

Making the Most of Your Educator Effectiveness Plan

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Every year, teachers create an Educator Effectiveness Plan that includes two main goals:

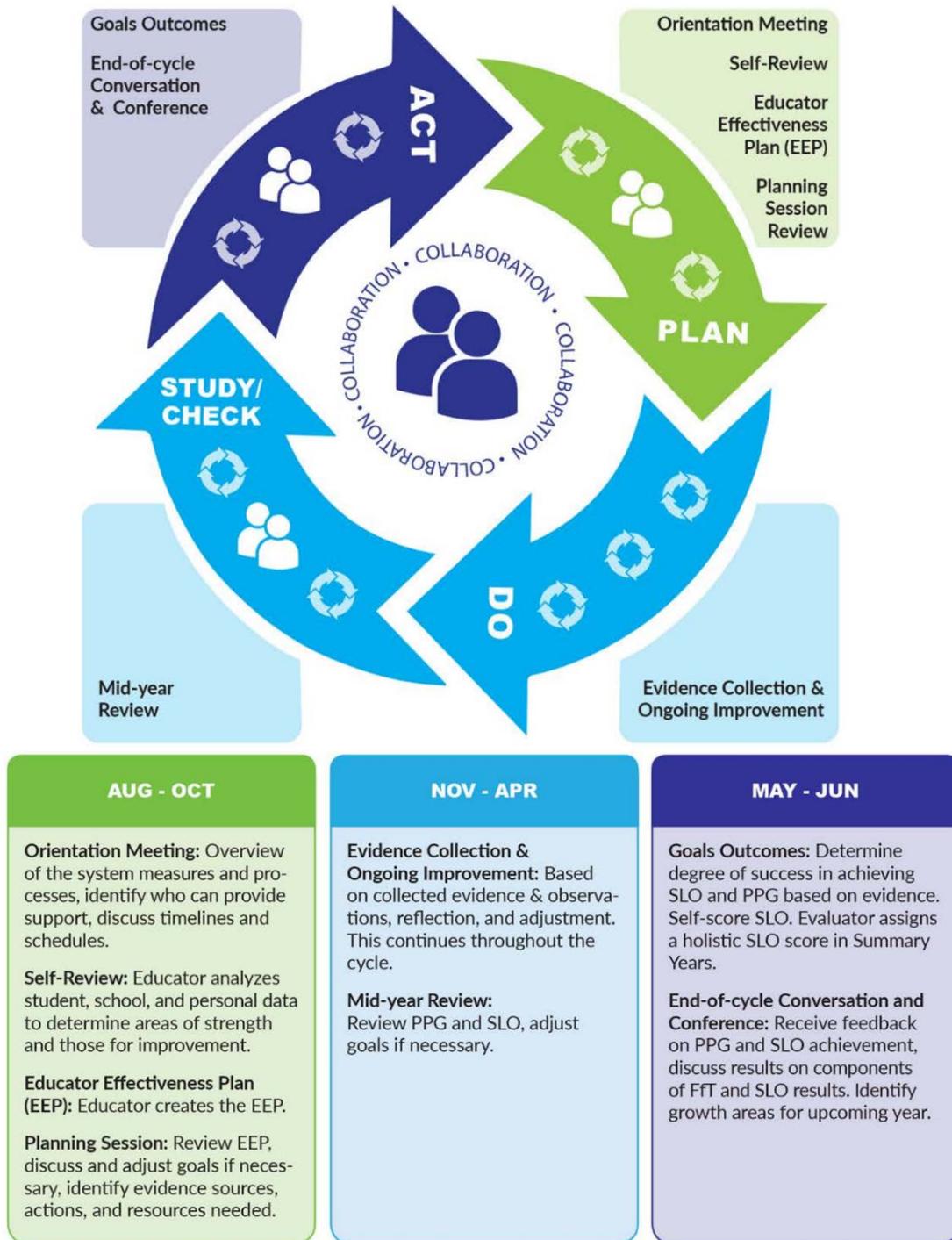
1. The Student Learning Objective (SLO), which focuses on student learning grounded in academic standards
2. The Professional Practice Goal (PPG), which focuses on the teacher's area of growth and should align with at least one aspect of the [Danielson Model for Framework for Teaching](#)

Starting with Educator Effectiveness Cycles

As a new teacher, you'll begin your own cycle depending on when you enter a district. You'll be on a summary year typically every three years, when you'll be aligned with an educational leader who will help you through the process. During this time, you'll have a minimum of two mini-observations with feedback, plus frequent and professional conversations surrounding your goals. If this is not your first time through the cycle, the observer will also look at progress through the (generally two) supporting years leading to the current summary year.

Supporting years are similar to the summary year in that you'll create, submit, and continually revisit your SLO and PPG. A building leader will also conduct a minimum of one mini-observation during the cycle.

Annual Improvement Cycles



(Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

How to Shape the Student Learning Objective

Contextualize the SLO in an academic standard in which student learning is the main focus. Remember that the objective doesn't begin and end with a goal: it should incorporate new methodologies of teaching that you feel free to explore through trial-and-error.

It's also important to remember that not all students must achieve a specific number on a test or scale in order to be deemed successful as a whole. Actually, the requirement is that you must progress the learning forward in order record successful teaching. Base these targets on data from previous years and milestones within the current academic year to make sure that they're attainable for each student subset.

Your goal should also include a plan for documenting student growth. Think about what's already being done in your classroom to mine this evidence and data, which you're often already recording in your gradebook or other living and breathing document that you reference frequently throughout the year. Make sure it's easy to use and as practical as possible so it can be done efficiently. Keep track of evidence of student learning in both formative and summative assessments as well as evidence of new instructional practices that seem to be successful in aiding student growth. Discuss this evidence collection at each weekly meeting with your support team.

SLO Quality Indicator Checklist. The [quality indicator checklist](#) is a helpful tool for determining whether the SLO hits the mark as intended by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in considering professional autonomy and individual student growth. See WDPI's [list of examples broken down by category](#).

A Word on Team SLOs. Team SLOs can be beneficial in helping each teacher on your support team work toward a common goal and share ideas and successes as well as failures for the benefit of learning from each other. Keep in mind a truly collaborative mindset: Employing group think rather than supporting creativity will result in a loss of individual responsibility for the SLO.

This Is About You, the Teacher. One key point of an SLO is for teachers to identify weaker areas of practice and discover how those can be improved to impact student learning. It's not focused solely on the lowest scores on a baseline assessment. The idea is that all students, not just the lowest scoring, are able to show progress as a direct result of improved teaching practices. Therefore, the SLO must to include new teaching practices to try during the upcoming school year. Keep it to a few at first and move forward from there based on the results.

Questions to Ask When Determining Strategies

1. What am I doing or not doing that is leading students to the current data reality?
2. What part of my teaching practice might be contributing to these results?
3. What evidence do I have to support my answers to the questions above?
4. What instructional actions can I take to move student learning forward? What do I need to start or stop doing?
5. Do I have a colleague or mentor who could help me identify ways I might improve instruction?
6. In addition to coaching/mentoring, what kind of learning do I need and where can I get it? (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

Narrowing a Focus: Endurance. Leverage. Readiness. An SLO should align with a specific grade-level academic standard, and the options can be overwhelming. Consider the following criteria to narrow an emphasis on learning (Reeves, 2002):

1. *Endurance* – Knowledge or skill useful across a lifetime (e.g., reading, explanatory writing, problem-solving)
2. *Leverage* – Knowledge or skill of value across disciplines (e.g., research process, reading and interpreting graphs, critical thinking)
3. *Readiness* (for the next level) – Knowledge or skill necessary for the next grade or next level of instruction (e.g., concepts of print, balancing an equation)

Evidence Sources. WDPI also recommends teacher-created assessments as opposed to standardized tests for baseline or interim data to determine growth for the SLO. There are a number of reasons why students would perform inauthentically on standardized tests, and instead be more likely to perform authentically on an assessment created by their teacher. WDPI believes that using teacher-created assessments will aid students in the understanding and development of assessment literacy for educators as part of their own growth and learning. At a minimum, give these types of assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the year or SLO timeline. Also, give formative assessments throughout the SLO cycle to collect data pertinent toward the objective.

WDPI has an excellent list of questions to consider when thinking about the type of evidence sources one might use for the classroom. CESA 6 also recommends [CommonLit](#) as a mentor text database and assessment tool.

WDPI recommends asking these questions as you think about evidence sources:

1. Do I currently have an assessment that will authentically measure a given focus area?
2. If not, can I, or my team, design an assessment to measure it? ([commonlit.org](#))
3. For every potential assessment: Is it
 - a. *Valid*: How well does it measure the learning targets?
 - b. *Reliable*: Can this assessment provide accurate results regarding students' understanding of the targets?
4. Are my practices equitable?
5. Is there a process to ensure that students performing at similar levels receive similar scores, regardless of who scores the assessment (e.g., common rubrics, training)?
6. How will I monitor student learning along the way to measure the impact of the strategies without waiting for the middle or end of interval?
7. When will I analyze the student data, in relationship to evidence of my practice, to know whether my strategies are working?
8. Who will I involve in this ongoing analysis and reflection?

Adjust When Necessary. Many teachers learn best through research and development, so understand your ability to adjust and change the goals of the SLO when appropriate as long as the data and rationale can support it. Assessment and continuous improvement on your part is just as important as assessment and continuous improvement on the student's part.

The Professional Practice Goal

The PPG is your opportunity to invest in a topic of research or practice that you've been interested in learning about with the justification of actually applying it to your daily work -- plus the added benefit of support from your team. The PPG should align with at least one aspect of the Danielson Model for Framework for Teaching, which is divided into four domains:

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Classroom Environment
3. Instruction
4. Professionalism. Educators should select one area of improvement to focus on during the Educator Effectiveness cycle.

Questions to ask when developing a PPG

1. What are my strengths/challenges as a teacher?
2. How is my practice reflected in the Framework for Teaching rubric?
3. What am I interested in learning/doing/improving?
4. Does it make sense for me to connect my PPG to my SLO?
5. Are there strategies to learn that will support my students' progress toward the SLO?
6. Where can I build in meaningful networking and collaboration with colleagues?
(Wisconsin Council Teachers of English)

A PPG that supports an SLO might be to research and test different methods of delivering to students multimodal texts such as podcasts, NPR interviews, YouTube videos, TED Talks, news articles, scholarly journals, and mentor texts in order to discover which is most effective in reviewing key ideas and in demonstrating an understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing ([CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1.D](#)). A PPG that does not align with an SLO might be researching new methods of classroom discipline and management by tracking effective approaches throughout the school year with different students.

When Considering Both SLOs and PPGs

Data-Informed, Educator-Developed Goals. You have the autonomy to create and develop your own goals based on data both from outside sources and your own classroom experience. Much of the Educator Effectiveness Plan revolves around using the Danielson Model for Framework for Teaching, an incredibly helpful resource in understanding the basic expectations of an effective educator that you should reference for creating goals as they relate to your SLOs and to your PPG.

Student Population. You have the autonomy to select what type of student population you would like to work with or that might benefit best from new approaches. For example, you might be interested in several sections of one class type, like English 11, or you might select only one section to hyperfocus on for a particular reason. A separate option to attempt closing the achievement gap might be selecting students labeled *special needs* or *English Language Learners* to work with during the course of the year.

Integration with District and School Priorities. WDPI encourages educators to be strategic about planning SLOs or PPGs around the school or district level goals. Different districts will approach this in different ways, but it's important to understand that your ownership of the goal will ultimately make it more successful and increase personal investment and excitement, rather than as a goal created and imposed upon you. An effective goal could be a balanced collaboration between the school's and educator's mission, vision, and values. For example, your principal and leadership team might

identify *literacy* as a priority area for the school. In that case, develop your SLOs based on your subject area, grade-level, and student data; incorporate instructional strategies that address the identified content/skills within a literacy context; and use a common writing rubric as one method of assessing subject-specific content/skills within a literacy context. This will help with your classroom goals and with your school's overarching goal.

Foundation of Trust. Your Educator Effectiveness Plan will not be truly successful unless you and your evaluation team have set a foundation of trust. Clear expectations and directions surrounding goal setting and feedback from observers are of the utmost importance for creating an environment in which the least amount of stress is inflicted upon educators. Student learning happens through mistakes, so in turn you also need room to grow through your own potential mistakes. The understanding that you won't be penalized for these mistakes allows growth; the alternative is creating goals that are safe and almost guaranteed to be attainable in order to not be scrutinized or punished.

A foundation of trust also assumes that you're using methods that have been researched and proven effective based on data informed results. An orientation session should happen between you and your observer or principal at the beginning of the Educator Effectiveness cycle to ensure optimal success.

Topics for Discussion During the Orientation Session

1. the evaluation criteria, or what rubric the evaluator will use to evaluate the teacher
2. the evaluation process, or how and when the evaluator will observe the teacher's practice
3. the use of evaluation results
4. any remaining questions or concerns (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

Rapid or Mini-Improvement Cycles. The expectation of professional educators is that you'll meet at least weekly with a team to discuss your progress with both the SLO and PPG. This accounts for the smaller cycles within each larger cycle timespan. The purpose of these frequent and smaller meetings is to ensure that the span of your Educator Effectiveness Plan is both continuous and manageable. The mini-improvement cycles give you and your team a chance to make purposeful changes to the curriculum, which will immediately have a positive impact on targets.

Completing the SLO & Critical Attributes

At the end of each cycle, you will self-score on goal setting, assessments, practices, progress monitoring, reflection, adjustment of practice, and outcomes. The evaluator will use this feedback as part of the EEP score for the year along with observations and perhaps team feedback. Again, what should be focused on is the opportunity to grow as an educator and become better at the craft year after year.

Reference

Reeves, D. (2002). *The leader's guide to standards: A blueprint for educational equity and excellence.* Jossey-Bass.