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Measuring the Quality and Rigor of Student Learning Objectives: Evaluation Brief for TIF Grantees

White **Paper**

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Introduction

Many schools and districts use student learning objectives (SLOs) to both measure student learning progress and evaluate teacher performance. In fact, several Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees are using SLOs as part of their educator evaluation and/or performance-based compensation systems. For a definition of SLOs, see in Box 1.

Yet, analyzing the quality and rigor of SLOs across content areas, schools, and districts is tricky. How do we know that an SLO truly measures what it intends to measure, in terms of both student achievement and teacher effectiveness? How do we know SLO evaluators are consistent in their ratings and reviews?

SLO analysis tools, or audit tools, are a common method that educators can use to analyze the quality and validity of scored SLOs. This brief provides TIF grantees with information on how to use an SLO analysis tool to ensure rigor and consistency. It also includes a case study of how one TIF grantee used such an analysis tool to evaluate the development and implementation of its own SLOs.

Box 1.
What Are Student Learning Objectives?

An SLO is a statement of intended learning that describes what students will know, understand, or be able to do by the end of the instructional interval. SLOs are typically created collaboratively by educators and evaluators, but are sometimes developed at the school or district level. SLOs may include:

- An objective statement (also called target),
- Related content standards,
- Student population,
- Interval of instruction,
- Baseline data,
- At least one evidence source (i.e., assessment used to measure progress),
- A strong rationale, and
- Relevant instructional strategies.

Overview of Student Learning Objectives

SLOs are classroom measures of student achievement or growth. There is consensus among researchers and practitioners that high-quality SLOs are specific and measurable, use the most relevant course content and standards, and incorporate baseline and summative assessments. An example SLO is on the next page in Box 2.

Box 2.
Example SLO: Introductory Spanish

Objective & Rationale	Students will be able to read, write, and speak simple words, phrases, and sentences in basic Spanish in the present tense and immediate future tense in these focal skill/content areas: introductions/greetings; vocabulary related to food, family, school, appearance, age, destinations, and hobbies; conjugation of regular verbs; simple interactions and formulaic questions; common pronouns and connectors; basic time; numbers to 100; basic geography; and Spanish culture.
Population	82 grade 7 students
Interval	School year 2015–16
Standards	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) – National Standards for Foreign Language Education: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 4.1, 4.2
Baseline	Spanish exposure survey. Results showed only one student had significant Spanish exposure.
Target & Rationale	All students will complete the Intro Language Proficiency Portfolio. All work accepted into the portfolio will have received a score of at least 80% (B-). The complete portfolio will include at least three work samples in each of the eight skill/content areas identified in the Objective Statement. This target represents a rigorous, yet attainable, goal for students as they will have multiple opportunities to produce work samples eligible for submission. The completed portfolio will represent a body of work that demonstrates students are ready to move into Intermediate Spanish.
Evidence	Course assignments submitted into the portfolio. Three submissions must be oral presentations. Assignments will be scored using the district's Introductory Language scoring rubric, when applicable.

SOURCE: Adapted from the Rhode Island Department of Education Grade 7 Spanish Student Learning Objective http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Student-Learning-Objectives/SLO_MS_Spanish_Gr7.pdf

Teachers, administrators, districts, and states develop and implement SLOs for a variety of reasons, including to measure the progress of individual educators in helping students achieve student growth targets and to encourage student improvement. SLOs can help more fully integrate teachers of non-tested grades and subjects into evaluation and compensation systems that already include teachers of tested grades and subjects.[1] By setting school-level SLOs, principals can also be directly responsible for student academic achievement as part of evaluation systems. When well implemented, SLOs serve as a measure of teacher effectiveness that links closely to student learning, making them attractive to TIF grantees that seek to address the TIF goal of improving student achievement by increasing teacher effectiveness.

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[1] Reform Support Network, 2012.

Ensuring the Quality and Rigor of SLOs

Reviewing the quality and rigor of SLOs for individual teachers is an important part of effective implementation, and grantees can accomplish this using an SLO quality rubric. SLO quality rubrics provide guidelines and criteria that an individual SLO should include in order to be specific, measurable, and rigorous, yet attainable. Administrators and teachers use them during the SLO development process to establish clear expectations of SLO quality, contributing to increased consistency across SLOs and ensuring continuous improvement.

Once teachers and administrators have used an SLO quality rubric at the individual educator level for developing and approving SLOs, grantees may consider the use of an SLO analysis tool[2] to look more broadly at SLOs across schools and districts. Given the high-stakes uses of SLOs, district and school administrators must be confident that they are using high-quality and rigorous SLOs to measure student achievement and educator effectiveness. The focus of this brief is on the important task of reviewing SLOs for consistency in quality and rigor *across grade levels and subjects* and, more broadly, a*cross schools and districts* (as opposed to reviewing individual teachers' SLOs, which is achieved using a quality rubric). The use of an SLO analysis tool can support this work. Many versions of SLO analysis tools are available online (see appendix B) and are used to rate the priority of content covered, the rigor of the growth targets, and the quality of evidence (i.e., assessment).

SLO analysis tools help address comparability issues and questions related to SLOs (see Box 3). Additionally, an analysis tool provides an opportunity for reviewers to reflect on several specific questions relating to a body of SLOs (e.g., a selection from a school or district) and their implementation (see Box 3).

Box 3.
What is an SLO Analysis Tool?

While an SLO quality rubric provides criteria to guide the development of a high-quality and rigorous SLO, the SLO analysis tool assesses the quality and rigor of SLOs and the SLO implementation process across multiple schools or districts. An SLO analysis tool addresses questions such as:

- Are educators developing SLOs with the same level of quality and rigor **across** grade levels, subject areas, schools, and districts?
- How **rigorous** are the SLOs? Are the SLO **growth targets** appropriate and attainable? Are students reaching the growth targets?
- Is the **evidence** (i.e., assessment) used across SLOs in the same content area of the same quality?
- Do the SLOs address the appropriate **student population**?
- What are appropriate next steps (e.g., additional **evaluator calibration** sessions, **professional development** for teachers?

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[2] Some states and districts refer to SLO analysis tools as SLO audit tools.

When and How to Use an SLO Analysis Tool

Grantees should use SLO analysis tools in conjunction with SLO quality rubrics. Initially, educators can use a quality rubric when writing their SLOs, with the rubric acting as a guide to facilitate the development of high-quality SLOs. Before grantees implement SLOs, a group of evaluators—within a school, across schools within a district, or across districts within a state—should use the same quality rubric to calibrate their expectations of quality and their approval criteria (see Box 4). This calibration should occur prior to an evaluator approving an SLO and a teacher implementing an SLO. A similar calibration process can occur prior to the SLO scoring (or rating) stage, to ensure that all evaluators are scoring SLOs in a consistent manner.

> **Box 4.**
> **Evaluator Calibration**
>
> The process of calibration entails asking evaluators (e.g., building administrators) to review a sample of at least 5–10 SLOs (preferably on the same content and grade level) and rate each SLO element using a quality rubric. Evaluators are successfully calibrated when the level of agreement among evaluators' ratings is high for each element for the entire sample of SLOs. A statistic known as Cronbach's alpha checks the level of agreement, or inter-rater reliability.
>
> The calibration process may yield a set of anchor SLOs, (e.g., example SLOs that vary in their quality) that evaluators can then use to ensure that their ratings do not deviate from the agreed-upon criteria. Involving other educators, such as district or building leaders, department chairs, and teachers in the calibration process helps establish clear expectations on SLO quality.

Toward the end of the school year (or semester), reviewers (e.g., a district or state administrator team, an external consultant) can use the **SLO analysis tool** to conduct a "spot check" or review (sometimes called an audit) of a representative sample of scored SLOs (see appendix C for guidance on this process). The goals of the review are threefold, and all relate to ensuring continuous improvement by refining the system:

(1) To identify areas where teachers may need more guidance and support to increase their SLOs' quality and rigor;

(2) To provide feedback for evaluators regarding further scoring calibration that might be needed; and

(3) To examine patterns of SLO implementation
(e.g., SLO ratings across content areas, data on the frequency with which teachers met the SLO goals, and students met their growth targets).

Many districts and states have already implemented such spot checks and reviews into their SLO processes. (For an example of a TIF grantee, see Box 5.)

District, state, or consultant reviewers should conduct an SLO analysis using an analysis tool at least every new school year, or more frequently if evaluator drift (i.e., evaluators appear to be approving or scoring SLOs of lesser quality and rigor than agreed upon during the calibration process) is suspected. Similarly, districts or states should examine their SLO quality rubric and related analysis tool annually to ensure they reflect the SLO form or template currently in use and emphasize the SLO elements of most value.

Data Needed to Conduct the SLO Analysis

To conduct a proper analysis, reviewers need access to specific data. Providing reviewers with the data listed below increases the likelihood of a successful SLO analysis.[3] To encourage sharing of scored SLOs, reviewers can request anonymized SLOs with fake IDs for both the educators and evaluators.

Necessary data include the following:

- A representative sample of SLOs across grade levels, content areas, schools, and/or districts, including the SLOs' scores (i.e., the evaluator's final rating of the SLO, such as "met all targets") if the review is emphasizing SLO implementation over development
- Evaluator IDs (fake/dummy IDs are acceptable if the grantee does not plan to follow up with specific evaluators based upon the results of the analysis)
- Student assessment results (if not already included within the SLO), for SLOs that incorporate assessments, such as standardized, performance-based, or school or district assessments
- State or other content standards related to the topic of the SLO
- Results of previous SLO analyses using the tool so reviewers can compare trends in quality and rigor over time and/or after professional development and support have been provided

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[3] Triangulation data, such as classroom observations, student surveys, or baseline/trend data (American Institutes for Research, 2012), can also be helpful to validate the SLO scores, especially when SLOs are used to contribute to teacher evaluation ratings, but these data are not necessary to conduct an analysis using an SLO analysis tool.

Grantee Spotlight: Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Through the TIF program, Washoe County School District (WCSD) in Nevada has improved educator Professional Growth Systems and Human Capital Management Systems through several initiatives implemented in nine high-needs schools. These initiatives include:

- Development and implementation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)
- Professional growth opportunities for teachers with a focus on STEM instruction and 21st Century learning skills
- In-depth training for educators in classroom observation
- Integration of a Human Capital Management web-based system that allows teachers and administrators to document and track SLOs, evaluations, observations, professional development plans, and classroom artifacts across the district.

As part of its program evaluation, WCSD sought to understand if SLOs were developed and implemented with similar quality and expectations across schools and across grade levels. The examination of SLOs was broken into four focal areas:

1. SLO Development—What was the content of an SLO?
2. SLO Implementation—What percentage of students met established growth targets?
3. SLO Quality —What were the SLOs' degrees of excellence?
4. SLO Expectations—How were guidelines for rubric scoring of SLOs and acceptance set by individual evaluation teams?

The external evaluator for WCSD conducted a pilot study that analyzed 141 SLOs using an SLO analysis tool. Developed by the evaluator and the grantee, this analysis tool is a companion to the grantee's SLO quality rubric and provides information specifically about the degree to which SLOs developed by teachers in a wide variety of settings are comparable in terms of rigor. The evaluator and grantee used the SLO analysis tool after they rated the SLO using the quality rubric. The evaluator and grantee analyzed SLOs for consistency in development and implementation across grade spans and content areas; however, insufficient sample sizes prohibited analyses at the school level and grade level.

WCSD's examination of the quality and rigor of SL0 development and implementation found evidence of comparability across grade spans and content areas. Specifically, consistency in ratings across grade spans and content areas emerged in the areas of (a) overall strength of the targeted learning content, (b) alignment of pre- and post-instruction measures to the targeted learning content, (c) appropriateness of SLO growth targets, (d) inclusion of scoring guidelines, (e) clarity and usefulness of instructional strategies, and (f) clarity and specificity in interval of instruction. However, less consistency in ratings emerged in the areas of (a) alignment of the learning content to the target population, (b) students' opportunities for growth, (c) the learning needs of the target student population, and (d) percentages of students reaching individual growth targets.

Conclusion

SLO analysis tools are a common and established method for analyzing the quality and rigor of SLOs across content areas, schools, and districts, and TIF grantees may find these tools useful as they move forward with developing and implementing SLOs in their educator evaluation and/or performance-based compensation systems. Grantees should consider the following key points regarding the use of such analysis tools:

- An SLO analysis tool is a useful method for measuring the quality and rigor of SLOs across teachers, grade levels, content areas, schools, and districts.
- SLO analysis tools can be used to "spot check" completed SLOs for purposes of ensuring consistency and comparability across educators, schools, and districts.
- SLO analysis tools can be used to conduct a thorough review and analysis of SLO quality and rigor when the following data are included in the review: a representative sample of SLOs, SLO scores, evaluator (non-identifiable) information, assessment data, relevant content or learning standards, and previous SLO analysis data.
- SLO quality rubrics are a complementary tool and precursor to the SLO analysis tool. When grantees use both tools throughout the SLO process, the SLO analysis can help grantees use SLOs as a reliable method of measuring student achievement and educator effectiveness.

Appendix A. References

The following resources informed this content of this brief:

Connecticut State Department of Education. *Student Learning Goals/Objectives: A Handbook for Administrators and Teachers: To Guide the Process for Developing High-Quality Goals/Objectives to Improve Student Learning*. 99 pages, 2014.Retrieved from http://www.connecticutseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/student_learning_goals_objectives_handbook.pdf

Arizona Department of Education. *The Student Learning Objective Handbook: The Student Learning Objective Process*. 64 pages, 2013. Retrieved from http://www.azed.gov/teacherprincipal-evaluation/files/2013/06/slo-handbook.pdf

Lachlan-Hache. L., E. Cushing and L. Bivona. *Implementing Student Learning Objectives: Core Elements for Sustainability*. American Institutes for Research. 35 pages, 2012. Retrieved from https://westcompcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/SLO-Implementation-American-Institute-on-Research.pdf

Community Training and Technical Assistance Center. *SLOs: Applying a Quality Rating Rubric Increasing Student Achievement, Advancing Teacher Practice*. 4 pages, 2016. Retrieved from http://maine.gov/doe/effectiveness/documents/6-Applying-a-Quality-Rating-Rubric.pdf

Reform Support Network. *Targeting Growth Using Student Learning Objectives as a Measure of Educator Effectiveness*. 8 pages, 2015. Retrieved from http://education-first.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RSN-Targeting-Growth.pdf

Reform Support Network. *A Quality Control Toolkit for Student Learning Objectives. Reform Support Network*. 19 pages, 2012. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/slo-toolkit.pdf

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. *Rubric for Rating the Quality of Student Learning Objectives. Center for Assessment*, 2013 Retrieved from http://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2_Rubric-for-Rating-the-Quality-of-SLOs-3-31-13.pdf

Aurora Public Schools. *Student Learning Objectives (SLO) & Student Outcome Objectives (S00): A Guide to Understanding and Using the SLO/ SOO Process as an Instructional Tool and Individual Student Growth Measure for Evaluation Purposes*. 86 pages, 2016. Retrieved from http://edeffect.aurorak12.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/178/2014/12/2016-17-SLO-SOO-User-Guide-6.pdf

Appendix B. Resources

SLO Quality Rubrics

SLO Review Tool provides a framework for teachers, school administration, and/or district administration to use when evaluating the quality of an SLO. This tool prompts educators to consider the level of quality of the Learning Goal, Assessments and Scoring (rubric or criteria), and the Targets and is a companion document to be used along with the SLO Rubric (as part of the NCIEA's SLO Toolkit). It includes specific descriptors and questions to consider, as well as examples and annotations to provide clarity when reviewing an SLO. Grantees can also use this SLO Review Tool as an instructional tool during professional development related to writing Student Learning Objectives. Courtesy of The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA). Available at: http://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/SLO-Review-Tool.pdf

Rubric for Rating the Quality of SLOs ensures that the content included meets a minimum requirement before grantees use it for teacher ratings. Courtesy of The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA). Available at: http://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2_Rubric-for-Rating-the-Quality-of-SLOs-3-31-13.pdf

Rhode Island Department of Education's ***Student Learning Objective Quality Review Tool*** helps educators and evaluators effectively review and revise Student Learning Objectives. The one-page tool includes guiding questions for each criteria of an SLO (e.g., Priority of Content, Rigor of Target, Quality of Evidence) to help determine whether or not that section is acceptable or in need or revision and to help evaluators calibrate prior to approving SLOs. Available at: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Student-Learning-Objectives/SLO-quality-check-tool.pdf

The ***SLO Quality Criteria Review Tool*** provides evaluators with multiple yes/no questions to rate the quality of the learning goal, the baseline data/evidence, the performance targets, and the assessment of student learning and progress monitoring. An evaluator can use the tool to determine whether the SLO is approvable or needs revisions and allows ample space for comments back to the teacher. Available at: http://edeffect.aurorak12.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/178/2014/12/SLO-Quality-Criteria-Review-Tool-1.pdf

Multiple states collaboratively created the ***Race to the Top Support Network Multi-State SLO Rubric***. The New York State version is a one-page checklist for evaluators and educators to use to measure the quality of the information provided by educators on the NYS SLO Template. A national SLO Work Group convened by the Reform Support Network (RSN) developed this draft rubric that includes representatives from many of the Race to the Top states, including New York State. The goal of the effort was to produce a rubric that multiple states can use to evaluate the quality of SLOs. The group examined a wide range of rubrics from school districts and states across the country, looking for strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences. The rubric that resulted from the efforts of the group uses one performance level—meets expectations—as the Work Group decided that an SLO should not be approved if it does not meet the expectations set forth in the rubric. The Work Group has updated this rubric to align with Education Law §3012-d. Available at: https://www.engageny.org/resource/draft-multi-state-slo-rubric/file/3566

SLO Analysis Tools

The Rhode Island Department of Education created an ***SLO Audit Tool and Guidance for LEAs*** to participate in each year to better understand the level of quality of their SLOs, to discover trends that could affect local policies and inform professional development for teachers and evaluators, and to inform the evaluation of Building Administrators. A reviewer using the tool rates each element relating to the priority of content, quality of evidence, and rigor of target, and provides an overall rating.

Tool and Guidance: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Best-Practices-Resources/SLO_Audit_Tool.pdf

Instructions: http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Best-Practices-Resources/SLO_Audit_Instructions.pdf

Additional Resources to Help Develop and Assess SLOs

- **The Center for Assessment's Student Learning Objective Toolkit**
  http://www.nciea.org/slo-toolkit/
- **Targeting Growth Using Student Learning Objectives as a Measure of Educator Effectiveness**
  https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/targeting-growth.pdf
- **Student Learning Objectives as Measures of Educator Effectiveness The Basics**
  http://educatortalent.org/inc/docs/SLOs_Measures_of_Educator_Effectiveness.pdf
- **Implementing Student Learning Objectives Core Elements for Sustainability**
  https://westcompcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/SLO-Implementation-American-Institute-on-Research.pdf
- **A Quality Control Toolkit for Student Learning Objectives**
  https://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/rsn-slo-toolkit.pdf
- **The Student Learning Objective Handbook The Student Learning Objective Process**
  http://www.azed.gov/teacherprincipal-evaluation/files/2013/06/slo-handbook.pdf

- **Requirements and Recommendations for Implementing The Student Learning Objective Process**
  http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Evaluation-System/Ohio-s-Teacher-Evaluation-System/Student-Growth-Measures/Student-Learning-Objective-Examples/SLO-Requirements-and-Recommendations-082415.pdf.aspx
- **Webinar from EngageNY-Making SLOs Matter**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0NdtiP5jT8
- **Setting Targets in Student Learning Objectives**
  http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Student-Learning-Objectives/Setting_Targets_in_Student_Learning_Objectives.pdf

Appendix C. Checklist and Steps for SLO Analysis

Prior to using an analysis tool to analyze the quality and rigor of SLOs across a school, district, or state, the review team should confirm they meet the following criteria. If so, review teams can proceed with the SLO analysis, using the steps listed below.

Checklist

☐ SLOs have been implemented with ample guidance and support regarding what constitutes high quality.

☐ An SLO quality rubric is available to guide teachers in writing their SLOs and evaluators in approving and scoring SLOs.

The rubric criteria match the elements of the SLO template being used by educators. If not, the rubric will be adapted to align. The alignment process will be completed by a team consisting of: [insert name of team members]_____.

☐ Evaluators' and leaders' expectations have been calibrated regarding the quality and the scoring process.

☐ An SLO analysis tool is available that complements the SLO quality rubric and aligns to the SLO template.

☐ A team of reviewers (e.g., school or district administrators, an external consultant group) has been sufficiently trained on the use of the SLO analysis tool.

☐ A representative sample of scored and redacted SLOs (i.e., SLOs that include no identifying information about the teacher or students) is available for the SLO analysis, including SLOs from multiple:

- Teachers/schools/districts
- Content areas
- Grade levels

☐ A set of example SLOs or benchmark SLOs is available to use as a guide in the review process (if this is the first review, this may not be available).

Steps for the SLO Analysis Tool Review[4]

Step 1: Gather a random sample of SLOs. If you are conducting a district-level analysis, it is important to include a representative sample of each school or evaluator in order to be confident there is consistency of rigor and quality of evidence across the district.

Step 2: Assign each SLO a number. Create a spreadsheet that lists all the SLO numbers along with the school/evaluator.

Step 3: Redact all identifying information from the SLOs (e.g., teacher name, evaluator name, school, etc.).

Step 4: Randomly assign reviewers to the SLOs. If possible, assign two reviewers to each SLO. Double scoring will increase consistency and highlight inconsistencies across reviewers that might skew your findings. Note the reviewers of each SLO on the spreadsheet.

Step 5: Reviewers should hold a calibration session with the analysis tool to ensure that, to the degree possible, reviewers are operating with the same assumptions and expectations. The calibration session should take roughly an hour. The reviewers should review two to three SLOs (from each school level and different subjects) in advance of the meeting, and during the meeting, they should walk through how they would answer all the questions using the audit tool, discussing where their answers differ until they reach consensus. Previous reviewers have found that it is helpful to annotate the SLO as they went, and referred to it later to help anchor their understanding of each question.

Step 6: Set a timeframe for all reviewers to complete their assigned analysis. Decide if reviewers will fill out paper forms of the tool or complete an online form in SurveyMonkey or Google Forms. (The authors recommend an online form.)

Step 7: Analyze the SLO data.

Step 8: If needed, assign a third reviewer or a reconciliation process for SLOs with discrepant results.

Step 9: Report SLO analysis data to review team and determine next steps, based on the results.

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[4] Adapted from the Rhode Island Department of Education's SLO Audit Instructions
http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Teachers-and-Administrators-Excellent-Educators/Educator-Evaluation/Best-Practices-Resources/SLO_Audit_Instructions.pdf

CTAC SLOs™ — An evidence-based strategy

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Quality Rubric

Washoe County School District

Key Idea	1	2	3	4	Possible SLO Location(s)
	Element: LEARNING CONTENT				Possible SLO Location(s)
Focus	Names the course(s), and cites content from the body of applicable standards.	Names the course(s), cites content from the body of applicable standards, selects *focused* (multiple standards but not a majority of course content standards) *content*.	Names the course(s), cites content from the body of applicable standards, selects focused and *coherent* (has a common theme or is inter-connected) *content*.	Names the course(s), cites content from the body of applicable standards, selects focused, coherent, and *pivotal* (most essential to the course) *content*.	Nevada Academic Content Standards, LC.1-LC.5
Key Idea	Element: ASSESSMENTS				Possible SLO Location(s)
Alignment	Aligns no items to the selected learning content and/or does not include standards alignment notation.	*Aligns some items to the selected learning content and some* of the baseline and culminating assessment items are comparable in content, depth, and structure.	*Aligns most* items to the selected learning content and *most* of the baseline and culminating assessment items are comparable in content, depth, and structure (if practicable).	*Aligns all* items to the selected learning content and *all* of the baseline and culminating assessment items are comparable in content, depth, and structure (if practicable).	Attachments, Nevada Academic Content Standards, A.1-A.6
Scoring and Performance	Provides needed scoring materials for the 8-level system and excludes higher- order or performance tasks (e.g., rubrics and/or scoring guides).	Provides needed scoring materials for the 8-level system (e.g., rubrics and/or scoring guides) and challenges students with *some higher-order and/or performance tasks (*e.g., visual, oral, written, physical tasks).	Provides needed scoring materials for the 8-level system (e.g., rubrics and/or scoring guides) and challenges students with *a majority of higher-order and/or performance tasks* (e.g., visual, oral, written, physical tasks).	Provides needed scoring materials for the 8-level system (e.g., rubrics and/or scoring guides) and challenges students with a majority of higher-order and/or performance tasks (e.g., visual, oral, written, physical tasks), and *measures some of the learning content more than once*.	Attachments, A.6
Key Idea	Element: STUDENT POPULATION				Possible SLO Location(s)
Need	Lists student names and/or identification numbers.	Lists student names and/or identification numbers *and provides baseline data* which indicate student need for the learning content.	Lists student names and/or identification numbers, provides baseline *and additional data* which indicate student need for the learning content.	Lists student names and/or identification numbers, provides baseline and additional data which indicate student need for the learning content, *and describes relevant characteristics* of the student population, including abilities and needs.	Student Data Sheet, SP.1-SP.3
Key Idea	Element: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES				Possible SLO Location(s)
Quality	Identifies 3 key strategies to be used.	Identifies 3 key strategies and *describes how they will be used*.	Identifies 3 key strategies, describes how they will be used, and *describes why they support the instructional outcome*.	Identifies 3 key strategies, describes how they will be used, describes why they support the instructional outcome, and *includes a plan for differentiation*.	IS.1-IS.4
Key Idea	Element: INTERVAL OF INSTRUCTION				Possible SLO Location(s)
Length	Selects a start and stop date.	Selects start and stop dates and *quantifies average daily/weekly instructional time*.	Selects start and stop dates, quantifies average daily/weekly instructional time, and *allows for depth and complexity of the learning content*.	n/a	II.1-II.6
Key Idea	Element: STUDENT GROWTH TARGETS				Possible SLO Location(s)
Rigor	Sets individual targets of unacceptable rigor for growth toward attainment of standards and justifies those targets using baseline and supporting data and/or does not provide justification for the growth targets.	Sets individual targets of *low rigor* for growth toward attainment of standards and justifies those targets using baseline and supporting data.	Sets individual targets of *sufficient rigor* for growth toward attainment of standards and justifies those targets using baseline and supporting data.	Sets individual targets of *high rigor* for growth toward attainment of standards and justifies those targets using baseline and supporting data.	Student Data Sheet, SGT.1, .2

Element	Key Language
Learning Content	**Course**: In elementary grades, usually is grade and subject (e.g., Grade 6 ELA) **Applicable standards**: The district-approved document from which standards are located (e.g., *Nevada Academic Content Standards*) **Standard**: The standards-level (or comparable level) of course content articulated in the body of applicable standards (e.g., "SL.1.1.a" for Grade 1 ELA) **Majority of content items**: More than half of the content standards are selected, given the total number of content standards for the course **Focused**: Counting all items for the course, selects between two and half of the content standards **Coherent**: A common thread can be drawn through the selection; no outlying content is included, as they are all connected. Often, connecting two types of standards in a course, such as performance and knowledge standards in physical education, can help demonstrate coherence. **Pivotal**: States how important the content is for students. This is often considered from a content perspective (e.g., Students need this content to be successful in the next course) and a real-time data perspective (e.g., These students this year need this content in light of pre-assessment data).
Assessments	**Aligns**: Measures all or part of the standard as indicated in the language of the standard; this is often accomplished by ensuring the items require students to demonstrate the learning in line with the verbs articulated in the standards. **Needed scoring materials**: Each assessment task has a clear and consistent method for scoring student performance. This usually translates to having rubrics and/or scoring guides for performance tasks, answer keys for selected-response tasks, and a workable numeric approach for issuing a final score to each student. **Higher-order tasks**: Items that are at the upper half of the commonly used cognition levels (e.g., Webb's Depth of Knowledge and the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy) **Performance tasks**: Items where students must construct a response, as opposed to where students select a response. (i.e., performance items in the written, oral, visual, or physical performance domains) **Measuring learning content more than once**: For each standard (or item) in the selected learning content, students have more than one opportunity to demonstrate the learning of the standard (or item). (e.g., 7 of the 13 standards in the selected learning content have more than one assessment item measuring them.)
Student Population	**Baseline data**: Information and scores resulting from the baseline assessment **Relevant versus irrelevant**: Relevant characteristics are attributes that inform the SLO and instruction (e.g., students need build keyboarding fluency and accuracy versus I have 19 boys and 10 girls) **Abilities**: Things students have learned and can do (often academic in nature) (e.g., visualize, identify letters, jump hurdles) **Needs**: Things students need to learn (often academic in nature) (e.g., have difficulty making connections, struggle to see different points of view)
Instructional Strategies	**Key strategies**: Core approaches to instruction that will carry throughout the interval. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather a few strategies that will form the overall approach to instruction of the learning content (e.g., hands-on instruction, integrating writing across the curriculum, core task writing project) **Describes**: Beyond identification, a description portrays how the strategy will be used in the classroom. (e.g., Two different SLOs may each cite "inquiry" as a key strategy. In the descriptions we might learn that one approach involves teacher-generated questions that students independently and silently work on, while another approach uses student-generated questions where collaboration and justification to peers based on evidence will be used.) **Why they support the instructional outcome**: This is the justification for why the identified strategies are being used (e.g., this approach aligns to our school focus strategy for this year) **Plan for differentiation**: This is not the plans themselves for differentiation, but is a summary statement of how the teacher plans to use ongoing reflection of data. This would include the data to be reviewed (usually formative assessments), the frequency of gathering the data to ensure it is ongoing, how reflection will take place, and how it will inform instruction. (e.g., I will review the weekly formative assessments to analyze the progress on student learning and make adjustments in my teaching as I reflect collaboratively with my colleagues.)
Interval of Instruction	**Start and stop dates**: Specific dates on the calendar including month, day, and year (e.g., February 17, 2015) **Quantifies average daily/weekly instructional time**: Totals the average amount of instruction based on usual dosage/amount of instruction (e.g., 45 minutes per week) **Allows for depth and complexity**: The SLO articulates how the timeframe allows for students to engage in the content deeply-not superficially-to learn the nuances and complexities of the selected learning content (e.g., I have taught this course before and it usually takes me 8 weeks for students to deeply learn the content. Given the increased rigor of the assessment this year, I am allowing an extra week.)
Student Growth Targets	**Rigor**: The degree of challenge reflected in the goals—which should be reasonable but aspirational—when viewing them in light of the measurements used to demonstrate learning of the content; the cognition level (e.g., Webb's Depth of Knowledge) is a good indicator of rigor.