

TEAM Best Practices Video Library

Instructional Plans

Descriptor 4



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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 educator's 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:

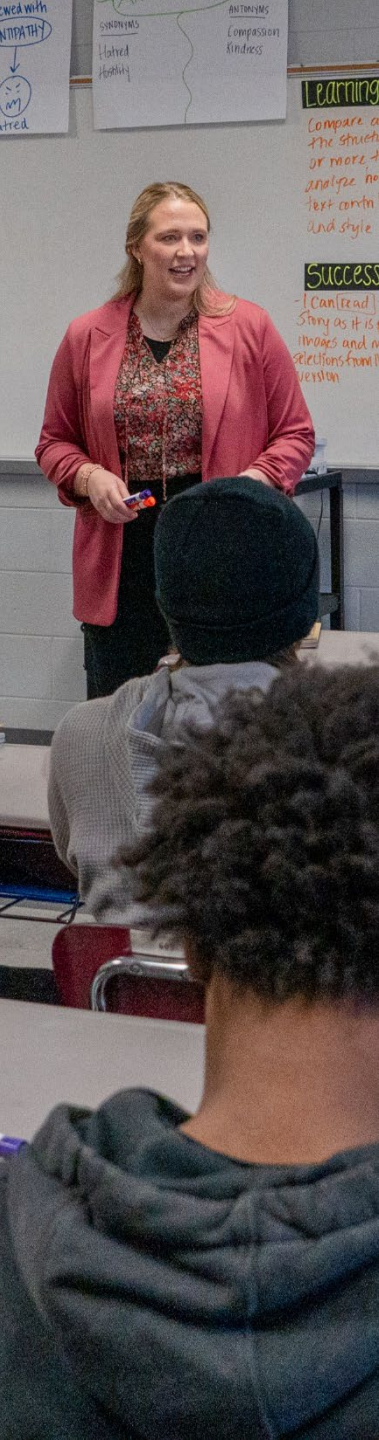
Planning Conference Discussions: These discussions are essential for understanding the teacher's planning process and should inform the planning scores. Explicit and direct questioning opens opportunities for educators to discuss their planning process and the evidence that may not be visible during 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.



Instructional Plans



Instructional Plans

Instructional plans are crucial for ensuring effective and efficient learning experiences. They are based on state standards, local curriculum resources, and analysis of formative and summative student assessments. Teachers need to be incorporating these elements into their daily, weekly, and unit planning.

Evaluators should establish a system for providing regular feedback on an educator's planning process. Instructional planning questions and conversations should aim to elicit a comprehensive understanding of the planning process, encouraging educators to articulate their strategies for delivering quality instruction and implementing best practices.

Benefits of Strong Planning Processes:

- Better-managed classrooms
- More effective learning experiences
- Higher student engagement

Educators should adjust scripted lessons and incorporate student knowledge to meet individual and group needs. Effective planning starts with the end in mind, developing lesson objectives that align with standards, planning activities, and materials to ensure student success.



Descriptor 4:

Instructional plans include evidence that the plan provides opportunities to accommodate individual student needs



Descriptor 4: Instructional plans include evidence that the plan provides opportunities to accommodate individual student needs.

This descriptor emphasizes the importance of tailoring instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of students. Effective instructional plans should reflect the teacher's knowledge of their students. This involves understanding where students are in their progress towards mastery and identifying the specific opportunities that will help them achieve the desired outcomes by the end of a unit or lesson.

Differentiation is key in accommodating individual student needs. Teachers must consider how to provide varied opportunities based on the unique needs of their students. This requires a deep understanding of each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences. By using data to inform their planning, teachers can ensure that their instructional strategies are effective and inclusive.



Evaluator Expectations

Evaluators seek to understand how teachers use data to inform their differentiated strategies, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to succeed. Evaluators should ask about the current levels of student understanding and how this information shapes the planning process. Evaluators look for insights into which standards or skills are most challenging for students and why. They should also examine how educators plan to differentiate activities and instruction, incorporate challenging questions to extend learning, and make adjustments if students do not show mastery of the objectives.

Example Questions:

- How will you differentiate activities or instruction to meet students' various needs?
- What higher order thinking questions will you use to push growth and deeper understanding of the lesson content for those who are ready?
- What adjustments to the lesson will you make if students do not show evidence that they have mastered the objectives?
- What adjustments to the lesson will you make if students show they are ready to move on or the lesson is not challenging for them?
- Which standards/skills seem the most difficult for students to master? Why do you think students struggle with mastery in this area?

Educator Expectations

Educators should provide evidence of how they tailor their strategies to meet the diverse needs of their students. This includes discussing specific accommodations and supports for individual students, as well as plans for challenging students who have already mastered the skills and need extended learning opportunities. They should also provide insights into which standards or skills are most challenging for students and why.

Additionally, educators should describe how they plan to differentiate activities and instruction, incorporate higher-order thinking questions to push growth, and make adjustments if students do not show mastery of the objectives. Evidence should reflect a deep understanding of students' strengths, weaknesses, and learning preferences, demonstrating thoughtful and inclusive planning.

Evidence Capture Example

As you watch this video, note the educator's explanation of how EL students are provided with sentence frames and individualized support as needed based on assessment-based evidence.



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 Example

As you watch this video, observe how the educator outlines her approach to planning activities based on students' varying levels of content knowledge. She designs targeted support for those needing additional time with foundational vocabulary, incorporates hands-on activities for students ready to apply their learning, and provides extension opportunities for those prepared to engage in higher-order thinking by creating their own labs.



Video featuring 2024-2025 West Grand Division Teacher of the Year Jenny Kiesel under the guidance of Corrie Martin, Principal at Lakeland Preparatory School, Lakeland School System



Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of Descriptor 4.
- Video featuring 2024-2025 Tennessee Teacher of the Year Bryan Kerns under the guidance of Dr. Brian Tate, Principal of Dobyns-Bennett High School, Kingsport City Schools



**Share evidence you captured of
Descriptor 4.**



Possible Evidence

Example of Descriptor 4 in the video:

- The educator discusses how he meets the needs of individual students with accommodations such as read aloud materials, preferential seating, and one-on-one support.



Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of Descriptor 4.
- 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 School, Lenoir City Schools



**Share evidence you captured of
Descriptor 4.**



Possible Evidence

Examples of Descriptor 4 in the video:

- The educator provides opportunities to dictate instead of writing based on language needs.
- She provides students with the opportunity to verbalize their thoughts before writing.
- During turn-and-talk, she pairs students by needs and ability level to share ideas and think before writing.
- For those who are ready to write, she provides small group or one-on-one support.
- The educator allows students to use sound spelling instead of correct spelling based on writing level.
- She provides opportunities for every student to participate with random calling strategies and think-pair-share.





Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Lesson Structure and Pacing:**
 - Pacing is appropriate and provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates.
- **Grouping:**
 - The instructional grouping arrangements (either whole-class, small groups, pairs, individual; heterogeneous or homogeneous ability) adequately enhance student understanding and learning efficiency.
- **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 the use 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.

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