

THE 5 PILLARS OF SUCCESS

IN THE STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES PROCESS



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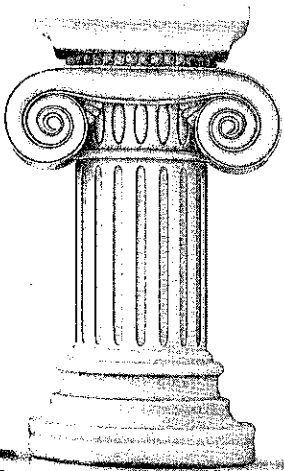
Educators across the state of Wisconsin will be faced with the challenge and opportunity of developing quality Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) to improve student learning. Research demonstrates that achievement is enhanced to the degree that teachers set challenging, rather than "do your best" goals, relative to the students' present competencies. There is a direct linear relationship between the degree of goal difficulty and performance (Locke & Latham, 1990). The SLO process has the greatest impact on student learning when teachers and administrators set rigorous yet attainable goals, use data to examine the effectiveness of classroom practices, and collaborate on teaching and learning.

We are all faced with the same challenge: How can we provide high levels of support in the SLO process to foster increased expectations and accountability? In grappling with this question we need to examine support systems currently in place. The Hudson School District has developed supports with a district level Learning Services Department, principals as instructional leaders, teacher leaders, and instructional coaches; all supported through high quality Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Five pillars of success have allowed us to construct a framework for successful development and implementation of SLOs. These pillars: collaboration, risk free rigor, SMART Goal alignment, system supports, and well-developed processes can guide a district's blueprint for quality SLO implementation.

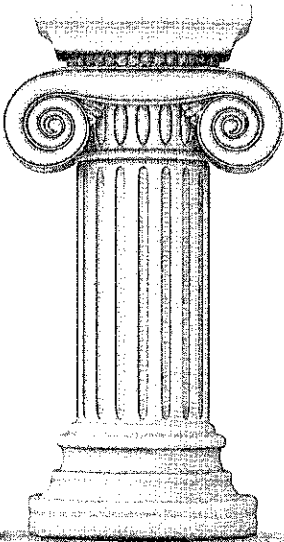
Collaboration

Collaboration is key in the SLO process. We all recognize the value of collaboration and the positive impact on student performance. Collaborative goal setting, dedicated PLC time, and support from the leaders in the district mitigates competition and ensures the SLOs are written with student performance in mind.



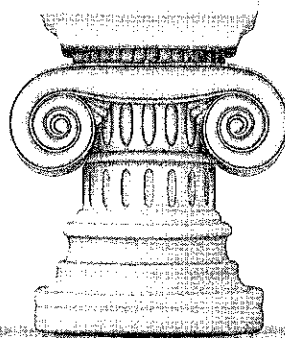
Risk Free Rigor

We need to support teachers in their understanding of the need to set rigorous yet attainable goals based on student needs. We need to ensure that our process allows teachers the freedom to aspire to continual growth. Risk free rigor is our goal.



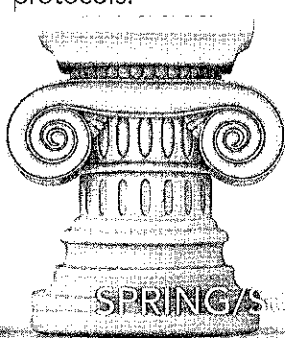
SMART Goal Alignment

Many districts employ the SMART goal process to ensure that district, school, team and classroom goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time bound. The SLOs should be developed following the SMART goal principles. Additionally, SLOs can be aligned to existing SMART goals to help connect the dots between the many initiatives.



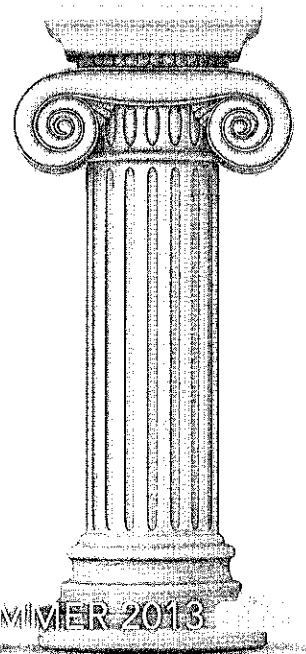
System Supports

The SLO process cannot exist exclusively at the classroom level. The entire K-12 system must embrace the potential power and benefit of utilizing Student Learning Objectives. This should be demonstrated through dedicated professional learning opportunities, teacher leader training and alignment of supports such as instructional coaching and PLC protocols.



Well-developed Processes

DPI outlines a four step process for the development of SLOs. Each step presents a distinct opportunity to collaboratively support teachers in the SLO process.



Step 1- Prepare the Student Learning Objective (SLO)
We believe the preparation of SLOs presents the greatest opportunity for collaborative support. To do this, we need a differentiated professional learning plan for a K-12 system that includes an overview of the SLO process and personalized learning opportunities, including the development of effective assessments, data collection, SLO differentiation, and the implementation of best practices and strategies. As part of the DPI pilot, we spent considerable time in Professional Learning Communities developing the SLO, rubric, and analyzing baseline data to develop a rigorous, yet attainable SLO. The Wisconsin DPI's SLO Selection/Approval Rubric effectively supported our SLO development.

You can find the DPI Rubric at: <http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/WiSLOselectionApprovalRubric.pdf>

Step 2- Submit SLO for Approval

SLO approval meetings with the teacher and principal were scheduled. The approval process is more than a "rubber stamp" opportunity. The approval process is the ideal time to explore opportunities for the principal to offer direct support to the teacher. This may also be an opportunity to identify teachers with similar goals who may be of support to one another.

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Step 3- Collect Evidence and Midyear Review

It is imperative that teachers continue to focus and reflect on their SLOs if we are going to ensure this process does not become a hoop through which to jump. The Midyear Review is not meant to be the time in which we summarize lower expectations of goals that were set earlier. Instead, reflective questions should be employed to lead to a deeper understanding of the SLO process and the potential impact on student learning.

Questions could include:

- What is going well?
- What are some challenges you are facing?
- What trends do you see in your data?
- What are the strengths?
- What are the areas of concern?

This is also an ideal time to discuss specific student data.

Questions could include:

- Which students are not meeting expectations?
- Why do you suspect they are not meeting expectations?
- What might we include as specific actions to support these individuals?

Step 4- Review and Score the Student Learning Objective

The end of the year conference in May should continue to be a supportive conversation where collaborative discussions revolve around the SLO and the data collected. Some guiding questions could include:

- How did the SLO process work for you?
- What was the impact for your students?
- What was the impact on you as an educator?
- What trends did you notice?

We firmly believe the SLO process is the element of any educator effectiveness framework that offers the greatest opportunity for student learning improvement and professional learning opportunities. Take a moment to reflect on a scenario where every K-12 student in the great state of Wisconsin is supported by teachers who set rigorous student learning goals in a system that is supported at the state, district, school and classroom level. This is the promise of the SLO process that we can make a reality. ■

Dave Grambow and Susie Prather presented a session on SLO Peer Coaching in mid-April at the WASC Symposium on Enhancing Teaching and Learning Through the SLO Process. Susie will be leading an SLO Writing Workshop at the WASC Annual Conference in Appleton on Wednesday late afternoon, October 2, 2013. Dave will be part of a session on SLO's for principals on Thursday afternoon, Oct. 3rd. See page 25 to register.

Locke, E. & Latham, B. (1990). A theory of goal setting and task performance. NJ: Prentice Hall.