

Student Learning Objectives Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q: How will we use state assessment data in our re-employment process since we will not receive state assessment data prior to the employment of our teachers for the following year?**

R: State assessment data should be a consideration in the employment of teachers. However, the use of that data may not be in the current year. As teachers continue their employment in your district, their students' state assessment performances data should be included in the determination of whether to re-employ. As teachers establish a trend for their students' performance, a piece of their re-employment may be based on the performance of their students on state assessments. Keep in mind that state assessment data is only one piece of the puzzle.

State assessment data can also be used in teacher evaluations to better inform the SLO target-setting process. Item-level data, tied to one or more grade level expectations, can be particularly helpful in pinpointing areas of academic strength and/or weakness. For example, students who struggled with state assessment items that require them to "Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text." may need modified growth targets that acknowledge those students' challenges in this area.

- **Q: How is the state assessment to be used in SLO development and evaluation?**

R: The state assessment provides data which may be used to create a focus area for an SLO. State assessments provide information about student proficiency in a variety of areas. This data may be used to support the development and evaluation of an SLO, but since results are received after employment decisions have been made, a state assessment may not inform the summative assessment of an active SLO.

State assessment data may be used to generate "after-the-fact" data to inform the SLO process. In the Missouri Growth Model, NCEs are calculated for each student and represent how much the student's actual score differs from his or her predicted score. These predictions may be thought of as targets. The NCE indicates if a student has met his or her target and the percentage meeting their target can be scored based on the SLO scoring guide. This "backwards-glancing" approach, in conjunction with data from one or more active SLOs, addresses the good practice of using multiple years of comparable student data in applying student growth to the decision of re-employment.

- **Q: How will we have multiple years of data to evaluate teachers if SLO module 2 training will not be complete until after the new year?**

R: It will be very difficult to have multiple years of data based on your SLOs for this current year. We encourage districts to get started developing SLOs and assessing student progress over the two points in time; however, multiple years of data will become more meaningful as the process progresses. We propose looking at this year as a formative year and growing with the process as you move forward.

For now, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is focusing on ensuring that districts and charter schools have a strong foundation in measuring student growth and can make the connection to their local evaluation systems. While multiple years of student growth data should be used in evaluations, districts and charter schools should consider student achievement as a lesser contributing factor during early implementation, then increase its significance as more years of data become available.

- **Q: How many SLOs are appropriate for our class work?**

R: Guidelines encourage that one, possibly two, SLOs should be written to form the basis for the assessment used to measure student growth. SLOs do not need to encompass all of the content covered by a course but should focus on the key components of a course that are essential for students to show growth during the interval of instruction.

- **Q: If a teacher has multiple classes to plan for, how many SLOs should they be held accountable for?**

R: We feel that the creation of two SLOs per year is a fair expectation for a teacher. There is quite a bit of work involved in the process of developing and evaluating an SLO and the assessment used to measure student progress. We encourage teachers to begin with courses that have the greatest number of students. Possibly in subsequent years they could address additional courses they teach.

- **Q: Should a teacher be required to write SLOs every year? If they are tenured teachers and not in their evaluation year, are they still responsible for the creation of SLOs?**

R: SLOs are good practice. We encourage SLOs be written as a tool to help teachers measure their students' growth and proficiency over two points in time. Even when the teacher is not in their evaluation cycle, SLOs may be developed and measured for purposes such as aligning curriculum or calibrating the rigor of SLO growth targets in preparation for the evaluation year. If there are not SLOs in place for a particular course or grade level content area, we feel it would be beneficial to both the teacher and his/her students to develop appropriate SLO's. This allows for student growth data to be collected on every teacher every year and provides multiple years of student growth data generated by the SLO which can be used when the teacher is in their evaluation cycle.

- **Q: Will the state be providing formative assessments to help teachers inform their teaching in an effort to improve their student achievement on state assessments?**

R: The Smarter Balanced interim assessments will be available beginning in January. These can be used as a type of formative assessment. However, we encourage districts to continue with their current formative assessment practices until they have the opportunity to become more familiar with the new assessments.