

Using Student Growth Percentiles as a DDM

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Since we began learning about DDMs, we have spent the bulk of our time discussing how to modify our existing assessments so that they effectively meet the criteria of assessing student growth. In this edition, we will focus on MCAS Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) as a measure of student growth. Since 2008, Massachusetts measures growth for an individual student by comparing the change in his or her achievement on MCAS to that of all other students in the state who had similar historical assessment results (the student's "academic peers"). The median SGP for an educator represents the exact middle SGP score for that educator's students.

The district is required to use median SGPs as one DDM for all teachers who teach 20 or more students in ELA and/or Math in grades 4-8. For teachers who teach both content areas, the district is only required to use median SGPs from one subject area. If the decision is made to use both ELA and math median SGPs, they may still supplement these measures with additional DDMs.

While precision of a median SGP decreases with fewer students, median SGP based on 8-19 students still provides quality information that can be included in determining the Student Impact Rating. Median SGP scores can even be used when a teacher has 7 or fewer teachers; ESE recommends that SGP be used in combination with other information and not used as a stand-alone measure.

Note: SGPs and Special Education Students-Based on analyses of historical SGP data, students with disabilities tend to have lower SGPs as a group, regardless of teacher, as compared to students who are not receiving special education services. Educators who are responsible for students with disabilities will have an increased chance of identifying as a teacher with low impact. ESE advises against changing the definition of high, moderate, low growth for these educators because it could be misinterpreted as a message that it is acceptable for teachers to set lower standards for growth with students of disabilities. ESE's recommendation is that evaluators and educators address this potential concern by using professional judgment in making a determination of student impact.

Important Dates:

DDM Pilot Materials due – May 23

Final Mentor meeting - June 2

PBIS training- June 16-18

August 6 – 8, 2014

Keys to Literacy will be offering a 3-day training on *Writing in the Content Areas & Keys to Argument Writing* August 6-8, 2014 right here at D-Y at the high school library. This is a free workshop for up to 35 teachers in grades 3-12. Those interested in earning one graduate credit from Endicott College will pay \$100 on the first day of the course.

Stay tuned for additional information.



How to use median SGP to make a determination of growth

1. Districts create student rosters for all educators for whom median SGPs will be used. ESE recommends districts create a Teacher of Record policy to be transparent about which students' SGPs will be included in an educator's median SGP. Educators who share responsibility for specific students should share full responsibility for these students' growth. This approach recognizes that teaching is often a collaborative endeavor and team members' efforts to support shared students are inextricably linked, whether the scenario involves team teaching, pull-out resource supports, or flexible grouping.
2. Districts will receive student SGP scores from ESE when they are available.
3. Districts will use the chart below to assist them in determining growth based on Median SGP

Determination of Growth for Teachers and Administrators based on Median SGP

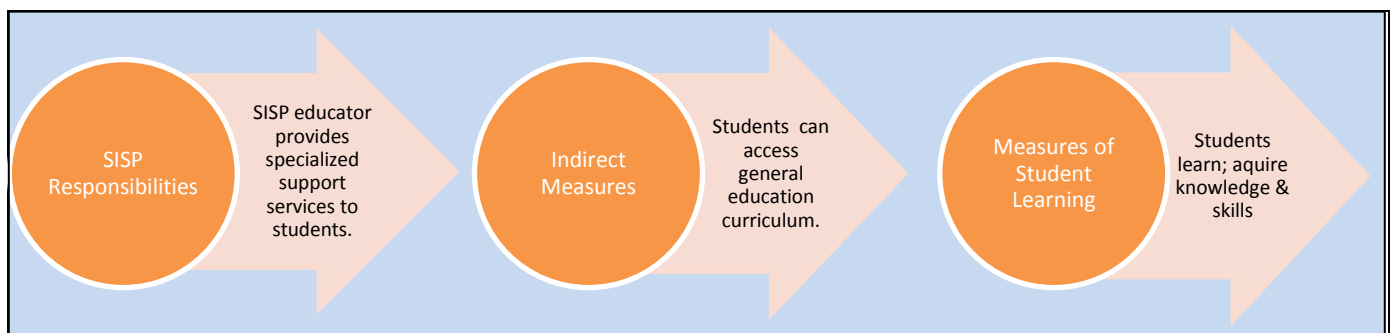
	Low	Moderate	High
Teachers	35 or lower	Greater than 35, but less than 65	65 or higher
Administrators	40 or lower	Greater than 40, but less than 60	60 or higher

4. Districts will report final Student Impact Ratings to ESE in October.

DDMs- Indirect Measures & Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

There is no question that Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) play a critical role in educating students by providing a wide-range of services and serving in multiple capacities across a variety of educational contexts. These educators are responsible for supporting conditions that make learning possible. The services that SISP educators provide translate to positive student learning gains often through an important intermediary step, which require evidence of *indirect measures of student learning*.

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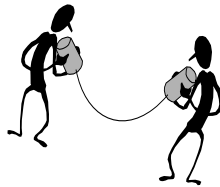
DDMs- Indirect Measures & Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP) Continued

It should be noted that there are some SISP roles which do include direct instruction of students. For example, guidance counselors who teach guidance curriculum may decide to give the students a pre- and post-test at the beginning and end of each unit to develop a DDM to assess the content they are responsible for teaching.

As mentioned in earlier articles and training sessions, DDMs must be aligned to the content and standards taught by each educator; this is true of both direct and indirect measures. For SISP educators, content should reflect their job functions and responsibilities and should align to what they do to support students, educators, administration, and /or parents.

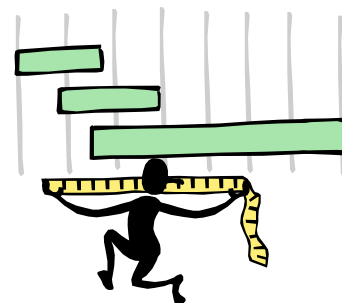
DDMs are not meant to measure every aspect of an educator's role. Chosen measures should provide both educators and districts with actionable information to inform practice and identify both areas of strength and areas where more supports are needed. Example DDMs for SISP Educators

- A key responsibility of the school nurse, social worker, and psychologist is to communicate student information relevant to the students' learning needs to multiple stake holders, including teachers and parents. These educators could design a DDM that involves collecting feedback from stakeholders on the quality, usefulness, and timeliness of communications. The results of the survey could then be analyzed and scored. Communicating students' needs with stakeholders supports students' readiness to learn and is, therefore, considered an indirect measure.
- A school could convene a team of SISP educators to develop an indirect measure focused on measuring the amount of time students spend engaged in class over the course of providing interventions. The team could conduct observations of students they have worked with to evaluate students' engagement in class or review records of return-to-class rates to measure the impact of interventions on students' engagement and time spent learning.



- School counselors can use parts of the Work-Based Learning Plan as a DDM to assess student progress in career-related skill development.
- School psychologists could evaluate psychological reports as a DDM. This could be done according to an agreed upon standard devised by the district's psychologists. Reviews could be conducted by the district's school psychologists who would meet together as a group and blindly evaluate each other's reports.
- School nurses might assess how students are able to articulate and manage their chronic health conditions as a result of the nurse's guidance. A potential performance task could be a developmentally appropriate self-care chart.
- One potential DDM for speech-language pathologists might be an agreed-upon, district-approved standard for conducting appropriate evaluations for students who may be experiencing communication disorders. Reviews of anonymous case files could be conducted by a group of SLPs who blindly review and score each other's evaluations.
- Occupational and physical therapists could look at the change in the amount of services that are provided within the naturally occurring contexts of the school day as determined through a review of student IEP Service Delivery Grids.
- Any progress monitoring data collection and analysis always has the potential to be a DDM.

Specialized instructional support personnel are encouraged to review their own current practices and data to assist in determining where to focus their attention next year in creating their two DDMs.



3 Considerations for DDMs

- DDMs should be aligned to the content and should reflect the job functions, practices and responsibilities that support students.
- DDMs should be informative in helping educator's recognize where students are succeeding as well as where they are struggling, and to identify where to adjust practice accordingly.
- DDMs should be common across grades in the district because the use of identical DDMs creates opportunities for educators to discuss results and share ideas for adjusting practice and allows for better calibration.

*"A good teacher
can inspire hope,
ignite the
imagination, and
instill a love of
learning."*

— Brad Henry

Recertification FAQ's

Q: I recently recertified online but DESE no longer sends a paper copy of the license. Do I have to pay \$25 for a hard copy to submit to Personnel?

A: No. Once you have completed the recertification process, call or email Sharon Ladley (ladleys@dy-regional.k12.ma.us, 508-398-7611) and let her know. Sharon can go directly into ELAR to pull your updated license information.

Q: Who is required to earn an SEI endorsement?

A: All PreK-12 teachers, including teachers with moderate and severe disabilities, who teach CORE academic subjects (ELA, Math, Science, History) must earn an SEI endorsement by July, 2016. From school year 2013 through school year 2016, if the educator does not have one or more ELLs assigned to his/her classroom, they are not required to earn an SEI endorsement. Beginning July 2016, a core academic teacher who is assigned an ELL must hold either an SEI endorsement or obtain one within a year.

Q: What are the new PDP requirements for ALL educators, beginning July 2016?

A: All teachers who are renewing a Professional license after July 1, 2016 will be subject to the following set of PDP requirements:

- 60 PDPs - Content of the license
- 30 PDPs - Content or Pedagogy
- 15 PDPs - Special Education/Diverse Learning Styles
- 15 PDPs - Sheltered English Immersion/ESL
- 30 PDPS - Elective

Coaches' Corner

Nix the Tricks- by Kelly Brown –Math Coach 4-8

Flip-Multiply or Same-Change-Flip

When dividing fractions make common denominators, then divide the numerators. If students solve problems using a common denominator they may discover that *multiplying by the reciprocal* is the equivalent of finding a common denominator. This takes practice.

Nix: Cross Multiply (Fraction Division)

Because:

Division and multiplication are different (albeit related) operations, one cannot magically switch the operation in an expression. Plus, students confuse “cross” (diagonal) with “across” (horizontal). Not to mention, where does the answer go? Why does one product end up in the numerator and the other in the denominator?

$$\begin{array}{c} 2 \div 4 \\ 3 \div 5 \end{array} = \frac{10}{12}$$

Fix:

Use the phrase “multiply by the reciprocal” but only after students understand where this algorithm comes from. The reciprocal is a precise term that reminds students why we are switching the operation.

$$\frac{2}{3} \div \frac{2}{3} = 1 \text{ easy!}$$

$$\frac{2}{3} \div \frac{1}{3} = 2 \text{ makes sense}$$

$$\frac{4}{5} \div \frac{3}{5} = \frac{4}{3} \text{ not as obvious, but still}$$

dividing the numerators

$$\frac{4}{5} \div \frac{1}{2} = ? \text{ no idea!}$$

If the last problem looked like the previous examples, it would be easier. So let's rewrite with common denominators:

$$\frac{8}{10} \div \frac{5}{10} = \frac{8}{5} \text{ makes sense}$$



If students are asked to solve enough problems in this manner, they will want to find a shortcut and may recognize the pattern. Show them (or ask them to prove!) why multiplying by the reciprocal works:

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{4}{5} \div \frac{1}{2} &= \frac{4 \cdot 2}{5 \cdot 2} \div \frac{1 \cdot 5}{2 \cdot 5} \\ &= \frac{4 \cdot 2}{1 \cdot 5} \\ &= \frac{4 \cdot 2}{5 \cdot 1} \\ &= \frac{4 \cdot 2}{5 \cdot 1} \end{aligned}$$

In this case students discover that multiplying by the reciprocal is the equivalent of getting the common denominator and dividing the numerators. This is not an obvious fact. Students will only reach this realization with repeated practice, but practice getting common denominators is a great thing for them to be doing! More importantly, the student who forgets this generalization can fall back on an understanding of common denominators, while the student who learned a rule after completing this exercise once (or not at all!) will guess at the rule rather than attempt to reason through the problem.

A second approach uses compound fractions. Depending on what experience students have with reciprocals, this might be a more friendly option. It has the added bonus of using a generalizable concept of multiplying by a convenient form of one" which applies to many topics, including the application of unit conversions. To begin, the division of two fractions can be written as one giant (complex or compound) fraction.

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\frac{4}{5}}{\frac{1}{2}} &= \frac{\frac{4}{5}}{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot 1 \\ &= \frac{\frac{4}{5}}{\frac{1}{2}} \cdot \frac{2}{1} \\ &= \frac{4 \cdot 2}{5 \cdot 1} \\ &= \frac{4}{5} \cdot \frac{2}{1} \end{aligned}$$



Effective Writing Instruction – article summary by Kim Marshall

(Originally titled “What Writing Is and Isn’t”)

“Let’s keep this in perspective,” says writer Jeff Anderson in an article in *Educational Leadership*. “The Common Core State Standards are a *guiding* document. Educators must look beyond the artificial boundaries assumed in such a document and dive into pedagogy, process, content knowledge, and research that reveals best practice in teaching writing. Many attempt to define writing by putting it in a box; developing a checklist, worksheet, or rubric; establishing grade-level exemplars; or listing rules of elements of style. In doing so, they organize writing into a neat, restrictive corner, distilling it to a one-way-to-do-it solution. And step by step programs keep moving on, trampling the varying student needs that exist in each classroom... The art of teaching writing standards of any kind blossoms from a full understanding of what writing is and isn’t.” Anderson believes it *isn’t*:

- A kit or a program – Worksheets, scripted lessons, and textbooks don’t teach writing.
- Test prep – It’s a shame that so many students think school is all about passing tests. Research has shown that teaching to the test makes students do worse on those tests. It turns out that all that “drill and kill” isn’t helpful. Better to “ignite the truth about what makes writing work so that students know how to proceed when a blank page or screen awaits.”
- Memorizing parts of speech – Actually, the Common Core will assess whether students can *apply* their knowledge of the parts of speech.
- Separate from reading – Anderson says that close reading, grammar, and author’s purpose need to be taught as part of a unified meaning-making endeavor. For example, when students read the lyrics to Beyoncé’s song, *If I were a boy*, they can learn about the subjunctive mood, which conveys something that’s contrary to fact. “And this new understanding that students gleaned from their reading will surface in their writing,” says Anderson

He then turns to what writing *is*:

- **A transaction** – “As writers of text – as humans – we desperately want to be heard,” he says, “to receive a response, to connect... Groping for power, young writers long to connect to audiences.” Students need the chance to free-write, instruction in how to take ordinary sentences and make them sing, and the time and space to experiment, share with others, and rewrite. Writing makes things possible, no matter what they choose to do in their lives: Scientists record and report observations; mathematicians explain abstract principles; website owners write content. Teachers should be finding ways to link the writing task to audience interaction. “Writing is alive and messy,” he believes. “It involves taking risks, which means making mistakes. And mistakes are necessary for growth.”
- **A skill that can be learned** – All writers struggle to find a focus, include pertinent detail, and create cohesion, and the standards are an excellent guide. Students also benefit from reading, analyzing, and emulating mentor texts. “As students note what a writer does well,” says Anderson, “they are, at the same time, creating a menu of options they can use in their own writing.”
- **A stimulus for passion and freedom** – A teachers’ job is to “ignite students’ passions and let their souls, thoughts, fears, truths, experiences, and arguments shine on the page,” says Anderson. “Writing should be a joyous act and, frankly, so should the teaching of it.” This happens when teachers create a supportive writing community, expose students to a variety of genres and styles, and suggest assignments that link to students’ obsessions and concerns. “Meet them there, and no list of standards or high-stakes test will be out of reach.”



“What Writing Is and Isn’t” by Jeff Anderson in *Educational Leadership*, April 2014 (Vol. 71, #7, p. 10-14), <http://bit.ly/1eaJojA>; Anderson can be reached at jeff@writeguy.net.