

EVAAS Value-Added Redesign

Usability Testing helps us...

- Gain a deeper understanding of the user's needs and frustrations
- Discover product flaws or areas of confusion
- Make the product easier to use

Test Moderators:

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"Nothing to prove, only *improve*."

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Goals

Develop tasks.

Develop brief statements about **how the product should function**.

Transform tasks into scenarios.

Develop narratives that describe **how a real user would interact with the product**.

Reveal friction points and confusing experiences.

Identify any **difficulties** that users could potentially face.

Methodology

Outreach & Screening

The VAR'd team decided that for the first round of testing, participants should be internal.

Screening Criteria:

- For the first round - Internal SAS employees
- Candidates should not have heavy experience with the Value-Added Report

Channels Used:

- Jamie reached out to participants over email.

Participant Profiles

Name	Participant Type	Prior Familiarity with Value Added
Katie Hobbs	Internal Employee	Low / Medium
Abe Kline	Internal Employee	Low / Medium
Abby Domanowski	Internal Employee	Low

Testing Setup, Moderation & Pre/Post-Scenario Questions

Test Setup

- Tests took place in a conference room and included the participant, the moderator, and a few observers.
- Participants were given paper slips with the scenarios and the moderator read each scenario aloud.
- Each Session was recorded.

Pre-Scenario (Before opening the report)

- What kind of information would you expect to find on a School Value-Added report?

Scenarios

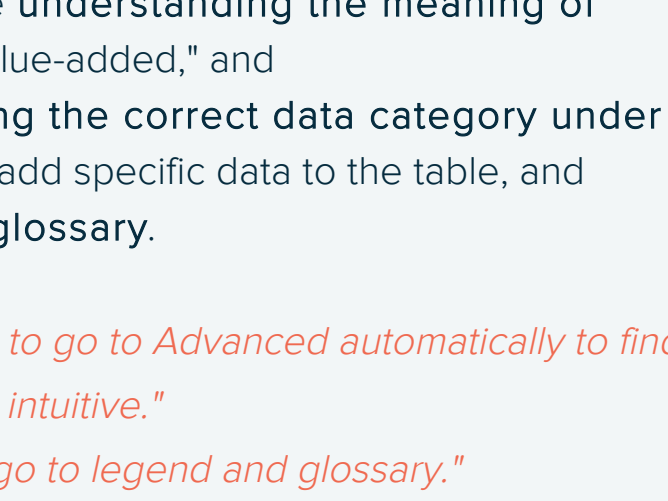
- What kind of information does it look like this report is providing?
- You're the principal at Mountain Lion Middle School, and you've just accessed your school's value-added report. How did the 7th graders do in EOG Math in 2019?
- What does it mean that the Growth column shows "Above"?
- You've shown this report to a teacher at your school. The teacher was curious about what the white dot on the graphs means. How would you explain it?
- The teacher is also curious about the colors. How would you describe the meaning behind the colored regions of the graph?
- You're interested in seeing how your school district did this year. Switch to the report for Big City School District.
- What can you tell me about Algebra I for 2019 in Big City School District?
- Switch back to the report for Mountain Lion Middle School. What is the growth index value for the 7th grade EOG Math in 2019?
- How would you interpret the difference between 7th grade EOG Math's growth indexes for 2019 and 2018?
- You're meeting with the school's Math coach and together you are examining the value-added report. You see that 6th grade EOG Math in 2018 and 2019 both have a white dot to the far left in the red section of the graph, but the 2019 graph has an additional symbol next to it. What do you think the symbol means?
- You want to see how 6th graders fared across subjects (not just in Math). Can you see a way to group the report so 6th grade scores are all next to each other?
- Growth results for 6th grade EOG Math have shifted, and as part of investigating why this happened, you want to see whether there have been changes in students' entering achievement. What would you do?
- For EOG Math, you're interested in seeing how growth at your school stacks up against growth in your district (Big City School District). What would you do?
- You want to know more about how the values on the report are determined. What would you do?

Post-Scenarios

- Based on what you've seen in this report, explain what you think value-added results are and what they mean.
- Play around with the report and give any feedback.

Results

The section below summarizes the overall impressions of the users' experiences. Further down, there are specific scenarios that detail the experience of participants on specific tasks as well as recommendations at the bottom of the page.



Overall Summary

THE POSITIVE POINTS

All participants thought the report **looked great**, found the report **very intuitive**, and **enjoyed the overall experience** of using the product.

- "Looks great and is easy to use. Very intuitive."
- "Found the arrows and grouping very obvious."
- "I liked the legend and glossary."
- "It looks nice and is relatively intuitive."
- "I liked the toggling on and off of the years and subjects."
- "The report is very intuitive."

THE FRICTION POINTS

Participants had trouble **understanding the meaning of terms** like "growth," "value-added," and "achievement," **choosing the correct data category under the Advanced tab** to add specific data to the table, and **noticing the legend/glossary**.

- "I'm not sure whether to go to Advanced automatically to find data, this part isn't as intuitive."
- "I didn't immediately go to legend and glossary."
- "I'm unsure what growth standard is."
- "I wanted to see what the scale is for the growth index."

Pre-Scenario

The user can make accurate assumptions about what will be on the report.

What kind of information would you expect to find on a School Value-Added report?

"Growth of students"

This participant would expect to see the growth of students in a school.

"Information reflecting the school"

This participant would expect to see information reflecting the selected school, such as value-added scores, list of teachers, classrooms.

"Some type of value"

This participant questions if it refers to the value the school is adding to the students or areas that are adding value to the school.

What this tells us:

Upon just hearing the term "Value-Added", while the participants gathered that the report involved information about students and some sort of growth, there's not a clear-cut definition that allowed users to quickly determine what the report intends to get across.

Scenario 1

The user can understand the type of information the report is providing.

What kind of information does it look like this report is providing?

All participants understood the information was broken up by subject/grade/year.

2 out of 3 participants mentioned "effectiveness level" and **all participants** associated the graph with growth over time.

One participant was unsure if the graphs were showing whether "the school meets expected or whether it is actual teachers."

Additional Notes:

- One participant recognized that the growth index was graphed.
- One participant liked the toggling on and off years and subjects.
- One participant recognized that clicking "Advanced" and then clicking "All" would show Achievement and Growth data.

What this tells us:

Overall the participants were able to understand the type of information the report was providing.

Scenario 3

The user can find the meaning of the value-added categories by accessing the legend.

What does it mean that the Growth column shows "Above"?

2 out of 3 participants were able to determine third grade Math was above the expectation of growth for that test.

1 out of 3 participants was able to locate the legend and use it for reference for this scenario.

What this tells us:

The participants were able to easily locate and use the district/school selection menu option.

Scenario 6

The user can switch to another district view.

You're interested in seeing how your school district did this year. Switch to the report for Big City School District.

The participants were able to easily locate and use the district/school selection menu option.

What this tells us:

The participants were able to easily locate and use the district/school selection menu option.

Scenario 4

The user can determine that the white dot is the growth index.

You've shown this report to a teacher at your school. The teacher was curious about what the white dot on the graphs means. How would you explain it?

All participants understood the meaning of the white dot in relation to its placement on the graph.

- "The white dot shows average growth for 7th grade for EOG math."
- "The white dot represents where 7th graders are falling compared to other 7th graders."

1 out of 3 participants specifically used the term "growth index" when describing the white dot.

What this tells us:

Participants were able to interpret the graph and understood that the placement of the white dot reflected where on the graph the growth of the selected group fell.

Scenario 10

The user can determine the meaning of the exceeds indicator.

You're meeting with the school's Math coach and together you are examining the value-added report. You see that 6th grade EOG Math in 2018 and 2019 both have a white dot to the far left in the red section of the graph, but the 2019 graph has an additional symbol next to it. What do you think the symbol means?

All participants understood that the symbol indicated the index was outside of the bounds of the graph.

Additional Notes:

- One participant looked to the legend for an explanation of the symbol.

What this tells us:

Participants were able to understand the meaning of the exceeds indicator, but would benefit from a reference in the legend.

Scenario 11

The user can group the table based on year, grade, or subject.

You want to see how 6th graders fared across subjects (not just in Math). Can you see a way to group the report so 6th grade scores are all next to each other?

All participants recognized that the hyperlinked columns paired with the arrow symbol indicated that those columns could be moved.

2 out of 3 participants were able to successfully rearrange columns and order by year, grade and subject.

One participant got stuck after concluding that since the non-hyperlinked column header didn't appear to be clickable, it wouldn't be able to be grouped.

Additional Notes:

- One participant initially tried to drag-and-drop the columns, but realized they were clickable.

What this tells us:

Overall, participants were able to recognize that the hyperlinked columns were able to be clicked and would regroup the data.

Scenario 13

The user can add a comparison.

For EOG Math, you're interested in seeing how growth at your school stacks up against growth in your district (Big City School District). What would you do?

All participants successfully located the "Add a comparison" button and were able to differentiate between the two separate groups when the comparison was added.

What this tells us:

Participants fully understood how to add a comparison and how to compare the data between the two selections.

Scenario 12

The user can add more data to the table.

Growth results for 6th grade EOG Math have shifted, and as part of investigating why this happened, you want to see whether there have been changes in students' entering achievement. What would you do?

2 out of 3 participants took some time figuring out to go to the "Advanced" tab and click "Achievement", but **all participants** did click the "Advanced" tab and added more data to the table.

When interpreting the Achievement, **all participants** identified that entering achievement was left of arrow and exiting was on the right.

What this tells us:

Participants fully understood the "Advanced" tab would lead them to more data, but it took some time for participants to understand what type of data each radio button would reveal.

Recommendations & Action Items

- Include a definition or explanation of "Value-Added" and the purpose of the report overall.
- Consider another word for Advanced or just have the check boxes for each data category.
- Draw more attention to the legend and glossary - (one participant suggested a "Joyride" or a pop-up to point out the glossary and legend)
- Define the Exceeds indicator in the legend.
- Add a definition for the growth standard in the legend/glossary.