of the Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand, telephonic and electronic feedback, 17/1/2013.

Mr Justice Libago, Department of Basic Education, electronic feedback, 24/1/2013.