

# Student Learning Objectives Implementation Guide for Teachers



**STUDENT  
LEARNING  
OBJECTIVES**

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## Using This SLO Handbook

The purpose of this Implementation Guide is to provide step-by-step information about crafting, implementing, and reflecting on SLOs. This guidance is not designed as a stand-alone resource for SLO implementation but should accompany training on the SLO process and support throughout the year. Teachers will be able to find support on a particular step by locating the general question in the table of contents and jumping to that section of the guide.

### Vision Statement

The Student Learning Objective (SLO) Model in Texas provides a framework for continual dialogue among students, teachers, and principals to support student growth and teacher development throughout the year.

### Guiding Principles

- Support Local Autonomy: Provide flexibility for districts, campuses, and classrooms to adapt as needed.
- Support and measure Student Growth
- Support Teacher Development:
- Provide a meaningful framework for measuring student growth and supporting teacher development

### Design Attributes

- Instructionally Valuable: Support educators to make responsive instructional decisions throughout the year.
- Standards-Aligned: Address academic standards that are critical to student learning.
- Equitable: Meet the unique needs of all students and teachers.
- Transparent: Be clear, concise, and easily understood.
- Manageable: Be easily incorporated into and enhance existing methods for measuring student learning.

## What Are Student Learning Objectives?

Excellent teachers regularly set learning goals for their students and use a variety of data sources to monitor progress towards these goals throughout the year. The Student Learning Objectives process aims to capture this best practice as a means to allowing teachers and teacher appraisers to determine student growth and reflect on a teacher's pedagogical strengths and areas for growth.

Student Learning Objectives are:

- Student growth goals
- Set by teachers
- Focused on a foundational student skill that is developed throughout the curriculum
- Tailored to the context of individual students
- Designed to help teachers better understand the impact of their pedagogy
- For the purposes of measuring student growth and refining a teacher's instruction

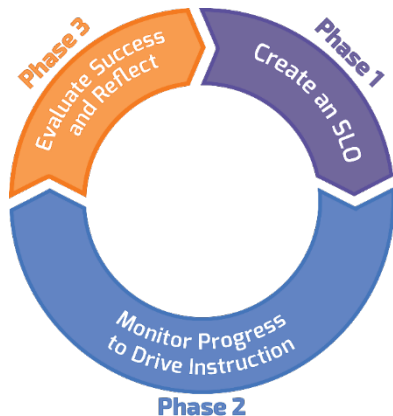
## Why Use Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) as a Measure of Student Growth?

SLOs drive both teacher practice and student learning by strengthening instruction. The use of SLOs has been associated with improved student outcomes on standardized assessments. Teachers crafting SLOs report improved understanding of how to use data to determine student needs and to measure progress toward growth goals. SLOs encourage collaboration among teachers as well as between teachers and their appraisers. SLOs encourage the adoption of a long-term vision for student learning and contribute to more meaningful discussions about vertical planning. Finally, SLOs provide a framework for measuring student growth grounded in student work as the source of evidence

# The Texas Student Learning Objective Process

## Process Overview and Planning Considerations

The Student Learning Objective process should be used throughout the school year to help teachers plan backward from an end vision for student success. This process helps encourage regular conversations and collaboration among teachers, students, and appraisers in order to ensure that instruction facilitates students' progress toward targeted growth goals.



The SLO process represents a continuous cycle of improvement embodied in strong teaching practice. Teachers and their appraisers will use SLOs to design strategies to meet their goals for student success, beginning with planning and leading to thoughtful instructional design and delivery. Throughout the year, teachers will collect a BOE (body of evidence) of student learning and adjust instruction accordingly. At the end of the cycle, teachers will reflect on outcomes and plan to refine their practice for the following year.

For ease of understanding, the SLO process has been grouped into three key phases to define the sequence of actions to be taken.

### Phase 1: Creating a Student Learning Objective

The first phase focuses on purposeful planning of instruction and setting student growth goals. At the beginning of the course, teachers work with each other, their appraisers, and other support staff to identify the foundational skill they'll address in their SLO, identify student starting points on the foundational skill, and develop clear targets for student growth.

### Phase 2: Monitoring Progress to Drive Instruction

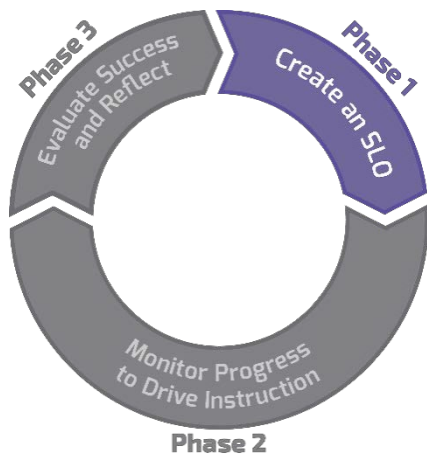
After the SLO Form is completed and approved by the appraiser, teachers will work with each other and their appraiser, engaging in ongoing dialogue about progress toward goals.

In this phase, teachers work with each other and their appraiser, to discuss students' progress toward goals. These discussions are opportunities for teachers to develop strategies to adjust instruction based on analysis of student learning. Teachers design assignments/projects/assessments that will constitute the body of evidence of student work.

### Phase 3: Evaluating Success and Reflection

This last phase occurs at the end of the course and involves using the body of evidence of student work to determine whether students met their growth goals. It also includes a conversation between the teacher and appraiser regarding the effectiveness of the teacher's engagement in the SLO process, and results in an overall rating that is based on both teacher and student outcomes. The final conversation helps teachers and appraisers plan for instructional refinement.

## Phase 1: Create a Student Learning Objective



Phase 1 will occur over the first 1-2 months of school for yearlong courses, or in the first 3-4 weeks for semester courses. During Phase 1, teachers will work with other teachers and with their appraiser to develop Student Learning Objective(s) for a selected course.

Although teachers will use the [Student Learning Objective form](#) to craft the SLO, the form simply captures the thinking prompted by the first four overarching questions found on the SLO Thinking Map (see p. #). Following the guidance below, teachers will spend time gathering resources and information to complete Steps 1 through 5. To improve the quality of the SLO, teachers may wish to refer to the [SLO Success Criteria](#).

### Step 1: What is the focus of my SLO and what is my SLO Skill Statement?

The goal of this step is to identify a foundational skill for this course that would be an appropriate focus for the SLO, and lead to an effective Skill Statement. Foundational skills:

- Are the most important skills students develop in the course.
- Can impact not just this course but other courses both in this current year and beyond.
- Persist throughout the course.
- Will be found in multiple TEKS.

*The Skill Statement represents a balance between being valuable for teacher growth, student growth, and being important for students both in the current course and in other courses beyond this year. If there are multiple, competing skills that appear to be equally important, teachers should consider which of those foundational skills they feel will lead to improving their instruction the most.*

#### **Decide on a general content area for focus**

The process for selecting an area of focus is different for the first year of SLO implementation than for the following years.

For the first year of implementation, teachers should focus on learning the SLO process. If teachers can work in teams in a common content area or with content with which they've had success in the past, they should consider taking that opportunity.

For each year after the first year of implementation, teachers should focus on a content area that provides the greatest opportunity to improve student growth and the teacher’s instructional practices. The primary goal of appraisal and SLOs within an appraisal system is to help identify a teacher’s areas of strength and areas for refinement. SLOs function best when used to facilitate student and teacher growth and development.

Begin the process by reviewing the courses or content areas that you teach. What you are looking for is a general content area to review further.

- If you are an elementary generalist, determine what content area you might choose. Should it be ELAR, math, science, or social studies?
- If you are a secondary teacher with multiple course preparations, consider a particular course for your focus.
- If you are a teacher of special education or of English language learners, could you collaborate with classroom teachers on a similar focus area? Open a dialogue with colleagues to determine if you can join the team to develop an appropriate SLO Skill Statement.

What should you consider in this deliberation? Is one content area more worthy of focus due in order to meet students’ needs?

### **What is the most important content of my course?**

The next step is to identify foundational skills associated with *the selected* content area. Teachers may be able to make these selections based on their knowledge of what components of the class were key elements in the success of previous classes. Educators should collaborate with their peers in this selection process. This will be especially important for new teachers who do not have the historical basis for this selection. Keep in mind:

- The focus area should be designed to address foundational skills that are pivotal to the current course as well as students’ subsequent education.  
*Hint: Consider the question: When students leave my course, what is the one thing they must be able to do as they move forward in their education?*
- Foundational skills should be threaded throughout the term of the course. These should not be unit-based selections; rather, they are broad skills that are addressed multiple times in lessons and, more importantly, are applied by students throughout the course.

### **Best Practices**

- Develop your SLO Skill Statement with colleagues.
- Share common elements of the SLO Skill Statement with your colleagues, but each teacher will craft and submit his or her own SLO based on current students.
- Use data to narrow the focus of your SLO Skill Statement.
- Where appropriate, initiate vertical planning conversations with the teachers of the grades and courses beyond yours to refine your selection of “must haves” for the course.

## Teachers' Thinking Revealed

*"This is my 10th year of teaching art in high school. And although we have four key areas we address in the introductory class, the principles and elements of art are the foundation. Once students understand that content, they can begin to express it in their creative work and use it in critiques of others' works. So that is going to be the focus for my SLO."*

*"Our fifth grade team met and basically decided right away to do an ELAR SLO. Our students have done well in math for several years, so we feel confident that our planning for math works. But, once we got to thinking about foundational skills in ELAR, we could not agree where to focus. Two team members thought we should work on reading and two thought writing was more important. So, we looked at the 4th grade STAAR results for ELAR and writing. Clearly, writing outcomes were lower and particularly low in the composition reporting category. And the sixth grade team also reported that writing to a prompt was a weakness in many of our students for students who were coming into our fifth grade class this year. We also noticed that early student work from these students supported this as a weakness as well. So, we decided to focus there and found that the 5.15 and 5.18, which address writing process and expository writing work."*

*In middle school social studies, we are just beginning to have students work on in depth research projects. This has always been a challenge for my students not because they can't write, but because they have difficulties understanding what they read, especially when it comes from primary sources and context plays a role in understanding. We have seen that reading of informational texts is an ongoing weakness for students in our school, based on STAAR results. I feel comfortable that this the right choice for a focus in our SLO."*

### **Find TEKS that align with the selected content**

Now that you have specified a particular focus, and written a Skill Statement, the next task will be to review the TEKS to determine which key standards are aligned to the focus.

To find your TEKS, visit this website :<http://tea.texas.gov/curriculum/teks/>

Remember that the introductory paragraphs often identify key skills and content areas for the course.

As you review, consider the following:

- In some disciplines, process standards may be more applicable than content standards. For example, a high school social studies class will address a significant number of standards addressing major events in history. Standards attached to each of those events will vary in content, depth, and emphasis. Social studies skills, such as using primary and secondary sources to develop an argument supported with evidence from the literature, however, can be applied across eras and across content areas.
- In mathematics, consider using the word "concept" as a strategy for identifying appropriate TEKS. For example, number sense is a concept that moves through multiple strands of student learning. It is possible that an SLO could result in asking students to display their grasp of the concept through different kinds of problems over the term of the SLO. **Measurement of the standards will be required.** Consider whether you will be able to assess students' skill levels in this content at each stage of SLO process. Measures used as a part of the body of evidence (BOE) must be aligned with the Skill Statement.



## **Write an SLO Skill Statement**

Skill Statements represent a valid focus area of the course and are designed to measure foundational skills. A Skill Statement describes specific measurable skills within the selected focus area that persists throughout the course and that will lead to student growth within the focus area as well as teacher growth in teaching this skill.

For example, suppose a high school US history teacher is considering appropriate content for an SLO Skill Statement. A variety of topics examined throughout the year, such as the American Revolution, the Civil War, the Great Depression, and so on. If the teacher decided to focus on one event in US history, that topic might be covered for only a few weeks within the school year. In contrast, focusing on interpreting information from multiple sources to draw valid conclusions is a skill that is addressed throughout the course regardless of the historical event currently being studied. Students' ability to analyze multiple pieces of evidence to justify their conclusions is critical skill for student success in US history and other several courses.

Using the focus area as a guide, consider a specific, measurable skill that will result in student growth within the focus area.

Focus Area	Skill Statement
Principles and Elements of Art	Students will use the elements and principals of design to create individual drawings that apply the five key principals of observational drawing: a) lines, b) spaces and shapes, c) relationships, d) lighting and shading, and e) composition.
Expository Writing	Students will apply the steps of the writing process (plan, draft, edit, publish) to craft well organized essays on informational texts.
Using primary and secondary sources from informational texts	Students will be able to use at least two primary or secondary sources to write an informative essay that conveys information clearly and accurately through effective selection of information, organization and analysis of content.

## Complete the SLO Form

The SLO Form, Step 1 provides a space for teachers to describe their chosen focus area, share their Skill Statement, share the rationale for why they selected this particular area and the associated foundational skills, and list to the applicable TEKS.

### *Sample SLO Form for Step 1* (based on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher's response above)

#### **Step 1: What is the focus and Skill Statement for my SLO?**

a. Identify the focus area of the SLO.

5<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts: writing expository/informational texts

b. What is the SLO Skill Statement for this content area or subject?

Using informational texts, students can write informative/expository essays that analyze a topic and convey ideas in an organized and detailed manner using supporting evidence from the text.

c. What led to the decision to focus on this content area and the SLO skill statement?

Our team debated about the best place to focus our efforts in order to yield the highest impact for our students. We were torn between reading comprehension and writing skills. We looked at STAAR data for our students from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, both for the Reading and the Writing tests. Scores were quite a bit lower on the writing test. Then we looked at the reporting categories for the Writing test and noticed that the writing process skill and informational writing were the lowest categories listed. Interestingly, the students did well on writing conventions. It was the actual composition in informational writing that was the issue. This data is also consistent with the early writing work we have seen so far from our students.

d. What TEKS for the content area or subject correspond to these most important skills? You may provide an enumerated list of TEKS, but be prepared to share the verbiage of the TEKS with your appraiser.

(15) Writing/Writing Process: Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, editing, and publishing) to compose text  
(18) Writing Expository and Procedural texts: Students write expository and procedural texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes

## Step 2: Who are my students?

The goal of this step is to describe students' typical skill level when they arrive in your course. You will describe the full range of students who come into your course from the highest- to the lowest-performing skill levels, with respect to the SLO Skill Statement. Next, *if you teach multiple classes*, you will select a class for the focus of your SLO. Then, you will collect multiple sources of data about your current students to decide which description best describes the skill level of each student covered in the SLO. Finally, you will record the initial skill level for each student. Think of this as an answer to the question that you are often asked, "What kind of students do you have this year?" For the foundational skill selected for the SLO Skill Statement, you are establishing whether this year's class is a typical group in terms of entering skill levels, a higher performing group, or a lower performing group.

### **Describe the typical entering skill levels of students in your class**

Picture the typical skill level of your students. How would you describe their entering skill level associated with your SLO Skill Statement? Write that description in the middle block of the chart called the Initial Skill Profile. Next, think about the highest-performing students and describe their entering skills in the top box. Next, think about the lowest-performing students and describe their entering skill level in the bottom box. Then, fill in the gaps just above and just below typical skill levels. What you will see is something that looks like a rubric to assess students' entry level skills. The goal is to make these descriptions crisp and distinct. Later, you will need to be able to pick a description that best fits each student in your class.

**Hint:** *What was just described is one strategy to complete the profile. Some teachers will state that it was easier for them to start with the highest-performing skill level and work their way down through the other levels. Find a strategy that works for you.*

There are a couple of key elements to remember. First, this is not based on your current students. That may seem odd, but the goal here is to try to understand if this class is similar to your previous classes, or if it's higher or lower performing. This will impact instruction and how you complete your SLO.

Second, make sure there is no overlap between the levels. For example, here are a couple of ISP levels from a high school automotive mechanics instructor:

**Well Above Typical Skill** states: *Students understand the basic principles behind how engines work and have some experience rebuilding engines.*

**Above Typical Skill** states: *Students understand the basic principles behind how engines work and have some experience rebuilding engines with guidance.*

At first glance, they are different, but in practice, would you be able to distinguish one level from the other? Chances are a high school student would not have occasion to work on an engine without some form of supervision. In practical terms, it would be hard to differentiate between the two.

Another potential issue in Initial Skill Profiles is using words such as “most,” “many,” and “some” in the descriptions. Ask friends to describe the difference in meaning between “most,” and “many.” Some will tell you percentages, and if they do, the percentages may not match. Others will have a specific definition in mind. The point is that there is ambiguity in these words. This does not mean that they cannot be used; rather, it means that they need to be defined. For example, you could include a legend at the bottom of the profile explaining the meaning of these ambiguous words as you will use them.

One last thing to remember is that you want to be able to describe the full range of student performance that you are likely to see. Try to make sure that every student can be mapped to a description. *For example, as you create the description for “Well Above Typical Skill”, consider some of the most advanced students you have ever taught. We will discuss later what happens if you discover that you have a student(s) who doesn’t fit into the levels you created for your Initial Skill Profile.*

What if you have never taught this course or you are new to teaching? Consult your colleagues who may have taught the course before to determine what they have noticed with students in the past. In addition, you may need to review data on earlier student performance to determine appropriate descriptions. One other strategy could be used in cases where you have vertically aligned courses. In those cases, the end-of-year expectations as indicated in the TEKS might be helpful to describe what students should be able to do upon arrival in your course.

Finally, check with your colleagues. Review each other’s’ Initial Skill Profiles to check for clarity. Sometimes a fresh set of eyes will notice wording difficulties that you may not have noticed. A sample Initial Skill Profile is below for a fourth-grade teacher focusing on critical thinking and problem solving in science:

Initial Student Skill Profile		
Skill Level	Descriptors	
Well above typical skill	<i>Student selects and uses tools, materials, and questions to investigate the natural world, following methods prescribed by the teachers, and using critical thinking skills to analyze, evaluate, and report findings.</i>	
Above typical skill	<i>Student selects and uses tools, materials, and questions to investigate the natural world, following methods prescribed by the teacher, and uses basic logic to analyze findings.</i>	
Typical skill	<i>Student selects and uses tools, materials, and questions to investigate the natural world, following methods prescribed by the teacher and uses basic logic to provide explanations for some observations.</i>	
Below typical skill	<i>Student selects and uses tools, materials, and questions to investigate the natural world, following methods prescribed by the teacher, but does not attempt to explain findings.</i>	
Well below typical skill	<i>Student is unable to select and use tools, materials, and questions to appropriately investigate the natural world.</i>	

### **Select the class.**

When teachers select the class they'll use for their SLO, the entire class should be included – targeting particular students or a portion of the class is not permitted. SLOs are designed to help reveal the effectiveness of teaching practices and to truly inform teacher development. *To do this, the process must focus on the growth of all students in the selected class, not just the growth of a portion of the class.*

- For elementary generalists, this will be the whole class.
- For elementary departmentalized teachers or secondary teachers, this will be the most representative class. Teachers should ask themselves, “Which class best represents the diversity in skill levels and challenges from among other classes I could have selected?” It would be best to avoid selecting classes that are unique for a particular reason (i.e., particularly high- or low-performing students).

Note: In subsequent years of implementation, this will be modified as follows:

Teachers and appraisers will collaborate to determine an area of challenge for the teacher. This might be a content area that is new to the teacher or in which the teacher wants to expand his or her mastery of the material. It might be a course where guiding students to mastery has proven to be difficult. The decision on where to focus will be part of the conference in which the goal-setting and professional development plan conversations occur (generally in conjunction with the end-of-year conference). It is important to think of SLOs as part of the appraisal system. Aligning goal-setting, professional development plans, and SLOs will lead to more successful strategies for gaining the support and feedback needed to meet the targets established in the SLO.

### **Collect multiple sources of data about students to identify initial skill level.**

The next task will be to collect multiple sources of data about your current students. It is important to remember that this should be current data, not data from previous years. The goal is to describe students' current skill level at the beginning of the course for the skill in question in the SLO. These data can come from both formal and informal sources.

For example, formal measures could include:

- Quizzes.
- Unit assessments.
- District formative assessments
- Teacher-created assessments/pre-tests
- Student work products including writing samples, lab reports.

Less formal measures include exit tickets that ask students to summarize their understanding or ask questions about the content, class work, class participation, etc. Considerable data can be drawn from your observations and interactions with students in class. What questions do they ask? Are they basic or more advanced questions? What kinds of errors or misconceptions do you see in homework responses?

A single source of data is not likely to be conclusive. Students do have “bad” days when they do not exhibit their potential. They may respond better to certain kinds of questions than they do to others. Collecting multiple measures will provide a more complete and accurate understanding of each student’s initial level of understanding and reduce the chance that what you are measuring are just random effects.

It is also important to remember that this does not need to be a new measure that you create. New measures can be created, especially if current measures do not appropriately assess the skill in question, but it is not essential. Effective instruction is in and of itself a data-gathering process. Teachers ask themselves, “Are they getting it? Do I need to adjust what I am doing?” That is data, and it can be an invaluable resource for estimating students’ preexisting level of skills and learning. If you can use these formal and informal data sources and feel confident about your evaluations of students’ skill level, do so, but if questions remain, you may need to consider some additional sources of data.

### **Map current students to the Initial Skill Profile.**

In the previous section, you determined what data sources you would collect about students’ current level of learning. In this section, you will focus on mapping students to the Initial Skill Profile to answer the question, which description is the best fit for each student included in the SLO? Your task will be to review the current data you have on each student and find which level descriptor is the most appropriate.

There are a couple of things to note here. First, as you work through this process, it may become apparent that the descriptors in the profile are not clear or sufficiently distinct. If so, make revisions but also reflect on what they reveal. For example, the need for revisions may indicate that your current class is significantly higher or lower than your typical class. Second, you are estimating student performance. Use your best judgment. Your assessments of students’ skill levels at the beginning of the year are not likely to be based on measures that have been refined to be psychometrically perfect, *so multiple measures are encouraged to help develop an accurate portrait of each student’s level of understanding. It is important to remember that the SLO process emphasizes accuracy but not quantitative precision.*

Below is an example of how a teacher might make decisions about assigning students to levels. This is from a high school teacher of an introductory information technology course. The highest two levels of the Initial Skill Profile he created are listed below:

*Well above typical: Students are able to use all of the following software programs with a moderate level of sophistication: word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation.*

*Above typical: Students are able to use two of the following software programs with a moderate level of sophistication: word processing, database, spreadsheet, and presentation*


*Suppose the teacher has two students, Frankie and Johnny. Frankie can create a presentation using graphics developed from the spreadsheet technology and provide a well-designed word-processed report. Johnny, on the other hand, can use the presentation software as well as word processing, but he does not use graphics at all because he does not know how to use the software. It should be clear that Johnny would fit the Above Typical description. But Frankie does not fit neatly in either level.*

Here is where we remind ourselves that this is estimation. Frankie has demonstrated most but not all of the skills indicated in the Well Above Typical level; however, he has also demonstrated more skills than is expected in the Above Typical level. The teacher, therefore, decides the Well Above Typical level description is the best fit for Frankie and maps him to that level.

The example is a reminder that you are estimating skill level. The teacher should use sound judgment, backed by multiple sources of data, to make decisions about where to map students. There should be consistency in how decisions were made about mapping students. If two students have similar performance, they should be mapped to the same level. Teachers should be prepared to provide evidence supporting the assignments that were made and to walk the appraiser through their process for determining students' ISP levels.

An important part of this step is to record students' initial skill level on the [Student Growth Tracker](#). This is an Excel spreadsheet that will be used to track growth (see below). Each student is listed separately and his or her level on the Initial Skill Profile is recorded. Note that the electronic version of the form has drop-down menus to simplify the selection of level. Click on the down arrow to find the appropriate level for each student, then just click to select the appropriate descriptor.

**Remember:** You will need to save the growth tracker following a naming convention recommended by your school.



## Student Growth Tracker

**Instructions for using the SLO Student Growth Tracker:**

**Info Tab:** Complete this tab with Teacher name, Course, and SLO Skill Statement. Note: this information with carry over to the next tab in the spreadsheet (columns C and D.)

**Student Growth Tracker Tab:**  
 Fill in Columns A and B with Student ID and Student name. You may use copy and paste from another Excel. Columns E, F, J, M, and N have "drop down" features, (click in the field and an arrow will pop up to the right.) Columns G, H, I, K, and L need to be manually entered with student scores.

<b>Teacher:</b>	
<b>Course:</b>	
<b>SLO Skill Statement:</b>	

## Step 3: What are my expectations for these students?

The goal of this step is to describe your expectations for students. These are the goals you have for each individual student based on the information you have about their starting point and other data that may impact their growth.

### **Develop the Targeted Skill Profile to describe expectations**

This profile describes your expectations for students' growth in the foundational skill identified in the SLO. By definition, the descriptors will not match those in the Initial Skill Profile – because students will have grown and developed over the course of the school year. Those Initial Profile phrases that would have described their performance at the beginning of the SLO process should no longer fit. There will be a different set of skills expected at the end of the interval, compared with the list of skills the students had at the beginning of the year, prior to any instruction. The descriptors for each skill level should be more challenging, and reflective of what students should be able to know and do at the end of the year.

You must consider two factors when you develop the Targeted Skill Profile. First, students' level on the Initial Skill Profile will clearly determine expectations for growth. You must know the student's starting point to predict the ending point. How students were distributed as a whole will also affect how you design the whole profile (more on that below).

Secondly, the SLO Skill Statement and TEKS or local curriculum identified will affect the profile. The TEKS expectations, for example, fundamentally define what we want students to achieve by the end of the course. But remember, neither of these factors can be considered in isolation. They are influenced by and influence each other.

Many of the questions that teachers have about the Targeted Profile focus on where to anchor the descriptors, or put another way, how to decide which descriptions should fit into which box. If students were distributed evenly or on a bell-shaped curve on the Initial, think of the typical level on the Targeted Profile as your expectations for that middle group. Let's look at an example:

Sally, a physical education teacher, developed her Initial Skill Profile and mapped her students to the five different skill levels. As a result, she found that she had 2 students with well above typical skill, 3 with above typical skill, 10 with typical skill, 4 with below typical skill, and 3 with well below typical skill. That is fairly close to a bell-shaped curve.

**Her SLO Skill Statement is:** *Students will implement their self-designed personal physical fitness plan based on the 4 main training principles (frequency, intensity, type and time) and incorporating the 4 main components of fitness (muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance) in order to meet their personal fitness goals.*



The **Typical (middle) skill level of the Initial Skill Profile** is: *Students understand the difference between strength and endurance, but have difficulty understanding the difference between muscular endurance and cardiovascular endurance. Student can demonstrate/model the difference between frequency and intensity of a given physical task.*

So based on the ISP, the **typical skill level of the Targeted Skill Profile** is: *Students understand and can implement all 4 components of fitness and at least 2 of the 4 main training principles in the design of their personal fitness plan and can use their plan to increase their overall fitness as measured by progress towards their fitness goals.*

The teacher would have used personal experience and expectations based on the TEKS to determine that this was what the typical student should be able to do by the end of the year, with ongoing practice and skill-building.

However, if a teacher had a group at the beginning of the year whose skill level was clustered around above typical and well above typical, instead of clustered around typical skill level, then expectations for what should be a typical skill set for this group of students at the end of the year would have to be higher. One way to think of it is to consider the bulk of your students. If the bulk of your students exhibit cluster around one particular skill level at the beginning of the year, then you would base the descriptors for your Typical Skill Levels at the end of year around the skills you would expect that particular group of students to be able to exhibit at the end of the year. **In other words, you use the skill descriptors from where the bulk of your students were on the Initial Skill Profile in order to build the Typical Skill Level on the Targeted Skill Profile.**

For example, imagine Sally, our physical education teacher had a different distribution: Ten students were well above typical, 8 were above typical, and 4 were typical on the Initial Skill Profile. If the teacher kept the description above for the typical group on the Targeted Skill Profile, that would not be expecting enough growth.

**The end of year Typical Skill level for this high-performing group** might possibly look something like this:

*Students include all 4 components of fitness as well as the 4 main training principles into the design of their personal fitness plan, and successfully implement their personal fitness plan by reaching specific, individualized, measurable goals related to each of the 4 components of fitness.*

If most students fall below typical, you will use the same strategy to anchor the Targeted Skill Profile. Again, use the largest group to anchor the profile and ask yourself, “How much do I want this group to grow?” Maybe these students will not reach the same high level you had for your high-performing group, but all students are expected to grow. Perhaps there is a level that is challenging and close to grade level, but perhaps not as high as it would be for the average group.

For example, **The end of year Typical Skill level for an overall lower-performing group** this might look like this:

*Students include at least 3 of the 4 components of fitness in the design of their personal fitness plan and with guidance can use their plan to increase their overall fitness by making progress towards meeting most of their fitness goals.*

Notice that this level is actually higher than the Typical Skill Level on the beginning of year Initial Skill Profile because students have to create a personalized fitness plan aligned to the 4 components of fitness, and also have to make progress towards their personal fitness goals.

Below is a sample Targeted Skill Profile for the Grade 5 science teacher.

<b>Targeted Student Skill Profile</b>	
SLO Skill Statement	SLO Skill Statement- Students will be able to analyze information from multiple pieces of evidence, draw accurate conclusions about their findings and justify their conclusions both verbally and in writing.
<b>Skill Level</b>	<b>Expectations</b>
Well above typical skill	Student is able to justify verbally and in writing an accurate conclusion of the findings using inferred evidence from multiple sources of evidence. Student is able to make a connection using a real world example and the conclusion from their evidence and includes the scientific principle.
Above typical skill	Using multiple sources of evidence, the student is able to make inferences, draw accurate an accurate conclusion and justify their conclusion verbally and/or in writing. Student is able to use the evidence to make a connection between their conclusion and a real-world example.
Typical skill	Using multiple sources of evidence, the student is able to make inferences, draw accurate an accurate conclusion and justify their conclusion verbally and/or in writing.
Below typical skill	Student is able to justify verbally and/or in writing an accurate conclusion of their findings using isolated facts from one piece of evidence.
Well below typical skill	Student is able to justify verbally and/or in writing the conclusion of their findings using isolated facts from one piece of evidence. Conclusion may be inaccurate and supported with irrelevant evidence.

## **Review supplemental data for each student covered in the SLO**

To craft a solid Targeted Skill Profile, you will need to review supplemental data. For example, you will want to consider how much students have grown in the past. Is there trend data that could be reviewed to determine the amount of growth students have made in the past? This might be as simple as looking at the first and last assessments from the previous year to determine the amount of growth students achieved. It is a best practice to look at more than one year's worth of student growth to determine a pattern. In addition, a student's work performance during the first few weeks of school can serve as a data source. What is the quality of the students' classwork/homework/in-class assignments? What are you seeing in terms of class participation? How have students performed on any beginning of year assessments you may give during the first four-six weeks of school? More data points may help you eliminate the possibility that you are seeing chance fluctuations that may not be seen again.

Another source of data to consider is background information about the specific students in your class. This comes in several forms. First, what amount of growth have these students exhibited in the past in similar or even dissimilar courses? Are these students, in general terms, quick learners and high performers?

That should affect the targets that you set. Similarly, if your current students have a history of difficulty in learning, that should factor into your decisions about targets for them.

Consider the example below:

*José has two students, Thelma and Louise, who have similar records of achievement on an earlier pre-assessment. Both were mapped to the typical level on the Initial Skill Profile. But José noted that Louise had 40 days of unexcused absences last year while Thelma only missed two days. And, upon further examination of the record, José found that Louise has failed several courses and was retained two years ago due to failures. The goal for Thelma is to reach the above typical level on the Targeted Skill Profile, but he decided that a challenging goal for Louise would be to reach the typical level on the Targeted Skill Profile, considering the context of her past performance.*

Note that this teacher had two students with similar records on pre-assessment results but marked differences in other measures of achievement (passing grades) and attendance. The teacher was able to justify differentiating targets based on knowledge of factors related to the students' histories and the impacts on their education. Teachers should consider these factors but be prepared to explain choices made when reviewing the SLO with the appraiser.

***Hint:*** *It is important to note that these three sections of Phase One work hand-in-hand. If the supplemental data indicates that students are likely to be higher performers than might have been indicated on the Initial Skill Profile, the Targeted Skill Profile might need to be adjusted to reflect higher expectations. It may be best to think of these tasks as being completed simultaneously rather than sequentially – with reflection and adjustment as each task is addressed.*



### **Identify sources of data to be included in the body of evidence**

Throughout the SLO interval, you will collect data to determine how students are progressing toward their targeted growth goals. You will need to identify what sources of evidence you will use. The measures you identify should be aligned with the SLO Skill Statement.

Begin by asking yourself if there are any existing measures that could be used for this purpose? Are there tasks, projects or assessments that you typically give throughout the year that could work for this purpose? Again, the **key will be if these sources of evidence are aligned with SLO Skill Statement**. It could be that a particular assessment/assignment covers more content than is included in your Skill Statement, but it should be possible to evaluate students' performance on the subset of skills or tasks identified in your skill profiles. (Please note that if the specific skill sets related to the SLO cannot be scored separately from the overall assessment score, they will not work as evidence for the SLO.)

There also need to be enough sources of evidence to be confident that you are truly measuring student's skill levels as they relate to the SLO Skill Statement. Best practice is to include at least five samples of student work in the body of evidence.

In some cases, teachers may need to develop a specific assessments/task/projects/presentations, etc. in order to accurately measure students' skill with respect to the SLO Skill Statement. If possible, a best practice is to design these assessments collaboratively with other teachers.

To ensure that any assessment measures you create are aligned with the SLO Skill Statement, consider using an assessment blueprint. A simple blueprint would list each aspect of the task/assignment/test and the TEKS or focus area with which it is aligned. The level of cognitive demand for an item could also be added. This would help you double-check that the assessment measure you are using represents an appropriate level of challenge for this class or grade. Are all items simply requiring recall, or do they ask students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize too?

Check with your appraiser to determine how any assessments created by teachers will be reviewed.

## Step 4: How will I guide these students toward growth?

The overall goal for this step is to describe how you will develop an instructional plan to address the needs of your students and guide them towards growth. The focus will be on *differentiation* and plans to monitor and adjust instruction.

### **Describe the plan for differentiation.**

*Effective teachers use many strategies to differentiate instruction. For the SLO, teachers are expected to be able to describe how they initially plan to differentiate for the highest- and lowest-performing students in the class.* For the higher-performing students, teachers might want to address more challenging content. Are there enrichment opportunities you could incorporate into classwork? Are there applications of the learning that might be more challenging for students?

Similarly, you want to address the lowest-performing students. How will you scaffold their learning? Do you have built-in one-on-one time or extra practice to assist these students? Do you devote additional resources to helping the student who is more challenged with the content?

Finally, be prepared to describe how these two differentiated approaches will coalesce in the classroom. How will you encourage both groups, as well as those in the middle, to continue to grow and learn even though their starting points and the pace of learning may not be the same? For example, an elementary school generalist may use a balanced literacy approach to teaching English Language Arts:

*Every morning, we have read aloud, shared, and discussed readings, asking questions for comprehension. But during guided reading time, students are supported at an appropriate level for their reading through text selection and individual support.*

### **Identify strategies to monitor progress towards targets.**

Next you will discuss your plans to monitor progress. It is important to remember that SLO Skill Statements, ISPs, TSPs, and supporting documents are not created and then addressed only at the end of the interval. The SLO process is a living plan, and should be monitored along the way using a body of evidence of student work. **Frequent assessment of progress and tracking of trajectory toward the goal using a body of evidence is required.** Less formal measures of assessment, such as questioning in class, homework assignments, and observations of students' work made over the shoulder during regular class time should regularly be included in monitoring students' progress toward goals.

Consider how often you will collect this formative data. *Depending on the grade level and subject areas, monthly or bi-monthly progress check-ins may be a reasonable expectation.* Consider what form those formative assessments will take in advance. For example, will there be specific tasks or assignments that will help monitor progress, or will there be interim assessments that could be used for this purpose? **What assessment measures will you document in the body of evidence for each student?**

Track the results of these assessments on the [Student Growth Tracker](#). This will help with visualizing progress and determining if there are any students or student groups that are falling behind, or if there are some students who may need more rigorous work to remain engaged in the learning. This will also help anchor conversations with your appraiser about how, when, and in response to what practices students grew.

Just as important as collecting measures of student progress is the plan for reviewing that data and deciding how to adjust instruction. It is a best practice that the data review process is conducted in teacher teams so that colleagues can help think through potential issues. Someone else on your team may have been implementing key instructional strategies that are new to you, and vice-versa. They may be able to recommend modifications and refinements to your practice. The review process will be effective only if it is scheduled regularly and the data are reviewed and discussed.

### **Plan for conferences with colleagues.**

Teachers should meet at least monthly to talk about progress. Include these discussions in regularly scheduled Professional Learning Community meetings or other standing meetings as much as possible. For those who do not have existing structures or an obvious team, consider alternatives such as meeting with teachers of other grades and subjects or with teachers on other campuses (whether virtual or face-to-face). Those who are in unique teaching positions in a school may need to reach to the district level for colleagues in similar roles. In very small school schools, the team may be the entire teaching staff. The point is, discussions with colleagues can elicit clarity and new ideas.

Part of preparing for this portion of the SLO process will be identifying who can participate in these collegial meetings and exactly when you will meet. Committing to these meetings on the [SLO form](#) itself will serve as a reminder that this is a key portion of SLO development that needs to stay on everyone's schedule.

### **Review SLO plan with appraiser for approval.**

SLO Skill Statements are teacher-written and administrator-approved. Since the SLO process is conceptualized as being part of the overall appraisal system, the administrator who approves the SLO Skill Statement should be the same person who completes the appraisal. Getting feedback on your SLO Skill Statement from other teachers, team leaders, department chairs, content specialists, or instructional coaches, however, will help to refine the SLO Skill Statement prior to submission to your appraiser.

Plan your SLO Skill Statement development around the timelines specified by your school and district, with the understanding that SLO Skill Statements may require revision. Plan backwards, allowing for the possibility that your appraiser may ask for revisions, and give yourself enough time to make those adjustments. In addition, find out how to submit your SLO Skill Statement for review. This could vary from district to district, and could involve paper or electronic submissions strategies. (Best practice: Shared folder in a school drive that appraisers and other teachers can access.)

As you complete the [SLO form](#), please notice that there is a spell-checker built into the form. Review the form for any errors before you submit it. When you are satisfied that the SLO Skill Statement is ready for review, send the [SLO form](#), the [Student Growth Tracker](#), and any other supporting materials that you feel might clarify the SLO Skill Statement to your appraiser. Supporting materials could include any assessments, rubrics, or performance tasks that you might ask students to complete as evidence of growth. Appraisers may also want to see how students were assigned to the Initial Skill Profile and may request any measures that were used as well as samples of student work.

Teachers and their appraisers will meet to discuss the SLO. Think of yourself as the guide for your appraiser. Your task will be to explain your thinking and the decisions that you made in crafting the SLO Skill Statement. You should use this time to request support that might be needed to succeed with this Skill Statement. Consider whether there are any professional development opportunities that might be beneficial or if there are resources that would enhance the learning experience for students.

It is permissible for appraisers to meet with a group of teachers who share a common SLO Skill Statement rather than individually. This will broaden the conversation and may assist in reflection on any changes that may be appropriate. If technology is readily available, it may be appropriate to use this meeting to make immediate adjustments to the SLO that may be required. At the end of the conference, appraisers will document their approval on the [SLO form](#) itself.

### Approvals: Things to remember

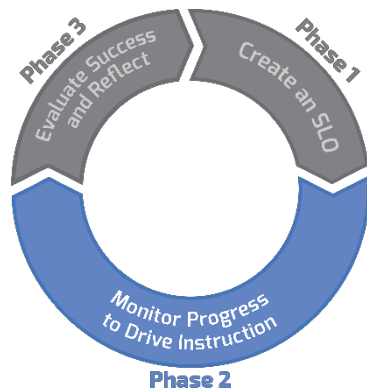
Appraisers can ask for revisions. Allot sufficient time for revisions and re-submissions as you plan for SLO Skill Statement development.

Once approved, the bulk of the SLO is not to be changed. Teachers may change, and should change, instructional strategies if progress monitoring indicates that students are struggling. The ability to monitor and adjust is reflective of effective teaching practice.

However, expectations for student growth are not to be changed. In fact, there is much to be learned from instances where students do not grow as expected. Teachers should reflect on those cases and consider where instructional practices could be improved, leading to better outcomes for the next SLO cycle. Using outcomes as learning experiences will help improve both teaching pedagogy and student



## Phase 2: Monitor Progress to Drive Instruction



During Phase 2 of the SLO process, teachers will be answering this question: Are my students progressing toward their targets? This phase is designed to last throughout the majority of a course and aligns with best practices in teaching as captured throughout the T-TESS observation rubric, principally within the three dimensions of “Standards and Alignment (1.1),” “Data and Assessment (1.2),” and “Monitor and Adjust (2.5).” Teachers engage in a continuous cycle that includes planning, instruction, evidence collection, analysis, reflection, and then back to planning in order to further student learning and promote student growth.

### Step 5: Are my students progressing toward targets?

#### **Monitor Progress.**

As the SLO Form was written, teachers identified a plan for monitoring instruction with progress checks and formative assessments. To ensure follow-through with those plans, teachers should note proposed dates of formative assessments on their planning calendar.

Progress monitoring will be advantageous to both teachers and their students. Recall that body of evidence (BOE) collected does not have to take the form of formal assessments. Collect data regularly, informally as well as formally. Record your estimation of student progress on the Student Growth Tracker. Currently, the form has columns for five sources of data. You are not restricted to just the five, however, and in some cases, five may be insufficient. To add more columns, right-click at the top of the fifth check-in column to insert additional columns. You can add any number of columns that you need to record your findings. If you add more columns, you may wish to click on “Page Layout” at the top of the page and change the orientation to Landscape.

Record whatever will help you understand students’ progress and whether they are on track to reach targeted growth goals. To aid in this process, print the Targeted Skill Profile. Using the Growth Tracker and Targeted Skill Profile hand in hand will help clarify current status.

Best practice: Include students in the process. They should know where they begin, how they need to perform on each piece of the BOE, know their target goal, and how they are progressing. They can keep track of their progress on an Individual Student Growth Tracker.

**SLO Example Individual Student Tracker**  
Reading Growth Tracker

**Student Name:**

	Student Growth Tracker							
	Skill Statement:							
Student Learning Objective Process	Initial Skill Profile Level	Targeted Skill Growth Goal	Assignment #1	Assignment #2	Middle of Year On Track?	Assignment #3	Assignment #4	Assignment #5
Score								
Teacher Signature-								Met Goal?

**Meet with colleagues to plan instruction.**

Teachers should plan regular reflection and discussions with their colleagues regarding student progress toward their SLO, preferably at least once a month. Progress discussions provide teachers a chance to review progress toward goals with their colleagues and plan for future instruction. Ideally, discussions include teachers who teach the same grade and/or subject, although this may include teachers across grades and subjects, instructional coaches, and/or district content specialists.

These check-ins should be planned around *existing* team meetings, one-on-ones, and other prescheduled meetings whenever possible. Teachers should schedule discussions when they feel they would be most beneficial. It is suggested that there be several progress discussions prior to the appraiser midpoint discussion and, when possible, before the appraiser end-of-year discussion.

*Prior to progress discussions*, teachers will assess student progress on the Targeted Skill Profile. Teachers will examine any evidence of student work that indicates growth on the particular skills identified in the Skill Statement. Similar to the beginning of the year, multiple sources of evidence should be included to triangulate student progress. Before the check-ins, teachers should assess individual student progress and record findings on the [Student Growth Tracker](#). These data will allow for more meaningful discussion grounded in the data.

In addition, teachers should consider the following self-reflection questions prior to the check-ins:

- What instructional strategies have been particularly successful in helping students progress on this skill?
- Which particular students (or groups of students) have made the most progress? Which have made the least? Why might this be the case?
- Where could I use additional support or ideas from my colleagues?

*During progress discussions*, teachers will spend time discussing their progress toward SLOs, sharing successful instructional strategies, and helping each other plan for the future. Teachers may use the optional [Progress Discussion Notes form](#) to keep track of discussions and meeting notes.

Colleagues should be prepared to engage in the dialogue and provide insights and feedback. The following guiding questions may provide a frame for those discussions:

- What progress has been made?
- How do you know? (What are your sources of evidence?)
- What strategies have you been implementing that are working?
- What strategies are not working?
- What are your biggest obstacles/challenges?
- What changes (if any) will you make moving forward? How will you know if they have been successful?

### **Adjust instruction to meet the needs of students.**

The goal for the conversations with colleagues is to determine if the instructional plan is meeting the needs of students. If that is not the case, the teacher should consider alternative approaches and strategies. The teacher should ask him or herself:

1. If some, but not all, students are progressing, are there more tailored strategies that might work with those who are behind?
2. Do those who are not growing require additional one-on-one time? Are there other strategies that may be beneficial for them?
3. Was one teacher in the team more successful than others? Did that teacher use any unique strategies that the others did not? Would it be possible to observe the strategy in action in the classroom? Could this approach be adopted by the remaining team members?
4. Is this an opportunity to explore professional development offerings? Are there trainings, webinars, or readings that the team can share to refine practice?

Keep in mind that when teachers meet with their appraisers at the mid-point (preferably during a post-conference for the sake of efficiency), they will be asked to describe how instruction has been adjusted. Teachers may want to keep a few notes to remind themselves of their progress in finding the right strategies to meet the needs of students.

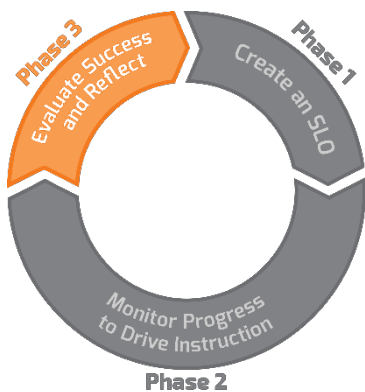
### **Conference with the appraiser at the mid-point.**

The required midpoint discussion provides teachers with the opportunity to review with their appraiser the progress students have made and receive feedback and support prior to the end-of-the-year discussion. These meetings should be designed to coincide with other planned one-on-one conversations, post-observation conferences, or other informal discussions. When teacher teams have similar or the same SLOs, appraisers may consider joining existing team meetings to discuss progress with the full group, rather than holding individual discussions.

Teachers should prepare for this discussion in the same way they prepare for discussions with their colleagues – by gathering evidence of student progress, assessing progress on the Targeted Skill Profile, and recording progress on the [Student Growth Tracker](#). Similar self-reflection questions may be helpful in preparing for the discussion. It is the teacher’s responsibility to have evidence of progress of students available for these conferences, including samples of student work.

This conference will be an ideal time for appraisers to facilitate teacher reflection and self-assessment, share insights, and provide support for improved effectiveness. Where teachers are struggling to see student progress, the appraiser may provide any number of follow-up supports to help the teacher (e.g., brainstorming additional instructional strategies, creating time/opportunities for teachers to shadow or mentor one another, providing targeted coaching, finding applicable professional development opportunities, etc.). Teachers may use the optional [Progress Discussion Notes](#), to keep track of the discussion and meeting notes.

### Phase 3: Evaluate Success and Reflect



In Phase 3 (near the end of the course), the appraiser and teacher will meet to discuss progress throughout the year, the quality of the SLO process, expectations for student growth, monitoring and adjustments, and overall student growth, using the Targeted Skill Profile, [Student Growth Tracker](#), and [SLO Rating Rubric](#). This discussion should be integrated with the end-of-year appraisal conference.

## Step 6: Did students grow and what did I learn from the process?

### Collect evidence of student growth.

Teachers will collect evidence of student growth using those measures include in the body of evidence. Teachers should include at least five pieces of evidence in the body of evidence for each student. This will allow the teacher to triangulate learning and offer students more opportunities to demonstrate their skills.

It is also important to consider the timing of these measures. Your school or district may have provided guidelines for appropriate timing to avoid state or district assessment and other events with the school. Also, recall that SLOs are closed out, with body of evidence (BOE) collected and final data reported, in time to hold an end-of-year conference that falls within the timeline for completion of teacher appraisal. For many of the T-TESS districts, this will mean that the evidence for SLOs will need to be collected no later than mid-April for most teachers.

Give consideration to strategies for scoring evidence. If you will use a shared a common assessment with your team as one source of data in your body of evidence, you should work together to ensure that

the entire team is scoring work similarly. In the case of rubrics, consider calibrating. Select a representative piece of student work and have each team member assess it with the rubric. If inconsistencies exist, talk through the student work and the rubric together to determine if there are differences in opinion about the meaning of terms. Continue to work through samples until you find that there is considerable agreement in ratings.

Sharing expectations of student work with your colleagues will help clarify whether what you see as good is what others see as good. Think of the learning that would occur if it becomes clear that our perceptions do not match. Are someone's expectations too high or too low? Does that mean that there are different expectations across the school? This is a perfect time to align these expectations.

### **Record student outcomes on the Growth Tracker.**

Now that student work/evidence have been collected, the data gathered should be used to map students to the appropriate level of the Targeted Skill Profile. Just as with the Initial Skill Profile, this is not an exact science. You are looking at the preponderance of data from the body of evidence of work for each student. Taken together, what can you conclude about student growth? Map each student to the Targeted Skill Profile level that most accurately describes the skill level represented by his or her body of evidence.

Next go to the [Student Growth Tracker](#) and column M, with the heading, "EOY Student Skill Level". Use the drop-down menu to select a level for each student. Compare the actual EOY level with the target you specified for the student in Targeted Student Skill Profile Goal (column F). If the level at the EOY is equal to their Targeted Skill Level, use the drop-down menu in column N to select "Met expected growth". If the skill level at EOY is higher than the goal specified, use the drop-down menu in column N to select "Exceeded Expected Growth". Finally, if the EOY skill level is lower than the targeted growth goal in Column F, use the drop down menu in column N to select "Did not meet expected growth."

Best Practice: Have students record and reflect on their EOY skill level and how it compares to their targeted growth goal on their Individual Student Growth Tracker.

### **Review student growth and consider areas to refine practice**

Now that the data has been collected and students assigned to levels on the Targeted Skill Profile, teachers will pause to reflect on the process, how much students grew, and what they learned about their own practice. Teachers may elect to use the [Teacher Reflection Guide](#) to guide this process. Teachers will reflect on student growth and progress, considering the following questions:

- Who grew the most? Why do you think they were so successful?
- Who grew the least? Can you identify where their problems in learning occurred?
- Were there any common characteristics among those who did not achieve the expected growth?

Similarly, teachers will reflect on their own pedagogy, considering questions such as:

- How did you adjust instruction during the year? Did the changes you made help improve student learning?
- What did you learn about your own pedagogy (assumptions, sequencing, grouping, etc.)?
- Were students engaged in the learning?
- Were the assignments, class work, and evidence (BOE) appropriate for this course?
- What would you do differently next time? Would you change the focus, the instructional strategies or the goals set for students? Why or why not?

Considering these questions may highlight areas of professional growth for the teacher in the coming year. Perhaps the strategies used are highly effective with certain groups of students but do not help others. Teachers may discover that students grew much more than anticipated and will want to challenge students more in the future.

The lessons learned from this SLO should inform SLOs in subsequent years as well as practice across all classes taught. When teachers pinpoint particular areas for pedagogical development, those refinement goals can be considered in mapping out the teacher's goal-setting and professional development plan for the upcoming year.

### **Meet with appraiser to discuss student growth and teacher insight.**

Teachers and appraisers will meet to review the SLO outcome and overall SLO process near the end of the year. The timing of this conference will coincide with the completion of appraisal meetings and should be held at the same time whenever possible.

Prior to the meeting, teachers should gather the following documentation and submit it to the appraiser:

- The completed [Student Growth Tracker](#).
- Copies of the student work from the BOE (Body of Evidence) used to determine end of year student skill level.
- Evidence of progress meetings with colleagues and/or adjustments to instruction.

The appraiser will review these materials and may ask the teacher to submit additional samples of certain students' work to review prior to the conference.

### **A word about not meeting targets...**

In the case that there are some students who miss their target, take this time to investigate why it might have occurred. You will ask yourself, "Why didn't they meet the target? Was there something about my practice that could be improved? Was the target appropriate? During progress monitoring, was there an intervention that may have helped these students? Or, do the exercises we do in class simply not prepare them for ultimate expectations? Use this time to explore possible reasons and resolve to adjust in the future.

The [SLO rating rubric](#) also evaluates the quality of your SLO, how high your expectations for student growth were, and how well you monitored and adjusted instruction. These are all things that you can address directly this year as well as in preparation for the next.

During the conference, the teacher will guide the appraiser through decisions made about students' end of year skill levels and explain how the evidence gathered weighed into those decisions. During the conference, the appraiser will ask teachers to share their reflections on what was revealed through the SLO process (see reflection questions above).

After the conference concludes, the appraiser will use the [SLO rating rubric](#) along with the body of evidence of student growth, instructional adjustments made, conversations and discussions throughout the year, and information the teacher shared during the end-of-year conference to determine final rating. Ratings will be determined by the appraiser based on the quality of the SLO process, teachers' expectations for student growth, progress monitoring and adjustment to instructional strategies, and student growth. Appraisers will record their ratings on the [SLO Rating Rubric](#).

It is important to note that this time of reflection will provide invaluable guidance for subsequent years.

- Teachers and their appraisers should consider what worked well and what did not work well in their SLO process. This information will provide suggestions for SLO improvement.
- In addition, a careful reflection on student growth and performance may uncover instructional strategies that were not effective for some subset of a class. This reflection could have implications for needed interventions for students as well as professional development for teachers.
- As SLO results are reviewed, teachers and their appraisers can also reflect on how the SLO process may have revealed teachers' strengths and areas for refinement. Again, this may suggest professional development opportunities that would be of particular benefit to a group of teachers.

## Final Thoughts: Student Learning Objectives

The SLO model described above provides teachers with a framework to set a vision of student success, plan for standards-aligned instruction, monitor progress using the BOE (student work) as evidence, and adjust instruction accordingly to ensure that it facilitates student progress toward growth goals.

The process is designed to mirror best practices that already exist across the state and to formalize this in a way they can be used to measure student learning and provide feedback on teachers' instructional choices as part of T-TESS or other evidence-based appraisal systems. It is the hope of the Texas Education Agency that districts and schools choosing to use this model will adapt it to fit within existing structures and best practices for measuring student learning within individual districts.

# Student Learning Objectives Form

Teacher Name	<input type="text"/>	Date	<input type="text"/>
School	<input type="text"/>	Appraiser Name	<input type="text"/>
Grade	<input type="text"/>	Subject Area	<input type="text"/>

## Step 1: What is the focus for my SLO?

a. Identify the focus area of the SLO.

b. What is the SLO skill focus statement for this content area or subject?

c. What led to the decision to focus on this content area and the SLO skill focus?

d. What TEKS for the content area or subject correspond to these most important skills? You may provide an enumerated list of TEKS, but be prepared to share the verbiage of the TEKS with your appraiser.



**Step 2: What do I think my students will be able to do?**

Use your knowledge of prior students' performance and end-of-year expectations for students in previous, vertically aligned courses to describe typical students in the class. A best practice is to start by describing a typical entering skill level, then, the highest entering skill level ("well above typical skill"), and the lowest entering skill level ("well below typical skill") and finally, complete the in-between levels ("above typical skill" and "below typical skill").

Initial Student Skill Profile		
SLO Skill Focus		
Level	Descriptors	Number of Students in this level
Well above typical skill		
Above typical skill		
Typical skill		
Below typical skill		
Well below typical skill		

a. Who will be included in your SLO?

*When choosing your class or classes, gather informal data about your students to determine which class or classes is/are most representative of the cross-section of students that you teach.*

- Elementary classroom teachers: select your entire class.
- Elementary departmentalized teachers or secondary teachers: identify the targeted class or classes (class, grade and subject).

b. What multiple sources of evidence/student work (both current and historical) did you use to map students to the Initial Student Skill Profile?

c. Match your current students to the descriptions in the Initial Student Skill profile.

- List the total number of students at each level in the right hand column above, and
- Record the level for each individual student on the Student Growth Tracker.
- Check here when both tasks are complete:

**Step 3: What are my expectations for these students?**

a. Use information about how students mapped to the Initial Student Skill Profile to describe the expected skill sets across all five levels, that student will be expected to demonstrate at the end of the year. In other words, what are the specific skills that will describe what high, average, and low performers will be able to do at the end of the course? Complete the Targeted Student Skill Profile below

*The profile should describe your expectations for what this particular group of students' performance will look like at the end of the interval. For example, the description at the middle level describes what you expect to be a typical skill level at the end of the interval.*

Targeted Student Skill Profile	
SLO Skill Focus	
Level	Expectations
Well above typical skill	
Above typical skill	
Typical skill	
Below typical skill	
Well below typical skill	

b. Use available data on your current students (e.g., attendance, grades in relevant courses, current student work, prior testing data, etc.) along with each student's description on the Initial Student Skill Profile to establish a target for each individual student covered in the SLO. Record these targets on the Student Growth Tracker.

c. What evidence did you use to establish a targeted skill level for each student? Include multiple data sources.

d. What will you include in the body of evidence (BOE) that will establish students' skill levels at the end of the interval? Describe the measures to be used and how they are aligned with the skills identified in the SLO.

**Step 4: How will I guide these students toward growth? (for use in discussion)**

Be prepared to discuss answers to the following questions with your appraiser.

- a. How will you differentiate instruction for those students who are in the highest performing group as well as those who are in the lowest performing group? How will you guide all students toward reaching their targeted growth goals?
- b. What strategies will you use to monitor progress? How will you document your body of evidence for each student.
- c. Describe your plan for conferencing with your colleagues about student progress. Who will be members of your team and how often will you meet? Who will be members of your team and how often will you meet? How will you share notes, best practices, feedback, etc.?

Optional Notes

**Student Learning Objectives Review & Approval**

*By signing below you acknowledge that you have discussed and agreed upon the Student Learning Objectives Plan, above.*

Comments	Decision
	Approved  Revise and Resubmit
Teacher Signature	Date
Appraiser Signature	Date

Revision Comments (if required)	Decision
	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Approval
Teacher Signature	Date
Appraiser Signature	Date

## Student Growth Tracker

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Student ID <input type="text"/>	Student Name <input type="text"/>	Teacher Name <input type="text"/>	Course <input type="text"/>	Initial Skill Profile Level (Select from Drop Down) <input type="text"/>	Targeted Skill Profile Growth Goal (Select from Drop Down) <input type="text"/>	Evidence of Student Progress # 1 <input type="text"/>
1							
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3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
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## SLO Teacher Rating Rubric

(For rating of the student growth component of T-TESS, either as a 5<sup>th</sup> domain or a 17<sup>th</sup> dimension)

Student Growth Rating	Descriptors
Distinguished	<p>The following have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher has crafted a high-quality Skill Statement</li> <li>Teacher has set beginning of year skill profiles using multiple sources of data</li> <li>Teacher has set student growth goals that reflect high expectations for students</li> <li>Teacher has consistently monitored student progress, collected data, and used evidence of student work to make successful adjustments to instructional strategies, as needed</li> <li>Teacher has compiled a valid and reliable body of evidence that accurately documents students' end of year growth</li> <li><b>All or almost all of the students met their expected growth target and most exceeded their expected growth target</b></li> </ul>
Accomplished	<p>The following have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher has crafted a quality Skill Statement</li> <li>Teacher has set beginning of year skill profiles using multiple sources of data</li> <li>Teacher has set student growth goals that reflect high expectations for students</li> <li>Teacher has consistently monitored student progress, collected data, and used evidence of student work to make adjustments to instructional strategies, as needed</li> <li>Teacher has compiled a valid and reliable body of evidence that accurately documents students' end of year growth</li> <li><b>Significantly more than half of the students met their expected growth target and at least some exceeded their expected growth target</b></li> </ul>
Proficient	<p>The following have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher has crafted a quality Skill Statement</li> <li>Teacher has set beginning of year skill profiles using multiple sources of data</li> <li>Teacher has set student growth goals that reflect high expectations for students</li> <li>Teacher has consistently monitored student progress, collected data, and used evidence of student work to make some adjustments to instructional strategies, as needed</li> <li>Teacher has compiled a valid and reliable body of evidence that accurately documents students' end of year growth</li> <li><b>Approximately half of the students met their expected growth target</b></li> </ul>
Developing	<p>The following have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher has crafted an adequate Skill Statement</li> <li>Teacher has set beginning of year skill profiles using minimal sources of data</li> <li>Teacher has set student growth goals that reflect adequate expectations for students</li> <li>Teacher has attempted to monitor student progress, collect data, and make some adjustments to strategies, although with limited success</li> <li>Teacher has compiled a limited body of evidence or a body of evidence that unreliably documents students' end of year growth</li> <li><b>Significantly less than half of the student met their expected growth target</b></li> </ul>
Improvement Needed	<p>The following have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher has crafted an adequate Skill Statement</li> <li>Teacher has set beginning of year preparedness levels using minimal sources of data</li> <li>Teacher has set student growth goals that reflect adequate expectations for some students</li> <li>Teacher has attempted to monitor student progress, collect data, reflect on his or her pedagogy, and make some adjustments to strategies, although with limited success</li> <li>Teacher has compiled a limited body of evidence that unreliably documents students' end of year growth</li> <li><b>Very few of the student met or exceeded their expected growth target</b></li> </ul>

**Appraiser Comments:**

The table below provides guidance for locating evidence to support evaluation of teachers' effectiveness on the criteria included in the rubric.

Rubric Criteria	Supporting evidence location
Quality of the Skill Statement	Skill Statement Success Criteria
Expectations for students	Targeted Skill Profile Success Criteria, and steps 3 and 4 on the SLO Form
Students meeting targeted growth	Completed Student Growth Tracker at the end of the SLO interval

### TIA Tip



For districts using SLOs as their student growth measure for TIA, consider using the chart below to align your SLO ratings to the [TIA Statewide Performance Standards for Student Growth](#).

% of Students who exceeded targeted growth (From SLO Growth Tracker)	% of students who met targeted growth (From SLO Growth Tracker)	SLO Teacher Rating Rubric Level	Alignment to TIA Statewide Performance Standards for Student Growth

Appraiser Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Student Learning Objectives Success Criteria

This tool is designed to be used by appraisers as they review SLOs for approval. Ideally, SLOs will demonstrate effectiveness with each of the success criteria. Appraisers can use this tool to coach teachers for improvement of the SLO. In addition, teachers are encouraged to use this tool as a guide to improve the quality of their SLOs as they are crafting them.

SLO Skill Statement	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Represents a foundational skill that is specific to the content area</li> <li>2) Persists throughout the course</li> <li>3) Measurable through a demonstration of student skill</li> <li>4) Focus on it will improve the teacher's practice (teacher dependent)</li> <li>5) The skills captured are clearly defined and appropriately focused (teacher dependent)</li> </ol>	
Initial Skill Profile	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Articulates skills for the beginning of the year</li> <li>2) Differentiates between levels</li> <li>3) Descriptors align to skill statement (potentially through subskills)</li> <li>4) Can be assessed in multiple ways</li> <li>5) Specific to the teacher's experience and expectations (teacher dependent)</li> </ol>	
Targeted Skill Profile	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Articulates skills for the end of the year</li> <li>2) Differentiates between levels</li> <li>3) Descriptors align to skill statement</li> <li>4) Can be assessed in multiple ways</li> <li>5) Targets are specific to the students in the teacher's class (teacher dependent)</li> <li>6) Reflects high, yet reasonable, expectations for student growth (teacher dependent)</li> </ol>	
Plan, Monitor, Collaborate	
<p><b>Plan</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Considers highest and lowest performing students in planning</li> <li>2) Challenges all students regularly</li> </ol> <p><b>Monitor</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assesses student progress on SLO at least twice per semester</li> <li>2) Assessments are aligned to SLO in content and rigor</li> <li>3) Adjusts pedagogy and lesson plans based on assessment results</li> </ol> <p><b>Collaborate</b></p> <p>In alignment with district and campus expectations for collaboration</p>	

## Progress Discussion Notes (Optional)

Meeting Name	Discussion #	Date
<b>Colleagues/Team Members</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Who is on my support team?</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Reflection Notes</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What instructional strategies have been particularly successful in helping students progress on this skill?</i></li> <li>• <i>Which particular students (or groups of students) have made the most progress? Which have made the least? Why might this be the case?</i></li> <li>• <i>Where could I use additional support or ideas from my colleagues?</i></li> </ul>		
<b>Discussion Notes</b>		
<b>Focus Area</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What additional strategies or adjustments do you think you will use to drive student growth?</i></li> <li>• <i>How will you know if these new strategies are working?</i></li> </ul>		



## End-of-Year Reflection

Teacher Name	Date
School	
Appraiser Name	

### Self-Reflection Notes on Student Progress

- *Who grew the most? Why do you think they were so successful?*
- *Who grew the least? Can you identify where their problems in learning occurred?*
- *Were there any common characteristics among those who did not achieve the expected growth?*

### Self-Reflection Notes on Instruction

- *How did you adjust instruction during the year? Did the changes you made help improve student learning?*
- *What did you learn about your own pedagogy (assumptions, sequencing, grouping, etc.)?*
- *Were students engaged in the learning?*
- *Were the assignments, class work, and measures appropriate for this course?*
- *What would you do differently next time? Would you change the focus, the instructional strategies or the goals set for students? Why or why not?*

## Definitions for the SLO Process

### Appraiser

“Appraiser” refers to the principal or designated individuals certified to appraise teachers using the T-TESS evaluation system.

### Body of Evidence

A collection of student work products (assessments, projects, tasks, performances, etc.) designed to measure student skill level throughout the year with respect to their progress toward meeting expected growth goals as they relate to the SLO Skill Statement.

### Colleagues or Teams

To maximize the effectiveness of this handbook, it is recommended that teachers meet with their colleagues throughout the year to share their learning and experiences. Throughout this handbook, we refer to “colleagues” and “teams.” These are general terms to signify any and all individuals or groups who can collaborate throughout a semester or year to support each other with instruction. These teams should collaborate through channels and networks that likely already exist within schools. In some schools, teams will be grade-level or content-area groups. In other cases, the team may be the whole school working together on SLOs.

### Course

Throughout the handbook, a “course” refers to a specific grade/subject combination. For example, 4th grade Science, 8th grade Math or High School Physics.

### Initial Student Skill Profile

Teachers develop the Initial Student Skill Profile to describe student performance levels on the first day of a course. The Initial Student Skill Profile is based on typical student performance as seen in the past. The goal of this profile is to learn the distribution of student skill levels present early in a course. This will provide the baseline from which the Targeted Student Skill Profile and student growth targets will be set.

### SLO Scoring Rubric (developed by TEA to describe teacher performance and measure student growth)

Appraisers will meet with teachers at the end of the year to discuss how they monitored student progress, adjustments made during instruction, SLO quality, and student growth, reflecting on the overall SLO process. Based on the conversation, review of evidence, and his or her professional judgment, the appraiser determines a rubric score based on all of these factors, using the SLO Scoring Rubric selected by the district.

### SLO Skill Statement

A clear, focused and measurable statement describing what students will know and be able to do with respect to a foundational skill of the course. This is the basis of the Initial and Targeted Skill Profiles.

### Success Criteria

This tool is designed to be used by both appraisers and teachers. Appraisers can use the tool as they review SLOs for approval and to coach teachers in improvement. Teachers are encouraged to use this tool as a guide to improve the quality of their SLOs as they are crafting them. Ideally, SLOs will demonstrate effectiveness with each of the success criteria.

### Targeted Student Skill Profiles (developed by teachers to describe student performance)

Teachers will develop the Targeted Student Skill Profile to answer the question of what students should be able to do at various levels leading up to and exceeding mastery of the particular skill(s). The teacher describes the skills that would be exhibited by students who meet each level of performance from “no familiarity” to “exceeds expectations”. Where possible, it is recommended that these profiles be developed by teacher teams. They will be based on the initial levels of student learning and TEKS or other curriculum expectations.

## **Student Growth Tracker**

The Student Growth Tracker is an Excel format spreadsheet that teachers will use to document students starting and end-of-year levels on the SLO Skill Profile. In addition, any progress check-in scores can be entered into the form to help monitor progress trajectory.

## **Teacher**

Teacher roles may look different across districts. For the purposes of T-TESS, “teacher” means anyone who is appraised on the T-TESS evaluation system.