Developing Quality Assessments

Increasing Student Achievement
Advancing Teacher Practice

About this document: This document provides a pathway for selecting and designing high quality assessments for use in SLOs. It includes key features and item types that can be further explored through the *Assessment Literacy Support* video series developed to support WCSD educators.

About TIF 4 and CTAC: As part of the Teacher Incentive Fund 4 (TIF 4) work, Washoe County School District (WCSD) has partnered with the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) in the use of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). CTAC provides technical assistance to the district and TIF 4 working groups based on 16 years of research and practice with SLOs.

Contact Information

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The following protocol highlights key steps to take when selecting and/or designing baseline and culminating assessments for SLOs. While sequencing of steps has a purpose, it well may be that steps may be taken iteratively or recursively to ensure the highest quality assessments.

1. **Review existing options.**
   Typically assessments can be categorized into the following groups. It may be helpful to chart the options by type in the table below. It is important to note the blueprint, or outline of the general features of the assessment—particularly to ensure the scope of content matches or comes close the content in your SLO's learning content.
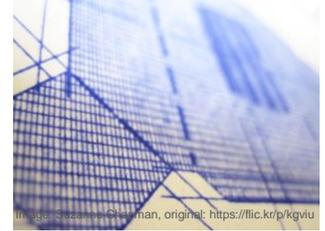
State-Developed	District-Developed	Commercially Developed	School/Common Assessments	Classroom Assessments

2. **Analyze the alignment, rigor, and structure.**
   These are three critical features of assessments. Key aspects related to these important features are highlighted below.

<u>Notes</u>

Alignment
- Assessment items measure part or all of a learning content standard(s)
- Baseline and culminating assessments align to each other

Rigor
- Level of cognition (e.g., Bloom's approach, Marzano's approach, Webb's DOK approach)
- Use of multiple measures

Structure
- Accessibility/Fairness of items
- Overall length of assessment

3. Ensure a varity of item types, developing additional items as needed.

A variety of item types helps give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning of the content and can help more accurately measure the various aspects of student learning embedded in the standards found in the learning content. Reflect on how many of the following item types are present, and how many of each type may need to be developed.

Included	Selected Response	Needed
	Matching	
	Multiple Choice	
	Multiple Select	
	True or False	

Included	Constructed Response	Needed
	Oral	
	Physical	
	Visual	
	Written	

4. Develop administration and scoring protocols.

Administration and scoring protocols promote consistency of expectations as well as a more common meaning of results. Consider the following when developing these protocols:

- Security of assessment materials
- Administration directions that are clear and concise
- Answer keys, rubrics, and scoring guides that are clear, accurate, and thorough
- Training scorers and devoting the needed time to training and scoring
- Translating scores to the WCSD 8 levels of performance
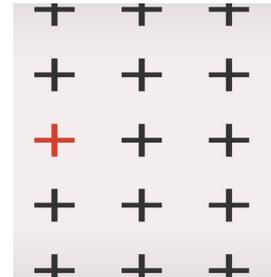
5. Facilitate peer/collegial review protocols.

Collaboration helps stimulate thinking in new ways and can help efforts evolve into higher and higher levels of quality. Allow other colleagues to review the assessments in the role of a "critical friend" to obtain important feedback regarding possible ways to improve the quality of the assessment. Consider such collegial groups as

- Grade or department level colleagues
- Colleagues from other schools
- District content and assessment colleagues
- Specialists with English language learners
- Specialists with Special Education students
- Regional or state colleagues
- Professional organization colleagues

6. Administer the assessments.

The best way to see how well the baseline and culminating assessments will work is to implement them. The more the assessment is implemented and later reflected upon, the richer the information source will be on the effectiveness of the assessment. Be sure to

- Hold tightly to the established administration and scoring directions.
- Capture any contextual factors you may want to know about later, such as
  o Time it takes for students to complete the assessment.
  o Any irregularities oraccommodations made during administration.
  o Student affect and perceptions.
  o Resources that may be helpful in the future (e.g., scratch paper, graph paper).
- Be comfortable with a good but less-than-perfect measurement: no measure is perfect, but we can continually refine to improve quality over time.

7. Reflect on implementation and results; refine as needed.

Reflect on both the administration of the assessments as well as the results produced by them. Reflection can prompt new and better ways to measure student learning. As you and your colleagues reflect and look for areas to refine, consider the following:

- How did the administration go compared to expectations?
- Are there important modifications needed in the administration?
- What do the score distributions look like?
- Are the distinctions between the eight levels meaningful in light of the results?
- Did the "highest" and "lowest" performing students score at different ends of the score distribution?
- Are there discrepancies in performance across student groups?
- Did the assessment measure the intended learning content?
- Is there a need for more or fewer items to reflect the desired balance of emphasis across the selected standards?
- Is there an appropriate balance of item types of level of cognition?
- Did the scoring materials work for the full range of student responses?
- What else might be needed to improve the quality of these assessments?