

TEAM Best Practices Video Library

Assessment
Descriptors 5/6



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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 5:

Assessment plans include performance checks throughout the school year



Descriptor 5: Assessment plans include performance checks throughout the school year

Planning assessments with performance checks throughout the school year is essential for effectively monitoring student progress toward mastery of state content standards. Learning is not a one-time event, and standards are not taught in isolation. They are interconnected and build upon each other over time.

A well-structured assessment plan includes a variety of formative and summative assessments, allowing teachers to gather meaningful data on student understanding at multiple points during the year. These performance checks help identify not only where students are in their learning but also what gaps may exist from earlier instruction.





Descriptor 5: Assessment plans include performance checks throughout the school year

By tracking assessment data over time—through screeners, classroom assessments, and benchmark tests—teachers can see patterns in student growth and adjust instruction accordingly. This ongoing monitoring ensures students are on a path toward mastery and supports targeted interventions when they fall behind.

Without consistently collecting and analyzing this data, it's difficult to know if students are truly progressing toward the rigorous expectations outlined in state standards. A comprehensive view of assessment evidence paints a clearer picture of each student's learning trajectory and readiness for summative evaluations like TCAP.



*Descriptor 6:

Assessment plans include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction

**Evidence for significantly above expectations (when descriptor 5 is also significantly above expectations)*



***Descriptor 6: Assessment plans include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction**

Using assessment data to inform instruction is a critical practice for effective teaching and directly ties to a teacher's knowledge of their students. When educators analyze both formative and summative assessment data, they gain insight into what specific skills or standards students are missing and can adjust instruction accordingly. This process is not limited to a single observation or assessment but involves collecting and interpreting data continuously throughout the unit and school year.

**Evidence for significantly above expectations (when descriptor 5 is also significantly above expectations)*





Descriptor 6 : Assessment plans include descriptions of how assessment results will be used to inform future instruction

Formative assessments, such as exit tickets, student responses, and in-class tasks, offer immediate feedback that teachers can use to modify instruction on the spot or in preparation for the next lesson. Summative assessments, on the other hand, provide a broader picture of what students have learned after a period of instruction, like a unit or benchmark.

By consistently analyzing this data, teachers are better equipped to diagnose learning gaps, plan targeted interventions, and ultimately raise student achievement. Effective instruction relies on this ongoing cycle of assessment, reflection, and adjustment, ensuring that all students are supported in their progression toward mastery of state standards.



Evaluator Expectations

Evaluators should look for clear evidence of documentation of regular formative assessments, such as exit tickets, student reflections, skill-based tasks, or questioning strategies embedded within daily instruction to monitor student understanding.

Evaluators should also expect to see a system for tracking assessment data over time, showing how the educator identifies student progress or gaps related to specific standards. Evaluators should ask questions that prompt the educator to describe how they analyze this data and use it to make instructional decisions, such as reteaching concepts, differentiating instruction for specific students, or revising future lesson plans.

Evaluator Expectations

During pre- or post-observation conversations, evaluators should take note of the educator's understanding of the standards, the measurement criteria for mastery, and a plan for using both formative and summative assessments to guide learning. Strong evidence includes not just the assessments themselves, but also reflective planning based on the results, demonstrating the educator's ongoing commitment to ensuring all students move toward mastery.

Examples of questions:

- How will you check for understanding throughout the lesson or unit?
- How will you continue to check for mastery of the standard or skill throughout the year?
- How will assessment results be used to inform future instruction?
- How will you use the data from your assessments?

Educator Expectations

Educators should provide specific evidence demonstrating their consistent collection of student data showing progress toward mastery of the standard and how they leverage the assessment data to inform future instruction. This evidence could include a documented plan outlining the various formative and summative assessments scheduled at key points during the year.

Educators should also describe how they will use assessment data to support students who have not yet reached mastery, such as through targeted interventions, small group instruction, or reteaching specific skills. For students who have already met mastery, the educator should provide evidence of plans to extend learning, perhaps through enrichment activities or deeper exploration of the content.

Educators should be able to articulate how they analyze assessment results, identifying gaps in understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly.

Evidence Capture Example

As you watch the video, note the educator's discussion of how students engage in a portfolio process of videoing their performance skills throughout the year. She uses the portfolio assessment data to inform her individualized instruction of the target skill. She also speaks to how she uses the data to adjust instruction both for students who have mastered the skill and those who require remediation.



Video featuring 2024-2025 East Grand Division Teacher of the Year Natalee Elkins under the guidance of Kathryn Lutton, Principal at Holston Middle School, Knox County Schools

Evidence Capture Example

As you watch the video, note the educator's discussion of how she uses exit tickets throughout the school year to gauge the disconnect between daily objectives and writing assessments. She describes how she analyzes the data from the exit tickets to determine if students need to revisit a portion of the text for clarification or if students need remediation of the skill. The educator uses the writing assessment to determine the need for more explicit instruction for transitions in writing.



Video featuring 2024-2025 Mid-Cumberland Core Region Teacher of the Year Ellie Lee under the guidance of Dr. Takisha Ferguson, Principal at Smyrna Middle School, Rutherford County Schools.



Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 5 and/or 6.
- 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 5 and/or 6.**



Possible Evidence Captured

Example(s) of descriptors 5 and/or 6 in the video:

- The educator describes how each unit builds upon the prior unit. The educator analyzes the unit assessments throughout the year to determine if students are ready for the next unit based on the percentage of students that mastered the objective.
- The educator determines the need to reteach part of the unit or continue instruction for the next unit.





Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 5 and/or 6.
- Video featuring 2023-2024 Shelby County/Municipals Core Region Teacher of the Year Stephanie Thomas under the guidance of Corrie Martin, Principal of Lakeland Preparatory School, Lakeland School System.



**Share evidence you captured of
descriptor 5 and/or 6.**



Possible Evidence Captured

Examples of descriptors 5 and 6 in the video:

- The educator uses an interactive online lab that reports real-time assessment data of students' level of mastery of the standard.
- The educator uses the assessment results to determine the scaffolds and supports that she will provide for students based on their identified area of need.





Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 5 and/or 6.
- Video featuring 2022-2023 East Grand Division Teacher of the Year Margaret Bright under the guidance of Dr. Chad Lewis, Principal of Lenoir City Elementary, Lenoir City Schools.



**Share evidence you captured of
descriptor 5 and/or 6.**



Possible Evidence Captured

Example of descriptor 5 and 6 in the video:

The educator shares how she has collected assessment data from unit 1. She describes her analysis of the data and how she will plan future instruction to focus on the purpose of text features.





Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Expectations:**

- Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.
- Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.
- Teacher creates learning opportunities where students can experience success.
- Students complete their work according to teacher expectations.

- **Standards and Objectives:**

- Learning objectives are connected to what students have previously learned and grounded in HQIM when available.
- There is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the daily objective that supports progress towards mastery of the standard(s).





Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Academic Feedback:**
 - Feedback from students is used to monitor and adjust instruction.
- **Teacher Content Knowledge:**
 - Teacher implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.
- **Teacher Knowledge of Students:**
 - Teacher practices display understanding of students' anticipated learning difficulties.
 - 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.





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