

# Measuring Student Growth in World Languages

The new Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) requires a percentage of teachers' evaluations to be based on their students making adequate growth. This document was created to provide guidance to assist in measuring student growth in the K-12 world languages content area. Specifically, it will answer some frequently asked questions about the development and use of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and the selection of Student Growth Measures (SGMs), based on best practices and existing tools in this discipline.

Please take some time to read and reflect on these points of guidance. Because the measurement of student growth is ultimately a local decision, the department walks a fine line between giving enough guidance to ensure good decision-making based on Ohio's new world language standards and best practices in this discipline and overstepping the limitations imposed by the local decision-making process.

## What is a Student Learning Objective (SLO)?

- A Student Learning Objective (SLO) is a measurable, long-term academic goal informed by available data that a teacher or teacher team sets at the beginning of a course for all students or for subgroups of students. A SLO seeks to measure a teacher's impact on student learning within a given interval of instruction.

## Exactly what should we be measuring with regard to world languages?

- **Teachers measure the change in students' overall language proficiency across language skills and the modes of communication** (i.e., interpretive listening, interpretive reading, interpersonal speaking, interpersonal writing, presentational speaking and presentational writing – deemphasizing interpersonal speaking in the classical languages). The measurement of overall language proficiency growth should extend from the beginning to the end of the evaluation period.
- **IMPORTANT: Measurements of grammar ability, vocabulary knowledge, understanding of cultural factoids and other discrete aspects of language are NOT acceptable.** Since the standards are communicative and proficiency-based in nature with culture embedded throughout, the measures that are used to determine students' overall language proficiency growth should also be based on communicative proficiency.

## What steps should teachers follow to implement their Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)?

- **Pre-Assessment:** To provide baseline data for the SLO, we recommend that teachers pre-assess their students using an Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) and a rubric that target their **current** proficiency level. The IPA should include tasks that allow sufficient "stretch" to cover a range of student proficiency levels. Teachers may also wish to use the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements to provide further baseline data. Teachers need to gather paper or digital evidence for each Can-Do Statement for inclusion in the SLO baseline proficiency determination. Students can provide evidence of their proficiency

gains by capturing their language performances digitally and placing them in the *Dossier* section of the LinguaFolio student self-assessment portfolio.

- **Growth Targets:** Teachers should set ambitious, yet attainable, growth targets for all students covered by the SLO. Teachers may need to create tiered targets, if appropriate, so all students may show growth. The teacher and the students work toward the SLO growth targets throughout the length of the course.
- **Post-Assessment:** We recommend that teachers post-assess their students using an IPA and a rubric at the target proficiency level. The final IPA also should include tasks that allow sufficient “stretch” to cover a range of student proficiency levels. Teachers may again wish to use the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements to provide further data supporting learner growth. Teachers need to gather paper or digital evidence for each Can-Do Statement for inclusion in the SLO baseline proficiency determination.
- **Post-Conference:** At the end of the designated interval, the teacher (or teacher team) meets with the principal or building team to assess progress toward the SLO goal and determine the teacher’s impact on student learning.

#### **Is the use of multiple measures recommended for providing SLO-related data?**

- Teachers should consider using multiple measures (e.g., portfolios, integrated performance assessments, Can-Do statements) to assess progress toward the SLO learner-proficiency goal. If multiple measures are used, teachers must establish scoring guidelines for each measure used.

#### **What link, if any, should exist between the SLOs and *Ohio’s Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*?**

- Teachers should create SLOs that align with *Ohio’s Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages* and written in a global manner to represent a performance-based goal.
- At least one SLO must take into account the overarching comprehensive standards, across the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal and presentational) and the different language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Comprehensive SLOs cannot focus on a single competency (e.g., Presentational Communication Competency #1) or on one grouping of process and content statements (e.g., Culture Competency #1, e-h). An initial tendency for some is to focus on one aspect of language, like writing, culture or grammar because these are considered easy things to assess/measure. However, such limited SLOs, which focus on discrete aspects of language and/or the standards, are invalid because they render no useful information about students’ overall language proficiency growth across ALL of the language skills and modes of communication.
- An additional targeted SLO might focus on individual skills, a mode of communication or intercultural competence.

### **Is there any guidance available to help me with creating SLOs that are sufficiently global?**

- The ODE has developed an [SLO Guidance Webpage](#) for use by Ohio world language teachers.
- Teachers can find additional resources on the Ohio Foreign Language Association's [Student Learning Objectives Weebly](#).

### **Why is ODE promoting the NCSSFL's LinguaFolio student self-assessment portfolio and the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements as possible measures of students' overall language proficiency growth?**

- LinguaFolio is a research-based tool that is appropriate for use in measuring students' language proficiency growth. The tool's *Biography* section contains the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements, which are self-assessment checklists written in "student-friendly" language across all levels of language proficiency as described by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL): Novice Low/Mid/High, Intermediate Low/Mid/High, Advanced Low/Mid/High, Distinguished and Superior. The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements also are aligned with both the ACTFL World-Readiness *Standards for Learning Languages* and with *Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages*. The LinguaFolio's *Dossier* section provides a place to house electronic evidence that substantiates mastery of the Can-Do Statements.
- Teachers should target the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do statements at the appropriate proficiency level in each of the five skill/mode categories (i.e., interpretive listening, interpretive reading, interpersonal communication, presentational writing and presentational speaking) that align with the course they are teaching and the global, communicative goals that they have developed for their SLOs. By using Can-Do statements at the beginning and end of the evaluation period, and giving integrated performance assessments as the pre- and post-assessments, teachers should have no difficulty quantifying their students' overall language proficiency growth in measurable terms.
- Please note that target proficiency charts are posted in the World Language Model Curriculum to assist language programs in targeting appropriate levels of student proficiency that are supported by research at each course level. The new learning standards, the model curriculum and all supporting information are posted [here](#).
- Information about the LinguaFolio, including the link to the tool's resources, can be accessed at [this link](#).

### **So, can I use the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements as my SLOs?**

- The NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements should NOT to be confused with SLOs. A Student Learning Objective (SLO) is a measurable, long-term academic goal informed by available data that a teacher or teacher team sets at the beginning of a course for all students or for subgroups of students. The use of the Can-Do Statements is one of multiple student growth measures recommended by ODE that can be used to quantify students' overall language proficiency growth, which in turn reveals to what extent the goal described in the SLO has been accomplished.

**I heard that the typical achievement-based assessments traditionally used in many language classes are not good measures of student growth. Is this true?**

- This is very true. The typical classroom assessments that are used to evaluate students (e.g., quizzes, end-of-chapter tests, semester and final exams) measure student *achievement* – what students know and can do on a specific topic (or set of topics) at a specific point in time (e.g., end of a chapter, end of a semester). Teachers should not confuse student achievement with the relatively new concept of student *growth*. **These traditional assessments give no indication of what students knew or did not know prior to learning taking place; they simply tell you what students know at the moment an assessment is given.** The crux of measuring student growth is knowing exactly what students know and are able to do at the beginning of the evaluation period, revealing what they know and can do at the end of the evaluation period *and quantifying the difference in very specific terms* (growth). To measure student growth, teachers should consider using a combination of measures specified in the SLO that together show proficiency growth from the beginning to the end of the evaluation period. For example, as one measurement of growth, teachers and students might utilize the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements at the beginning and end of the evaluation period.

**What oversight will there be of my students' progress toward the overarching communicative goals I have included in my SLO?**

- At the local level, teachers and administrators will monitor student progress toward SLO goals through formal and informal formative assessments. These assessments should be part of daily teaching and learning and should guide instructional decisions. Schools may use common assessments across classes to monitor progress toward SLO goals at the building or district level.
- At the end of the evaluation period, the teacher (or teacher team) meets with the evaluator to assess progress toward the SLO goal and determine the teacher's impact on student learning.
- Schools must submit evidence of their student growth measurements online to ODE. Educators can avoid potential pitfalls by carefully following the process described here to ensure adherence to best practices in the world language content area.
- Finally, ODE will conduct random reviews of districts' evaluation processes.

**Whom can I contact with specific questions that I have about Ohio's New Learning Standards for K-12 World Languages, the LinguaFolio tool, and the creation of high-quality world language SLOs and best practices in the world language teaching field related to communicative language learning?**

- Contact one of your ODE World Language Consultants:
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