NJTESOL-NJBE Guidance on Developing Student Growth Objectives (SGOs)

English Language Development (ELD) for ESL teachers

NJTESOL-NJBE views this initiative as a significant opportunity to more clearly define our field and goals while developing assessments which measure English language development growth. We encourage supervisors and teachers to examine practices and programs to ensure that ELLs have ample opportunities to develop academic language and to use this process to inform instruction as well as program design.

As we search to identify ways to accurately and validly measure progress on English language development, we have often depended on reading and writing measures and anecdotal records of students' progress. However, the SGOs for ESL teachers should be based on the WIDA ELD standards and subsequently on ELD growth not on content-based assessments (DRA, content tests, etc.) unless the ESL teacher is also responsible for English Language Arts (i.e. replacement ELA). An important point to consider is that ELD growth is related to time and intensity of instruction with a multitude of outside factors which impact English language development. The basic premise of the SGO is to measure what the student actually learned in each teacher's class during the academic year. Therefore, the measurement should reflect the actual instruction which occurred and should be connected to the curriculum. Important points to consider when establishing your benchmark targets:

- **Focus on ELD:** ELLs must have ample opportunities to acquire academic English; therefore, the ESL teacher must have opportunities to focus lessons on English language development

- **New Jersey is a WIDA state**: Therefore, district or commercially developed benchmarks and assessments should be aligned with the WIDA ELD standards and performance criteria (linguistic complexity, language forms and conventions and vocabulary usage)**.** Educators should set appropriate target(s) by language domain(s) (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, writing) to attain by the end of the year.

- **Growth trends**: When setting SGOs, educators should consider WIDA's findings as related to growth trends: the lower the English Language proficiency (ELP) level the greater the growth as well as the lower the grade level the greater the growth (Cook, et. al, 2011). Based on this information, general

education and bilingual teachers may choose to develop specific SGOs in the content areas for the subgroup of ELLs by ELP level.

- **Number of students**: It is not recommended that SGOs be set with less than 10 students in the group. If the class is less than ten, then the district may decide to group proficiency levels and/or grade levels and set a general SGO.

- **Types of programs**: In middle school and high school settings, ESL is often the replacement class for English Language Arts. Therefore, districts should consider setting one SGO for ELA and one for ELD. (*Note that replacement ELA teachers in grades 4-8 will also receive SGP scores from the NJASK. NJTESOL-NJBE has recommended that only students who have taken NJASK in English for two or more consecutive years be included in the SGP calculation*).

- **Collaboration**: While the NJDOE is requiring collaboration between teachers and principals to set SGOs, NJTESOL-NJBE recommends that other staff members knowledgeable about ELD standards (e.g. bilingual/ESL supervisors, lead teachers) be involved, where appropriate, to ensure SGOs accurately capture student starting points and necessary accommodations.

When setting SGOs for ELLs, NJTESOL-NJBE recommends:

- Base the SGO on actual data from the actual students in the ESL teacher's class.
- Initially, target a specific domain rather than an overall composite score unless your district has already created assessments which capture the overall growth.
  - NJTESOL-NJBE recommends using the Writing rubric and developing a standard pre-post prompt for writing using the WIDA materials as a resource (2012 Amplification, Performance Criteria).
- Data can also be collected using district-based or commercially developed assessments. The assessment should measure English language development aligned to WIDA standards and performance criteria.
- **It is NOT recommended to use ACCESS scores as a measure of growth for the SGOs**. ACCESS measures growth from spring to spring which includes many additional variables. <u>The SGO is developed to measure growth during a particular school year and based on the actual curriculum and instruction</u>

delivered. The ACHIEVENJ guidelines provide further overall explanation on ways to determine appropriate growth objectives (pages 12-13).

Frequently Asked Questions

Many teachers and supervisors are asking "are we allowed..?" Please note that the SGO process is developed within the district/school and therefore, the NJDOE is providing guidance and not mandates. The questions to ask are: does this accurately measure what we teach and is it aligned to the WIDA ELD standards and performance criteria?

1. **Are we allowed to use an assessment that is already developed by an educational publisher? (aligned with WIDA Standards) as pre and post assessment?**

   The assessment used is a district-based decision. If the assessment is aligned with WIDA standards and measures English language development then the district may decide to use a commercially developed assessment. Ensure that you are able to establish appropriate growth measures using the tests.

2. **Are we allowed to use W-APT scores to set up SGO? or do we have to generate new pre-post assessment?**

   Remember the W-APT was designed as a screener and is not as specific or exact as the MODEL or ACCESS.

3. **Can you use the W-APT to assess in fall and spring?**

   NJTESOL-NJBE does not recommend using W-APT as the pre-post assessment. It was not designed to measure growth.

4. **If we create our own assessment, what rubric should be used?**

   NJTESOL-NJBE recommends using the WIDA speaking and writing rubrics and/or use the performance criteria to develop your own assessments in the other domains. http://wida.us/standards/eld.aspx

5. **Does anyone have an example?**

   This process provides a wonderful opportunity to develop assessments which measure English language development. NJTESOL-NJBE chapters may want to meet in early fall to share resources and have discussions about assessments.

6. **One class of mine has only 3 students, I only have 9 students in all, at the high school, how do I create the SGO?**

The NJDOE is recommending that the SGO be developed for 10 or more students. Therefore, in this case, the district may want to develop a general SGO across grade levels and ELP levels.

7. **I thought of using the "vocabulary usage" criterion of the WIDA performance definitions for the levels to advance upon, under "reading and listening."**

   This would be fine, but you would need to develop your own listening and reading selections based on that one criterion.

8. **Can the WIDA MODEL be used as an assessment for SGOs? I am not sure whether we should use the entire assessment or just portions of the assessment.**

   The WIDA MODEL was designed as an interim assessment. So it would be acceptable to use. A few cautions: there is no alternate form and it is based on grade level clusters; so students would be taking the exact same assessment across multiple grades if it is intended for use in multiple years.

9. **Are there rubrics that ESL educators can use to determine growth using the performance criteria of the English Language proficiency levels set by WIDA?**

   Educators may wish to use the *Speaking and Writing rubrics* developed by WIDA (http://wida.us/searchResults.aspx?cx=0001878867407992537742:bjkids4qwcy&cof=FORID:10&q=speaking%20rubrics). The 2012 amplification of the ELD standards clarified the performance definitions by creating expectations based on receptive and expressive skills.

10. **What type of professional development is needed for ESL teachers to build capacity for doing this work?**

    Districts may wish to focus professional development for ESL teachers around developing tasks to assess proficiency levels and calibrating scores on writing and/or speaking samples based on proficiency benchmarks. To understand the ELP levels, districts may choose to use student work samples and compare them to examples for each proficiency level found at www.wida.us The performance definitions and the Model Performance Indicators (2012 amplification) could be used as guidelines in developing district assessments that track learners' progress.   These documents are available at www.wida.us

Below we describe a process that one district shared on how they established the SGO for their ELLs

Establish growth patterns in Writing with existing data

As part of the process, it is important that teachers **begin with knowledge about how their students have performed in the past.** Your district may not have these data available so you may want to look at ACCESS data to see if there are any patterns or trends. The ACCESS scores may also inform which domain to target in your SGO. This district has already gathered these data by domain and performance criteria. This table shows the growth patterns of a group of fourth grade ELLs from last year, using the WIDA Writing rubrics on district-created unit assessments. These assessments were crafted with the ACCESS and the W-APT as models. In this way, the assessments were aligned to the WIDA ELD standards.

Previous Year's 4th grade ELLs (2012-2013) Data Growth in Writing as determined by WIDA Rubrics

Student	Writing LC* Sept	Writing LC May	Writing VU** Sept	Writing VU May	Writing LFC*** September	Writing LFC May	Growth
Level 1 and 2 Students							
1	3	4	3	4	3	3	2/3
2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2/3
3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3/3
4	2	3	2	3	2	2	2/3
5	3	4	4	5	3	4	3/3
6	1	2	1	2	1	2	3/3
7	1	3	1	3	1	2	3/3
Level 3 and 4 Students							
8	3	4	3	4	3	4	3/3
9	4	4	4	4	4	4	0/3
10	3	4	4	3	3	3	1/3
11	3	4	5	4	4	4	1/3
12	3	4	4	4	3	4	2/3
13	4	4	4	4	4	4	0/3
14	3	4	3	4	3	3	2/3
15	4	4	4	4	3	4	1/3
16	4	5	5	5	4	5	2/3

* Linguistic Complexity   ** Vocabulary Usage   *** Language Forms and Conventions

Summary of findings for Writing

	ELP Levels 1 & 2	ELP Level 3 & 4
Number of students who remained the same	0	2
Number of students who increased 1 ELP level in one Performance Criteria	0	3
Number of students who increased 1 ELP level in two Performance Criteria	3	3
Number of students who increased 1 ELP level in three Performance Criteria	4	1
Total	7	9

All ELLs at ELP levels 1 and 2 increased in two of the three performance criteria; but only four ELLs at ELP levels 3 and 4 increased at that rate. However, seven of the nine ELLs at ELP levels 3 and 4 students increased in at least one or more performance criteria. Therefore, these data can be used as baseline in differentiating SGOs by proficiency levels. Please note that this is actual growth from September to May. Teachers may have multiple points of progress, where they can monitor student progress. But only the beginning and end points were included in order to provide a realistic measure of growth. These data support the finding by WIDA that the higher the proficiency level the slower the growth.

SGO Creation

In the previous section, the patterns of growth were identified for Fourth grade ELLs. This information will be critical in establishing realistic yet rigorous SGOs for 2013-2014 school year. The next step in this process is to create a data profile of the incoming fourth grade ELLs as depicted below:

Incoming Fourth Grade ELLs for the 2013-2014 school year at Sunshine Elementary

Student	Beginning ELP levels based on ACCESS	LC		LFC		VU	
		Sept	May	Sept	May	Sept	May
1*	1.9						
2*	2.7						
3	3.6						
4	3.8						
5	3.9						
6	4.1						
7	4.2						
8	4.4						
9	4.5						
10	4.6						
11	4.9						
12	4.9						
13	5.1						
14	5.9						

*student with a star are at level 1 or 2

Using the information gathered as a baseline and the profile of the class coming in, an SGO could be developed for the majority of students who are at ELP levels 3 and 4 (12 out of the 14 ELLs). If only two ELLs are at ELP levels 1 and 2, a

SGO should not be developed since there should be at least ten in the targeted group. Therefore, a rigorous yet achievable SGO could be:

Assessment	Target ELD Goal:	Number/percentage of grade 4 ELLs entering **at ELP levels 3 and 4** in the 2013-2014 school year who will attain the target			
		4	3	2	1
WIDA Writing rubric on district-created assessment	Increase 1 ELP level on **one** of the three performance criteria	83% (10-12)	66% (8-9)	55% (6-7)	54% or below (0-5)

There could be many variations of this model depending on the assessment and decision about domains. The important part of the process is to base the SGO on growth patterns from the previous year and actual baseline data of the students on the ESL teacher's roster.

For this reason, NJTESOL-NJBE recommends using the WIDA writing rubric and growth across the performance criteria as an assessment tool and measurement criteria. Districts could create pre-post writing prompts using W-APT, MODEL and ACCESS samples as guides. It is also recommended to gather information about student performance in January, as the SGO process allows for a revision of the goal mid-year.

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