

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

Setting growth targets is not a science, with exact methods and procedures, but here is one approach to setting them. This sequence of steps uses a backward mapping approach. The example assumes that you are using preassessment and postassessments that are similar.

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

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

Step 2: Determine performance tiers for the postassessment by establishing score ranges.

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

Example 1

- Basic (score of 0–60)
- Appr. Proficient/Proficient (61–86)
- Advanced (87–100)

Example 2

- Very low achievement (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 the Preassessment	Number of Students Performing at That Level on the Preassessment
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 on the next page, the length of the arrow varies. Because of the assessment results, expected growth may be greater for some students than for others. In general, it might be expected that those within a lower achieving tier would achieve more growth on the assessment than those already in a higher achieving tier.

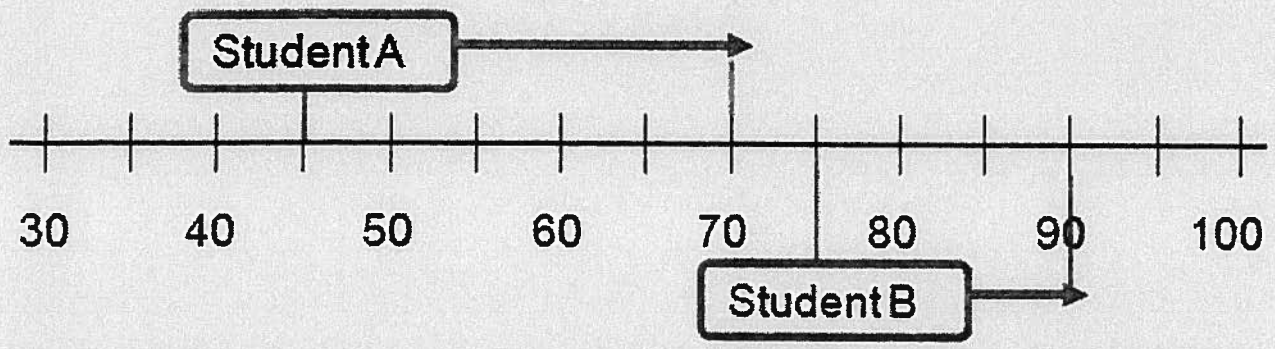
Step 5: Determine what growth expectations are reasonable according to postassessment or trend data.

Trend Data From the Prior Year

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	70	87	17 pts

Mean Growth: $(18+18+17+16+17)/5 = 17.2$

Median Growth: 17



Step 6: Set your growth targets on the basis of the information available to you.

Example:

Baseline Score (From Preassessment)	Number of Students	Growth Target (for Postassessment; 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 17 points
Mid-high achievement (77-86)	12	Score 90 or increase score by 10 points
High achievement (87-93)	11	Score 97
Exceptional achievement (94-100)	1	Score 97 or maintain higher score