



Student Learning Objectives (SLO) Tips – September 2017

Timely Resources for SLOs

1. [Learning Module SLO Steps 1 & 2](#)
2. [SLO Form](#)
3. [SLO Quality Tool](#)

SLO Skill Focus and Statement

The first step to crafting an SLO is to select an area of focus that represents a foundational skill students must master for the content area. It is important for appraisers to remind teachers that this step begins by focusing on key areas of content, not on the TEKS. Teachers should be encouraged to select a skill focus with sufficient depth and complexity to sustain the process through the course. It is not uncommon for the area of focus to involve skills that are essential not only to the current course, but that are also applicable to other courses. For all teachers, the basic question they are answering is “When my students leave this course, what is the one skill that must be developed for me to consider my time with them as successful?”

For the first year, teachers should select a subject or content area (math, science, reading, etc.) where they already have some proficiency. This will allow them to focus primarily on learning the SLO process rather than selecting an area that will be more challenging. When first beginning the SLO process, grade level or subject area teams may share a common focus. In subsequent years, however, SLOs should be tailored to the individual needs of teachers..

The SLO Skill Statement identifies the key skills that will be the focus of the SLO for the year. For many educators, writing the skill statement involves a process of continuing to revise the statement until it provides a succinct and distilled description of the core skill to be addressed through that SLO. Once refined, the SLO Skill statement describes the skill focus in a way that allows for a range of demonstration of ability including varying levels of complexity.

Initial Skill Profile (ISP)

After creating the SLO Skill Statement, teachers will develop the Initial Skill Profile (ISP) to describe the range of skills entering students typically demonstrate related to the area of focus and then collect data to map the selected class onto the ISP.

An effective ISP will often identify the prerequisite skills, or “building blocks”, necessary for students to reach more complex levels of skill that the Skill Statement captures. For example, if the skill statement focuses on synthesizing multiple sources to create a persuasive argument, the ISP should contain descriptions of student skills related to identifying main idea and text analysis. Focusing the ISP on qualitative descriptions of prerequisite skills can also help to ensure the indicators at each level are sufficiently differentiated to allow accurate mapping of students.

Having developed the ISP, the teacher can then begin to collect data on the students to begin the mapping process. For this part of the process, the teacher should focus on collecting a few pieces of current data on students directly related to the indicators described in the ISP rather than looking at historical data. As teachers begin the process of mapping, they may discover their descriptions do not fully cover the range of skills present in their current class or that additional differentiation is needed to avoid having all the students clustered in one or two levels. If so, the teacher can adjust the ISP as needed and should capture the revision process as part of their reflections. The ISP helps teachers to better understand the capabilities of their current students and to focus on the skills they do possess at the start of the year allowing for better planning to help maximize growth for each student.

Please take advantage of your ESCs for support as you work through implementation. You can also contact Linda Johnson at linda.johnson@tea.texas.gov to talk through any part of the SLO process.