STANDARD OVERVIEW

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B1 is perhaps the most obvious standard and indicator in the NSQ, yet it is also often the most difficult for a K-12 course provider to master. What does “measurable” mean, anyway?

When the Launch K-12 virtual program became a member of Quality Matters in 2017, we mistakenly thought we had the requirement for course objectives under control—after all, we had always ensured alignment in all of our courses to the Missouri Learning Standards (MLS) required by our state. It didn’t take us long to realize, however, that while we had 100% alignment to our state’s standards (NSQ Standard B3), we also had to ensure that our course-level objectives were measurable—and that wasn’t always (or even often) the case with MLS.

We soon learned that even if the state standards weren’t measurable, that we could improve the quality of our course design by including overarching course objectives that were measurable—which helped to ensure the alignment of the course materials, assessment, activities, and tools. We were able to demonstrate this to stakeholders by developing a correlation document or alignment map. Having measurable course objectives allows us to determine in a quantifiable way whether or not a student has mastered that objective. See example at right.
HELPFUL HINTS for putting standard into practice

Other helpful hints for building learner engagement include:

- **Keep your Bloom's handy (or Webb's Depth of Knowledge):** Both taxonomies can be very helpful in writing alternate, measurable course objectives.

- **Network!** The QM course review process helped us to figure out a structure that would work for us via alignment documents. We learned that you can "fail forward" and that members of both Quality Matters and Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance were able to provide some helpful guidance.

- **Document your development process:** We built a Canvas resource course for the subject matter experts writing content and another course for the instructional designers developing the content. We use template assignments, course writing documents, and alignment documents to provide examples of exactly what we need to ensure measurable objectives and alignment to state standards.

- **Consider the needs of your audience:** Partner districts need to know how our courses align to Missouri Learning Standards, whereas parents and students are more concerned with individual assignments. Our answer is to make our alignment document suitable for all potential audiences, but also to repeat information from the document in multiple places: on our website, unit overview pages, and even assignment-level goals on each page of the course.

RESOURCES to support standard use (mostly practical)

At Launch, the following resources are used throughout our course development process: from writing measurable course objectives to ensuring the alignment to Missouri Learning Standards: they help to keep track progress.

**Course writing document:** Create a template which provides a space for the Subject Matter Expert and Instructional Designer to write and edit assignments before they are built in Canvas. From the beginning of the process, emphasize the importance of not only aligning assignments to state Standards, but also ensuring that the objectives of each assignment are measurable.

**Course Writer Resource Course:** Helpful for SME’s in particular, as they delve into the course writing process. The CANVAS course helps them to understand the need for measurable objectives.

**Alignment document template:** Used during the course writing process. This includes tips for filling out each field. Launch instructional designers complete this at the end of the development process.

**Project Management software (Monday.com):** This tool helps us keep track of every step of course development. Not only do we know exactly where a course is in the writing, development, and revision cycle, we also know when it is time to fill out the alignment document.

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Author/Organization Bio

Dr. Meghan Roe is the Coordinator of Course Development for Launch in Missouri, a state-wide K-12 virtual program based out of Springfield Public Schools. Launch has been a Quality Matters subscriber since 2015 and recently joined the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance. Meghan leads a team of 11 Instructional Designers and 2 Quality Assurance Specialists in the design and development of hundreds of courses inside Canvas. She has a particular interest in bringing together the NSQ standards for online courses and the NSQ standards for online teaching, both for her team and for the team of curriculum leads and full-time teachers, who are also often the subject matter experts that write course content.