



SCILLSS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction to SCILLSS**
 - a. Project Purpose
- 2. SCILLSS Year 2, Quarter 4 News & Highlights**
 - a. What We've Been Up To
 - b. Digital Workbook on Educational Assessment Design and Evaluation
 - c. PLD White Paper
 - d. Models and Tasks for Classroom Use
 - e. State Summative Item Development
 - f. Available State and Local Assessment Resources
 - g. Dissemination
 - h. What's Next?

Introduction to SCILLSS

The Strengthening Claims-based Interpretations and Uses of Local and Large-scale Science Assessment Scores (SCILLSS) project is funded by the US Department of Education's Enhanced Assessment Instruments Grant Program. As lead state and grantee, the Nebraska Department of Education is working in collaboration with two other state education agencies (the Wyoming Department of Education and the Montana Office of Public Instruction), four organizations (edCount, ACS Ventures, SRI International, and the Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation (PIRE)), and a technical advisory panel of 10 experts that contribute an essential combination of expertise in principled-design, measurement, assessment literacy, and classroom practices to support the implementation of this project.

Project Purpose

The SCILLSS project aims to strengthen the knowledge base among stakeholders for using principled-design approaches to create and evaluate quality science assessments that generate meaningful and useful scores, and to establish a means for states to strengthen the meaning of statewide assessment results and to connect those results with local assessments in a complementary system.

SCILLSS Year 2, Quarter 4 News & Highlights

What We've Been Up To

In this quarter, the SCILLSS project focused on the development of the fourth and fifth chapters of the digital workbook on educational assessment design and evaluation, state and classroom-based assessment resources, and the Performance Level Descriptor (PLD) white paper. edCount finalized chapter three and continued developing chapters four and five of the digital workbook to be disseminated next quarter. Organizational partners completed the second iteration of the classroom-based assessment resources using a principled-design approach, which they introduced to state partners at a virtual orientation meeting. In addition, organizational partners scheduled a question and answer session with Dr. Richard Luecht, the lead author of the PLD white paper, and state partners. SCILLSS partners also continued their dissemination efforts with organizational partners by presenting at an assessment conference in Montana, preparing materials for the 2019 NCME conference, and attending workshops with state assessment staff in Nebraska.

Digital Workbook on Educational Assessment Design and Evaluation

edCount completed and disseminated the third chapter of the digital workbook on educational assessment design and evaluation. The content of the third chapter explores the concepts of comparability and reliability and related validity questions. edCount continued developing the fourth chapter of the digital workbook and met with accessibility and fairness experts to review the module outline and content in relation to the validity questions. edCount also collaborated with expert advisor, Dr. Suzanne Lane, to develop a detailed outline for assessment literacy chapter five, which focuses on the topic of consequences and use. Organizational partners plan to finalize and publish both chapters next quarter.

PLD White Paper

SCILLSS partners, in collaboration with a selection of expert advisors, developed a PLD white paper to help stakeholders coordinate and write PLDs within a principled-design approach. The white paper addresses how to write quality PLDs and provides helpful resources for their development. The paper addresses specific language and consciousness of the verbs and skills used, the task design and scale, considerations for ensuring that item development targets the PLDs, and the relationship of the item development to the scale and score interpretations. To support interpretation of the white paper, state partners participated in a question and answer session with lead author and SCILLSS expert, Dr. Richard Luecht.



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Models and Tasks for Classroom Use

edCount completed the second iteration of the classroom-based assessment resources using a principled-design approach titled, *A Guide to Develop Classroom-based Next Generation Science Standards Assessment Tasks: A Principled-design Approach (The Guide)*. On February 15, 2019, organizational partners facilitated a virtual orientation meeting with state partners to introduce the revised version of *The Guide*. The presentation addressed the purpose and use of *The Guide* and provided background and context for developing multi-dimensional classroom-based tasks using a principled-design approach. Following the orientation meeting, state partners and a selection of expert advisors reviewed *The Guide* and provided feedback on its purpose and use, which organizational partners will use to revise and finalize it for dissemination. Organizational partners plan to derive training materials for the upcoming professional learning sessions from the resources in *The Guide*.

Dissemination

In January, edCount presented two sessions at the Montana Office of Public Instruction Annual Assessment Conference. The sessions introduced the SCILLSS project and shared resources designed to help strengthen the knowledge base among state and local educators in principles for high quality assessment that are critical to the appropriate selection, development, and use of assessments in educational settings. In February, Dr. Ellen Forte, SCILLSS Principal Investigator, attended a collaborative planning session with the Nebraska Department of Education and their assessment vendor, NWEA. The purpose of the meeting was to apply aspects of principled-design to evaluate the alignment of Nebraska's state science assessment tasks to their measurement targets, and to evaluate how the tasks and items map onto the achievement level descriptors. In addition, SCILLSS state and organizational partners prepared a presentation on the purpose and use of the local and state self-assessment protocols for the 2019 NCME conference.

What's Next?

Next steps include finalizing and publishing the fourth and fifth chapters of the digital workbook on educational assessment design and evaluation as well as the classroom-based assessment resources to the project website and developing materials for the summer 2019 professional learning sessions in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana. In addition, organizational partners will work to finalize the grade 5 large-scale assessment task and begin conceptualization and development of the grade 8 and 11 tasks. Partners will begin planning the 2019 SCILLSS Annual Meeting.

State Summative Item Development

In year two of the SCILLSS project, organizational partners drafted measurement targets, unpacked the NGSS dimensions, and drafted design patterns and task templates for grades 5, 8, and 11 to articulate a principled-design approach for developing three-dimensional state assessment tasks in science. To complete this package of principled-design resources, edCount is now articulating a process for drafting a series of sample items aligned to the SCILLSS measurement targets and design templates at grades 5, 8 and 11. Science content experts began drafting a grade 5 large-scale assessment item to complement the package of SCILLSS principled-design assessment tools and resources. Based on initial feedback from state partners and expert advisors, organizational partners will refine the development process and initial grade 5 item and will develop additional sample items at grades 8 and 11.

Available State and Local Assessment Resources

- Theory of Action Development Guide
- Ensuring Rigor in State Assessment Systems: A Self-Evaluation Protocol
- Ensuring Rigor in Local Assessment Systems: A Self-Evaluation Protocol
- Digital Workbook on Educations Design and Evaluation: Creating and Evaluating Effective Educational Assessment Chapter 1–3
- A Principled Approach to Designing Three-Dimensional Science Assessment Tasks: A Process Guide
- Claims, measurement targets, unpacked NGSS dimensions, design patterns, and task templates for grades 5, 8, and 11
- The Role of Performance Level Descriptors for Establishing Meaningful and Useful Reporting Scales in a Principled Design Approach

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