# TEAM Best Practices Video Library

**Assessment**

*Descriptor 3*

TN Department of Education

*Summer 2025*

# DISCLAIMER – Generative AI Tools

The State of Tennessee does not currently permit the use of Generative AI tools, such as Otter, in meetings hosted on state resources. Meetings with contractors, vendors, and subrecipients are not public meetings and may involve discussion of protected state data. Generative AI tools are not adequately regulated and are designed to train on data that is collected and may misrepresent data or release protected data to the general public. While the State supports your desire to maintain documentation of the meeting and what you learn, please respect our decision to safeguard information and do not attempt to use tools such as these. If you choose to use a tool such as this, the State will block that tool from the meeting.

# General Educator Rubric:

Planning Domain

# Planning Domain

The Planning Domain is designed to evaluate how effectively teachers prepare and think through the steps for instruction. This domain emphasizes the planning and implementation of the unit or lesson plan rather than the written plan itself. Evaluators should look for evidence of planning in the lesson plan, classroom observation, and planning conference discussions.

**Key Considerations:**

- **Lesson Planning:** While written plans are important, the primary focus is on how teachers plan for instruction. A detailed, multi-page lesson plan is not necessary; instead, evaluators should consider how well the teacher's planning translates into effective classroom practice. Planning scores should be based on teacher process, evidence collected during observation and conversation, teacher implementation of the plan, student work samples, and assessment samples.

- **Planning Conference:** A pre-conference should occur before an announced observation. This meeting helps the evaluator gather information from the educator about the planning process before observing a lesson. If the observation is unannounced, then the evaluator should have a planning conference after the classroom observation to discuss the educators planning process.

# Planning Domain

## Indicators:

**Instructional Plans:**
- Evaluators should assess the strategies teachers use to align their instruction with state standards. This includes both lesson and unit plans.
- Look for evidence that the teacher has thoughtfully prepared to meet the learning objectives.

**Student Work:**
- Consider the tasks and activities students are engaged in. Student work should provide insight into how well the teacher's planning supports student learning.
- Evaluators should look for evidence that student work is challenging students to use a variety of thinking and problem-solving skills.

**Assessments:**
- Assessments are crucial for understanding student learning. Evaluators should examine how teachers use assessments to support and enhance student learning.
- Evidence of effective assessment practices can be found in both the planning and execution phases.

# Planning Domain
## Evaluation Process:

**Planning Conference Discussions:** These discussions are essential for understanding the teacher's planning process and should inform the planning scores. Explicit and direct questioning opens opportunities for educators to discuss their planning process and the evidence that may not be visible during classroom observations. Evaluators can request a meeting after the instruction to gather additional evidence about the teacher's planning process. This is particularly important for understanding how the teacher plans for the entire unit, not just the observed lesson.

**Classroom Observations:** During observations, evaluators should focus on how the teacher's plans are implemented in the classroom. This includes looking at student engagement, student work, and assessment outcomes.

**Post-Conference:** The post-conference should serve as an opportunity for educators to engage in self-reflection regarding their planning and execution. Evaluators should pose thought-provoking, open-ended questions that encourage educators to critically examine the planning practices that have successfully enhanced student learning, as well as identify areas for improvement to further advance student progress toward mastery.

# Assessment

# Assessment

Assessment is more than just a measure of learning; it's a driving force behind meaningful instruction. When educators plan assessments thoughtfully, they create opportunities to better understand what students have learned and how to support them moving forward. Effective assessment begins before instruction even starts. It is embedded in the planning process and reflects the goals of the unit and the standards students are expected to meet.

The most important question educators should ask when designing assessments is: "What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?" And just as importantly: "How will I know they've learned it?" The answers to these questions inform not only the content of assessments but also how the results will be used.

# Assessment

Assessments should not be confined to the end of a unit. Performance checks should take place throughout the unit and throughout the school year to gauge progress and guide instruction in real time.

A strong assessment plan incorporates multiple methods of measuring student learning. This could include projects, presentations, written responses, experiments, or essays. Assessments should routinely include written components that give students the opportunity to reflect, organize, and articulate thinking in a tangible product. To ensure assessments are used effectively, educators must be clear in the measurement criteria, detailing exactly what success looks like for students.

Assessment data, both formative and summative, should guide lesson planning, intervention efforts, and decisions about future instruction.
In the end, assessment is a tool for growth. When thoughtfully planned and strategically used, it becomes a roadmap to increased achievement and deeper learning.

# Assessment

**Benefits of Effective Assessment Plans:**

- **Aligns instruction with learning goals:** Ensures assessments measure what students are actually expected to learn, based on standards and curriculum.
- **Clarifies expectations for students:** Provides clear targets and success criteria, helping students understand what they need to achieve.
- **Informs instructional decisions:** Guides teachers in adjusting instruction, pacing, and strategies based on assessment data.
- **Supports differentiated instruction:** Identifies students' strengths and needs, allowing for targeted interventions and enrichment.
- **Monitors progress over time:** Ongoing performance checks track growth and provide early warnings when students fall behind.
- **Raises overall student achievement:** When assessments are planned and used effectively, they drive continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

# Descriptor 3:

Assessment plans measure student performance in multiple ways

# Descriptor 3: Assessment plans measure student performance in multiple ways

It is essential for educators to design assessments that measure student performance in a variety of ways such as projects, experiments, presentations, essays, short answers, or multiple-choice tests because students learn and demonstrate their understanding differently.

By assessing students through multiple formats, educators provide equitable opportunities for all learners to show what they know and can do. A single assessment type may not capture the full scope of a student's understanding. For example, a student might struggle with multiple-choice questions due to the format, not a lack of knowledge. Offering different types of assessments allows educators to better diagnose where a student may need support.

It also allows for richer evidence of mastery, since students are given multiple avenues to express their learning. Ultimately, using varied assessment methods gives a more complete and accurate picture of student achievement and ensures that assessment truly reflects learning, not just test-taking ability.

# Evaluator Expectations

An evaluator should look for clear indicators across classroom observation, student work samples, and discussions with the educator that show the educator has planned for multiple forms of assessment to measure students' level of understanding of the objectives or state standard.

During classroom observation, the evaluator might see students engaging in varied assessment tasks such as group projects, written responses, hands-on experiments, or presentations that reflect different modes of demonstrating understanding. A review of assessments should show variety in assessment products. Examples may include essays, visual displays, lab reports, or completed rubrics that align with specific learning goals.

# Evaluator Expectations

In conversation, the evaluator should ask questions that challenge educators to articulate why they chose particular assessment types and how each one aligns with the standard and meets the needs of different learners.

**Examples of questions**

- How will students demonstrate mastery?
- What are the different types of measures you will use to determine mastery?
- How will you use assessment to accommodate the needs of individual students?
- Can you share your process for using varied assessment methods to measure student progress?

# Educator Expectations

Educators should be prepared to present a diverse collection of assessment tools and strategies. Examples of assessment formats are anecdotal notes from class observations, multiple-choice quizzes, exit tickets, written assignments, class discussions, student growth portfolios, presentations, projects, and experiments. Educators should be able to explain how each format provides insight into student learning.

During a discussion with an evaluator, the educator should articulate how different formats support different learners and offer a more complete picture of student understanding. They should also describe how they use these multiple measures to track progress and adjust instruction, ensuring all students have opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do in meaningful ways.

# Evidence Capture Example

As you watch this video, note how the educator shares the different forms of formative assessments to inform her instruction.

The educator includes the following assessments:

- – Vocabulary check at the door when students enter
- – Written comprehension and writing assessment with bell work
- – Assess mastery of the daily objective with an exit ticket
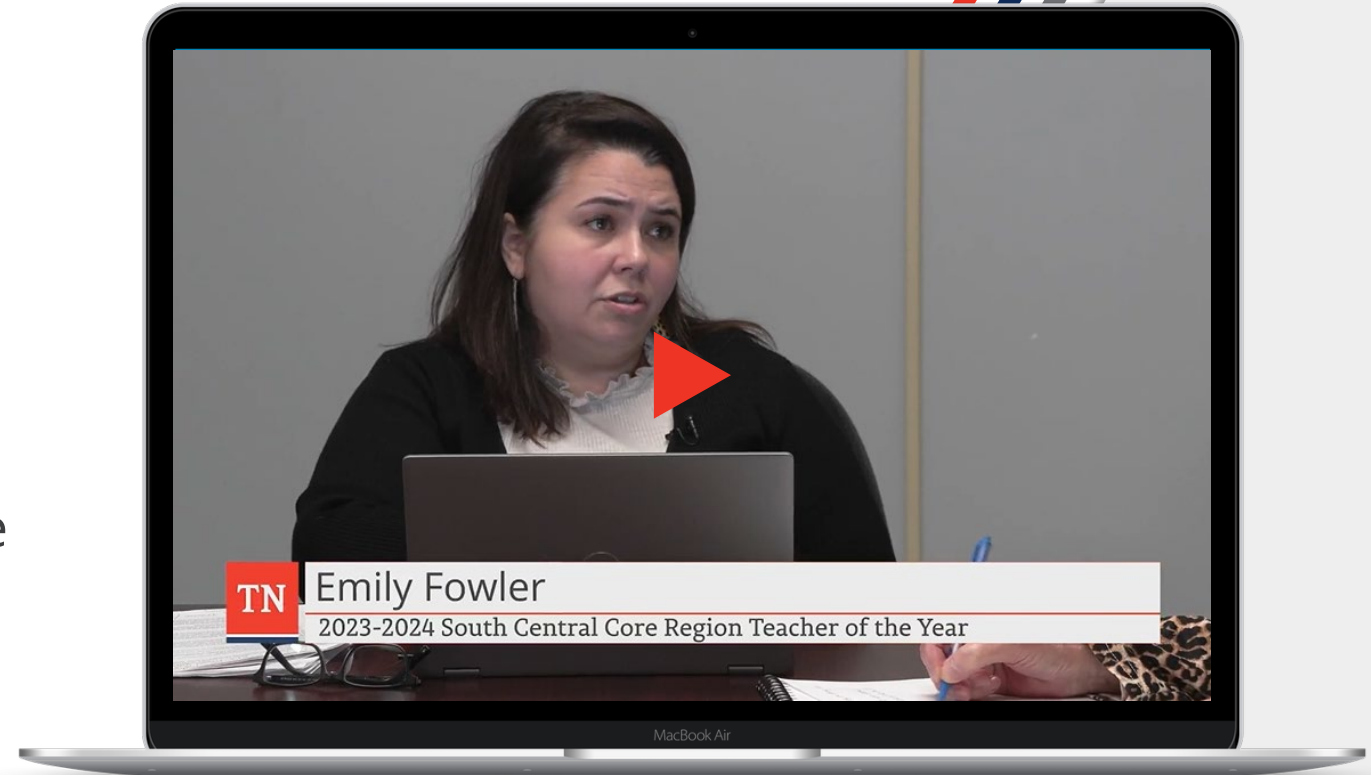


Video featuring 2023-2024 South Central Core Region Teacher of the Year Emily Fowler under the guidance Penny Love, Principal of Culleoka Unit School, Maury County Schools

# Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 3.

- Video featuring 2024-2025 West Grand Division Teacher of the Year Jenny Kiesel under the guidance of Corrie Martin, Principal of Lakeland Preparatory School, Lakeland School System.
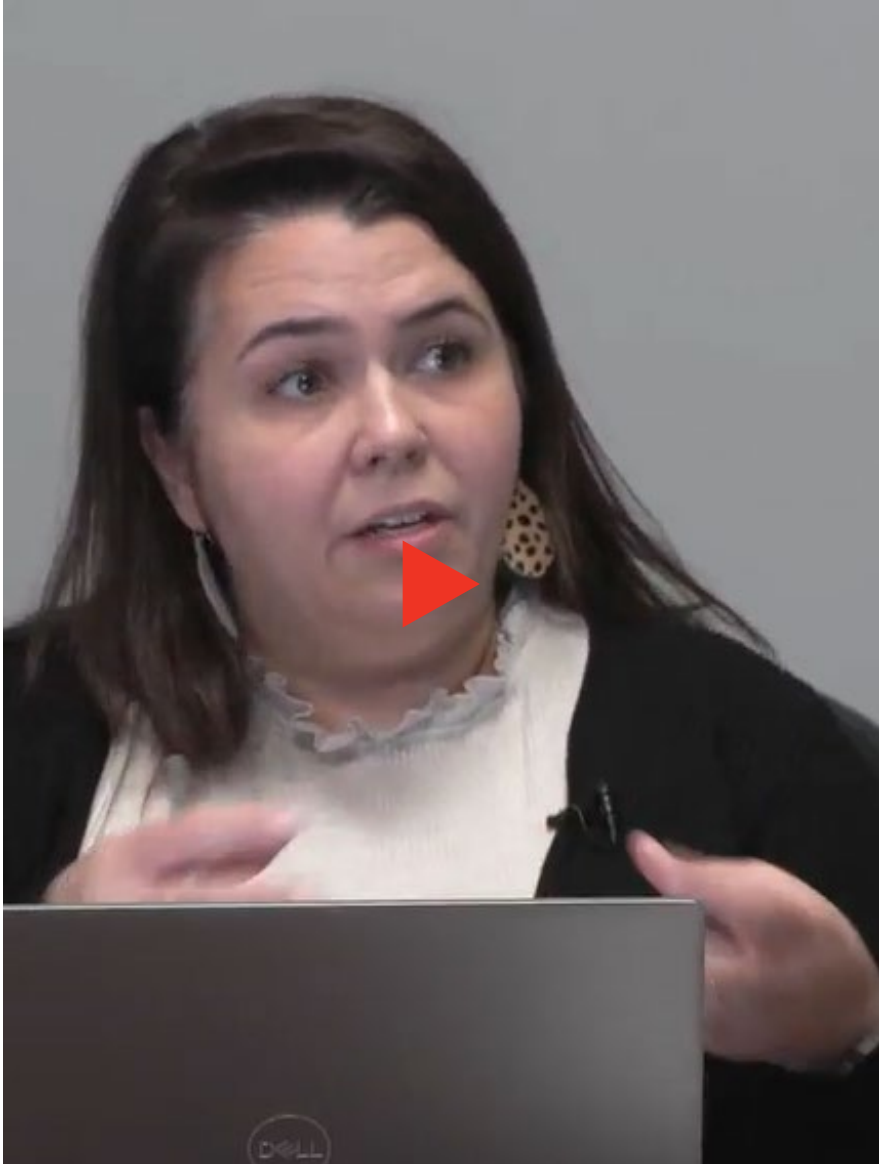
# Share evidence you captured of descriptor 3.

# Possible Evidence Captured

Example(s) of descriptor 3 in the video:

- The educator shares her different methods of assessment to measure students' progression towards mastery.
- Forms of assessment include:
  - Notebook portfolio
  - Labeling
  - Hands on activities
  - Written assessment

# Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 3.

- Video featuring 2023-2024 South Central Core Region Teacher of the year Emily Fowler under the guidance of Penny Love, Principal at Culleoka Unit School, Maury County Schools.

**Share evidence you captured of descriptor 3.**

# Possible Evidence Captured

Example(s) of descriptor 3 in the video:

- The educator shares her different methods of assessment to measure students' progression towards mastery.
- Forms of assessment include:
  - Writing: students use expressive language to write a narrative
  - Speaking: students ask questions and narrate their own experiences
  - Listening comprehension: students understand spoken conversation
  - Written comprehension: students understand written text

# Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Standards and Objectives:**
  - There is evidence that students demonstrate mastery of the daily objective that supports progress towards mastery of the standard(s).
- **Pacing**:
  - Pacing is appropriate and provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates.
- **Activities and Materials:**
  - When appropriate, incorporate resources beyond the school curriculum texts.

# Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Questioning:**
  - Teacher questions are varied, high quality, and support the following question types:
    - knowledge and comprehension
    - application and analysis
    - creation and evaluation
  - Questions are purposeful and coherent.
  - Questions require active responses.
  - When text is involved, majority of questions are text-based.

# Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Teacher Knowledge of Students**:
  - Teacher practices display understanding of students' anticipated learning difficulties.
  - Teacher practices incorporate student interests and cultural heritage.
  - Teacher provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.

# Feedback Survey

- Follow the QR code or use the link below to access the form for the feedback survey.
    - https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/planning_rubric_video_library
- Please use the form to reflect on today's learning and provide feedback about this resource.

# Thank You!

Email questions to TEAM.Questions@tn.gov .

**TN** Department of **Education**