TEAM Best Practices Video Library

Student Work

Descriptor 2

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.

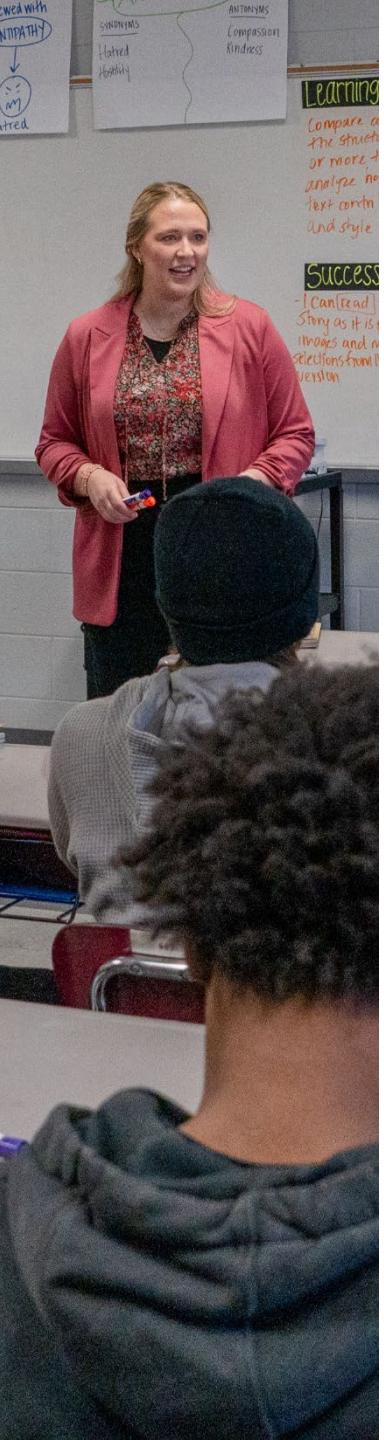
Additionally, it is crucial to connect student work to prior learning and their life experiences outside of the classroom. This connection helps students build on their existing knowledge, making them feel more confident and capable. Linking assignments to students' life experiences makes the work more 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 2:

Assignments require students to draw conclusions and support them through writing

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Descriptor 2: Assignments require students to draw conclusions and support them through writing

This descriptor focuses on whether assignments elicit students to engage in problem-solving and higher-level thinking. Students should be drawing conclusions based on their understanding and then articulating these conclusions through writing. Writing is a critical component because it involves processing and verbalizing thoughts, which helps solidify understanding.

Regardless of the content area, students should be able to express their thinking on paper, demonstrating their ability to analyze and synthesize information.

At higher levels, student work should reflect more complex problem-solving and deeper engagement with the content. Assignments should be demanding and high-quality, requiring students to think critically and solve problems as they perform and complete their work.

Evaluator Expectations

Evaluators should look for high-quality, challenging assignments that engage students in complex problem-solving and higher-level thinking. They seek evidence that students can draw conclusions based on their deep understanding of the content, express their thinking clearly in writing, and demonstrate skills such as making inferences or summarizing findings from texts or experiences. Regardless of the content area, students should be expected to write, as writing supports deep comprehension and effective communication.

Examples of questions:

- What type of problem solving will students be using to complete these activities?
- How will students' writing support their problem solving throughout this unit?
- How will you encourage students to engage in high-quality problem solving so that they can draw conclusions, generalize, and produce arguments?

Educator Expectations

Educators should share how they have designed activities to push students to engage in different types of problem-solving tasks that involve reaching conclusions and producing evidence-based arguments.

Educators should explain how writing assignments are integrated throughout the unit to support and enhance students' problem-solving and thinking skills. Examples of student work, lesson plans, and specific activities that require critical thinking and written expression will help illustrate the effectiveness of these assignments in promoting higher-level thinking and meaningful learning.

Examples of different types of Problem Solving in the classroom:

Drawing Conclusions:

- Read a story and draw conclusions about the characters' motivations.
- Observe different artworks and draw conclusions about the emotions or stories they convey.
- Analyze historical events and draw conclusions about their causes and effects.
- Analyze data sets and draw conclusions about trends and patterns.
- Conduct a lab experiment and draw conclusions about chemical reactions.
- Participate in different physical activities and draw conclusions about which exercises improve their heart rate the most.
- Analyze the structure of a song and draw conclusions about how different sections contribute to the overall effect.

Examples of different types of Problem Solving in the classroom:

Producing an Argument:

- Write to explain why a particular strategy is the most effective for solving a math problem.
- Explain why a particular piece of art is effective, using elements like color, shape, and composition as evidence.
- Debate the impact of a historical decision using evidence to support their viewpoints.
- Write a report arguing the best statistical method to use for a given data set supported by their analysis.
- Write a research paper arguing the implications of their findings supported by scientific evidence.
- Write to explain why certain exercises are better for cardiovascular health using their observations as evidence.
- Explain why a particular piece of music makes them feel a certain way using elements like tempo and instrumentation as evidence.
- Write a research paper arguing the influence of a specific composer or musical movement supported by analysis of their works.

Examples of different types of Problem Solving in the classroom:

Generating Ideas:

- Work in groups to find solutions to real-world problems, such as planning a budget for a class event.
- Brainstorm solutions to environmental issues, such as reducing waste in the classroom.
- Design experiments to address scientific questions or propose solutions to improve student lives.
- Develop mathematical models to solve real-world problems such as optimizing resources in a business scenario.
- Propose solutions to improve their school's physical education program such as incorporating more diverse activities or addressing barriers to participation.
- Design a project that addresses a social issue through music such as creating a song to raise awareness about environmental conservation.
- Work together to create a class performance that addresses a theme, such as friendship or teamwork, and discuss how music can convey these ideas.

Evidence Capture Example

As you watch the video, note how the educator shares how her writing assignment requires students to draw conclusions as to whether the character is human or not based on evidence from the text.

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 2.

- Video featuring 2024-25 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 2.

Possible Evidence

Example(s) of descriptor 2 in the video:

- The educator shares how she engages students in problem solving through case studies.
- Students use their reasoning skills by looking at a scenario, data, or observations to draw conclusions and determine a solution to the issue.

Evidence Capture Practice

- Watch the video and capture evidence of descriptor 2.

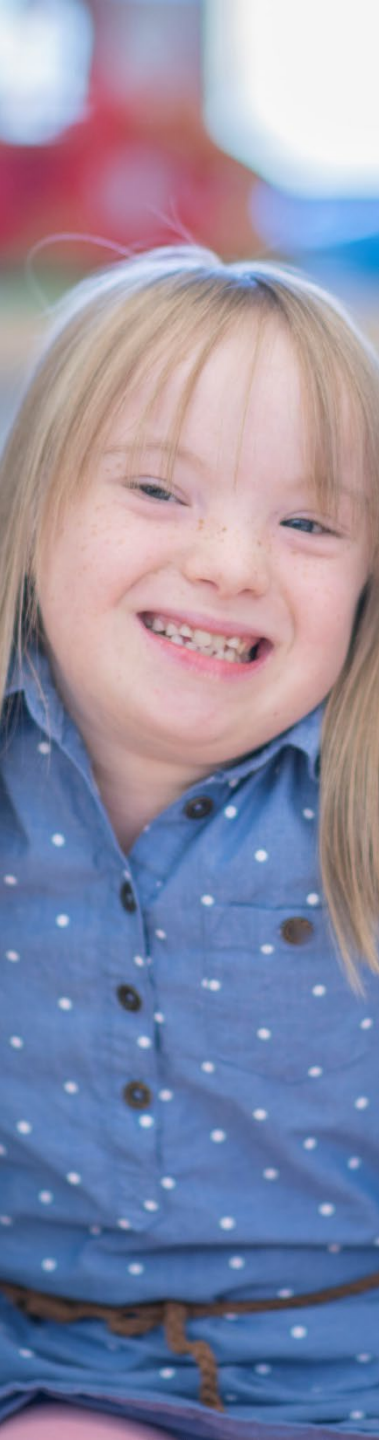
- Video featuring 2023-2024 Shelby County/Municipals Core Region Teacher of the Year Stephanie Thomas under the guidance of Corrie Martin, Principal at Lakeland Preparatory School, Lakeland School System.

Share evidence you captured of descriptor 2.

Possible Evidence

Example(s) of descriptor 2 in the video:

- The evaluator's question prompts the educator to explain how she engages students in applying their knowledge by having them create their own argumentative pieces incorporating rhetorical devices.
- The students determine which rhetorical devices to use that will best support their argument in their extended writing.



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 reflect the following characteristics:
    - support the lesson objectives
    - are challenging
    - provide time for reflection
    - incorporate multimedia and technology

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.
  - When text is involved, questions are text-based.
- **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:

- **Problem Solving:**
  - The teacher implements activities that teach the following problem-solving types:
    - Abstraction
    - Categorization
    - Drawing Conclusions/Justifying Solution
    - Predicting Outcomes
    - Observing and Experimenting
    - Improving Solutions
    - Identifying Relevant/Irrelevant Information
    - Generating Ideas
    - Creating and Designing

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 .