

# Understanding Implementation of New Models for Student Learning Through the Data: *Embedded Practice & Student Learning Goals*

Office of Educator Excellence and Certification Services

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## Context

A companion to the [Artifact Guidance for Demonstrating Instructional Outcomes](#), this guidance document was informed by data collected and analyzed during RIDE's Student Learning Pilot, a two-year initiative from which both *Embedded Practice* and *Student Learning Goals* were confirmed as formal student learning models starting in the 2019-20 school year. RIDE intentionally collected data through surveys and focus groups with piloting educators and evaluators over the course of the multi-year pilot. Ultimately, the goal was to understand the implementation process more deeply, and to provide specific areas for support for teachers and evaluators toward improved processes and outcomes.

## Collecting Data to Understand Implementation

Implementing *Embedded Practice* or *Student Learning Goals* models in an existing evaluation system offers opportunities for district and school leaders to study – and ultimately improve - the overall local process of measuring student learning. Toward this end, an integral component of studying the implementation process is to collect and analyze data from teachers and evaluators who directly engage with this work. We believe the two most effective methods of understanding implementation are through surveys and focus groups. Using data from both methods allows for an understanding of the implementation process in real-time to support, as needed, and to improve the structures put in place to operationalize each model. Consider leveraging your building- or district-level data teams and leaders to support this work. You may also consider seeking an intern from a local university who may be interested in data collection and analysis.

### Surveys

Surveys capture user perceptions at a moment in time. These data collection instruments can be a useful tool in understanding and improving the implementation of student learning through local evaluation systems. As such, it is important to think about designing survey instruments with intention to ensure that you have enough data from which to draw conclusions and corroborate across multiple perspectives on a similar experience.

The following sample questions provide district leaders with a starting point in the development of a local survey instrument on a platform of your choice (e.g. Google Survey or SurveyMonkey) that provides the functionality needed to disaggregate the data for analysis. These surveys should be designed to collect information from teachers *and* evaluators to understand implementation from both perspectives:

### Sample Teacher Survey Questions

1. *How did you feel about the implementation process of this new model?*
  - *I felt excited to implement this model.*
  - *I would have liked to have known more about the new model before getting started*
  - *I had the information I needed to get started, but would have liked more materials/resources*
  - *I am concerned about scoring at the end of this process.*
  - *I am concerned about the how the pilot will accurately represent student learning.*

- *I felt ready to implement the model, and I have ideas of how it could be improved or redefined for a more significant impact.*
2. *If anything, what was most challenging about this process?*
    - *Choosing a group of students*
    - *Identifying content standards*
    - *Setting timeframes for cycles of instruction*
    - *Setting student learning expectations*
    - *Discussing instructional strategies*
    - *Collecting evidence of student learning*
    - *Finding time to collaborate with colleagues*
    - *I have no concerns*
  3. *How are your discussions about student learning different from past years? [Open Response]*
  4. *What group of students did you choose to focus on? Check all that apply.*
    - *All classes*
    - *Entire class*
    - *High-performing class*
    - *Mid-performing class*
    - *Low-performing class*
    - *Special population (MLLs, Differently-abled)*
    - *Heterogeneous group (high/mid/low)*
    - *Other*
  5. *Why did you choose to focus on this group/subset of students? Check all that apply.*
    - *Data informed my choice.*
    - *My school and/or district goals informed my choice.*
    - *I am participating in a team goal, and we decided collectively.*
    - *I am confident that my instructional strategies will support these students.*
    - *I want to focus on a particular group's needs.*
    - *Supporting this group will provide an opportunity to apply a new instructional strategy.*
  6. *How many standards have you chosen to focus on for your planned cycle(s) of instruction?*
    - *One standard*
    - *Two standards*
    - *Three or more standards*
  7. *To what extent do you feel you know how to teach and assess the standards you have prioritized for your students' learning?*
    - *I know how to teach and assess the standard in more than one way.*
    - *I know how to teach and assess the standard in one way.*
    - *I am still learning how to best teach and assess these standards.*
  8. *How many instructional cycles do you anticipate conducting this year?*
    - *One cycle (spans the entire course)*
    - *Two cycles*
    - *Three or more cycles*
    - *I am not sure.*
  9. *What types of on-going data discussions do you anticipate engaging in? Check all that apply.*
    - *PLC Meetings*
    - *Evaluator/Teacher (one-on-one)*
    - *Data Team*
    - *RTI/MTSS*
    - *Common Planning/Grade-level Meetings*
    - *Virtual collaboration (Google Docs, etc.)*

- *I am not sure*

10. *How are you recording expectations for student learning? [Open Response]*

### Sample Evaluator Survey Questions

1. *How did you feel about the implementation process of this new model?*
  - *I felt excited to implement this model.*
  - *I would have liked to have known more about the new model before getting started*
  - *I had the information I needed to get started, but would have liked more materials/resources*
  - *I am concerned about scoring at the end of this process.*
  - *I am concerned about the how the pilot will accurately represent student learning.*
  - *I felt ready to implement the model, and I have ideas of how it could be improved or redefined for a more significant impact.*
2. *What, if anything, did/will you do to prepare for BOY conferences with your teachers? Check all that apply.*
  - *Consulted with colleagues*
  - *Reviewed students' data from previous school year*
  - *Reviewed BOY data*
  - *Reviewed former teacher evaluations/SLOs*
  - *Used the BOY Data Discussion tool from RIDE*
  - *Helped teachers set expectations for student learning*
  - *Asked my teachers to record expectations for student learning*
  - *Discussed how I could support my teachers*
3. *How are you keeping track of your teachers' expectations for student learning?*
4. *What types of on-going data discussions do you anticipate attending and/or engaging with teachers? Check all that apply.*
  - *PLC Meetings*
  - *Evaluator/Teacher (one-on-one)*
  - *Data Team*
  - *RTI/MTSS*
  - *Common Planning/Grade-level Meetings*
  - *Virtual collaboration (Google Docs, etc.)*
  - *I am not sure*
5. *To what extent do you feel your teachers have a deep knowledge of the standards they have prioritized for their students' learning?*
  - *I feel all of my teachers have a deep knowledge of the standards they teach and assess.*
  - *I feel most of my teachers have a deep knowledge of the standards they teach and assess.*
  - *I feel some of my teachers have a deep knowledge of the standards they teach and assess.*
  - *I feel few of my teachers have a deep knowledge of the standards they teach and assess.*
  - *Supporting this group will provide an opportunity to apply a new instructional strategy.*
6. *To what extent do you feel that you are prepared to support your teachers with this new model?*
  - *Not very prepared*
  - *Somewhat prepared*
  - *Very prepared*
7. *What other supports/resources would be helpful to you at this time? [Open Response]*

## Focus Groups

Focus groups provide an opportunity for district leaders to collect valuable data through a facilitated discussion of a deliberately selected group on a given topic. Different from one-on-one conversations, or interviews, focus groups provide an opportunity for the participants to build on the conversation through their perceptions and shared experiences. Ultimately, a successful focus group is dependent upon (1) the deliberate selection of participants and (2) a well-developed protocol to foster discussions that add to the overall data set.

Based on preference and resources available, a district may decide:

- to have a central office administrator, external facilitator, or the district leader managing the project conduct the focus group(s).
- whether or not the focus groups will be audio recorded, video recorded, or another person will take notes to capture the discussion.
- the number of evaluators (approx. 2-4) and educators (approx. 8-10) across grade levels and schools to more deeply understand the data collected in the BOY survey.

Like the survey instrument, the following sample focus group protocol can be used with educators *and* evaluators to understand the experience of implementing a new student learning model from multiple perspectives. This protocol was used in a 45-60 minute timeframe with one facilitator for questions and one note-taker.

### Sample Focus Group Protocol

*[Facilitator says:] Thank you for joining us today. I am/we are here in an effort to hear your perspectives on your participation in the implementation of a new student learning model [insert model name here]. I/we understand that you are using the \_\_\_\_\_ model, correct? [pause to confirm]*

*I/we have six general questions we would like to ask the group. As the question and response period occurs, please know the following:*

- *You do not need to respond to any of the questions – only those you are comfortable discussing.*
- *While we will not be recording this conversation electronically, we will be typing what is said, without any name being shared of who-said-what.*
- *If you think of something to share after a question has been asked, please go ahead and share it. We can be somewhat fluid in how we discuss implementation of the model.*
- *This feedback will go back to the district leaders(s) supporting this work for analysis and considerations for supports needed to improve the process.*
- *Please balance the time of your sharing and listening with others in the group.*

*Does that sound good to everyone? [listen for objections, address if/as needed] Any questions? [Provide 5 seconds of wait time for questions] Great, let's get started.*

**Question 1 [Teachers & Evaluators]:** Overall BOY survey responses show that \_\_\_% of participants are excited about the new model for student learning. What was, and is, exciting about using this new model? Has your response changed since you completed the survey this fall? If so, why?

**Question 2 [Teachers & Evaluators]:** Can you talk about how setting expectations for student learning through the \_\_\_\_\_ model has changed from the use of SLOs in years past, to how you are doing it now?

**Question 3 [Teachers & Evaluators]:** Data discussions are an important component of operationalizing the new models for student learning. Other than the BOY conference, what other data discussions have you had? How are these discussions captured/recorded? Has there been enough time for meaningful conversation? In what context did these take place (e.g. principal's office, PLCs)

**Question 4 [Teachers & Evaluators]:** Think about the resources and support you have received so far this year. What remains your greatest need in terms of resources and support? What ideas do you have for improving resources for next year?

**Question 5 [Teachers]:** Now we'd like to talk about evidence of student learning, which is central to this overall process. What are you using for evidence and how did you decide on that evidence? Have you use the Artifact Guidance to help you make decisions about quality evidence through artifact sets?

**Question 5 [Evaluators]:** What guidance have/are you giving teachers for the evidence they should be using/collecting to show student learning? Have you reviewed, and encouraged teachers to use, the Artifact Guidance?

**Question 6 [Teachers & Evaluators]:** Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the student learning pilot?

## Toward Improved Outcomes: Analyzing & Acting on Data

Once data has been collected, it is most important to determine a method for analyzing and acting upon the data toward improved outcomes. There are a multitude of methods, and preferences for doing this work. So, rather than suggest a singular approach, the following considerations should help frame your approach to analyzing, and acting upon the data you have chosen to collect:

- **Clarify and communicate with your team why data is important to improve evaluation systems.** It is highly likely you already use surveys to learn about initiatives in your school/district. Leverage the successes and look for an opportunity to try something new in this process.
- **Develop your annual timeline in advance.** Plan around key events in your local calendar to ensure you have participation in the process.
- **Determine who will be responsible for designing, collecting, and analyzing the data for this overall process.** Choose a district leader, or small team of leaders, who understand(s) the systems-level approach and is familiar enough with the process to provide proper supports. Also, it is helpful to have a team member who has a strength in the use of qualitative data collection and analysis.
- **Use the themes and outcomes from the implementation survey to structure your focus groups.** This, coupled with anecdotal evidence from ongoing conversations in your school/district, will help leverage this opportunity to learn more about areas for improvement.

- **Consider the most useful method of learning from the focus group data.** It is a heavy lift to organize and theme the data from focus group transcripts. Work with your team's strengths, in advance, to determine a coding method that will help maintain integrity of the data, and an organization that leads to actionable outcomes (i.e. Excel spreadsheet with coded columns to organize 'bits' of data).
- **Use the themes and outcomes from the focus groups to suggest new questions for the EOY survey.** You should maintain similar questions on the EOY survey to see progress from the implementation survey, in addition to adding new questions that might follow-up on information gleaned from an analysis of the focus group data.
- **Reflect on the overall data collection and analysis process.** How valuable was this process toward actionable outcomes? Based on data from the surveys and focus groups, what would needs have risen to the surface? What critical supports will you put in place for teachers *and* evaluators?
- **Communicate findings and take action with educators.** Given the findings from the overall data collection and analysis, it is important to communicate not only the findings, but any changes that will impact future iterations of this system in your district. This would also be an opportune time to gather educators who are interested in supporting these new action steps.

## Questions?

We encourage you to email [edeval@ride.ri.gov](mailto:edeval@ride.ri.gov) with any questions related to the content of this guidance document.