Designing a Student Learning Objective Approach for Utah Educators

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Advance Organizer

- Introduction to SLOs
- Full group discussion and decisions
  - Theory of action for SLOs
  - Role of SLOs in the overall system
- Small group work
  - The objective setting process
  - Measurement approaches
  - Oversight and support
- Closing discussion

The Basics of SLOs

- Teachers, along with principals (or others), establish goals for each student or the class as a whole
- A measurement or evaluation process is established to determine the extent to which teachers meet their goals
- Teachers are then judged according to this measurement/evaluation process

- Sounds simple, right?

Student Learning Objectives

- Opportunities:
  - Can be inclusive of all educators
  - Can incentivize appropriate educational behaviors
    - Setting meaningful goals, monitoring progress toward those goals, and evaluating the extent to which those goals are achieved

- Challenges:
  - Will require significant PD and oversight to establish meaningful and *comparable* goals
  - Still requires high quality measures, at least for posttest
  - Using as a "growth" measure suffers from the same limitations as all of the previous

Student Learning Objectives as a Framework

- As we work in this area, we need to strive toward building a comprehensive and thoughtful approach that includes the tested subjects/grades, the "non-tested" content area teachers, and other licensed professionals

- "Tested" and "non-tested" subjects and grades can then be viewed as special cases of the comprehensive framework

Claims to evaluate SLOs

- A theory of action is useful for crafting a validity argument

- More formally, we can create <u>claims</u> for SLOs and then consider the challenges and support for these claims

Claims, challenges, opportunities

- <u>Claim</u>: *Teachers have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (& ethics) to set meaningful, ambitious, and fair goals for individual students*

- <u>Challenge:</u> Who will guide, monitor, and/or evaluate the quality of these goals?
  - This adds an extra (or at least different) significant validation requirement beyond test-based approaches

- <u>Opportunity:</u> Teaching quality would like improve if teachers were supported in improving the way they used data to establish goals for <u>individual</u> students.

Claims, challenges, opportunities

- <u>Claim</u>: *Teachers have the knowledge and skills to tailor learning opportunities for individual students*
- <u>Challenge:</u> Will there be a temptation to limit the range/variability of the goals to maximize efficiency?
- <u>Opportunity:</u> If teachers were really expected to focus on the needs of individual students, learning opportunities could very well improve. Would using <u>group instead of individual</u> goals limit this opportunity?
  - Undoubtedly high school teachers will have to set group goals

Claims, challenges and opportunities

- <u>Claim</u>: *Teachers and/or others have measurement or evaluation procedures sufficient for judging whether students have reached the intended goals*

- <u>Challenge 1:</u> Are classroom assessment tools capable of validly measuring ambitious goals?

- <u>Challenge 2:</u> If external assessments are used, would that lead to narrow goals to match the more limited tools (tail wagging the dog)?

- <u>Opportunity:</u> Could this be a lever for improving the quality of classroom assessment and evaluation tools and processes?

SLOs as a framework

- In spite of these challenges, SLOs probably offer the best starting point
- Paraphrasing what Churchill said about democracy…
  - SLOs are the worst possible approach, except for all of the others…
- This would put all educators in the same boat, while those in "tested" subjects could use data from the state test to evaluate their goals
- We still need a lot work in this area—e.g., who approves the goals?—but it appears to be a promising starting point

What is Growth?

- Many laws and regulations refer to "student growth" or some similar definition

- Even though I gave a strong recommendation for using an SLO framework, I think if we force the growth issue here (i.e., change in performance over two or more occasions), we will be in the same sinking boat as other growth determinations for non-tested subjects and grades

- SLOs will work best if educators are held accountable for having students aim for a specific target measured at the end of the year
  - Yes, I know it is not technically growth, but we should try to do conduct one good measurement first before we add a second measure

Major decisions and discussion

- ## What is our theory of action for SLOs
  - Are SLOs a means for improving teaching and learning?
  - Are SLOs an approach of last resort for documenting student performance?
  - What are the design implications depending on which decision we make?

- ## What is the role of SLOs in the overall system?
  - Will all educators be expected to participate in the SLO process?
  - Will SLOs serve as the "growth component" of the overall evaluation or a "3rd leg of the stool" along with practices and growth?
  - How much weight will SLOs (and/or growth) have in the overall system

Our work for today

- Now that we've solved these easy questions...

- There are many aspects of SLOs that we need to wrestle with as we design the system for Utah.

- We will spend most of our time today working on the following major issues:
  - Objectives and the process for establishing objectives
  - Measurement approaches for evaluating the degree to which objectives were achieved
  - Oversight and support

- Ok, let's get to work...