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Student Learning Objectives as Measures of Educator Effectiveness

The Basics



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Student Learning Objectives as Measures of Educator Effectiveness The Basics

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Lisa Lachlan-Haché, Ed.D.
Ellen Cushing
Lauren Bivona



1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007-3835
800.356.2735 | 202.403.5000

www.air.org

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AIR is working with states and districts across the country to improve teacher evaluation and feedback. Our work is focused on designing systems of educator evaluation and compensation that incorporate multiple measures of performance and, in particular, measures of student growth. In this work, student learning objectives (SLOs) have emerged as a novel approach to measuring student growth, particularly for the majority of educators not covered by a state standardized assessment (Prince et al., 2009). In this paper, we offer some ideas for states and districts that are considering the use of SLOs to measure student growth, including a basic description of SLOs, highlights of the SLO development process, and a discussion of their function within the evaluation cycle. For more detailed discussions of SLO implementation, benefits, challenges, and potential solutions, see the other papers in this series: *Implementing Student Learning Objectives: Core Elements for Sustainability* and *Student Learning Objectives: Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions*.

SLOs are required, recommended, or identified as an example of student growth in nearly half of U.S. states.

Introduction to SLOs and SLO Development

Student learning objectives are a set of goals that measure educators' progress in achieving student growth targets.¹

In short, educators or educator teams establish learning targets for groups of students based on available data; monitor student growth toward the targets; and, at the end of an agreed-upon time period, determine the degree to which students meet the targets (see Appendix A for three SLO examples). Evaluators support this work by approving the SLO, engaging in midcourse reviews, reviewing the SLO, and scoring the final results.²

The **SLO development process** promotes reflective teaching practice by requiring that educators:

- review standards
- identify core concepts and student needs
- set goals for students
- monitor student progress
- examine outcome data to determine next steps

What is a growth target?

The *growth target* of an SLO focuses on the expected learning at the end of the instructional period. Here is a basic example:

All students that scored between 52 and 65 percent on the baseline assessments will need to show average growth of at least 24 or more percentage points on the social studies learning standards, as measured by the district's summative assessment.

¹ The term “educator” is used throughout this document to refer to individual teachers, school administrators, or teams of teachers or administrators that participate in the SLO process. Furthermore, we use the term “growth” purposefully while acknowledging that there are states and districts that allow SLOs to demonstrate “attainment” (e.g., a certain percentage of students reach a designated level of proficiency).

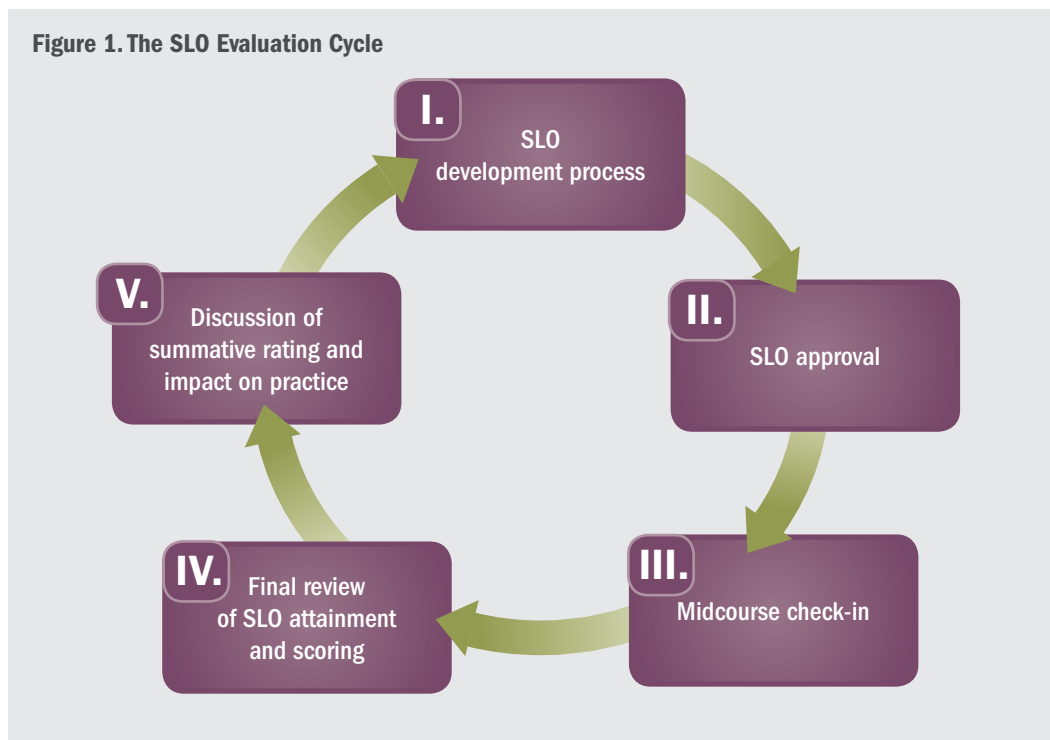
² In many cases, evaluators are principals, although some districts provide SLO leaders who serve as SLO evaluators.

The **SLO evaluation cycle** streamlines these actions into a deliberate process that can formalize good educator practice (What Works Clearinghouse, 2011).

The cycle outlines the overall sequence of five events that start with the development of the SLO and end with the final review, scoring, and discussion of the SLO (see Figure 1). The SLO evaluation cycle begins with the development of the SLO by the educator. The designated evaluator must approve the SLO, in many cases using a rubric, framework, or checklist to support consistent reviews. During the year, the evaluator and educator meet for a midcourse check-in, discuss the educator's progress toward meeting the objectives, and reflect on necessary instructional adjustments. In the rare case that one or more SLOs need modification (due to high student mobility, for example), the educator can make revisions. At the end of the course, the educator provides organized student progress data, and the evaluator reviews the SLOs and assigns an overall SLO rating. The SLO rating is then combined with other performance measures to determine an overall summative evaluation rating.

A CRITICAL NOTE:

- SLOs, when used in educator evaluation, typically cover the entire course of instruction rather than outcomes for one unit.
- SLOs differ from individualized education programs (IEPs) in that they generally apply to all students or subgroups of students.
- The students covered under an SLO are often representative of the teacher's schedule. For example, if a science teacher teaches four sections of biology and two sections of earth science, two SLOs might be used. The first would cover the biology classes and the second would cover the earth science classes.



The educator and evaluator then discuss the rating and identify appropriate next steps to inform the SLO development process for the next year and to support the educator in refining and improving instructional practice overall. Throughout the cycle (as illustrated by the arrows in Figure 1), teachers interact with one another and with their students to determine the best instructional strategies that will facilitate student growth. Reflecting on instructional practice is a critical step for ensuring that the SLO process supports student growth.

District timelines for the SLO evaluation cycle are an especially useful tool for helping educators grasp how SLOs will affect their year. An example from Austin Independent School District is available in Appendix B. In the following sections, the SLO development process is explained in detail, then the remaining four steps of the SLO evaluation cycle are outlined.

I. SLO development process

Though SLOs take on a variety of shapes and forms, the following five steps generally outline the first part of the SLO evaluation cycle, the SLO development process.

STEP 1: Identify Core Concepts and Standards

The development process begins with an educator or a team of educators identifying the main content and standards for their grade or subject. In this step, the educator articulates the major concepts or skills that students will gain during the course. The content and standards should represent the essential learning of the course, such as key skills or overarching content, and the specific national or state standard(s) that align with that content. Content should be broad enough to represent the most important learning in the course, but narrow enough to be measured through one or more summative assessments.

STEP 2: Gather and Analyze Student Data

Gather baseline and trend data. SLOs are based on a clear understanding of the student population under the educator's charge. In this step, educators gather baseline and trend data to better understand how well prepared their students are for the content covered in the course. These data should include multiple sources, such as end-of-year data from the previous year, baseline data from district assessments, pretest data, student work samples, and benchmark tests or unit tests that address similar standards. Some states and districts also recommend using additional data including student transiency rates,

SLO development generally includes the following five steps:

1. Identify core content and standards
2. Gather and analyze student data
3. Determine the focus of the SLO
4. Select or develop an assessment
5. Develop a growth target and rationale

SLOs come in a variety of forms as follows:

Course-Level SLOs—focused on the entire student population for a given course, which often includes multiple classes

Class-Level SLOs—focused on the student population in a given class

Targeted Student SLOs—separate SLOs for subgroups of students that need specific support

Targeted Content SLOs—separate SLOs for specific skills or content that students must master

Tiered Targets—often used within a course- or class-level SLO to set differentiated targets for the range of student abilities

pass/fail rates from earlier courses, and attendance rates. Some districts and states provide lists of approved data sources for use in SLO development. An example from the Georgia Department of Education is provided in Appendix C. After identifying curricular priorities and gathering baseline data, the educator is prepared to conduct a detailed analysis.

Conduct an analysis of student data. This step helps the educator determine the current level of student learning and the potential for growth. The educator analyzes his or her current students' data to identify trends in student performance and preassessment skills and knowledge (e.g., What level of prerequisite knowledge and interest do my current students have?). The educator can also review past students' data to identify growth trends specific to the SLO course (e.g., What is the average amount of growth attained in this course? Are there specific skills or content strands that particularly challenge students?). Based on the data analysis, the educator can decide which knowledge or skills the SLO(s) will target.

To aid in this step, it may be helpful to think about three groups of students: those who are prepared to access the course content, those who are not prepared (need some remediation), and those who are very well prepared (and may be in need of some enrichment). Educators can organize student data into a useful chart for this step. A modified example from the state of Ohio is available in Appendix D.

STEP 3: Determine the Focus of the SLO

Identify the student population of focus for the SLO. SLOs can focus on a single class, multiple class periods, or subgroups of students. Targeted objectives allow educators to address specific subpopulations that need attention regarding a particular standard or topic. The review of assessment data may highlight trends for a subset of students on a similar trajectory or may reveal specific content that a whole class finds challenging. The first instance may lead to a targeted student SLO, while the second instance may lead to a targeted content SLO.

This step requires educators to articulate why they have chosen a particular group of students or a narrow set of skills or content as a focus of their SLO. For example, if an analysis shows that 80 percent of a class is weaker in a necessary skill, but 20 percent of students have already mastered the skill, an educator might create one SLO for the students who are struggling in the skill and a separate SLO for the students who have already mastered the skill. Another approach is to create an SLO that applies to everyone in the class that has tiered targets or separate learning goals for different subgroups of students.

Determine the interval of instruction. SLOs can cover an entire school year, a quarter, a trimester, or a semester.³ Educators set the interval of instruction based on their course structure. Districts may also set requirements for educators regarding the interval of instruction when state or district timelines for evaluation results conflict with course structure. For example, some states require evaluation data to be submitted in March, prior to the administration of most end-of-course assessments. In such cases, educators write their SLOs for semesters or trimesters—with the interval of instruction focused more on meeting the needs of the evaluation cycle than on showing growth over the entire year.

STEP 4: Select or Develop an Assessment

Valid and reliable assessments of student achievement are necessary for maintaining SLO rigor. In this step, educators indicate which summative assessments will be used to assess student learning at the end of the interval of instruction and consider which formative assessments will be used to track progress and make midcourse adjustments.

Educators often choose their assessments based on guidance from the state or district. This guidance ensures that rigorous assessment standards are applied to educators uniformly. When multiple educators adopt the same SLO, it is advisable that all educators use the same assessment measure(s) to ensure that student progress is measured the same way and under the same testing conditions. For the purposes of SLO development, many states and districts recommend team-developed tests and advise educators to avoid using tests developed by an individual teacher.

A CRITICAL NOTE:

SLOs are only as good as the baseline, trend, and assessment data upon which they are built. If these forms of data are invalid or unreliable, the growth target and SLO will be compromised.

³ To improve the comparability between teachers, a standardized interval of instruction is recommended. To improve comparability between student growth measures, yearlong SLOs are recommended.

Growth targets should be considered estimates and handled with a degree of caution during the early years of implementation. Educators may set targets that are too ambitious (and unachievable) or too low (and insufficiently challenging for teachers and students), resulting in misleading evaluation results. To support educators and their evaluators in building their skill in setting and judging growth targets, states and districts can provide explicit guidance and training. Training should include how to identify student trends through data analysis, how to set appropriate growth expectations based on data, and how to identify appropriate formative and summative assessments and their limitations.

Assessment options may include:

- Performance-based assessments, such as presentations, projects, and tasks graded with a rubric.
- Portfolios of student work, with samples throughout the year that illustrate knowledge and skills before and after a learning experience. A rubric is also needed for this type of assessment.
- State exams when value-added or standardized student growth scores are not available.
- Nationally normed tests.
- Educator, school-created, or district-created tests.

Educators should identify assessments that are:

- Aligned to national or state standards and to the SLO growth target (meaning that they measure the skills or content addressed by the SLO).
- Reliable, meaning that they produce accurate and consistent results.
- Valid, meaning that they measure what they are designed to measure.
- Realistic in terms of the time required for administration.

STEP 5: Develop a Growth Target and Rationale

In this final step of the SLO development process, educators must understand assessment data and identify student achievement trends to set rigorous yet realistic student growth targets. In this step, the educator writes specific growth targets for students that align

with state or national standards, district priorities, and course objectives. These growth targets can include specific indicators of growth (e.g., percentage correct or number of questions answered correctly) that demonstrate an increase in learning between two points in time. The target can be tiered for students in the classroom to allow all students to demonstrate growth or it can apply to all students in a class, grade, or subject. Table 1 provides examples of teacher-developed growth targets.

Table 1. Examples of Teacher-Developed Growth Targets

Invalid SLO Growth Targets	Potentially Valid SLO Growth Targets	
<p>Eighty percent of students will pass the end-of-course exam.</p> <p>Note: This is an invalid growth target because it does not show growth and instead focuses on student attainment.</p>	<p>All of my students will progress at least one fitness level on the FitnessGram during the fall semester.</p>	
<p>Students scoring 80 or lower on the preassessment will increase their scores by at least 10 points. Any students scoring 81 or higher on the preassessment will maintain their scores.</p> <p>Note: This is a poorly constructed growth target for two reasons: 1) teachers must aim to bring students up to proficiency, so those students scoring a 50 need to make greater gains than only 10 points to reach or come close to reaching proficiency; 2) teachers must aim to grow all students; in this course-level SLO, those students scoring high on the preassessment need to be challenged with a higher goal and an additional assessment to illustrate their growth may have to be added.</p>	<p>Using the American Government preassessment, all students will meet their target score:</p>	
	Preassessment Baseline Score Range	Target Score on End-of-Year Portfolio
	30–40	70
	41–50	80
	51–70	90
	71–85	90 plus a score of 85 or higher on capstone project
	86–95	95 plus a score of 90 or higher on capstone project

Explain the rationale for the growth

target. High-quality SLOs include strong justifications for why the growth target is appropriate and achievable for the group of students. In this step, educators provide precise and concise statements that describe student needs and explain in detail how the baseline and trend data informed the development of the growth target(s). When applicable, rationales should also connect with school and district goals or priorities and can include instructional strategies used to achieve SLO goals.

Additional SLO resources, including examples, checklists, and timelines, are provided in Appendix G.

A Note on Instructional Strategies:

Some SLO templates also include information on how the educator will achieve growth targets in the classroom by requiring that teachers identify the instructional strategies they will use during the SLO interval of instruction. Although critical to the SLO process, some educators feel that such detail is better left for professional learning community conversations and lesson planning and is not necessary for the SLO template. Regardless of where instructional strategies are noted, through conversation or on the SLO template, SLOs will only be useful if they inform educator performance. SLOs will not change the quality of instruction if they remain inactive documents disconnected from action. Therefore, conversation and thought around how the SLO is enacted are essential.

II. SLO approval

A Step for Educators: Prepare to submit the SLO. To submit the SLO for approval, many states and districts recommend educators submit not just the completed SLO document, but also each chosen assessment used to measure growth in the SLO. Some evaluators are not familiar with all assessments and need access to make an informed decision. After submitting, educators should ideally receive feedback on the SLO from their evaluator or an SLO review team within one week. If the SLO is not approved, the educator should be given a short window to make appropriate changes and then resubmit the SLO for review. Districts and states can streamline this process by providing evaluators forms for reviewing the SLOs and giving feedback or approval to educators.

A Step for the Evaluator: Review guidance materials and the SLO. Educators may be asked or required to submit SLO materials prior to the SLO conference. Materials may include a student needs assessment, baseline and trend data, and assessments used in the SLO. Evaluators will review the SLO to assure that all required elements are complete. Evaluators should generate notes about the SLOs prior to the conference and include clarifying questions that will support a quality approval process.

A Step for the Educator and the Evaluator: Schedule and engage in the SLO conference. Once the SLO has been submitted for final approval, the educator and evaluator should discuss it. All SLOs must be finalized early enough in the school year so that the educator has sufficient time to develop them and then work toward achieving their growth targets. This is particularly true for educators whose interval of instruction is a semester, trimester, or quarter. To reduce the time burden on educators and evaluators, these conferences can be conducted in conjunction with another meeting, such as a postobservation conference.

III. Midcourse check-in

Establish and prepare for midcourse check-ins. Follow-up conversations between the educator and evaluator can be useful throughout the year. During these meetings, educators should meet with their evaluator and discuss how they are progressing toward achieving their SLOs.⁴ These conversations will be particularly useful in the early years of SLO implementation as educators reflect on the growth targets they have set for their students. If the targets are too easy or too hard, the educator and evaluator should discuss how they can create more appropriate targets for future years. During this conversation, the educator and evaluator should also discuss any extenuating circumstances that might cause the educator to modify his or her SLO. While this modification should only occur on rare occasions, there are situations where it is appropriate, such as a change in teaching assignment, a significant influx or exodus of students, or a major event impacting instruction (e.g., relocation of students to another facility).

While SLO check-ins are important, we recognize that educators and evaluators are busy. To reduce the scheduling burden, educators and evaluators should consider meeting for their midcourse check-ins in conjunction with other meetings.

⁴ Formative data are an integral component of these conversations.

IV. Final review of SLO attainment and scoring

A Step for the Educator and the Evaluator: Prepare for final SLO review and scoring. At the end of the interval of instruction, educators and evaluators review the data from the SLO to see if the growth targets were met. The SLO scoring process often requires different tasks for the educator and evaluator. **A Step for Educators:** Prior to the end-of-year review, educators can make the process more efficient by collecting relevant information and compiling it in a useful way. Having all student work or other documentation clearly organized and final student scores summarized saves valuable time and reduces paperwork. **A Step for Evaluators:** While student performance data are a necessary component of this process, evaluators may want to consider asking educators to complete an end-of-year reflection that addresses the attainment of student targets (e.g., How would I describe my students' progress this year? What evidence do I have that my students made progress this year?) as well as the educator's experience with the SLO process (e.g., Do I fully understand the SLO process or do I need additional guidance on some aspect of the SLO process prior to next year? How did the SLO process help me grow as an educator?). An example reflection document is available in Appendix F. After receiving the review documents, evaluators then need time to review SLO data and make decisions around scoring and feedback. This is a critical phase of the process that can be time-consuming and may require meetings across evaluators to assure consistency in both scoring and feedback. School- and/or district-level calibration sessions should be considered at this juncture.

Ultimately, all steps in the SLO evaluation cycle can lead to reflection, collaboration, and the improvement of educator practice.

V. Discussion of summative rating and its impact on practice

Evaluators should come prepared to the final SLO meeting having reviewed the educator's materials and completed the scoring guide to determine the educator's summative performance on the SLOs. Following these steps, the meeting with the educator should focus on the summative rating and lessons learned from the process. In the early stages of implementation, these lessons may focus on the quality of the baseline data, the validity of the assessment, or the accuracy of the growth target. The discussion should also address aspects of the educator's performance that were valuable for improving student learning as well as those aspects that could be improved. Conversations around which instructional practices produce student learning and which need refinement can lead to improved practice and greater gains in student learning. For this critical piece of the SLO process, districts and states can offer evaluators conversation templates, prompts, and other resources to support more consistent and high-quality conversations with educators. Training sessions can be used to support evaluators as well, offering opportunities for evaluators to practice providing critical feedback in a safe and supportive environment.

SLOs as a Measure of Both Student Growth and Teacher Effectiveness

At AIR, we believe that SLOs can offer a clear connection between instruction, assessment, and student data. SLOs also create a common vision for educators by integrating district, school, and teaching team goals. The rich discussions that occur during and after SLO development can improve the instruction teachers provide to their students, which is key to boosting student learning. While not without challenges, the SLO process has the potential to support states and districts as they navigate federal and state requirements to include measures of student growth in all educator evaluations.

In conclusion, the most important aspect of SLOs is their potential to support educators in setting high expectations for themselves and their students. Within evaluation, SLOs can promote collaboration, build assessment literacy, and focus educators on student data. That being said, successful implementation requires much more than the basics outlined here. For a discussion on SLO benefits, challenges, and potential approaches to addressing common SLO challenges, see *Student Learning Objectives: Benefits, Challenges, and Solutions*. For more information on implementing SLOs at the state and district levels, see *Implementing Student Learning Objectives: Core Elements for Sustainability*.

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Appendix A

SLO Examples

SLOs can be adapted to meet the specific context of any state or district. Early SLO implementers have capitalized on the adaptability of SLOs and use them to meet the objectives of their specific evaluation system. Indiana, New York, and Ohio all include similar information in their SLO templates; however, the unique versions of each state template subtly illustrate each state's context and policies.

Indiana

Indiana uses SLOs within the RISE evaluation system. Indiana not only requires a class-level SLO, but also mandates that educators create a second, targeted SLO that focuses solely on the lowest performing students in the class. In the SLO, the objective is the range of students that score at or above a particular score on their subject-level assessment. Teachers determine their SLO performance levels based on the number of students that perform within a certain range.

Indiana Example

Teacher(s): Elementary Music Education Teacher

Prework: Step 1	Approved Assessment	Assesment: <i>Teacher Created Rubric Assessment</i>			
	Approved Mastery Score	Score: 6 out of 9 Rubric Points			
Prework: Step 2	Level of Student Preparedness	High— 5 students Medium— 12 students Low— 4 students			
		Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)
Step 3: Class Learning Objective		Exceptional number of students achieve content mastery	Significant number of students achieve content mastery	Less than significant number of students achieve content mastery	Few students achieve content mastery
		At least 20 out of 21 students achieve a score of 6 or higher on the Music Mastery Rubric.	Fewer than 13 of 21 students achieve a score of 6 or higher on the Music Mastery Rubric.	At least 13 of 21 students achieve a score of 6 or higher on the Music Mastery Rubric.	At least 18 of 21 students achieve a score of 6 or higher on the Music Mastery Rubric.

Teacher(s): Elementary Music Teacher

Prework: Step 1	Approved Assessment	Assesment: <i>Music Reading Assessment</i>			
Prework: Step 2	Level of Student Preparedness	Low (pulled from class above): 4 Students			
Step 3: Class Learning Objective		Highly Effective (4)	Effective (3)	Improvement Necessary (2)	Ineffective (1)
		Surpassed goal or otherwise demonstrated outstanding student mastery or progress	Met goal or otherwise demonstrated significant student mastery or progress	Did not fully meet goal, but showed some student mastery or progress.	Did not meet goal, little to no student mastery or progress.
		Targeted Population: Students who start the course at the lowest level of preparedness as identified in Step 2 4 Students Targeted IN Content Standards: Standard 5 – Responding to Music: Reading, Notating and Interpreting Music Growth and/or Mastery Goal: 3 out of 4 targeted students will achieve a score of 20 out of 25 or higher on the Music Reading Assessment.			

Source: Indiana Department of Education, 2012

New York

Local autonomy and decision-making power is important for districts. As a result, New York has approved four different methods that districts can allow their schools to use for writing, approving, and scoring SLOs. New York requires that all SLOs be graded using a scale of 0–20 points and provides multiple options for educators to frame SLOs and evaluators to score them, including:

- Using **evaluator judgment** to assess if the target was met
- Using district-determined rating scales with a **mastery target**
- Using district-determined rating scales with **tiered targets**
- Using a **matrix** to assess attainment of student-specific targets

New York Example

Population	<p><i>These are the students assigned to the course section(s) in this SLO—all students who are assigned to the course section(s) must be included in the SLO. (Full class rosters of all students must be provided for all included course sections.)</i></p> <p>8th grade Spanish: All students in a class of 22; 2 are students with IEPs who receive special education services.</p> <p>Note: One student is receiving home-tutoring and is not participating in the baseline.</p>
Learning Content	<p><i>What is being taught over the instructional period covered? Common Core/national/state standards? Will this goal apply to all standards applicable to a course or just to specific priority standards?</i></p> <p>New York State Learning Standards for LOTE with a focus on the following standards:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Standard 1: Students will be able to use a language other than English for communication.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Standard 2: Students will develop cross-cultural skills and understanding.</p> <p>New York State P–12 Common Core Learning Standards for ELA & Literacy, as they pertain to Spanish language and culture studies with a focus on the following standards:</p> <p>Reading Standards</p> <p>RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.</p> <p>Writing Standards</p> <p>W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p>W.8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>Speaking and Listening Standards</p> <p>SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and educator-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues (see state syllabus for modern languages at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/lotel/pub/modernl.pdf) building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p>Language Standards (relevant to the target language and culture)</p> <p>L.8.3 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.</p>

Interval of Instructional Time	<p><i>What is the instructional period covered (if not a year, rationale for semester/quarter/etc.)?</i></p> <p>September 2011–June 2012</p>
Evidence	<p><i>What specific assessment(s) will be used to measure this goal?</i></p> <p>The assessment must align to the learning content of the course.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A regionally developed assessment based on the June 2010 proficiency exam (listening, reading, and writing components only) will be used as a diagnostic assessment. 2. A regionally developed Foreign Languages Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors (FLACS) summative assessment will be administered on June 18, 2012. <p><i>Offers accommodations as legally required and appropriate?</i></p> <p>Yes; students' IEPs and 504 plans will be followed, as applicable.</p> <p><i>Ensures that those with vested interest are not scoring summative assessments?</i></p> <p>Yes; summative assessments will be scored by another educator in my school/district following my district's rules.</p>
Baseline	<p><i>What is the starting level of students' knowledge of the learning content at the beginning of the instructional period?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 95% (21 students) of my students completed Spanish 7; however, all students did not have results from 2010–11 Spanish 7 that showed mastery of instructed grammar and vocabulary. Results from 2010–11 also illustrate that many students continue to struggle with successful communication, particularly with regards to listening, speaking, reading, and writing for the purposes of communication. 2. Scores ranged from 57% to 100% in this class section on the diagnostic assessment, which my district uses as a baseline for all Spanish 8 students. <p>See breakdown:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 9/21 scored between 57%–70% b. 8/21 scored between 71%–80% c. 4/21 scored between 89%–95%
Target(s)	<p><i>What is the expected outcome (target) of students' level of knowledge of the learning content at the end of the instructional period?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students who scored 57–70% on the baseline assessment will show mastery of at least 85% of the Spanish 8 learning standards, as measured by the district's summative assessment in June 2012. 2. Students who scored 71–80% on the baseline assessment will show mastery of at least 90% of the Spanish 8 learning standards, as measured by the district's summative assessment in June 2012. 3. Students who scored 89% or above on the baseline assessment will show mastery of at least 95% of the Spanish 8 learning standards, as measured by the district's summative assessment in June 2012. <p>90% of students will meet or exceed their differentiated targets for this SLO.</p>

HEDI Scoring	<p>How will evaluators determine what range of student performance “meets” the goal (effective) versus “well below” (ineffective), “below” (developing), and “well above” (highly effective)?</p> <p>Highly Effective: 94–100% of students meet or exceed their differentiated targets for this SLO. Effective: 80–93% of students meet or exceed their differentiated targets for this SLO. Developing: 65–79% of students meet or exceed their differentiated targets for this SLO. Ineffective: 64% or less of students meet or exceed their differentiated targets for this SLO.</p>																			
	HIGHLY EFFECTIVE			EFFECTIVE						DEVELOPING						INEFFECTIVE				
	20-100	19-98	18-96	17-93	16-92	15-91	14-90	13-89	12-87	11-85	10-83	9-82	8-79	7-78	6-76	5-73	4-69	3-65	2-61	1-56
99	97	94					88	86	84		80			77	75	72	68	64	60	0
Rationale	<p>Describe the reasoning behind the choices regarding learning content, evidence, and target and how they will be used together to prepare students for future growth and development in subsequent grades/courses, as well as college and career readiness.</p> <p>All 8th grade students are required to pass Spanish I. As of last year, that was not accomplished, and many of the students in this current cohort who did pass their prior Spanish course did not achieve mastery of the material required. Many students entered this course struggling with successful communication, particularly with regards to listening, speaking, reading, and writing for the purposes of communication. As a result, a new software program is currently in use to support targeted interventions in listening, reading, and writing in order to improve comprehension and retention levels for all students. This software provides me with regular formative assessment data regarding the progress of each student and allows me to provide targeted supports based on individualized needs. By focusing on improvements in comprehension and retention, students will have a strong baseline foundation in Spanish, which is required in order to be prepared for future course work that builds directly on the material covered this year. Students will be assessed, using a district-developed assessment, in 3 of the 4 tasks (listening, reading, and writing) required for completion of one unit of study at Checkpoint A as prescribed by the NYS LOTE standards. This assessment will adequately measure if students are ready for the next level of learning in Spanish. Aligning instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards will also prepare students for continued study in their native language and a foreign language.</p>																			

Source: Albrycht, 2012

Ohio

Ohio requires a more detailed set of information in the SLO. For example, when discussing the baseline data, it is requested that the educator provide an overview of the assessment used, including the number of questions, the format of the test, and the general analysis of the findings. For the student population, it is requested that the educator include the students covered as well as the students omitted, with a rationale as to why those students were not included.

Ohio Example

Educator Name: Mr. Smith

Content Area and Course(s): American Government, Social Studies

Grade Level(s): 11

Academic Year: 2012–13

Please use the guidance provided in addition to this template to develop components of the student learning objective and populate each component in the space below.

<p>Baseline and Trend Data</p>	<p><i>What information is being used to inform the creation of the SLO and establish the amount of growth that should take place?</i></p> <p>Results of a district-created pre-assessment comprised of 50 multiple-choice questions and an essay show that students' background knowledge of American government varies. Pretest scores ranged from 20 to 95. Most students demonstrated a basic understanding of the structure and functions of government and public policy. Few students demonstrated an understanding of the basic principles of the U.S. Constitution and how the government and economy are interrelated. Given a document-based essay question, most students were able to cite evidence to support their discussions but tended to rely on one or two sources; this finding is consistent with a review of essays contained in student portfolios from last year's history course. Last year and in the pre-assessment essay, students struggled to evaluate evidence for point of view and content.</p>
<p>Student Population</p>	<p><i>Which students will be included in this SLO? Include course, grade level, and number of students.</i></p> <p>This SLO covers all 64 of my 11th grade students enrolled in my American Government courses, which I teach during periods 2, 4, and 7. Two of my students have disabilities. I will provide these students with all instructional and assessment accommodations and modifications contained in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).</p> <p>Six of my students are first- and second-year ELL [English language learner] students. I will work with the ELL educator to develop strategies for supporting this group and to create an assessment that is developmentally appropriate for them.</p>
<p>Interval of Instruction</p>	<p><i>What is the duration of the course that the SLO will cover? Include beginning and end dates.</i></p> <p>Students take this course in the fall semester. The interval of instruction is from September 2012 to December 2012.</p>
<p>Standards and Content</p>	<p><i>What content will the SLO target? To what related standards is the SLO aligned?</i></p> <p>The course focuses not only on knowledge of American government but also on reasoning and writing skills related to social studies. My SLO will target key topics in American government as articulated in the Ohio Department of Education's 2010 Academic Content Standards. These topics include civic involvement, civic participation and skills, basic principles of the U.S. Constitution, structure and functions of the federal government, role of the people, Ohio's state and local governments, public policy, and government and the economy. All 16 content statements within these topics are demonstrated by this learning objective. In addition, the SLO aligns with the Common Core State English Language Arts standards for History/Social Studies (RH.11-12.1–RH.11-12.10).</p>

<p>Assessment(s)</p>	<p><i>What assessment(s) will be used to measure student growth for this SLO?</i></p> <p>I will assess students using a district-created portfolio assessment out of 100 points. The portfolio will consist of a district-created end-of-course multiple-choice exam covering the content of the Ohio Academic Content Standards for American Government (50 percent) and three biweekly writing prompts administered in November and graded by the social studies team using a district-created rubric (50 percent). As an end-of-year project, all students must complete a course capstone project. I will use the results of this project as an assessment with my high-achieving students.</p> <p>Per their IEPs, the two students with disabilities will receive extended time for the assessments. One student will receive a scribe for the essays and the other student will have fewer test items listed per page.</p> <p>In consultation with the school's ELL specialist, I will modify the language of the assessment for my ELL students by shortening sentences, removing unnecessary material, using familiar or frequently used words, and using easily understood grammar (i.e., keeping to present tense, using active voice, avoiding conditionals). Based on the learning needs and English literacy of each individual ELL student, I will work with the ELL specialist to modify the requirements of the writing prompts. Possible strategies include allowing students to draw diagrams, having students present their claims and evidence orally, or allowing students to write their essays in their native language.</p>												
<p>Growth Target(s)</p>	<p><i>Considering all available data and content requirements, what growth target(s) can students be expected to reach?</i></p> <p>I have set tiered growth targets for my students. All students will be expected to achieve at least a target score of 70, which is the passing score for my district. Students' scores on the pre-assessment determine their growth target for the end-of-year portfolio assessment.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="532 1052 1325 1304"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="532 1052 829 1115">Baseline Score Range (based on pre-assessment)</th> <th data-bbox="829 1052 1325 1115">Target Score (on end-of-year portfolio)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1115 829 1157">30-40</td> <td data-bbox="829 1115 1325 1157">70</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1157 829 1199">41-50</td> <td data-bbox="829 1157 1325 1199">80</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1199 829 1241">51-70</td> <td data-bbox="829 1199 1325 1241">90</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1241 829 1283">71-85</td> <td data-bbox="829 1241 1325 1283">95 plus a score of 85 or higher on capstone project</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1283 829 1304">86-95</td> <td data-bbox="829 1283 1325 1304">100 plus a score of 90 or higher on capstone project</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Baseline Score Range (based on pre-assessment)	Target Score (on end-of-year portfolio)	30-40	70	41-50	80	51-70	90	71-85	95 plus a score of 85 or higher on capstone project	86-95	100 plus a score of 90 or higher on capstone project
Baseline Score Range (based on pre-assessment)	Target Score (on end-of-year portfolio)												
30-40	70												
41-50	80												
51-70	90												
71-85	95 plus a score of 85 or higher on capstone project												
86-95	100 plus a score of 90 or higher on capstone project												
<p>Rationale for Growth Target(s)</p>	<p><i>What is your rationale for setting the above target(s) for student growth within the interval of instruction?</i></p> <p>I set tiered targets to help ensure that all students will be able to demonstrate developmentally appropriate growth. Students who scored lower on the pre-assessment will be expected to demonstrate more growth in order to meet grade-level expectations. In addition, since the portfolio assessment did not have enough stretch for my highest performing students, I will include the results of a capstone report and presentation to ensure that all students are increasing their knowledge of American government and their ability to articulate reasoned and substantiated arguments related to American government.</p> <p>I am using a portfolio assessment so that students can demonstrate growth in both their understanding of the content and their writing and reasoning skills around social studies. By combining measures, I am targeting deficits in both writing and content knowledge.</p> <p>Finally, the school is focusing on writing across content areas. Since this SLO focuses not only just on content but also on writing and reasoning, it aligns with broader school and district goals.</p>												

Appendix B

Austin Independent School District SLO Timeline

Date	Activity
Aug-Sept	Complete Needs Assessment
Aug-Sept	Determine Team or Individual SLO and Student Group
Sept	Align to Standards and Create Learning Objective
Sept-Oct	Develop/Choose Assessment and Get Approval
Sept-Oct	Analyze and Document Preassessment Results
Sept-Oct	Create Growth Target
October 28	Complete and Submit Both SLOs in Online Database
Sept-Apr	Monitor Student Progress Toward Learning Objective
Nov-Jan	Complete Revision Requests From Principal and/or REACH Team
January 20	New Student Enrollment Cut-Off
Jan 21-Feb 4	Request Your Own Revision
TBD	Administer Postassessments
May 15	Complete Final Submission Form

Source: http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SCI_SLO_Manual.pdf

Appendix C

Georgia Department of Education Data Source Guidance for Determining Growth Targets

Below are some of the districtwide data sources that school systems can review when determining tiered SLO growth targets.

- a. Formative or summative assessments based on SLO's standards
- b. Benchmark tests that focus on SLO's standards
- c. Unit tests from course that assess SLO's standards
- d. Grades from SLO course's performance-based tasks
- e. Student transiency rate for school system (High? Low?)
- f. Pass/fail rate for SLO course for last two years
- g. Percentage of students receiving As, Bs, Cs, Ds, and Fs in course
- h. Attendance rate for school(s) (all classes and SLO course)
- i. Educator surveys detailing student growth predictions and progress
- j. Any formal or informal tests or course assignments with pre- and post-results (growth data)
- k. Tutoring and remediation services provided for course
- l. Percentage of students in SLO course in gifted classes, AP classes, etc.
- m. Acceleration methods for SLO course
- n. State-mandated standardized tests based on SLO's standards
- o. Perception survey data from stakeholders related to SLO course
- p. Any other data that link classroom practices to student achievement

Appendix D

Sample Template for the Analysis of Student Data

Educator: _____

Grade/Subject: _____

Standards Used: _____

School/District Priorities: _____

Content Standard (The actual number of the standard and/or the expectation/topic of that standard)	Assessment (Includes name of assessment, if it is a state assessment or commercially available assessment, and a description of the assessment)	Evidence (Summary of the assessment results including the range of scores, percentage of students that answered questions correctly, etc.)	Student Score Distribution (Note performances of groups of students, either groups of students that performed lower than others on a particular skill, a subgroup that scored exceptionally well, and the students that performed at grade level)	Impact on SLO Development (Note how these data will influence SLO development)

Appendix E

Student Learning Objective (SLO) Template Checklist

This checklist should be used for both writing and approving SLOs. It should be made available to both teachers and evaluators for these purposes. For an SLO to be formally approved, ALL criteria must be met, and every box below will need a check mark completed by an SLO evaluator.

Standards and Content	Baseline and Trend Data	Student Population	Interval of Instruction	Assessment(s)	Growth Target(s)	Rationale for Growth Target(s)
<p>What information is being used to inform the creation of the SLO and establish the amount of growth that should take place within the time period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies sources of information about students (e.g., test scores from prior years, preassessments) <input type="checkbox"/> Draws upon trend data, if available <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes the teacher's analysis of the baseline data by identifying student strengths and weaknesses 	<p>Which students will be included in this SLO? Include course, grade level, and number of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies the class or subgroup of students covered by the SLO <input type="checkbox"/> Describes the student population and considers any contextual factors that may impact student growth <input type="checkbox"/> If subgroups are excluded, explains which students, why they are excluded and if they are covered in another SLO 	<p>What is the duration of the course that the SLO will cover? Include beginning and end dates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Matches the length of the course (e.g., quarter, semester, year) 	<p>What content will the SLO target? To what related standards is the SLO aligned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Specifies how the SLO will address applicable standards from the highest ranking of the following: (1) Common Core State Standards, (2) Ohio Academic Content Standards, or (3) national standards put forth by education organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Represents the big ideas or domains of the content taught during the interval of instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies core knowledge and skills students are expected to attain as required by the applicable standards (if the SLO is targeted) 	<p>What assessment(s) will be used to measure student growth for this SLO?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies assessments that have been reviewed by content experts to effectively measure course content and reliably measure student learning as intended <input type="checkbox"/> Selects measures with sufficient "stretch" so that all students may demonstrate learning, or identifies supplemental assessments to cover all ability levels in the course <input type="checkbox"/> Provides a plan for combining assessments if multiple summative assessments are used <input type="checkbox"/> Follows the guidelines for appropriate assessments 	<p>Considering all available data and content requirements, what growth target(s) can students be expected to reach?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All students in the class have a growth target in at least one SLO <input type="checkbox"/> Uses baseline or pretest data to determine appropriate growth <input type="checkbox"/> Sets developmentally appropriate targets <input type="checkbox"/> Creates tiered targets when appropriate so that all students may demonstrate growth <input type="checkbox"/> Sets ambitious yet attainable targets 	<p>What is your rationale for setting the target(s) for student growth within the interval of instruction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates teacher knowledge of students and content <input type="checkbox"/> Explains why target is appropriate for the population <input type="checkbox"/> Addresses observed student needs <input type="checkbox"/> Uses data to identify student needs and determine appropriate growth targets <input type="checkbox"/> Explains how targets align with broader school and district goals <input type="checkbox"/> Sets rigorous expectations for students and teacher(s)

Appendix F

End-of-Year Reflection for Educators

How would I describe my students' progress this year?

What evidence do I have that my students made progress this year?

Were some groups of students more or less successful than others? If so, why might that be?

Do I fully understand the SLO process?

Do I need additional guidance on some aspect of the SLO process prior to next year?

How did the SLO process help me grow as an educator?

Appendix G

Additional Resources for SLO Examples, Checklists, and Timelines

SLO Examples

Austin
http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SCI_SLO_Examples_2011-12.pdf
Denver
http://sgoinfo.dpsk12.org/
Rhode Island
http://www.ride.ri.gov/educatorquality/educatorevaluation/SLO.aspx
Indiana
http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Learning/Student%20Learning%20Objectives%20Handbook%201%200%20FINAL.pdf
New York
http://engageny.org/news/student-learning-objective-exemplars-from-new-york-state-teachers-are-now-available/
Georgia
http://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/cms/lib/GA01000549/Centricity/Domain/45/SLO_Henry_County_2011_2012_Final.pdf

SLO Checklists and Rubrics for Development and Approval

Austin	
<i>Guide for the Development of Student Learning Objectives</i>	http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SCI_SLO_Guide_2009-2010.pdf
<i>Student Learning Objective Rigor Rubric</i>	http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SCI_SLO_Rubric_2010-11.pdf
Denver	
<i>Rubric for Rating the Quality of Objectives</i>	http://static.dpsk12.org/gems/sgo/RubricforRatingSGOs.docx
<i>Checklist for Developing Objectives— Teacher</i>	http://sgoinfo.dpsk12.org
Rhode Island	
<i>Guide to Educators: Writing Student Learning Objectives</i>	http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Docs/Guide_For_Teachers_Writing_Student_Learning_Objectives.pdf
<i>Indicators of a Strong SLO</i>	http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Docs/Indicators_of_a_Strong_SLO.pdf
Ohio	
<i>Student Learning Objective (SLO) Template Checklist</i>	http://education.ohio.gov/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=127093

SLO Timelines and Other Supporting Documents

Austin	
<i>SLO Timeline 2012–2013</i>	http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SC1_SLO_Manual.pdf (see page 5)
<i>SLO Worksheet</i>	http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/initiatives/compensation/docs/SC1_SLO_Worksheet_2010-11.pdf
Denver	
<i>Objective Worksheet</i>	http://static.dpsk12.org/gems/sgo/WritingObjectivesWorksheet.doc
Rhode Island	
<i>Writing Student Learning Objectives—Video for Teachers</i>	http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/Docs/Student_Learning_Objectives_Webinar_For_Teachers.wmv
Indiana	
<i>Step 1: Pre-Approval for School Based Assessments</i>	http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Learning/Assessment%20Approval%20Forms.pdf
<i>Step 2: Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels</i>	http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/DOK_Chart.pdf
<i>Step 3: Set Student Learning Objective (Class)</i>	http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Learning/Step%203%20Forms%201_0.docx
<i>Step 4: Mid-Course Check-in (Optional)</i>	http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Learning/Step%204%20Form%201_0%20(optional).docx
<i>Step 5: End-of-Course Review</i>	http://www.riseindiana.org/sites/default/files/files/Student%20Learning/Step%205%20Form%201_0.docx
New York	
<i>New York State Student Learning Objective Template</i>	http://engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-student-learning-objective-template/
Ohio	
<i>Introduction to Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)</i>	http://education.ohio.gov/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=131648
<i>Student Learning Objective (SLO) Template</i>	http://education.ohio.gov/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=127233
<i>Guidance on Selecting Assessments for Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)</i>	http://education.ohio.gov/GD/DocumentManagement/DocumentDownload.aspx?DocumentID=131878

About American Institutes for Research

Established in 1946, with headquarters in Washington, D.C., and offices across the country, American Institutes for Research (AIR) is an independent, nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization that conducts behavioral and social science research and delivers technical assistance both domestically and internationally in the areas of health, education, and workforce productivity. As one of the largest behavioral and social science research organizations in the world, AIR is committed to empowering communities and institutions with innovative solutions to the most critical education, health, workforce, and international development challenges.

AIR currently stands as a national leader in teaching and learning improvement, providing the research, assessment, evaluation, and technical assistance to ensure that all students—particularly those facing historical disadvantages—have access to a high-quality, effective education.

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The AIR Performance Management Advantage, which falls under the larger umbrella of AIR's Educator Talent Management services and resources, is a service line built on a six-step process designed to support a district or state in designing, developing, implementing, and assessing its educator evaluation system.



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1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
800.356.2735 | 202.403.5000

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