

SLOs: Connecting Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards

*Increasing Student Achievement,
Advancing Teacher Practice*



About this document: This document helps demonstrate the commonalities between SLOs and *Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards*. It highlights several connections for each phase of the SLO process, and reinforces the common goals of both landmark initiatives.

About the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC): CTAC is a national nonprofit organization with a demonstrated 35-year record of success in the fields of education and community development. Working at local, state, and national levels, CTAC achieves significant, long-term improvements in areas such as student achievement, teacher and principal effectiveness, school and district turnaround, and organizational capacity. CTAC introduced Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) nationally through a groundbreaking partnership with the Denver Public Schools and Denver Classroom Teachers Association. SLOs are now being implemented in more than 30 states across thousands of school districts in the United States. CTAC has more than 15 years of national leadership experience providing technical assistance, informing practice and policy, and evaluating SLOS.

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Connecting the CCR Standards

Forty-five states, as well as several other jurisdictions, currently implement some or all of the Common Core State Standards (Maryland's College and Career-Ready Standards). With over 30 states also implementing some version of Student Learning Objectives, one might wonder how these initiatives can work together to improve student learning. This document highlights key connections between these important and landmark national initiatives.

Common Aims: College and Career-Ready Standards and SLOs

| Aim | College and Career-Ready Standards Connection | SLO Connection |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Improving Student Outcomes | College and Career-Ready Standards seek to help prepare all students for college and careers. | SLOs are implemented given their research-based track record of improving student outcomes. |
| Deep Content Knowledge | Standards are fewer and deeper, promoting focus on key areas of content for students and teachers. | SLOs also require teachers to explore their focal content deeply and expect students to demonstrate a corresponding depth of learning. |
| Advancing Pedagogy | Pedagogical shifts in practice have been articulated to maximize the instructional impact of teaching the standards. | SLOs prompt a reflection on proven strategies. SLO research demonstrates that SLOs impact practice, improving student outcomes. |
| High Quality Assessments | Measuring the College and Career-Ready Standards requires correspondingly high quality assessment measures. Next generation assessments are incorporating a growing presence of constructed-response items and all Depths of Knowledge. | Higher quality SLOs use rigorous assessment methodologies such as tapping all Depths of Knowledge, constructed-response items, and multiple measures. |
| Rigorous and Clear Expectations | Internationally benchmarked, College and Career-Ready Standards set high expectations for students and provides a common language of learning across the K-12 spectrum. | High quality SLOs set high expectations for teachers and students and provide a common framework for educators to discuss student progress within and across grade levels. |

SLO Preparation Phase Connections

Typically August and September (or start of year)

- **Training:** Regardless of the sequence, training is essential to successfully implement both the College and Career-Ready Standards and SLOs. While the locally-established construct and processes for SLOs are important to understand, success will be directly tied to a teacher's depth of content knowledge for the course standards.
- **Support:** It is important to be aware of the supports available for both initiatives. Almost without exception, being supporting in the SLO development and implementation phases requires growing more deeply in both content and effective pedagogy.

SLO Development Phase Connections

Typically September and October (or beginning of course)

- **Crafting the SLO:** Each element of an SLO has strong links to the College and Career-Ready Standards to note:

| Element | College and Career-Ready Standards Connection |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Data Review & Baseline Evidence | Multiple data sources, including professional development on the College and Career-Ready Standards, should inform selections in an SLO. |
| Student Population | The preparation of each student for college and careers must remain forefront in the development of an SLO. |
| Learning Content | The selection of focus standards must take into account the most essential content for the course and what specific needs are identified. |
| Instructional Interval | Given the scope of content expected for the course, careful consideration must be made of how much time to devote to the critical content. |
| Target | Targets should reflect differentiated yet high expectations of growth (e.g., narrowing and closing achievement gaps) to successfully prepare each student for college and careers. |
| Evidence of Growth | High quality assessments need to be selected and/or designed which should reflect the direction of the Next Generation Assessments. |
| Rationale | Thoughtful justifications help ensure all students reach high levels of learning and are a hallmark of high quality SLOs. |
| Strategies | In determining the overall pedagogical approach for the selected content, the instructional shifts should be incorporated, whether explicitly or implicitly. |
| Teacher Professional Development and Growth | Ongoing exploration of the standards and corresponding pedagogy are vital to continue to improve practice as well as student learning. |

Connecting the CCR Standards

- **Approval:** Teachers and administrators should center their approval conversations on how the SLO prepares all students for subsequent coursework and a more successful educational trajectory.

SLO Implementation Phase Connections

Typically October through May

- **Instruction:** Effective pedagogy is needed to facilitate students attaining their targets. The content-specific instructional shifts should be regularly incorporated, in addition to other research-based strategies that explicitly or implicitly are a part of the approved SLO.
- **Reflection:** Teachers reflect on instruction and student outcomes to determine how each student is progressing towards the target and which strategies—or variations thereof—are maximizing instructional time during the interval. Reflection should incorporate regular reviews and exploration of the core standards and corresponding instructional shifts.
- **Support:** As instruction and reflection point to specific student and teacher needs, interventions and professional supports must be available. While teachers often refine many aspects of their practice through individual reflection/means, collegial and administrative supports provide an additional level of support that can often multiply the power of individual reflection and refinement on practice.

SLO Results Analysis Phase Connections

Typically May through June (or just before course's end)

- **Summative Assessment:** Summative assessments need to align fully to the focal standards. These assessments determine the degree to which content standards are learned.
- **Reflection on Outcomes:** Reflecting on outcomes help educators determine student learning and how well instruction was delivered.
- **Planning for Next Cycle:** Reflections help establish next steps for educators in terms of how to advance students learning as well as in developing subsequent SLOs.

Additional Resources

The following resources were used in the development of this document and are available at the referenced locations:

College and Career-Ready Standards

- College and Career-Ready Standards:
<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/ccss/>
- PARCC: <http://www.parcconline.org/>

SLOs

- CTAC's SLO Resources: <http://www.ctacusa.com/education/student-learning-objectives-slos/>