



SCILLSS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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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 3, Quarter 4 News & Highlights

What We've Been Up To

In this quarter, the SCILLSS project engaged in dissemination efforts, conducted the SCILLSS pilot study, facilitated the continued development of the state-specific action plans, and finalized generalizable process documentation and resources. SCILLSS partners facilitated workshops in Montana and Nebraska to support local educators in using a principled-design approach to develop classroom assessment tasks aligned to three-dimensional standards and continued to collaborate with the Nebraska Department of Education to discuss using a principled-approach to develop Nebraska's science summative assessment. edCount and SRI partners also finalized the large-scale process report for developing three-dimensional assessments using a principled approach and continued to conduct the pilot study with required modifications due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Pilot Study

SCILLSS partners facilitated a virtual pilot study orientation meeting with Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana educators to launch the second window of the SCILLSS pilot study. As educators submit the pilot study results (i.e., teacher and student surveys, student responses, scoring and evaluation spreadsheets) from administration windows 1 and 2, SCILLSS partners are organizing and reviewing the data in preparation for analyzing the data using STATA. SCILLSS partners developed and finalized a codebook and data workbook for the grade 5 data received. SCILLSS partners plan to provide educators with data for the post-pilot focus group sessions (one each per grade band) which are scheduled for April or May. Due to the nation's response to the coronavirus pandemic with widespread school closures, causing an unprecedented disruption of K-12 schooling across the United States, SCILLSS partners are not able to complete the pilot study as anticipated and in its entirety. Montana, Wyoming, and Nebraska educators face a strong likelihood that school closures will remain in effect until mid-to late-April and possibly for the remainder of the school year. As a result, several educators that were able to administer the SCILLSS tasks to students prior to school closures taking effect were no longer able to access or submit their pilot results as they were locked out of their buildings and classrooms. Similarly, several educators participating in a later administration window were not able to start the piloting process. As a result, SCILLSS partners were only able to gather and evaluate results from the administration of a portion of the 15 tasks (nine educator-developed and six expert-developed tasks) intended for inclusion in the study. In many cases, the sample size (n of student participants) for each piloted task also decreased. Consequently, SCILLSS partners plan to adjust our analysis accordingly to accommodate the minimized data set.



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Dissemination

edCount and SRI partners facilitated a three-hour workshop-style session at Montana's OPI 2020 Annual Assessment Conference on January 13. The workshop aimed to increase participants' knowledge of a principled-approach for developing three-dimensional tasks aligned to Montana's Next Generation Science Standards for use within classrooms and of the characteristics and features of high-quality assessment tasks. Partners also provided tools and resources to build participants' capacity to use and facilitate a principled-design approach to design or evaluate classroom science assessment tasks.

In addition, partners facilitated a two-day professional learning workshop on January 23 and 24 at a Nebraska Pop-Up Conference in Kearney, Nebraska. Day 1 focused on building capacity in teacher leaders to support teachers on Day 2 in their learning and use of principled design to develop three-dimensional tasks. On Day 2, teachers had the opportunity to engage in a principled-approach to classroom science task development aligned to three-dimensional standards with support and resources.

In March, SCILLSS partners collaborated with Nebraska state leads to coordinate and plan for a collaborative virtual meeting with NWEA, NDE, and SCILLSS partners. The meeting is scheduled for April 6-7, 2020 and will be facilitated virtually using Microsoft Teams. The objective of the meeting is to support Nebraska's use of a principled design approach and tools and resources to develop three-dimensional large-scale assessment tasks for the NSCAS Science Summative.

In addition, SCILLSS partners' proposal to present at the 2020 NCSA Annual Conference was accepted. The proposal, "Advancing Multidimensional Science Assessment Design for Large-scale and Classroom Use," summarizes SCILLSS partners' intent to describe the project's principled-design approach to assessing the NGSS for both large-scale and local tests, with a specific emphasis on classroom assessment.

What's Next?

Next steps include scheduling and facilitating post-pilot focus groups with the participating educators to gather additional feedback about the quality of the principled-design process and the appropriateness and usefulness of the classroom assessment tasks. SCILLSS partners plan to analyze the data from phases one and two of the SCILLSS pilot study and provide summary reports to educators to support the focus group conversations. In addition, SCILLSS science experts will use submitted student responses to create annotated exemplars. Organizational partners are scheduled to finalize the generalizable classroom-based assessment resources, and to plan and make decisions related to the format of the 2020 SCILLSS Annual Meeting given the coronavirus pandemic.

Process Resources

SCILLSS partners worked on revisions to and finalized the large-scale assessment development process document, titled "A Principled Approach to Designing Large-scale Three-dimensional Science Assessment Tasks: A Process Guide."

SCILLSS partners are working on a toolkit of professional learning resources to support state and local education agencies in designing three-dimensional classroom science assessment tasks using a principled design approach. The toolkit will include a variety of resources, including, but not limited to, an agenda, PowerPoint presentation, activities, design templates, exemplary models, review criteria checklists, a process guide and a facilitators guide.

State-specific Action Plans

In January, SCILLSS partners attended planning meetings with Nebraska and Wyoming to support states in the evaluation of their Theory of Action (ToA) implementation and their development of a state action plan. The purpose of the state action plan is to guide state partners in their post-project efforts to establish a coherent, high-quality assessment system in science and to take the necessary steps toward achieving the claims and outcomes in their ToA. SCILLSS partners facilitated an additional planning meeting with Wyoming to discuss plans to evaluate their implementation of their ToA and to develop a state action plan.



Contact Us!

Liz Summers,
Project Director

lsommers@edcount.com

Erin Buchanan,
Deputy Project Director

ebuchanan@edcount.com