TEAM Best Practices Video Library

Student Work

Descriptor 1

Department of Education

Summer 2025

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General Educator Rubric:

Planning Domain

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Planning Domain

The Planning Domain is designed to evaluate how effectively teachers prepare and think through the steps for instruction, emphasizing 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.

Student Work

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Student Work

Effective planning requires consideration of the content-specific student work and of assignments that students will complete during lessons. To ensure challenge and rigor, student work assignments should provide opportunities for multiple types of thinking and problem-solving.

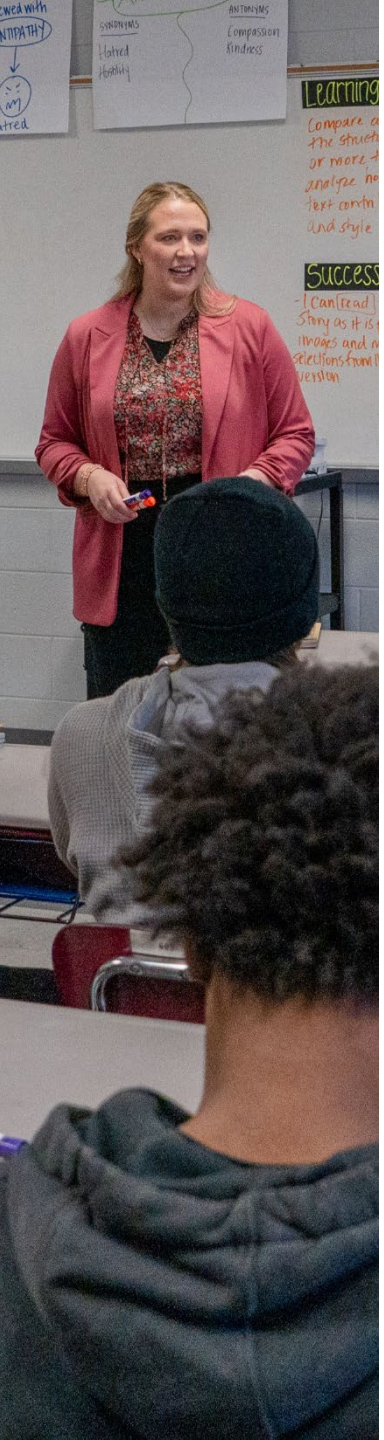
Additionally, it is crucial to connect student work to prior learning and their life experiences outside of the classroom. This connection helps students build on their existing knowledge, making them feel more confident and capable. Linking assignments to students' life experiences makes the work more relevant and engaging which motivates them to participate actively.

By integrating prior learning and life experiences, educators can foster a deeper understanding of the content, encourage critical thinking, and enhance problem-solving skills, ultimately enriching the overall learning experience.

Student Work

Benefits of High-Quality Student Work:

- **Enhanced Critical Thinking:** Encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information leading to deeper understanding.
- **Improved Problem-Solving Skills:** Develops students' ability to approach and solve complex problems using various strategies.
- **Increased Engagement:** Connects learning to students' personal experiences and interests, making lessons more relevant and motivating.
- **Higher Achievement:** Aligns with state standards and high-quality curriculum materials, leading to improved academic performance.



Student Work

The development and evaluation of student work should enhance and reinforce instruction in the classroom. Student work and assignments should be aligned with pre-tests and post-tests, which in turn should be aligned with state standards. This alignment ensures that the analysis of student work can predict student performance on post-tests.

Collecting and analyzing student work is a critical component of effective teaching and evaluation. By aligning assignments with standards and using high-quality materials when available, teachers can enhance instruction and ensure students are engaged in meaningful problem-solving and thinking activities.

After classroom visits, evaluators should collect student work to assess the types of thinking and problem-solving demonstrated. This can be done through various means, including videos and notes. Evaluators should analyze the student work and discuss it with teachers during post-conferences to ensure the planned instruction occurred effectively.

Descriptor 1:

Assignments require students to interpret information rather than reproduce it

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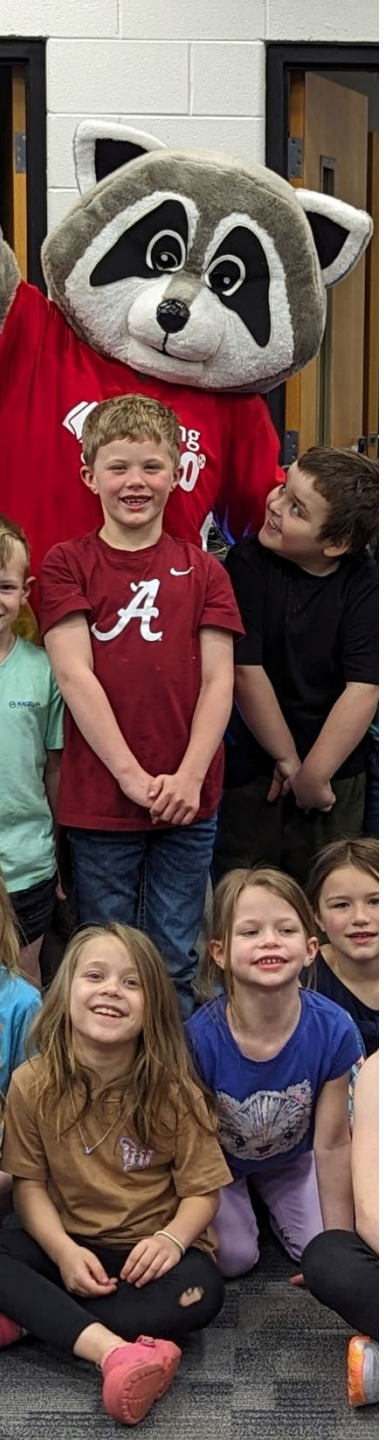


Descriptor 1: Assignments require students to interpret information rather than reproduce it

Reproducing information, such as memorizing or labeling, involves very low-level thinking. In contrast, higher-level thinking involves organizing, interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing information.

When planning instructional activities, teachers should consider the types of thinking required for students to meet daily objectives. Thinking can begin as low-level to create a foundation but then move to more challenging types of thinking as students grow in their knowledge.

Student work can take many forms, especially in classes where traditional paper assignments may not be applicable for every assignment. Evidence of thinking in student work can include notes, drawings, written pieces, performances, hands-on building or creating, or conversation and discussion.

After a lesson, student work should be assessed to determine the types of thinking students used to complete the activity. This analysis helps determine whether the assignments enhanced and reinforced instruction. Exemplary student work involves students engaging in high-level thinking activities.

Evaluator Expectations

When collecting evidence, evaluators should note the types of thinking that are required for students to use to complete the assignments. Evaluators assess whether the planned activities challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of the content and examine how the assignments require meaningful engagement rather than simple reproduction of information.

By analyzing student work after the lesson, evaluators gain insights into the effectiveness of the instructional plans and the types of thinking students used to complete their assignments. This comprehensive approach helps evaluators support educators in enhancing their instructional strategies and improving student outcomes.

Evaluator Expectations

Examples of questions:

- What assignments have you planned?
- What opportunities will you provide for students to use different types of thinking during your lesson?
- How will the assignments in this lesson/unit challenge students to develop a deeper understanding of the content?
- How will you plan to engage student thinking in organizing, interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information rather than reproducing it?
- Where do you expect to see productive struggle?

Educator Expectations

Educators should be prepared to outline specific activities designed to engage students in different types of thinking. Educators should explain how these assignments are structured to promote deeper understanding of the content and facilitate mastery of the standards.

Additionally, educators should discuss how they anticipate students will use different thinking strategies throughout the lesson and how these strategies will help students progress toward mastering the content.

Educators must ensure that rigorous assignments are implemented as planned and evidence of thinking can be seen in the student outcomes.

Examples of what different types of thinking look like in the classroom:

Organizing :

- Students might create graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams or flowcharts, to categorize and arrange information logically.
- Students could organize historical events in chronological order or group scientific concepts by their characteristics.
- Students might organize different exercises into categories such as upper body, lower body, and core workouts.

Interpreting :

- Students could read a passage and then explain its meaning in their own words or interpret data from a graph to draw conclusions.
- Students might interpret the results of a scientific experiment or the themes in a literary work.
- Students might listen to a symphony and explain how the dynamics, tempo, and instrumentation contribute to the overall feeling of the piece.

Examples of what different types of thinking look like in the classroom:

Analyzing :

- Students might break down a complex problem into smaller parts to understand its components.
- Students could engage in comparing and contrasting different viewpoints on a topic or analyzing the causes and effects of an event.
- Students could analyze the factors leading to a historical conflict or the impact of a policy decision.

Evaluating :

- Students might assess the credibility and relevance of sources, critique arguments, or judge the quality of work based on specific criteria.
- Students could evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different scientific theories or assess the effectiveness of a literary piece in conveying its themes.
- Students could evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of basketball shooting techniques based on criteria such as form, consistency, and success rate.

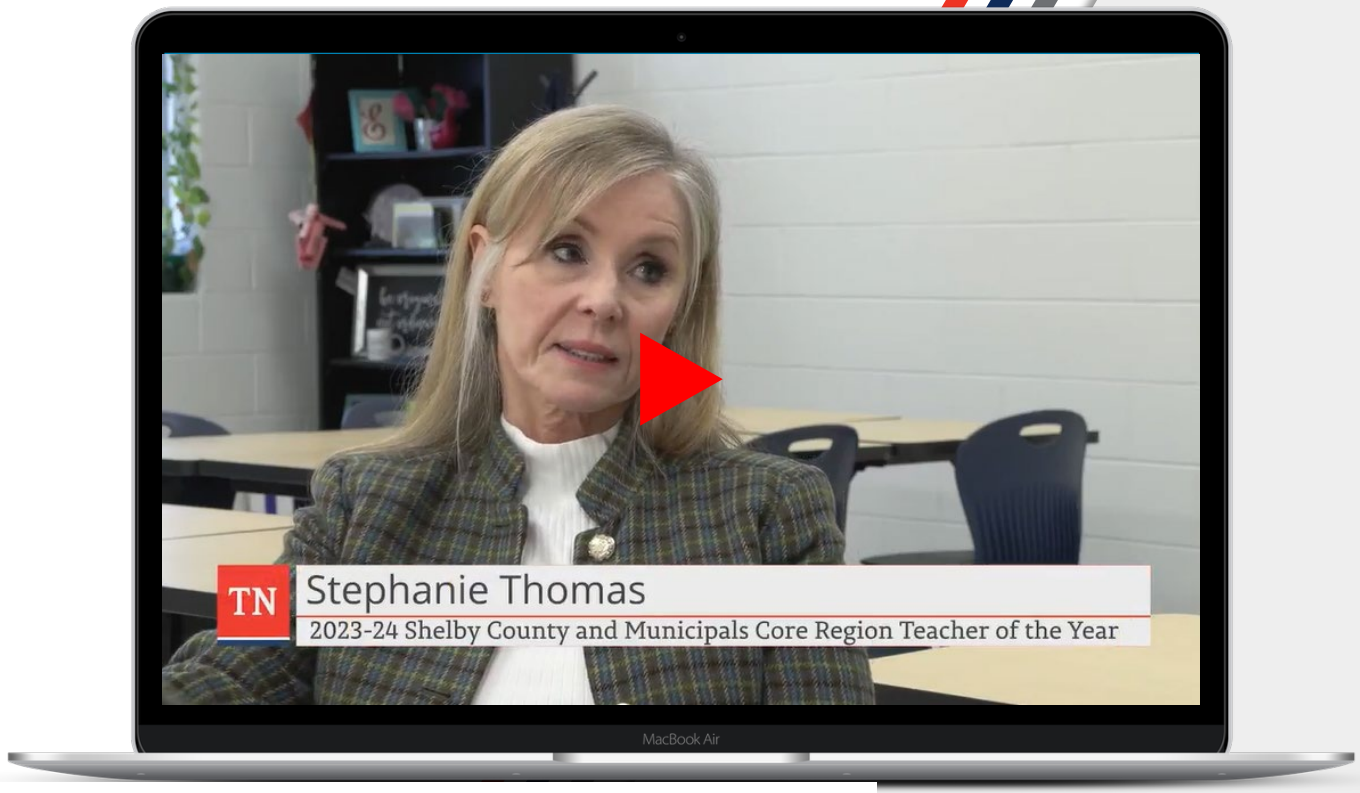
Examples of what different types of thinking look like in the classroom:

Synthesizing :

- Students could combine information from multiple sources to create a new understanding or solution.
- Assignments might involve writing a research paper that integrates findings from various studies or developing a project that applies concepts from different subjects.
- Students could synthesize information from different scientific studies to propose a new hypothesis or create a multimedia presentation that combines historical data with modern implications.
- Students might create a song that blends classical music techniques with modern pop rhythms and melodies.

Evidence Capture Example

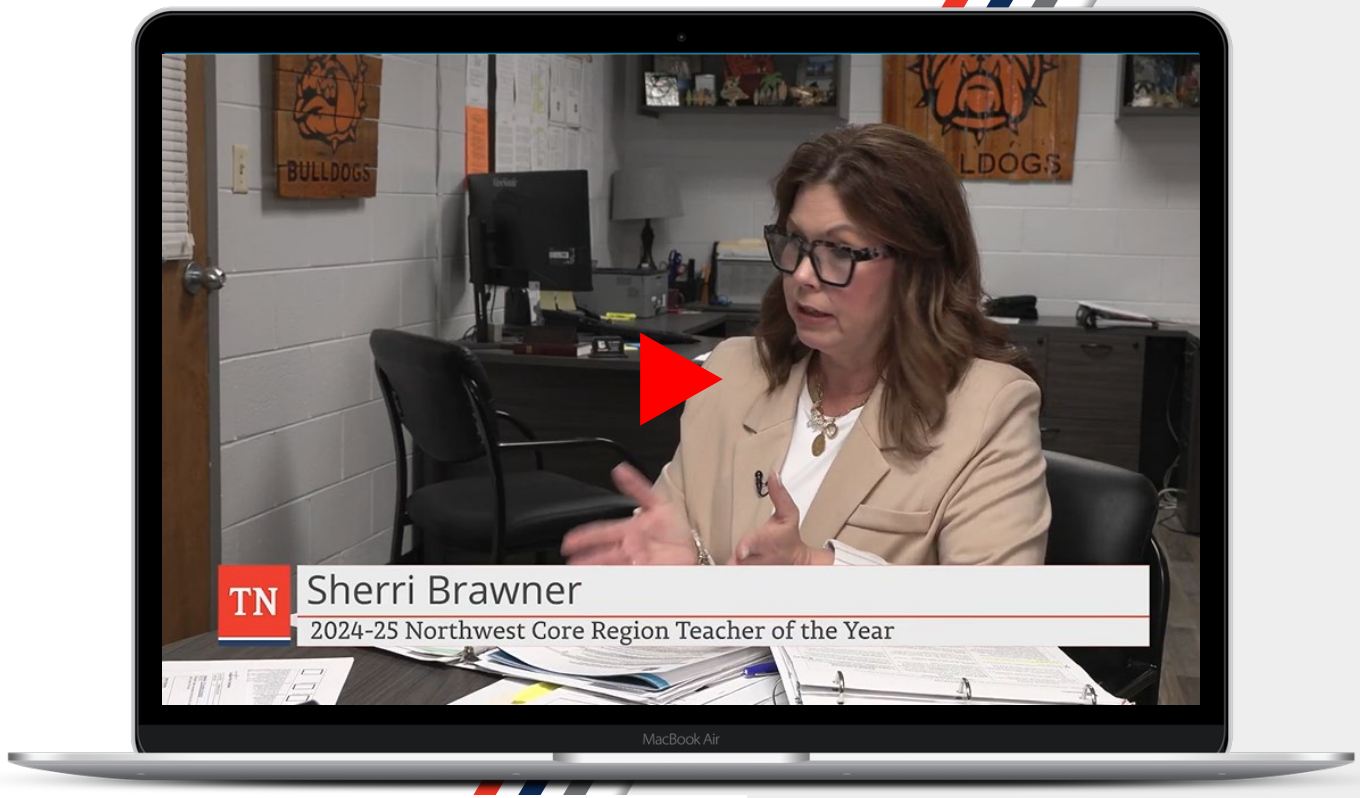
As you watch this video, observe how the evaluator's question prompts the educator to describe the student assignment. The educator states that students identify rhetorical devices used in a piece of text, then evaluate why the author chose their strategy, and finally analyze the effectiveness of the rhetorical device.



Video featuring 2023-2024 Shelby County/Municipals Core Region Teacher of the Year Stephanie Thomas under the guidance of Corrie Martin, Principal at Lakeland Preparatory School, Lakeland School System

Evidence Capture Example

As you watch this video, observe how the educator explains how her students will analyze the characters and their traits from the text and compare it to their own characteristics to determine which character they are mostly closely aligned. The students will interpret the information to create a writing piece from the character's point of view.



Video featuring 2024-2025 Northwest Core Region Teacher of the Year Sherri Brawner under the guidance Lee Lawrence, Principal of Gleason School, Weakley County Schools

Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 1.

- 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.

Share evidence you captured of descriptor 1.

Possible Evidence Captured

Example(s) of descriptor 1 in the video:

The educator shared how her lab work provides students with the opportunity to engage in different types of thinking by:

- creating their own scenarios/tests
- collecting data
- analyzing data
- drawing conclusions based on the data collected
- determining if their conclusion supports their hypothesis

Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 1.

- Video featuring 2023-2024 East Grand Division Teacher of the Year Margaret Bright under the guidance of Dr. Chad Lewis, principal at Lenoir City Elementary School, Lenoir City Schools.

Share evidence you captured of descriptor 1.

Possible Evidence Captured

Example(s) of descriptor 1 in the video:

The educator describes how her unit engages students to:

- analyze a research statement to turn it into a focus statement for a piece of writing
- understand how the focus statement guides the rest of the writing
- evaluate details from notes to determine which ones best match the focus statement
- analyze a picture of the feather and evaluate the purpose of each detail

Connections to Other Indicators

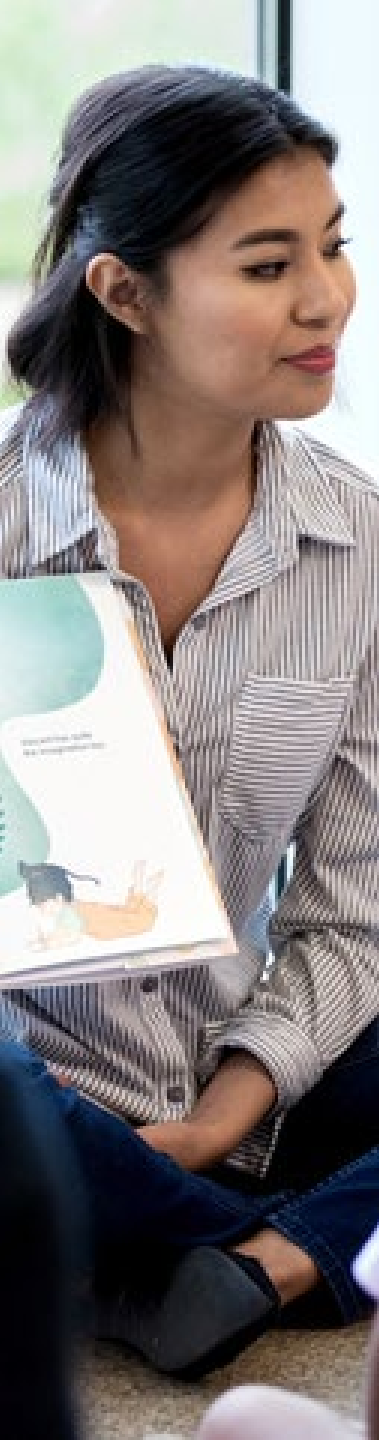
This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Expectations:**
  - Teacher sets high and demanding academic expectations for every student.
  - Teacher encourages students to learn from mistakes.
- **Activities and Materials:**
  - Activities and materials feature the following characteristics:
    - Support the lesson objectives
    - Are challenging
    - Elicit a variety of thinking
    - Sub-objectives are aligned to the lesson's major objective
  - Texts and tasks are appropriately complex.

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 require students to cite evidence.
- **Teacher Content Knowledge:**
  - Teacher implements subject-specific instructional strategies to enhance student content knowledge.



Connections to Other Indicators

This descriptor is closely aligned with the following indicators:

- **Thinking:**
  - The teacher teaches different types of thinking:
    - analytical thinking, where students analyze, compare and contrast, and evaluate and explain information
    - practical thinking, where students use, apply, and implement what they learn in real-life scenarios
    - creative thinking, where students create, design, imagine, and suppose; and research-based thinking, where students explore and review a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems
  - The teacher provides opportunities where students:
    - generate a variety of ideas and alternatives, and
    - analyze problems from multiple perspectives and viewpoints.

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 .