

Handout 3.3. Thinking About Growth Targets—Where to Begin?

Setting growth targets is not a science, but here is one approach to setting growth targets. This sequence of steps uses a backward mapping approach. This example assumes that you are using similar pre-assessment and post-assessments.

Step 1: Determine your baseline data sources (pre-assessment, prior year test scores, etc.) and select a high-quality post-assessment that:

- Is aligned to the curriculum
- Contains stretch
- Is valid and reliable

Step 2: Determine performance tiers for the post-assessment by establishing score ranges.

- What is the passing score?
- What score would represent high performance?

Example 1:

- Basic (score of 0-60)
- Approaching Proficient/Proficient (61-86)
- Advanced (87-100)

Example 2:

- Very low achievement (score below 60)
- Low-mid achievement (61-76)
- Mid-high achievement (77-86)
- High achievement (87-93)
- Exceptional achievement (94-100)

Step 3: Determine performance tiers for the baseline data by establishing score ranges.

- What is the passing score?
- What score would represent high performance?

Step 4: Categorize the student performance data on the baseline assessments by the tiers of performance you established in Step 2.

Performance Level on Pre-assessment	Number of Students Performing at that Level on the Pre-assessment
Very low achievement (score is <60)	5
Low-mid achievement (61-76)	21
Mid-high achievement (77-86)	12
High achievement (87-93)	11
Exceptional achievement (94-100)	1

For example, think about where students are and where they should be at the end of the year. Note that in the diagram below, the slope of the line varies. Based upon the assessment, expected growth may be greater for some students than others. In general, it might be expected that those on within a lower achieving tier would achieve more growth on the assessment than those already in a higher achieving tier.

Step 5: Determine what growth expectations are reasonable based upon post-assessment or trend data.

Student	Pretest (out of 100)	Posttest (out of 100)	Growth
Student A	61	79	18 pts
Student B	63	81	18 pts
Student C	65	82	17 pts
Student D	65	81	16 pts
Student E	66	83	17 pts

Mean Growth: $(18+18+18+16+17)/5 = 17.5$

Median Growth: 17

Step 6: Set your growth targets based upon the information available to you.

Example:

Baseline Score (based on pre-assessment)	Number of Students	Growth Target (for post-assessment; whichever is greater)
Very low achievement (score < 60)	5	Score 70 or increase score 15 points
Low-mid achievement (61-76)	21	Score 81 or increase score by 13 points
Mid-high achievement (77-86)	12	Score 90 or increase score by 10 points
High achievement (87-93)	11	Score 97 plus 80 on capstone project
Exceptional achievement (94-100)	1	Score 97 or maintain higher score, plus 85 on capstone project