

Educator Effectiveness for World Language Teachers

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)¹

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Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, all Wisconsin educators (administrators and teachers) will be evaluated based on student achievement. School districts can choose between two evaluation systems that are essentially very similar: The [Department of Public Instruction's Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System](#) and the [CESA 6 Effectiveness Project Professional Evaluation System](#). It is important to note that both systems use DPI's model for [Student Learning Objectives \(SLOs\) & Other Student Outcomes Measures](#).

Preamble

The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System has been piloted for two years and will be implemented in the 2014-15 school year. Feedback from schools participating in the pilot phase of the system has led to numerous changes. More details and clarification will be in place soon, but it is important for everyone to understand that this first implementation year requires patience and goodwill on all sides. No statewide system will be implemented without flaws in its first year.

The most significant changes for the first year of implementation may well be (i) the reduction of two personal SLOs to one and (ii) the elimination of the required evaluator. In other words, teachers now evaluate themselves based on one SLO only.

Self-evaluation brings with it both the benefit of working within the framework of personal professional responsibility and an accountability measure that is not built on measures of compliance but on the individual teacher's responsibility for a meaningful opportunity for professional growth.

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A Framework for World Language Educator Effectiveness

The Educator Effectiveness model for Wisconsin world language teachers provides another great opportunity to communicate to students, parents, administrators, school board members, employers as well as the general public the educational value of world language learning. We can use the process of setting explicit goals to let everyone know what world language learning is about. While all engaged learning should have an element of fun, world language learning is not primarily about fun and games. It is the accomplishment felt by the student who learns to communicate with people from other countries in their language. It is the accomplishment felt by the student who gathers information from original sources in other languages. And it is the accomplishment felt by the student whose prospective employers value the contributions brought to their business that only multilingual employees can bring.

We know that the pathway to that reward, accomplishment and success leads through multiple years of learning a second or third language. We know the scaffolding necessary to help a student advance from one proficiency level to the next. These are the day-to-day technicalities of our profession, the calibration of appropriately complex linguistic and cultural levels of engagement in the new language.

Such learning and teaching cannot be accomplished by the mere addition of separate skills, such as the memorization of dialogs, vocabulary lists or grammatical analyses. For the past twenty years, world language educators have worked hard to design standards for learning world languages and provide a framework of proficiency levels as a compass in the learning and teaching process. World language teachers know best that the overall goal of world language education is to put students in the position to communicate in another language across all modes of communication. Therefore, SLOs (student learning outcomes or objectives) must be framed in terms of proficiency goals that are grounded in standards based instruction. This is not new. But the process of selecting proficiency and standards-based SLOs for teacher evaluation helps world language educators to make this process visible to others.

Common Proficiency Expectations for All?

Once world language teachers use proficiency indicators as the basis of SLOs, another question follows: Should we not all aim toward the same proficiency levels for specific student cohorts across classrooms and school districts in the entire state? Why would we have different expectations for students in different classrooms? In the absence of external evaluations or assessments, it is upon us to let students, parents and the larger community know what they can expect world language students to be know and be able to do once we release students from our care.

If we look at educator effectiveness through this lens, we may realize that the system can be used for meaningful professional reflection and discourse. That is what it is designed to do. It is yet another step of implementing what the standards and proficiency movement started about two decades ago.

General Questions

Q Do teachers have to submit an Educator Effectiveness Plan (EEP) every year?

A. Yes. Each teacher will create an annual EEP, in both the Rating and Non-Rating years. The purpose is to focus the teacher on desired student outcome goals and then align instructional practice to achieve these goals.

New for 14-15: Changed “Rating Year/Non-rating Year” cycle to “Effectiveness Cycle”; “Rating Year” is now called “Summary Year” (summarizes the Effectiveness Cycle process, regardless of how many years worth of data are included).

Q Will teachers be evaluated every year under this system?

A. No. Teachers will be evaluated their first year of employment and every third year thereafter. A district can choose to evaluate more often. These summative years are referred to as Summary Years.

<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/teacher/teacher-evaluation-process>).

Q What is in an EEP?

A. EEPs (Educator Effectiveness Plan) consist of one SLO (Student Learning Objective) and one PPG (Professional Practice Goal).

New for 2014-15: Reduction from two SLOs to one SLO annually. Also: An evaluator is no longer required to formally approve the EEP or SLO goals.

Q. What is a PPG?

A. A PPG is a goal focused on an educator’s practice. This goal is not scored, but serves to align an educator’s SLOs to his or her professional practice. The Professional Practice Goal should be written with expected student growth (SLOs) in mind.

Q What will be evaluated in Summary Years?

A. The Wisconsin Educator Effectiveness System is a performance-based evaluation system that balances an educator’s professional practice (50%) with evidence of student outcomes (50%). (<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/eesystem/about>)

Q What is being evaluated as part of a teacher’s professional practice?

- A. Evaluators will use Charlotte Danielson’s 2013 *Framework for Teaching* (DPI EE System). Check CESA 6 for their model that is organized in four domains: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibilities (<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/eeteacherevaluationprocessmanual-version4.pdf>). Teachscape is the DPI online management system.

The CESA 6 Educator Effectiveness Project uses MyLearningPlan for the evaluation of educator practice

(http://www.cesa6.org/products_services/teacher_leader_effect/abouteffectivenessproject.cfm).

Q What evidence of student outcomes count for 50% of a teacher’s evaluation?

- A. Changed for 2014-15: Removed “District Choice” as an outcome measure for teachers. The Student Outcomes Summary is composed of 5% of “School-Wide Reading Value-Added or Graduation Rate Scores” and 95% of a “Student Learning Objective” score.

SLO scores are based on outcome results and process rather than results only; scores are no longer averaged; educator self-scores all SLOs (no evaluator scoring on individual SLOs).

(<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/eeteacherevaluationprocessmanual-version4.pdf>)

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Q How many SLOs do teachers have to submit per year?

- A. One.

Q What constitutes evidence for successful goals in an SLO?

- A. Teachers identify the appropriate, high-quality assessment tool or evidence source(s) to determine progress toward set goals. Such sources might include district-developed common assessments and portfolios or projects of student work (when accompanied by a rigorous scoring rubric and baseline data providing a comparison of progress across the year). Summative statewide assessments should not be used.

<http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/eeteacherevaluationprocessmanual-version4.pdf> , p. 21 ff

Q What is an SLO?

- A. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) are student academic growth goals stated in SMART format. An SLO must be **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, and Time-bound** (<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1297795>).

Q What exactly are SMART Goals?

The concept of SMART goals was developed in the field of performance management. SMART is an acronym standing for **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, and Time-bound**.

Specific goals are those that are well-defined and free of ambiguity or generality. The consideration of “W” questions can help in developing goals that are specific:

What?—Specify exactly what the goal seeks to accomplish.

Why?—Specify the reasons for, purposes or benefits of the goal.

Who?—Specify who this goal includes or involves.

When?—Specify the timeline for the attainment of the goal.

Which?—Specify any requirements or constraints involved in achieving the goal.

Measurable goals are those which have concrete criteria for measuring progress toward their achievement.

Attainable goals are those that are reasonably achievable. Goals that are too lofty or unattainable will result in failure, but at the same time, they should involve extra effort to achieve. In either extreme (too far-reaching or sub-par), goals become meaningless.

Results-based goals are those that are aligned with the expectations and direction provided by the district or building goals. They are goals that focus on results and are relevant to the mission of an organization such as a school, helping to move the overall effort of a school forward.

Time-bound goals occur within a specified and realistic timeframe. Often in schools, this timeframe may be a school year, although it could be a semester, or a multi-year goal, depending on local contexts and needs.

Q What should world language SLOs be aligned with? My own curriculum, district curriculum, or standards?

- A. Learning and teaching must be developed in a standards framework. Therefore, SLOs need to be aligned with the content and performance standards for a discipline. For

world language educators, this means a clear connection or alignment between local classroom practices, local curriculum and the Wisconsin Standards for Language Learning. Wisconsin's state standards for world language learning are based on the national standards for world language learning.

www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/World-ReadinessStandardsforLearningLanguages.pdf SLOs should further be aligned with the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#).

Q When do I write SLOs?

- A. SLOs are written for a specific student cohort after reviewing and analyzing baseline performance data at the beginning of the school year. If you don't know your students yet, you cannot write SLOs.

2014-15: SLOs no longer need to be approved by an evaluator.

Q What is a student cohort?

- A. A cohort may be an entire class, a subgroup of students in one class, or students in different sections with shared learning goals as identified in baseline performance data. <http://ee.dpi.wi.gov/files/ee/pdf/eeteacherevaluationprocessmanual-version4.pdf>, p. 21

A simplified, yet accurate, characterization of defining student cohorts is a reminder to ourselves: We know our students, we know how far along the continuum of learning they are, and we know what needs to be done for each of them to advance. Without knowing our students, learning and teaching becomes a guessing game. The focus in our classroom needs to be on the learner. Teaching strategies need to be adapted to learner needs.

FAQs for SLOs in World Language Education

Q How do SLOs relate to other initiatives?

While the educator effectiveness initiative is a completely new system, teachers are very familiar with setting goals for student learning. World language teachers understand that their students need to advance on the proficiency scale. Therefore, writing SLOs is simply a matter of re-stating proficiency goals teachers for all students or for different student populations. World language teachers have been operating in a standards and proficiency based environment for almost two decades. SLOs actually help teachers to articulate their goals clearly and succinctly.

Q What is the uniting framework for writing SLOs?

A. World language education is standards based and follows the [ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines](#). Therefore, all world language SLOs are based on advancing proficiency levels in one or more of the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational).

Q What is the role of the cultures standard in the design of SLOs?

A. World language standards are proficiency-based with culture embedded throughout. Learning about culture cannot be separated from linguistic proficiency. SLOs should include performance and content expectations across disciplines and presuppose a student’s ability to communicate cultural concepts and issues in the target language. Please review the Cultural Awareness Domain in the ACTFL Performance Descriptors which demonstrate how language should be used in culturally authentic ways (<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-descriptors-language-learners>).

Q How do world-language specific SLOs support school-wide literacy goals and Common Core Standards?

A World Language Standards are well aligned with Common Core Standards. Standards based world language instruction advances literacy learning. See the ACTFL alignment document for details (http://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/Aligning_CCSS_Language_Standards_v6.pdf).

Q Where can I find support for writing SLOs that advance cultural and interdisciplinary learning?

A. The publication “Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage The World” (<http://cal.dpi.wi.gov/files/cal/pdf/book-globalcompetence.pdf>) is an excellent resource. It includes a definition of global competence, many examples from different disciplines, and matrices to help organize teaching and learning. The four elements of those matrices in different content areas are: Investigate the World, Recognize Perspectives, Communicate Ideas), and Take Action.

Q What levels of proficiency should be expected of students at the end of one, two, three, or four years of learning a world language?

A. We must ensure that all students in Wisconsin are able to communicate in their chosen world language at levels comparable across schools and school districts.

Q Can I write SLOs based on grammar items or vocabulary lists?

A. Such SLOs are not in line with the stated goals of learning world languages. Those goals focus on proficiency, not on mastering grammatical terminology or word lists.

Q Does that mean I should no longer teach grammar or ask students to memorize vocabulary lists?

A. No, not at all. But remember that learning grammar and words must be seen in the context of proficiency. A student who is perfectly capable of explaining grammatical concepts but cannot apply them to speaking a language has not met the expectations of the world language program. Students, however, should have a functional knowledge of grammatical concepts and categories.

Q Can I use the SLO process to communicate the goals and the value of my world language program not only to administrators, but also to parents and the larger community?

A. Absolutely. Clear expectations and demonstrated student proficiency need to be communicated with students, parents, and community members. Students have a right to expect a clearly articulated path to proficiency in their chosen language. So do parents and the larger community. Well written SLOs will be the foundation for communicating those expectations.

Q World language education is an elective subject. Will students still enroll in world language programs if we expect them to work hard?

A. Students will be proud of their accomplishments and be willing to work hard toward meaningful goals. In general, fun and games do not sustain interest in the long run. Furthermore world language teachers must demonstrate the value of global learning and proficient communication in another language as an intellectually demanding, rigorous and essentially rewarding effort.

Q How can I use the NCSSFL-ACTFL “Can-Do Statements” in the process of writing SLOs?

A. The NCSSFL-ACTFL “Can-Do Statements” are excellent tools for learner self assessment. If you want to use these statements in an SLO, you need to verify these student self

assessments through teacher and/or external assessments. Teacher assessments can include reviews of student portfolios, ongoing classroom assessments, and interviews. An example of a good external assessment is the ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) assessment.

Q What is the relationship between LinguaFolio and the new NCSSFL-ACTFL “Can-Do Statements?”

A. The Can-Do Statements “are a revision of the NCSSFL 2009 LinguaFolio Self-Assessment Checklist and may be used by learners as a stand-alone self-assessment or as part of the LinguaFolio compendium.
(<http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/ncssfl-actfl-can-do-statements>). The full LinguaFolio online compendium can serve as a repository of evidence provided by students of their progress toward specific proficiency levels.

Developing SLOs for World Language Teaching: Step by Step

1. Define your targeted student group.
2. Conduct a baseline assessment of student proficiency across all standards.
3. Base the SLOs on these baseline assessments.
4. Identify teaching strategies.
5. Collect evidence of student learning on a regular basis.

<http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1223930>

Q Where can I find support for standards based curriculum planning for world languages?

A. The Department of Public Instruction developed a curriculum guide, *Planning Curriculum for Learning World Languages*, to provide this support. The guide is available at DPI’s Publications Sales Department (<https://pubsales.dpi.wi.gov/product-category/world/>). WAFLT (www.waflt.org) and ACTFL (www.actfl.org) also provide excellent resources.