Illinois State Board of Education

Student Learning Objective Guidebook

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Assessment and Accountability
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http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

This document is intended to provide non-regulatory guidance and is subject to revision.

Table of Contents

Introduction

This guidebook describes the Student Learning Objective (SLO) process and provides resources for educators and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) joint committees who are working to incorporate the SLO process into a comprehensive performance evaluation plan.

Measuring Student Growth in Illinois

The Illinois Administrative Code establishes the minimum requirements of a valid and reliable performance evaluation plan for employees who hold a professional educator license endorsed in a teaching or administrative field and are serving as a teacher, principal, or assistant principal.

All educators are advised to read Illinois Administrative Code Part 50 Evaluation of Educator Licensed Employees Under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code:

http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/50ARK.pdf

Student Learning Objectives

A Student Learning Objective (SLO) is a detailed process used to organize evidence of student growth over a specified period of time. The SLO process is neither an assessment nor a measurement model. The SLO process is solely an organizational and planning tool. The SLO process helps educators organize evidence of student growth using chosen assessments and selected measurement models.

The SLO template (see Appendix A) includes questions and statements that guide educators through the process of measuring student growth for the purpose of performance evaluation. The SLO process is appropriate for use in all grade levels and content areas, and for use by both teachers and administrators. When implemented with fidelity, the SLO process benefits students, teachers, and evaluators by supporting collaboration and reflective teaching practices. In addition, the SLO process supports the use of authentic and performance-based assessments, and considers individual student needs.

Implementation Overview

The SLO process is integrated into a district's performance evaluation plan as a tool to organize the measurement of student growth and improve instruction using timely student assessment data. The development of SLOs requires an initial time commitment. However, once SLOs are developed they may be revised and used again for the next evaluation cycle. The following steps provide PERA joint committees with a framework for successful SLO implementation.

Step 1: Plan

- Create a shared calendar to manage timelines, targets, and meetings.

- Design a communication plan to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed.

- Build educators capacity to develop, modify, or select quality classroom assessment and evaluation tools. Resources are available on the Balanced Assessment webpage:

  http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

- Determine what categories of teachers are required to use the SLO process, and how many SLOs are required. This decision may be based on the type and/or number of assessments required, and/or other factors including but not limited to existing assessment tools and opportunities for teacher collaboration.

Step 2: Develop

- Develop a strategic implementation timeline that includes SLO development, review, and approval.

- Adopt or develop a SLO template (see Appendix A).

- Develop a process for combining student growth measures and assigning a teacher rating.

Step 3: Implement

- Convene collaborative groups/teams to develop SLOs.

- Pilot the SLO process.

- Utilize the SLO process as part of the performance evaluation plan district-wide.

Step 4: Sustain

- Develop a plan to monitor, evaluate, and improve the SLO process.

Piloting

Different components of the SLO process may be phased in over time as part of the piloting process. The piloting process should occur before the official implementation of the evaluation plan. This allows teachers, administrators, and evaluators time to develop familiarity and expertise in the process before any human resource decisions are made utilizing student growth data.

A pilot may begin the implementation of the SLO process within specific content areas, grade levels, or schools. This structure allows the SLO process to be piloted before implementing district-wide. Often specific content areas, grade levels, or schools are asked to pilot because they are determined "most likely to succeed," will provide meaningful feedback during the development process, and model best practices during the district-wide implementation.

The SLO Process

The SLO process uses a template (see Appendix A) that contains guiding questions and statements. The example included in this guidance document organizes the guiding questions and statements within five elements that are outlined in this section of the guidebook. Completed SLO examples may be found on the ISBE Balanced Assessment webpage:

http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

The SLO process outlined in this guidebook has been adapted from the Center for Assessment SLO Toolkit: http://www.nciea.org/slo-toolkit/

Element 1: 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 development of a learning goal provides a foundation for meaningful, goal directed instruction and assessment. The guiding questions and statements included within this element help teachers and evaluators reflect on the process of developing a meaningful learning goal.

The learning goal may include one big idea. A big idea integrates multiple content standards, and links units of instruction together. The big idea chosen should be representative of the most important learning and typical student growth in a specific content area, grade level, or classroom. A teacher covers many big ideas over the course of a school year or course, but chooses one big idea per SLO.

In addition, educators assigned to teach multiple courses, subjects, or grade levels may choose a specific course, subject, or grade level for each SLO in collaboration with the evaluator.

Element 2: Assessment

Assessment, evaluation, and scoring procedures should be used to support and measure the learning goal. The guiding questions and statements included within this element help teachers and evaluators determine how assessments will be used to monitor student growth in order to inform and differentiate instruction for all students. Assessments may include, but are not limited to, authentic and performance-based assessment (e.g., portfolios, performances, lab activities, etc.).

Element 3: Growth Targets

The guiding questions and statements included within this element help teachers and evaluators identify appropriate growth targets. Growth targets should be differentiated for individual students or groups of students. Growth targets should be ambitious, yet realistic for students to achieve in the specified period of time.

Element 4: Outcome

The outcomes identify how students performed at the end of the instructional period. The guiding questions and statements included within this element prompt teachers to record the actual number or percentage of students who achieved the identified growth targets.

Element 5: Teacher Rating

The method for determining a teacher rating for each SLO must be determined by the PERA joint committee. A teacher rating process is outlined in the State Performance Evaluation Model (Illinois Administrative Code Part 50).

SLO Cycle

The example SLO Cycle included in this guidebook contains six steps. The goal is to create an efficient and effective evaluation cycle that supports collaboration between teachers and evaluators.

Step 1 of the cycle begins the SLO process. During this step, teachers will complete the first three elements of the SLO template. During Step 2 of the cycle, the teacher meets with the evaluator for the initial review and approval of the SLO. The evaluator may provide feedback to the teacher to ensure the SLO is rigorous and attainable.

Step 3 of the cycle highlights the importance of using timely student assessment data to inform and differentiate instruction during the first half of the cycle. During Step 4 of the cycle, the midpoint check-in, the teacher and evaluator meet to discuss students' progress towards meeting the identified growth targets. The evaluator may provide suggestions for adjusting instruction to ensure student success. In addition, adjustments may be made to the SLO under circumstances that the PERA Joint Committee has deemed allowable. Such circumstances may include but are not limited to the following situations:

- The teacher's assignment has changed.
- There have been significant changes in the student population.
- Student nonattendance issues.

Step 5 of the cycle highlights the importance of using timely student assessment data to inform and differentiate instruction during the second half of the cycle. During Step 6 of the cycle, the teacher completes Element 4, documenting the actual outcomes and participates in a final review with the evaluator. During this step, the evaluator assigns a final teacher rating.

Adaptive Conditional Measurement Model

This section of the guidebook provides an example measurement model and discusses the implications of this measurement model on the SLO process. This example measurement model requires three basic steps, and has been adapted from Marion, DePascale, Domaleski, Gong, and Diaz-Bilello (2012).

Step 1: Collect Baseline Data

Within this measurement model, teachers collect baseline data at the beginning of the school year or interval of instruction. 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. These data may also be gathered by reviewing a student's cumulative/temporary file.

Baseline data may include, but is not limited to, the following data:

- Early Course Work
- Student Surveys
- IEP Information

- English Language Proficiency
- Attendance
- Historical Assessment Data

Step 2: Determine Growth Targets

Growth targets are then identified for individual students. Growth targets are also identified within Element 3 of the SLO template.

Ideally, teachers would examine trend data that they have collected over multiple years to determine growth targets. If trend data is not available, educators may choose to look at data from students past performance in a prior grade or course along with the baseline data collected at the start of the school year or course.

Teachers would then discuss with their evaluator why the specific growth targets were set, citing baseline and/or trend data and goals for the upcoming school year or course. This discussion takes place during Step 2, the initial review, of the SLO Cycle.

During Step 4, the midcourse check-in, of the SLO Cycle, the teacher and evaluator examine the data collected during the first half of the cycle to determine if students are on track to meet their growth targets, and whether the growth targets need to be adjusted due to over- or underestimation, and/or justifiable circumstances for certain students.

Step 4: Document Outcomes

Finally, the teacher documents how many students met their identified growth targets. In addition, the teacher should document how many students exceeded or did not meet their growth targets and why that may have been. This step is completed as part of Element 4 of the SLO template, and discussed during Step 6, final review, of the SLO Cycle.

Resources

Performance Evaluation Reform Act

www.isbe.net/PERA/default.htm

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) (Senate Bill 315; Public Act 96-0861) was passed by the Illinois General Assembly and signed by the Governor in January 2010. In relation to measuring student growth PERA requires that:

- Upon the implementation date applicable to a school district or other covered entity, performance evaluations of the principals/assistant principals and teachers of that school district or other covered entity must include data and indicators of student growth as a "significant factor".

This webpage provides information concerning the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA).

Illinois Administrative Code Part 50

www.isbe.state.il.us/rules/archive/pdfs/50ARK.pdf

The Illinois Administrative Code Part 50 established the minimum requirements of valid and reliable performance evaluation systems for employees who hold a professional educator license endorsed in a teaching or administrative field and are serving as a teacher, principal or assistant principal. Performance evaluation systems shall assess both professional competence or practice, and student growth.

Balanced Assessment Webpage

www.isbe.state.il.us/assessment/htmls/balanced-asmt.htm

This webpage contains numerous resources supporting the development of balanced assessment systems, increasing assessment and data literacy, and measuring student growth for the purpose of performance evaluation.
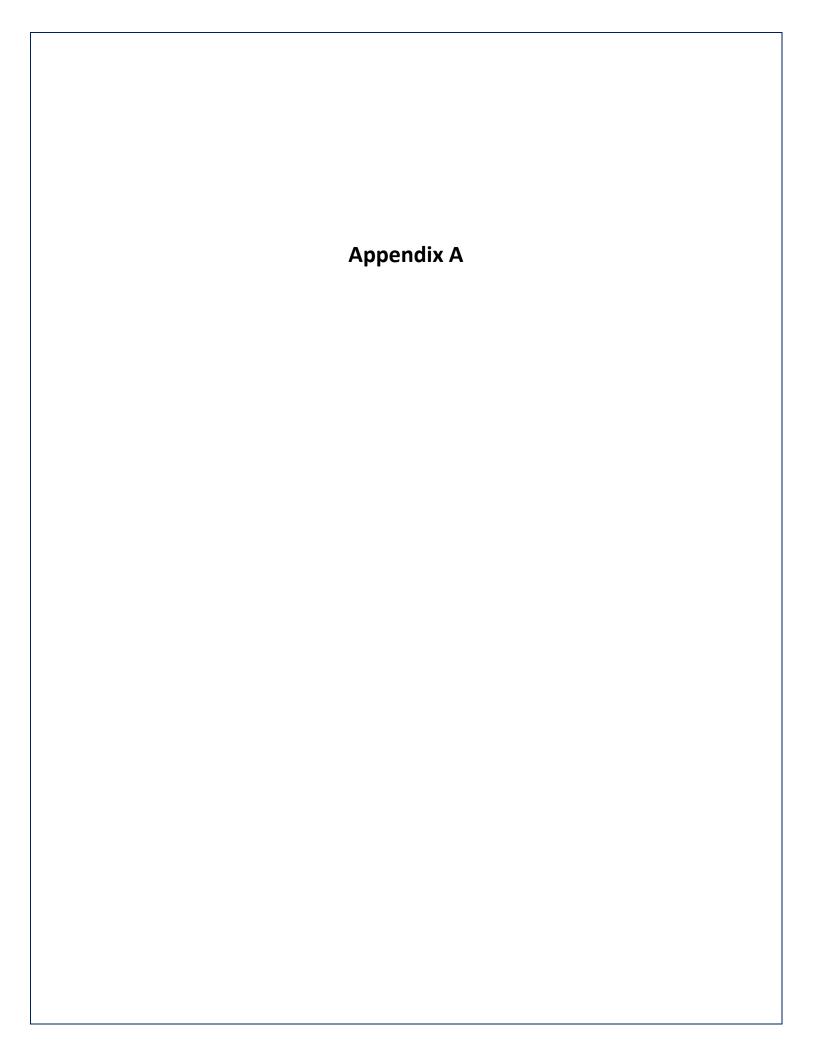
Performance Evaluation Advisory Council

www.isbe.net/PEAC/default.htm

This webpage contains a variety of resources for educators working to implement the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA).

Center for Assessment SLO Toolkit

www.nciea.org/slo-toolkit/

The SLO Toolkit is a collection of resources developed by the Center for Assessment.

Appendix A

Illinois State Board of Education
Example SLO Template

General Information

Academic Year	
Educator Name	
Course/Subject	
Grade Level(s)	
Interval of Instruction	

Timeline

Initial Approval Date	
Midcourse Check-In Date	
Midcourse Check-In Notes:	

Element 1: Learning Goal

☐ Describe the learning goal.	
☐ Identify the content standards associated with the learning goal. *Include the text of the content standards.*	
☐ Describe the student population.	
☐ Summarize the instructional strategies used to teach the learning goal.	

Discussion Questions
- What "big idea" is supported by the learning goal?
- How does the learning goal support students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills?

Element 2: Assessment

☐ Describe the assessment and evaluation procedures that measure students' understanding of the learning goal.	
☐ Describe how the assessment and evaluation procedures will be differentiated to meet the needs of all students described in the student population.	

Discussion Questions
- How often will you collect data to monitor student progress toward this learning goal?
- How will you use this assessment information to monitor student progress and inform your instruction?

Element 3: Growth Targets

☐ Identify students' baseline data.	
☐ Using students' baseline data identify appropriate growth targets for your student population.	

Discussion Questions
- Explain how the growth targets demonstrate ambitious, yet realistic targets, for all students described in the student population.
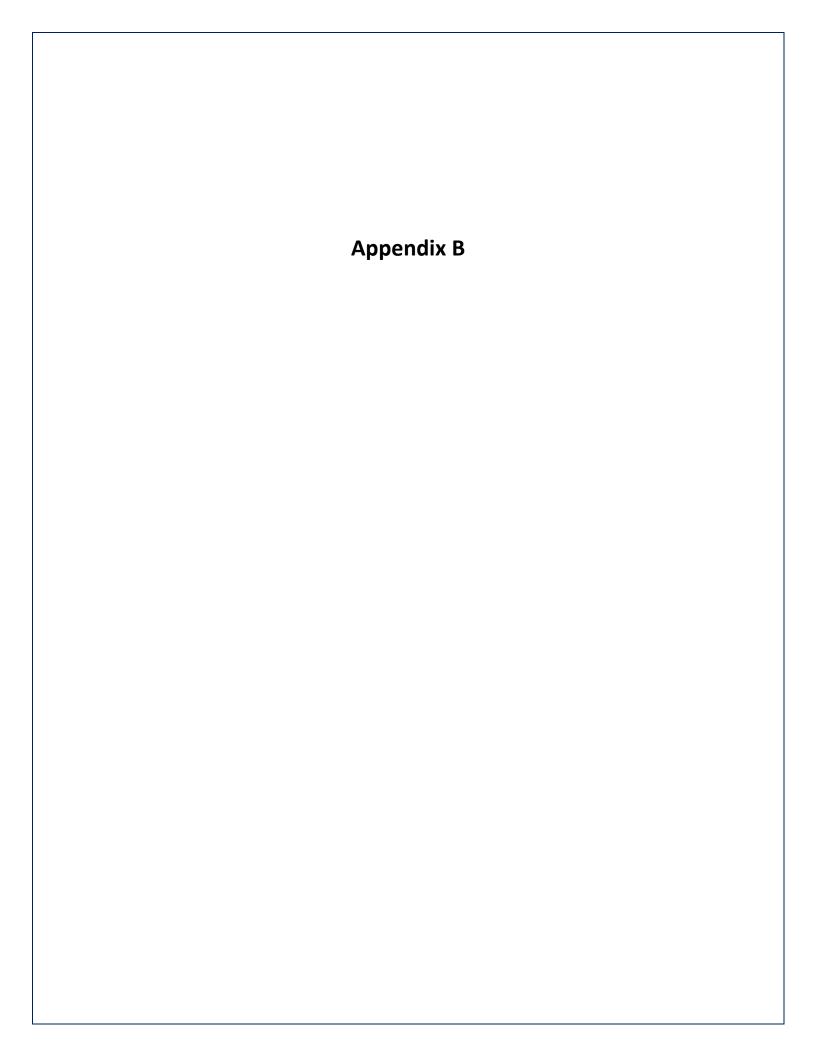
Element 4: Outcome

☐ Document the number or percentage of students who achieved their identified growth targets.	

Required for Evaluator

☐ Explain how the number or percentage of students who met their identified growth targets translates into an appropriate teacher rating.	

Element 5: Teacher Rating

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Less than 25% of Students Met the Indicated Growth Target(s).	25% - 50% of Students Met the Indicated Growth Target(s).	51% - 75% of Students Met the Indicated Growth Target(s).	76% - 100% of Students Met the Indicated Growth Target(s).
☐	☐	☐	☐

Date:	Evaluator Signature:
Date:	Teacher Signature:

Appendix B

Measurement Model Example

The adaptive conditional measurement model helps educators organize and analyze assessment data for the purpose of measuring student growth. The goal of this model is to provide educators with timely data so they may inform and differentiate instruction to ensure student success. This model may be used as part of the SLO process, corresponding with Elements 3 and 4.

SLO Context

Course/Subject	English I
Grade Level(s)	Ninth Grade

☐ Describe the learning goal.	Students will write informative and explanatory texts that convey a clear, focused, and substantive main idea.

☐ Describe the assessment and evaluation procedures that measure students' understanding of the learning goal.	Writing prompts have been created by the district English department aligned to the district curriculum and state standards. The *6+1 Trait* © writing rubric will be used to evaluate these writing prompts throughout the school year. In addition, formative assessment such as self- and peer-assessment will be used to regularly check for student understanding. These assessments and examples of student coursework will be collected in electronic portfolios.

Step 1: Collect Baseline Data

Students complete an expository writing prompt prior to instruction at the beginning of the school year, and use the *6+1 Trait* © writing rubric to evaluate the assessment. The rubric contains the following performance levels that will be used to measure student growth throughout the SLO process:

- Beginning
- Emerging
- Developing
- Capable
- Experienced
- Exceptional

The teacher will also collect data concerning students IEP and EL status from their cumulative files to consider as part of the baseline data collected.

Step 2: Determine Growth Targets

Student growth targets are then identified for individual students. In this example, the teacher has collected trend data concerning students' expository writing for the past two years. Using this data, the teacher is able to identify patterns of typical student growth in her classroom. The teacher uses the trend data and baseline data to determine realistic growth targets for her current students.

In this example, please note that Juliet, Richard, and Manuel have very specific needs that will impact their growth targets. For example, Juliet, Richard, and Manuel all have IEPs for specific learning disabilities, and Richard is also categorized as an English Learner. These students may require differentiated instruction and assessments.

Figure 1. Expected Growth Targets

Student	English Learner	Identified Disability	Writing Prompt 1	Growth Target
Juliet		LD (Writing)	Emerging	Capable
Manuel		LD (Reading)	Emerging	Developing
Melissa			Developing	Capable
Richard	2.0	LD (Reading)	Beginning	Developing
Tony			Developing	Capable

Midcourse Check-In

At the midcourse check-in, the collected data was examined to determine if students were on track to meet their growth targets. The teacher and evaluator determined that Tony was on track to exceed his initial growth target. Therefore, Tony's growth target was adjusted from capable to experienced.

Step 3: Document Actual Outcomes

Finally, at the end of the SLO cycle, the teacher documents how many students met their identified growth targets.

Figure 2. Actual Outcomes

Student	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	Growth Target	Outcome
Juliet	Emerging	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	✓
Manuel	Emerging	Emerging	Developing	Emerging	Developing	-
Melissa	Developing	Developing	Capable	Capable	Capable	✓
Richard	Beginning	Beginning	Emerging	Developing	Developing	✓
Tony	Developing	Developing	Capable	Experienced	Experienced	✓

Note. Exceeds Growth Target (+), Meets Growth Target (✓), Does Not Meet Growth Target (-).

In this example, four of the students met their identified growth targets. However, Manuel did not meet his growth target. The assessment data collected for Manuel also displays a non-linear pattern, moving from Emerging to Developing, and back to Emerging. The teacher was not sure why this patterned occurred, and decided to collect more data to confirm her assessment of Manual's abilities. First, she asked a fellow teacher to evaluate samples of Manuel's writing using the same rubric to ensure that she was using the rubric appropriately. The second teacher evaluated Manuel's writing samples as emerging.

Next, the teacher decided to look at other work samples and compare them to the writing prompts Manuel completed. These writing samples also indicated that the score of emerging was appropriate, and that Manuel did not meet his growth target of developing.

The teacher then reflected individually, with colleagues, and with her evaluator about what changes to her instructional practice and what other supports may be needed to help Manuel work toward achieving his identified growth target.

Teacher Rating

In order to document a final teacher rating the evaluator must compare the actual outcomes with the identified growth targets. The evaluator must provide an explanation of how the actual number or percentage of students who achieved the identified student growth targets translates into an appropriate teacher rating.