



## Your Virtual **PERA Coach**

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Dear Illinois Educator,

Happy New Year! Although it is cold outside, we know you are staying warm running to keep up with your performance evaluation process and timelines. Integrating the student growth component for full implementation is new to most districts this year. Therefore, this issue of the PERA Coach focuses on student growth and the use of student learning objectives (SLOs); a frequently requested area for additional guidance.

We will provide you with a detailed example created by Diana Zaleski of what the SLO process looks like when using the state's guiding questions and statements. Dr. Zaleski outlines the three steps involved in collecting and analyzing data. We also give you reminders and suggestions regarding reflective conversations centered around student growth.

Also in this issue, we shine a spotlight on the Ball-Chatham Unit School District #5. The continuous improvement process they use in creating and refining their performance evaluation system is a prominent feature. In addition, some of the forms and documents used in the Ball-Chatham district are shared so you can modify and use parts that may be applicable to your own district.

We hope you will find all of the concrete examples and sample documents featured in this issue to be helpful as you continue to examine your own district's practice in your performance evaluation journey. Keep in mind, these samples and examples are a small part of a larger evaluation plan. Each evaluation plan has been locally created in each school district based on discussion and consideration of local needs, culture, climate and context. Samples are provided as a resource but should not be considered to be competing with the expectations and requirements of locally developed plans.

Sincerely,

The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council

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# STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## An Annotated Student Learning Objective (SLO) Example\*

By Diana Zaleski, Ph.D.

The SLO process uses a template that contains guiding questions and statements. This example includes a sample of these guiding questions and statements from the [state template](#).

### General Information

Academic Year	2016-2017
Educator Name	Example Teacher
Course/Subject	English I
Grade Level(s)	Grade 9
Interval of Instruction	8/22/16 - 10/21/16

### Learning Goal

A learning goal is a description of what students will be able to do at the end of a specified period of time aligned to appropriate learning standards. The learning goal is one overarching concept or skill that is representative of typical student learning.

\*PEAC Note- the interval of instruction will vary based on the learning goal

Describe the learning goal.	Students will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Summarize the instructional strategies used to teach the learning goal.	The teacher will provide weekly opportunities for students to practice writing formal essays that include opportunities for self- and peer-assessment and revision.

This example uses a ninth grade anchor standard from the Illinois State Standards. These anchor standards are great examples of ready-made learning goals. In addition, the teacher specifies that students will revise their work. Revision provides students with an opportunity to apply the feedback that the teacher provides and learn from his or her mistakes.

### Assessments

Assessment and evaluation procedures should be used to measure the learning goal. [Illinois Administrative Code Part 50](#) allows teachers to use different assessments that measure the same content over multiple points in time. Therefore, assessments (i.e., tests, writing tasks, projects, labs, performances, etc.) that are already embedded in a teachers' instruction will provide the most meaningful and timely data.

Describe the assessment and evaluation procedures that measure students' understanding of the learning goal.	Weekly student essays (Type III) will be collected in portfolios. In addition, students will complete a research project (Type II) that includes a formal essay on a topic of interest that they selected and researched. A common rubric will be used to evaluate student progress over time. *PEAC Note- the scope of assessment will usually be more focused than a "topic of interest".
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There is no need to create new assessments, and if we begin to think about how our assessments inform our instruction and work as a system, then only one SLO may be required. In this example interim assessments (i.e., essays) are considered a Type III assessment and the common summative assessment (i.e., a research project) is considered a Type II assessment. This example meets all of the requirements included in [Illinois Administrative Code Part 50](#).

\*PEAC Note- the use of one SLO in this possible due to the common rubric used. However, each district's joint committee needs to make sure student growth is measured using the types of assessments required in Part 50 that are also in accordance with their own uniquely developed plans.

### Growth Targets

Growth targets should be differentiated for individual students or small groups of students. Growth targets should be ambitious, yet realistic for students to achieve in the specified period of time. In addition, the choice of measurement model will also inform how assessments will be used, and how growth targets will be identified. This example uses a simple three step measurement model.

#### \*Step 1: Collect Baseline Data

Baseline data provides measures of student understanding and ability to apply content knowledge. Many teachers already collect baseline data at the start of the school year in order to appropriately differentiate instruction (e.g., early coursework, student surveys, attendance, IEP or 504 plan, etc.). In this example, the teacher has asked students to complete an initial essay which will serve as her baseline data.

Student	Baseline Data		Performance Levels from Common Rubric or Evaluation Tool				Growth Targets
	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Final Research Project		
Andrea	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	
Mathew	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing	
Nathan	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	Capable	
Teresa	Beginning	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Developing	
Victoria	Developing	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Experienced	Experienced	

#### \*Step 2: Determine Growth Targets

Student growth targets are then differentiated according to individual student or small groups with similar abilities.

Student	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Final Research Project	Growth Targets
						Growth Targets
Andrea	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable
Mathew	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing
Nathan	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	Capable
Teresa	Beginning	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Developing
Victoria	Developing	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Experienced	Experienced

At the midpoint in the SLO cycle, the collected data should be examined to determine if students are on track to meet their growth targets. Teachers and evaluators should ask, "do growth targets need to be adjusted due to over or underestimation, and/or justifiable circumstances for individual students or certain groups of students?"

\*PEAC Note - In the example, the teacher and evaluator reviewed the data and individual student circumstances but did not believe midpoint adjustments were needed.

### Midpoint Data

Student	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Final Research Project	Growth Targets
Andrea	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable
Mathew	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing
Nathan	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	Capable
Teresa	Beginning	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Developing
Victoria	Developing	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Experienced	Experienced

### Step 3: Document Outcomes

Finally, the teacher documents how many students met their growth targets. In this example, 100% of students met their growth targets. Therefore, the teacher would receive a rating of an "excellent" for the student growth component.

### Outcome

Student	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Final Research Project	Growth Targets
Andrea	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable
Mathew	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	Developing
Nathan	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	Capable
Teresa	Beginning	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Developing
Victoria	Developing	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Experienced	Experienced

### A Final Comment

The biggest mistake most joint committees make is relying on secondhand information when working on their evaluation plans. Please do not rely on a single presentation or a neighboring district's plan. Read [Illinois Administrative Code Part 50](#) to ensure you have accurate information, and remember that the PERA joint committee should annually review the evaluation plan and make improvements when necessary.

### Author Note

Dr. Diana Zaleski is an Instructional Resource and Professional Development Director at the Illinois Education Association who specializes in assessment and data literacy. Correspondence regarding this example may be sent to [Diana.Zaleski@ieanea.org](mailto:Diana.Zaleski@ieanea.org)

\*Click [here](#) for a full-size copy of Dr. Zaleski's annotated example document.



## REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT STUDENT GROWTH

The guiding questions and actual data based on the example illustrated in the SLO article above can be used to facilitate reflective conversations about student growth with teachers. Ideally, reflective conversations should be held at the beginning of the year when teachers identify their learning goal, at

a mid-point check-in to discuss whether students are on track to meet their growth targets, and toward the end of the year to discuss learning results. Some districts use templates\* to expedite this or hold group conversations with grade-level/department teams. You can use each of the main steps of the SLO process for the conversation.

Evaluators should remember to use coaching conversation strategies to support reflective thinking and to create more meaningful dialogue with teachers. Evaluators should ask questions that are open-ended, including probing questions to encourage teachers to reflect and clarifying questions to learn more about instructional decisions the teacher has made.

Suggestions of questions for each part of the SLO process are listed below:

### **Learning Goal**

The teacher should identify a goal for student growth (ideally goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound).

#### Sample discussion questions:

Discuss the instructional strategies that will be used to reach this goal.

How does the goal support students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills?

### **Assessment Method**

Describe the assessment and evaluation procedures that measure students' understanding of the learning goal (pre-assessment, formative assessments and summative assessments).

#### Sample Discussion questions

How often and when will you collect data to monitor student progress toward this goal?

How will you use this assessment information to monitor student progress and inform your instruction?

### **Growth Targets**

Identify students' baseline data.

Use baseline data to identify and justify appropriate growth target(s) for your student population.

#### Sample discussion questions

How did you make decisions about the growth targets you set for your students?

Explain how the growth targets demonstrate ambitious, yet realistic targets, for all students described in the student population.

### **Outcomes**

Document the number or percentage of students who achieved their identified growth target(s). The evaluator and teacher can review the learning results.

#### Sample discussion questions

What sources of data did you use to determine growth?

How did you monitor student progress and adjust instruction in response to the data?

\*Click [here](#) to see a copy of the template Northbrook/Glenview School District #30 uses to guide teachers as they develop their plans for student growth. The questions listed in their document are used to facilitate discussions between evaluators and teachers.



**Demographics:** Ball-Chatham School District is a unit district located in southern Sangamon County and includes the southern portion of the capitol city of Springfield. It is comprised of six attendance centers housing a total of approximately 4700 students.

**What's best for children:** When Ball-Chatham began their work with PERA and their PERA Joint Committee, they looked to lessons learned by other districts who were early implementers. They took time to examine 'the why' behind implementation and the changes that would be made to their evaluation system. From the very beginning, the Joint Committee made the commitment to being collaborative and made sure that every decision was centered around what was best for kids. Every decision came back to student needs and ways staff could improve instruction and help students attain higher achievement.

**Embedded assessments:** The committee looked at the design/implementation process as an opportunity to improve professional practice and they embedded student growth as a way of measuring progress. A quality assessment component was integrated into the curriculum. Teachers and instructional coaches collaborated across the district about common assessments and long term goals. Teachers didn't create assessments just because they were being evaluated but the assessments were a part of what students were doing and learning every day.

**Communication:** Communication is an important part of the entire process. Administrators and teachers co-presented information about decisions that were made and the 'why' behind them. The Joint Committee wanted to hear from everyone and wanted to make sure accurate information was being shared across the district. A question and answer sheet was created and is housed on the district's staff Google drive so staff members can anonymously enter questions and read the responses that are written by a few authorized users. In this way, there is a common message that goes out to all staff.

**Continuous improvement:** Ball-Chatham views the process as continuous improvement and as an on-going process. They acknowledge that for true change to occur, it can be at least a 3-5 year process. They also recognize that the process will look differently in three years than it does today and they are okay with that. They know that modifications might be needed to continue to help students achieve more. Teachers are encouraged and supported to take risks. Even if something doesn't go well, they reflect with their colleagues and evaluators and talk about revisions they can make.

**Role of the PERA Joint Committee:** During this first year of full implementation, the Joint Committee continues to meet. Titles are checked at the door and members can respectfully disagree with each other, keeping in mind what's best for kids as they continue to have hearty conversations; discussing how it's going, identifying areas in which clarifications are needed and sending out communications. The message heard across the district is "We're listening and we're responding". They know that when they get off track, they need to go back to their commitment of being collaborative and doing what's best for kids. This keeps everyone moving in the same direction and focused on growth.

**Resources from Ball-Chatham:** Thank you to Ball-Chatham for sharing examples of some of the documents they use. You can click on the caption below each miniature document to view the full-size documents which includes the timeline they use to evaluate staff, their SLO template, and a "cheat sheet" provided to staff members to give them a concrete example of how to complete the form. In addition, there is also a copy of a sample class roster data sheet teachers can use to record their students' growth.



[August 2016 Issue](#) - start of the year requirements, an evaluation timeline and time management

[May 2016 Issue](#) - how to use evaluation data and sustainability

[April 2016 Issue](#) - getting ready for implementation and preparing an on-going communications plan

[March 2016 Issue](#) - spotlight on two district's journey to PERA implementation

[February 2016 Issue](#) - focus on optional weightings and determining Summative Ratings

[January 2016 Issue](#) - continued focus on assessing student growth and student learning objectives

[December 2015 Issue](#) - focus on assessing student growth

[November 2015 Issue](#) - focus on developing a communication plan and evaluating teacher practice

[October 2015 Issue](#) - focus on getting started and the work of the PERA joint committee

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