

APPRAISER HANDBOOK



T-TESS Educator Feedback

“Our goal next year is to begin completing announced observations earlier, so we can also complete unannounced observations. We feel we will get a truer picture of each teacher’s practices with respect to the rubric when we have the opportunity to complete the announced visit with a pre-conference and post-conference first, then later go back for an unannounced visit. While the walkthroughs provide some of that information, we feel strongly a second unannounced visit will really give us the data we desire.”

- Principal, Texarkana ISD

“If we could do it differently, we would have had the system rollout as a standing agenda item.”

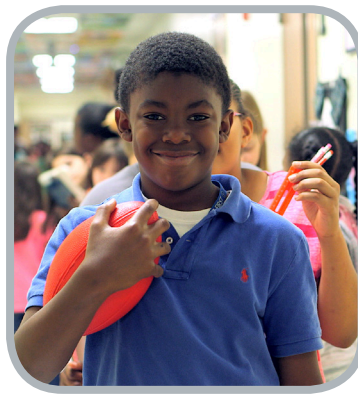
- Principal, Taft ISD

“We felt that more time needs to be spent in working and training with teachers on the planning domain. The more we got into the rubric this year, the more we realized that our teachers need a much better understanding of this domain and how to plan to meet the requirements in the other domains.”

- Principal, New Caney ISD

“The biggest thing about implementing is how it is presented. I personally went to every campus and was a ‘cheerleader’ for T-TESS. Our administrators went to training, then each administrator did the training with staff and continued the positives of the new tool.”

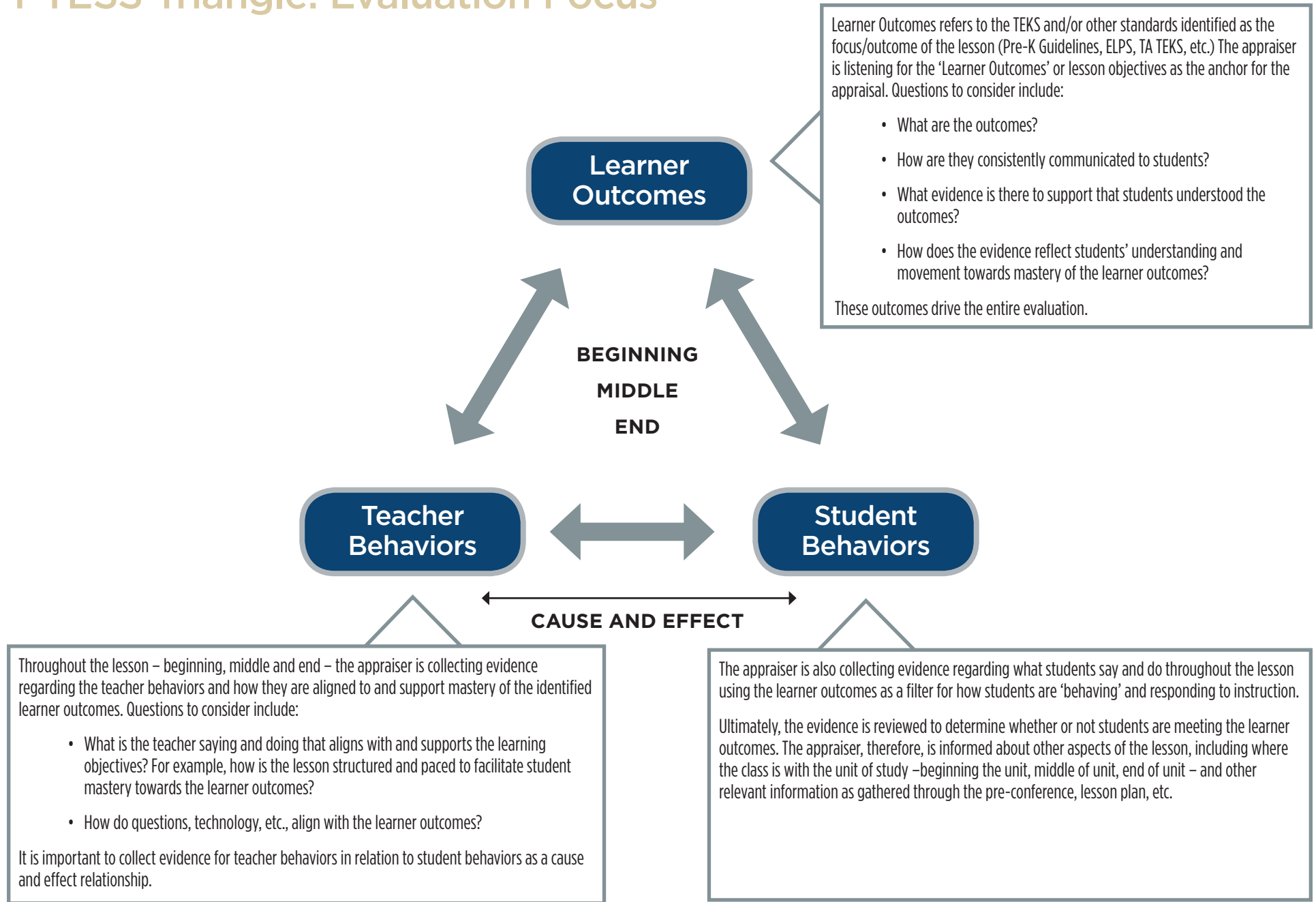
- Central Administration, Brownwood ISD



“We asked teachers to self-assess their lesson and we read through the descriptors in the ‘developing’ and ‘proficient’ columns of the rubric with them as we discussed the lesson. When doing that, the teachers better understood the rubric, better understood their own strengths and challenges, and were more accepting of how the lesson rated.”

- Principal, Ballinger ISD

T-TESS Triangle: Evaluation Focus



Background

The Texas Education Agency's (TEA) approved instrument for evaluating teachers, the Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS), was the primary instrument used by 86 percent of LEAs in the state and has been in place since 1997. As research has routinely emphasized, the number one in-school factor for increasing student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher, and since 2009, Texas has made significant strides to improve both the quality of its educator preparation programs and the quality of individual teacher evaluations so that teachers and administrators have more meaningful feedback on student learning and growth. In acknowledging the vital roles teachers play in student achievement, and based on feedback from the field, TEA has revisited the state's approved instrument for evaluating teachers.

Stakeholder Involvement

During the fall of 2011, the TEA created the Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup, comprised of members from the agency's Educator Initiatives department, the USDE-funded Texas Comprehensive Center, Educate Texas, (a public-private education initiative of the Communities Foundation of Texas), and the Region XIII Education Service Center. This workgroup examined literature on evaluating educator effectiveness, including different appraisal models from across the nation, to help inform the development of a new Texas system. As a key resource, the workgroup reviewed and used the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality's publication, *A Practical Guide to Designing Comprehensive Teacher Evaluation Systems: A Tool to Assist in the Development of Teacher Evaluation Systems*.

During the spring of 2014, the teacher steering committee developed an evaluation system tied to the teaching standards. In the redesign of the state evaluation system, the committee focused on creating a system that would be used for continuous

professional growth, while de-stigmatizing the observation process, moving the mindset away from compliance and toward feedback and support.

The system they created provides for actionable, timely feedback, allowing teachers to make efficient and contextual professional development choices that will lead to an improvement in their teaching. The system includes:

- A rubric with five performance levels that clearly differentiate practices. The rubric allows for immediate feedback built into the document itself. Any teacher can self-assess, and look to the practices articulated in the levels above his or her observation rate and understand which practices will elevate their performance.
- A teacher self-assessment that allows all teachers to determine their professional growth goals, build a professional development plan to attain those goals, and track the progress of their development over the course of the year based on both their assessment of their practice within their unique teaching context, as well as the feedback received during the ongoing formative and end-of-year conversations with their appraiser.
- These multiple measures, taken together, will provide a more complete narrative of teacher performance than any single measure taken by itself and will comprise an end-of-year evaluation rate based on the following weights: observation and teacher self-assessment will comprise 80% of the evaluation rate, and student growth will comprise 20% of the evaluation rate, if the district opts to aggregate scores rather than provide 16 dimension scores and a separate student growth score.

Recommended Process

The state recommended teacher evaluation system encourages annual evaluations comprising multiple informal observations and walk-throughs, and at least a single formal observation. During the three-day face-to-face appraiser training on the state teacher evaluation system, participants will discuss best practices for fostering open, collaborative campus cultures where feedback and instructional growth are embedded into the school calendar, where dialogue between teachers and campus leaders allow for both groups to further develop insight into good instructional practices, and where teacher leaders play a role in informal observations and collaborative professional development. TEA will work with the 20 regional service centers to offer assistance and support to districts that lack the personnel capacity to implement T-TESS.

Qualified Appraisers

Administrators, teacher leaders, and district personnel are eligible to serve as qualified appraisers. All designated appraisers must participate in required certification training and demonstrate proficiency in the observation process by successfully completing an online certification test through the Teach for Texas portal, including subsequent certifications to remain current.

Announced and Unannounced Classroom Observations

While only one formal observation is required, best practices would dictate that multiple formal and informal observations are recommended. Prior to announced observations, the appraiser conducts a “pre-conference” meeting with the teacher to ask pertinent background questions about the lesson plan and the students in the class in order to provide context.

After each classroom lesson observation, the teacher being observed will receive written and/or oral feedback from the individual appraiser in a “post-conference” meeting. In the post-conference, the appraiser shares an area of “reinforcement” to highlight the teacher’s strengths, as well as an area of “refinement” where the teacher has growth areas. All formal observations must include post-conference meetings within ten (10) working days but best practices would dictate that immediate feedback (within 48 hours) would be most impactful for the teacher.

Overview of the Four Domains of the T-TESS Rubric

The following pages will review the important elements of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) rubric. The details of the fourth domain, Professional Practices and Responsibilities, are flexible based on local expectations. Recommended guidance is provided for the process of collecting evidence and rating the Professional Practices and Responsibilities domain.

The following pages include the stylized version of the T-TESS rubric and explanations of the dimensions for the Planning, Instruction, and Learning Environment domain.

Classroom examples and sample questions are also included to further clarify the dimensions. For detailed explanations of the descriptors, see the *T-TESS Teacher Handbook* which may be accessed on the Teach for Texas web site.

| Four Domains of the T-TESS Rubric | |
|---|--|
| PLANNING | INSTRUCTION |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standards and Alignment 2. Data and Assessment 3. Knowledge of Students 4. Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieving Expectations 2. Content Knowledge and Expertise 3. Communication 4. Differentiation 5. Monitor and Adjust |
| LEARNING ENVIRONMENT | PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures 2. Managing Student Behavior 3. Classroom Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professional Demeanor and Ethics 2. Goal Setting 3. Professional Development 4. School Community Involvement |

| RECOMMENDATIONS |
|--|
| BASED ON BEST PRACTICES |
| Multiple observations – formal and informal |
| Observations should be lesson length (beginning middle and end) |
| At least one announced and one unannounced observation |
| Post conference within 48 hours in-person |
| Pre-conferences should take place for all announced observations |

PLANNING DIMENSION 1.1

Standards and Alignment

The teacher designs clear, well-organized, sequential lessons that reflect best practice, align with standards and are appropriate for diverse learners.
Standards Basis: 1A, 1B, 3A, 3B, 3C

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

Instructional Planning Includes:

- All rigorous and measurable goals aligned to state content standards.
- All activities, materials and assessments that:
 - are logically sequenced
 - are relevant to students' prior understanding and real-world applications
 - integrate and reinforce concepts from other disciplines
 - provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, lesson and lesson closure
 - deepen understanding of broader unit and course objectives
 - are vertically aligned to state standards
 - are appropriate for diverse learners
- Objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal, providing relevant and enriching extensions of the lesson.
- Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s).

Instructional Planning Includes:

- All measurable goals aligned to state content standards.
- All activities, materials and assessments that:
 - are sequenced
 - are relevant to students' prior understanding
 - integrate other disciplines
 - provide appropriate time for student work, lesson and lesson closure
 - reinforce broader unit and course objectives
 - are vertically aligned to state standards
 - are appropriate for diverse learners
- All objectives aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal.
- Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s).

Instructional Planning Includes:

- All goals aligned to state content standards.
- All activities, materials and assessments that:
 - are relevant to students
 - provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure
 - fit into the broader unit and course objectives
 - are appropriate for diverse learners
- All objectives aligned to the lesson's goal.
- Integration of technology when applicable.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Most goals aligned to state content standards.
- Most activities, materials and assessments that:
 - are sequenced
 - sometimes provide appropriate time for lesson and lesson closure
- Lessons where most objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Few goals aligned to state content standards.
- Few activities, materials and assessments that:
 - are sequenced
 - rarely provide time for lesson and lesson closure
- Lessons where few objectives are aligned and sequenced to the lesson's goal.

Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes



PLANNING DIMENSION 1.2

Data and Assessment

The teacher uses formal and informal methods to measure student progress, then manages and analyzes student data to inform instruction.
Standards Basis: 1B, 1F, 2B, 2C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students, shares appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessment data with students to engage them in self-assessment, build awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and track their own progress.
- Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals and engages with colleagues to adapt school-wide instructional strategies and goals to meet student needs while maintaining confidentiality.
- Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students and incorporate appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessments data into lesson plans.
- Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and other school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals, while maintaining student confidentiality.
- Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and use of results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students.
- Consistent feedback to students, families and other school personnel while maintaining confidentiality.
- Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of most students.
- Timely feedback to students and families.
- Utilization of multiple sources of student data.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Few formal and informal assessments to monitor student progress.
- Few opportunities for timely feedback to students or families.
- Utilization of few sources of student data.



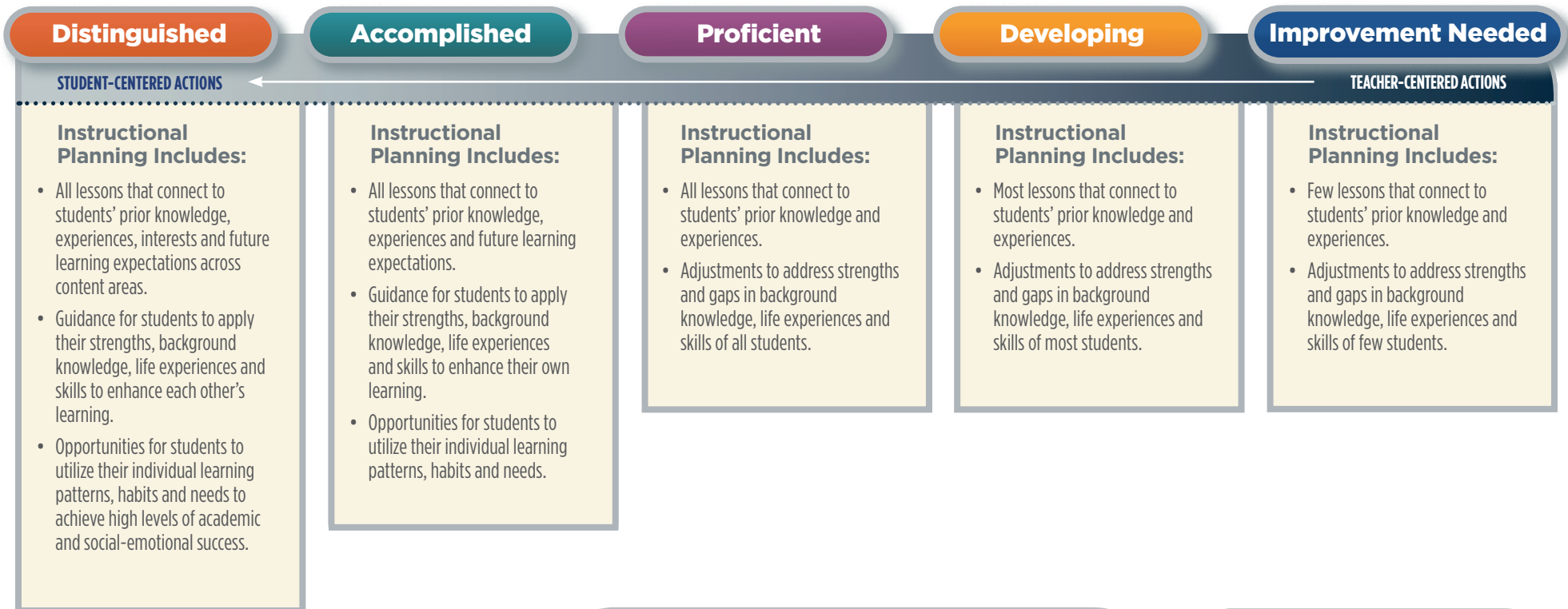
Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

PLANNING DIMENSION 1.3

Knowledge of Students

Through knowledge of students and proven practices, the teacher ensures high levels of learning, social-emotional development and achievement for all students.
Standards Basis: 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

PLANNING DIMENSION 1.4

Activities

The teacher plans engaging, flexible lessons that encourage higher-order thinking, persistence and achievement.

Standards Basis: 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application.
- Instructional groups based on the needs of all students, and allows for students to take ownership of group and individual accountability.
- The ability for all students to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups.
- Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students and actively engage them in ownership of their learning.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking and problem solving.
- Instructional groups based on the needs of all students and maintains both group and individual accountability.
- All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups and facilitates opportunities for student input on goals and outcomes of activities.
- Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Questions that encourage all students to engage in complex, higher-order thinking.
- Instructional groups based on the needs of all students.
- All students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups.
- Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Questions that promote limited, predictable or rote responses and encourage some complex, higher-order thinking.
- Instructional groups based on the needs of most students.
- Most students understanding their individual roles within instructional groups.
- Activities, resources, technology and/or instructional materials that are mostly aligned to instructional purposes.

Instructional Planning Includes:

- Encourages little to no complex, higher-order thinking.
- Instructional groups based on the needs of a few students.
- Lack of student understanding of their individual roles within instructional groups.
- Activities, resources, technology and/or instructional materials misaligned to instructional purposes.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

INSTRUCTION DIMENSION 2.1

Achieving Expectations

The teacher supports all learners in their pursuit of high levels of academic and social-emotional success.

Standards Basis: 1B, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2C, 3B, 4A, 4D, 5B

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS ←

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

The Teacher

- Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves.
- Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that all students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
- Provides opportunities for students to self-monitor and self-correct mistakes.
- Systematically enables students to set goals for themselves and monitor their progress over time.

The Teacher

- Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves.
- Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
- Anticipates student mistakes and encourages students to avoid common learning pitfalls.
- Establishes systems where students take initiative of their own learning and self-monitor.

The Teacher

- Sets academic expectations that challenge all students.
- Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that most students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
- Addresses student mistakes and follows through to ensure student mastery.
- Provides students opportunities to take initiative of their own learning.

The Teacher

- Sets academic expectations that challenge most students.
- Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that some students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
- Sometimes addresses student mistakes.
- Sometimes provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.

The Teacher

- Sets expectations that challenge few students.
- Concludes the lesson even though there is evidence that few students demonstrate mastery of the objective.
- Allows student mistakes to go unaddressed or confronts student errors in a way that discourages further effort.
- Rarely provides opportunities for students to take initiative of their own learning.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

INSTRUCTION DIMENSION 2.2

Content Knowledge and Expertise

The teacher uses content and pedagogical expertise to design and execute lessons aligned with state standards, related content and student needs.

Standards Basis: 1A, 1C, 1E, 1F, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

The Teacher

- Displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches and closely related subjects.
- Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines, content areas and real-world experience.
- Consistently anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns.
- Consistently provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).
- Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline, the state standards, related content and within real-world scenarios.

The Teacher

- Conveys a depth of content knowledge that allows for differentiated explanations.
- Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines and real-world experiences.
- Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops teaching techniques to mitigate concerns.
- Regularly provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).
- Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.

The Teacher

- Conveys accurate content knowledge in multiple contexts.
- Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines.
- Anticipates possible student misunderstandings.
- Provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).
- Accurately reflects how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline and the state standards.

The Teacher

- Conveys accurate content knowledge.
- Sometimes integrates learning objectives with other disciplines.
- Sometimes anticipates possible student misunderstandings.
- Sometimes provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).

The Teacher

- Conveys inaccurate content knowledge that leads to student confusion.
- Rarely integrates learning objectives with other disciplines.
- Does not anticipate possible student misunderstandings.
- Provides few opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

INSTRUCTION DIMENSION 2.3

Communication

The teacher clearly and accurately communicates to support persistence, deeper learning and effective effort.

Standards Basis: 1D, 1E, 2A, 3A, 4D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

The Teacher

- Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate safely and effectively using a variety of tools and methods with the teacher and their peers.
- Uses possible student misunderstandings at strategic points in lessons to highlight misconceptions and inspire exploration and discovery.
- Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct.
- Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that require a deeper learning and broader understanding of the objective of the lesson.
- Skillfully balances wait time, questioning techniques and integration of student responses to support student-directed learning.
- Skillfully provokes and guides discussion to pique curiosity and inspire student-led learning of meaningful and challenging content.

The Teacher

- Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to communicate effectively, including the use of visual tools and technology, with the teacher and their peers.
- Anticipates possible student misunderstandings and proactively develops techniques to address obstacles to learning.
- Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct.
- Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke thought and discussion.
- Skillfully uses probing questions to clarify, elaborate and extend learning.
- Provides wait time when questioning students.

The Teacher

- Establishes classroom practices that provide opportunities for most students to communicate effectively with the teacher and their peers.
- Recognizes student misunderstandings and responds with an array of teaching techniques to clarify concepts.
- Provides explanations that are clear and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct.
- Asks remember, understand and apply level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson and provoke discussion.
- Uses probing questions to clarify and elaborate learning.

The Teacher

- Leads lessons with some opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration.
- Recognizes student misunderstandings but has a limited ability to respond.
- Uses verbal and written communication that is generally clear with minor errors of grammar.
- Asks remember and understand level questions that focus on the objective of the lesson but do little to amplify discussion.

The Teacher

- Directs lessons with little opportunity for dialogue, clarification or elaboration.
- Is sometimes unaware of or unresponsive to student misunderstandings.
- Uses verbal communication that is characterized by inaccurate grammar; written communication that has inaccurate spelling, grammar, punctuation or structure.
- Rarely asks questions, or asks questions that do not amplify discussion or align to the objective of the lesson.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

INSTRUCTION DIMENSION 2.4

Differentiation

The teacher differentiates instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs.

Standards Basis: 1C, 1F, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3C, 4A, 5A, 5C, 5D

| Distinguished | Accomplished | Proficient | Developing | Improvement Needed |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS ← | | | TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS | |
| <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts lessons with a wide variety of instructional strategies to address individual needs of all students. Consistently monitors the quality of student participation and performance. Always provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. Consistently prevents student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. Regularly provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. Proactively minimizes student confusion or disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts lessons to address individual needs of all students. Regularly monitors the quality of student participation and performance. Provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught. Recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and responds to student learning or social/emotional needs. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapts lessons to address some student needs. Sometimes monitors the quality of student participation and performance. Sometimes provides differentiated instructional methods and content. Sometimes recognizes when students become confused or disengaged and minimally responds to student learning or social/emotional needs. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides one-size-fits-all lessons without meaningful differentiation. Rarely monitors the quality of student participation and performance. Rarely provides differentiated instructional methods and content. Does not recognize when students become confused or disengaged, or does not respond appropriately to student learning or social/emotional needs. |



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

INSTRUCTION DIMENSION 2.5

Monitor and Adjust

The teacher formally and informally collects, analyzes and uses student progress data and makes needed lesson adjustments.

Standards Basis: 1D, 1F, 2B, 2C, 3B, 4D, 5C, 5D

| Distinguished | Accomplished | Proficient | Developing | Improvement Needed |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS ← | | | TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS | |
| <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematically gathers input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities or pacing to respond to differences in student needs. Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. Uses discreet and explicit checks for understanding through questioning and academic feedback. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities and pacing to respond to differences in student needs. Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. Continually checks for understanding through purposeful questioning and academic feedback. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently invites input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. Adjusts instruction and activities to maintain student engagement. Monitors student behavior and responses for engagement and understanding. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. Adjusts some instruction within a limited range. Sees student behavior but misses some signs of disengagement. Is aware of most student responses but misses some clues of misunderstanding. | <p>The Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely utilizes input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction and activities. Persists with instruction or activities that do not engage students. Generally does not link student behavior and responses with student engagement and understanding. Makes no attempts to engage students who appear disengaged or disinterested. |



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Growth Processes
- Analysis of Student Data

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION 3.1

Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures

The teacher organizes a safe, accessible and efficient classroom.

Standards Basis:
1D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that primarily rely on student leadership and responsibility.
- Students take primary leadership and responsibility for managing student groups, supplies, and/or equipment.
- The classroom is safe and thoughtfully designed to engage, challenge and inspire students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives.

- Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that she or he implements effortlessly.
- Students take some responsibility for managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment.
- The classroom is safe, inviting and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to all students.

- All procedures, routines and transitions are clear and efficient.
- Students actively participate in groups, manage supplies and equipment with very limited teacher direction.
- The classroom is safe and organized to support learning objectives and is accessible to most students.

- Most procedures, routines and transitions provide clear direction but others are unclear and inefficient.
- Students depend on the teacher to direct them in managing student groups, supplies and/or equipment.
- The classroom is safe and accessible to most students, but is disorganized and cluttered.

- Few procedures and routines guide student behavior and maximize learning. Transitions are characterized by confusion and inefficiency.
- Students often do not understand what is expected of them.
- The classroom is unsafe, disorganized and uncomfortable.
- Some students are not able to access materials.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Analysis of Student Data

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION 3.2: The teacher establishes, communicates and maintains clear expectations for student behavior.

Managing Student Behavior

Standards Basis: 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D

| Distinguished | Accomplished | Proficient | Developing | Improvement Needed |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS | | | TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently monitors behavior subtly, reinforces positive behaviors appropriately and intercepts misbehavior fluidly. Students and the teacher create, adopt and maintain classroom behavior standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently encourages and monitors student behavior subtly and responds to misbehavior swiftly. Most students know, understand and respect classroom behavior standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system proficiently. Most students meet expected classroom behavior standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistently implements the campus and/or classroom behavior system. Student failure to meet expected classroom behavior standards interrupts learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rarely or unfairly enforces campus or classroom behavior standards. Student behavior impedes learning in the classroom. |



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Analysis of Student Data

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DIMENSION 3.3

Classroom Culture

The teacher leads a mutually respectful and collaborative class of actively engaged learners.
Standards Basis:
1E, 1F, 3B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Consistently engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests and abilities to create a positive rapport amongst students.
- Students collaborate positively and encourage each other's efforts and achievements.

- Engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning, sometimes adjusting lessons based on student interests and abilities.
- Students collaborate positively with each other and the teacher.

- Engages all students in relevant, meaningful learning.
- Students work respectfully individually and in groups.

- Establishes a learning environment where most students are engaged in the curriculum.
- Students are sometimes disrespectful of each other.

- Establishes a learning environment where few students are engaged in the curriculum.
- Students are disrespectful of each other and of the teacher.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Analysis of Student Data

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DIMENSION 4.1

Professional Demeanor and Ethics

The teacher meets district expectations for attendance, professional appearance, decorum, procedural, ethical, legal and statutory responsibilities.

Standards Basis: 6B, 6C, 6D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Models all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) across the campus and district for educators and students.
- Advocates for the needs of all students in the classroom and campus.

- Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Models all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) within the classroom.
- Advocates for the needs of all students in the classroom.

- Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Meets all professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors).
- Advocates for the needs of students in the classroom.

- Behaves in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Meets most professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors).

- Fails to meet the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.
- Meets few professional standards (e.g., attendance, professional appearance and behaviors) or violates legal requirements.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher
- Formal Observations/Walkthroughs
- Classroom Artifacts
- Analysis of Student Data
- Daily Interaction with Others

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DIMENSION 4.2

Goal Setting

The teacher reflects on his/her practice.

Standards Basis: 5D, 6A, 6B

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Consistently sets, modifies and meets short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection, peer and supervisor feedback, contemporary research and analysis of student learning.
- Implements substantial changes in practice resulting in significant improvement in student performance.

- Sets some short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection, peer and supervisor feedback, contemporary research and analysis of student learning.
- Meets all professional goals resulting in improvement in practice and student performance.

- Sets short- and long-term professional goals based on self-assessment, reflection and supervisor feedback.
- Meets all professional goals resulting in improvement in practice and student performance.

- Sets short-term goals based on self-assessment.
- Meets most professional goals resulting in some visible changes in practice.

- Sets low or ambiguous goals unrelated to student needs or self-assessment.
- Meets few professional goals and persists in instructional practices that remain substantially unimproved over time.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan (GSPD)
- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher, Including the End-of-Year Conference
- Analysis of Student Data

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DIMENSION 4.3

Professional Development

The teacher enhances the professional community.

Standards Basis: 3A, 6A, 6B, 6C

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Leads colleagues collaboratively in and beyond the school to identify professional development needs through detailed data analysis and self-reflection.
- Seeks resources and collaboratively fosters faculty knowledge and skills.
- Develops and fulfills the school and district improvement plans through professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team leadership, committee leadership or other opportunities beyond the campus.

- Leads colleagues collaboratively on campus to identify professional development needs through self-reflection.
- Fosters faculty knowledge and skills in support of the school improvement plan through professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team leadership, committee membership or other opportunities beyond the campus.

- Collaboratively practices in all scheduled professional development activities, campus professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team membership, committee membership or other opportunities.

- Engages in most scheduled activities, professional learning communities, committee, grade- or subject-level team meetings as directed.

- Engages in few professional development activities, professional learning communities or committees to improve professional practice.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan (GSPD)
- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher, Including the End-of-Year Conference
- Analysis of Student Data
- Daily Interaction with Others

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DIMENSION 4.4

School Community Involvement

The teacher demonstrates leadership with students, colleagues, and community members in the school, district and community through effective communication and outreach.

Standards Basis:

2A, 2B, 4A, 4D, 5B, 6B, 6C, 6D

Distinguished

Accomplished

Proficient

Developing

Improvement Needed

STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS

TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS

- Systematically contacts parents/guardians regarding students' academic and social/emotional growth through various methods.
- Initiates collaborative efforts that enhance student learning and growth.
- Leads students, colleagues, families and community members toward reaching the mission, vision and goals of the school.

- Systematically contacts parents/guardians regarding students' academic and social/emotional growth through various methods.
- Joins colleagues in collaborative efforts that enhance student learning and welfare.
- Clearly communicates the mission, vision and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families, and other community members.

- Contacts parents/guardians regularly regarding students' academic and social/emotional growth.
- Actively participates in all school outreach activities
- Communicates the mission, vision and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families.

- Contacts parents/guardians in accordance with campus policy.
- Attends most required school outreach activities.
- Communicates school goals to students, parents and families.

- Contacts parents generally about disciplinary matters.
- Attends few required school outreach activities.



Possible Sources of Evidence:

- Conferences and Conversations with the Teacher, Including the End-of-Year Conference
- Classroom Artifacts
- Student Data
- Daily Interaction with Others

RUBRIC WORD BANK

with example qualifiers that are interchangeably used:

| DIMENSION EXAMPLE: | Distinguished | Accomplished | Proficient | Developing | Improvement Needed |
|---|----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS ← | | | TEACHER-CENTERED ACTIONS | |
| LEARNING ENVIRONMENT CLASSROOM CULTURE | ALL | ALL | ALL | MOST | FEW |
| LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR | CONSISTENTLY | CONSISTENTLY | CONSISTENTLY | INCONSISTENTLY | RARELY |
| INSTRUCTION ACHIEVING EXPECTATIONS | ALL | MOST | MOST | SOME | FEW |
| INSTRUCTION CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE | CONSISTENTLY | REGULARLY | DOES (ACTION) | SOMETIMES | FEW |
| INSTRUCTION DIFFERENTIATION | ALWAYS | REGULARLY | DOES (ACTION) | SOMETIMES | DOES NOT (ACTION) |

Planning Instruction

One of the main precursors of a successful lesson is a well-developed lesson plan. When planning, teachers should begin by identifying the student learning outcomes: exactly what the student is expected to learn and the evidence of mastery. The instructional plan is a tool to guide instruction and focus the lesson. When instructional plans are sequenced from basic to complex, and build upon prior knowledge and deepen understanding, learning is relevant, organized and comprehensible. The goal is to develop a quality lesson plan with rigor that promotes learning for all students.

Time spent developing strong lesson plans yields many benefits. Lesson plans contribute to better-managed classrooms and more effective and efficient learning experiences for students. Individual schools can reach consensus on critical elements that should be included in each teacher's lesson plan. This should be determined at the school level based on individual school needs. There is no formal or recommended lesson plan template. Local schools and districts will determine what the lesson plan requirements are for the Planning domain rating process.

How is Evidence Collected for Designing and Planning Instruction?

Evidence is collected for this domain before, during, and even after an observation has been conducted. It is critical for evidence to be collected in this comprehensive manner in order to give teachers a clear picture of how to effectively design and plan for instruction. Some appraisers have the misconception that the lesson plan and the pre-conference (if applicable) are the only places to gather evidence. Again, to truly observe how teachers plan for instruction, evidence must be also gathered before, during, and even following an observation.

Before the Lesson

The lesson plan is used by the appraiser to gather information about what the teacher has planned to accomplish in the lesson being observed. If the observation is announced, the lesson plan is used to guide the planning of the pre-conference. This is done so that the appraiser can identify the questions that need to be asked to gain clarity about what is happening in the lesson, as well as possible places within the lesson where the teacher may need to reflect upon the way he/she is planning to teach the lesson concepts and skills. After all, the pre-conference is intended to help teachers become more reflective practitioners. It allows the teacher an opportunity to mentally rehearse the lesson that he/she is planning to teach. The pre-conference should be scheduled before the announced observation of the lesson. If a lesson is unannounced, then the pre-conference could be scheduled over the course of an observation window if a window is given for the unannounced observation.

The goal is for teachers to become more reflective practitioners. Reflecting on the lessons that will be taught (lesson plan and pre-conference) and reflecting on the lessons that have already been taught (post-conference) will ultimately strengthen the quality of teaching that educators provide to students on a daily basis.

The evidence that is gleaned from reviewing the lesson plan and from the pre-conference is used to support the dimensions/descriptors from the Planning domain. When reviewing lesson plans to identify the questions that may need to be asked in a pre-conference, the following guiding questions may be helpful to appraisers to assist them in framing the questions they will ask.

- What should the students know and be able to do by the end of the lesson?
- What will the teacher and students be doing to show progress toward mastery of the objective(s)?
- How will the teacher know that students have mastered the objective(s)?

It is important to note that even after reviewing the lesson plan extensively and conducting the pre-conference on an announced lesson, appraisers are not yet able to rate the lesson appropriately, as evidence for this domain should also be gathered during the lesson in order to determine if the teacher has effectively executed their lesson plan.

During the Lesson

As a result of quality planning, lessons have a clear beginning, middle and end, and are scaffolded to follow a logical progression of basic to complex. A well-designed lesson, where appropriate planning time has been devoted, contributes to higher quality, student-centered learning experiences that are challenging and an efficient and effective learning environment where students assume responsibility for their own learning. During classroom instruction, this allows teachers to focus on the execution of the lesson and the impact on student outcomes. Likewise, the observation allows the appraiser to compare how the lesson was planned, to how the lesson is executed during classroom instruction. This is an opportunity for the appraiser to collect evidence regarding the effectiveness of planning and what was discussed during the pre-conference.

Evidence of effective planning should be gathered by the appraiser during the lesson and then be used to rate the dimensions using the descriptors from the Planning domain. Appraisers should see that planning was effective as evidenced by the instruction that is ultimately provided. Appraisers must always ask themselves, “Was the teacher’s planning at the level it needed to be in order to support the students’ mastery of the learning objective in the lesson itself?”

After the Lesson

Following the lesson, appraisers may still need additional evidence for some of the dimensions/descriptors in the Planning domain. For example, appraisers need to examine the student work produced within the lesson and, perhaps, may need clarity as to how the student work will be assessed by the teacher to assess student progress and determine next steps for instruction. This may be especially important for unannounced observations that do not include a pre-conference.

Protocols should be established by the school or district to guide the process for collecting evidence following the lesson. These actions ensure consistency among the team of appraisers; yet, the evidence should be linked to this specific lesson observation. Typically, teachers appreciate the fact that appraisers want to give them the best possible snapshot of their teaching and welcome the questions that may need to be asked. Once evidence has been gathered, appraisers can then assign ratings.

PLANNING

Explanation of the T-TESS Rubric

This section includes resources and information on the four dimensions of the Planning domain:

Planning effective lessons aligned to the standards is dependent upon the teacher's ability to create and communicate clearly defined learning outcomes or objectives appropriate for the students. A teacher must have access to the necessary resources with which to familiarize themselves, in order to effectively utilize the state content standards. In many ways this dimension is the foundation for all other dimensions, because if the teacher is not clear about what he or she wants students to know and be able to do as a result of the lesson, the balance of the lesson cannot be properly developed or implemented.

| PLANNING |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Standards and Alignment2. Data and Assessment3. Knowledge of Students4. Activities |

| DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING INCLUDES: | |
|--|---|
| STANDARDS AND ALIGNMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All rigorous and measurable goals aligned to state content standards.• All activities, materials and assessments that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ are logically sequenced◦ are relevant to students' prior understanding and real-world applications◦ integrate and reinforce concepts from other disciplines◦ provide appropriate time for student work, student reflection, lesson and lesson closure◦ deepen understanding of broader unit and course objectives◦ are vertically aligned to state standards◦ are appropriate for diverse learners• Objectives that are aligned and logically sequenced to the lesson's goal, providing relevant and enriching extensions of the lesson.• Integration of technology to enhance mastery of goal(s). |
| | MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS |

STANDARDS AND ALIGNMENT

The teacher must ensure that he or she establishes rigorous and measurable goals aligned to state content standards for all lessons. Both the students and the teacher should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson and the purpose for what takes place.

For this to occur, a teacher must first clearly define the learning objective for the lesson and then maintain the focus of the lesson on this objective, which may require teachers to redirect students' comments. The sequencing of the lesson relates to the sub-objectives that are taught within a lesson. Sub-objectives should be taught or reviewed in an appropriate sequence for the grade level and ability of the students. The segmenting of the lesson relates to the pacing of the lesson. An effective teacher will provide sufficient time for the introduction of the lesson, the instruction within the lesson, the student activities, and closure. Although these may be embedded within each other during a given lesson, the segmenting of the lesson allows sufficient time for each to take place so that students can have opportunities to master the learning objective.

It is also important for teachers to assist students in making correlations between how one content area connects to, and reinforces concepts from, other disciplines. For example, when measuring or creating graphs in science, a teacher may make connections to math with an emphasis on the math vocabulary that students are learning. In literature classes, connections may be made for what is being read and a historical time period students may be studying in social studies. It is important to make such connections to other disciplines significant and meaningful to students. The descriptors under this dimension directly connect to the Instruction domain.

Differentiated instruction methods that are demanding for every student and create opportunities for all students to experience success can be implemented only when a teacher's knowledge of students is developed and utilized during instruction. When a

teacher sets high and demanding expectations for every student, he/she is also able to develop and/or select activities and materials that are challenging.

This dimension addresses the variety and appropriateness of activities and materials that a teacher chooses to implement during a lesson. By using a variety of materials and activities, teachers are able to address various learning styles and intelligences. Therefore, the criteria used by teachers in choosing materials and activities should be those that clearly support the lesson objectives and are related to the needs of the students. Therefore, this dimension is closely related to Differentiation, Activities, and Knowledge of Students. In order to plan appropriate activities and materials, a teacher must have knowledge of the needs and interests of the students.

A teacher must be able to create a safe learning environment in which students' efforts are reinforced and valued in order for students to experience success. For a teacher to optimize instructional time, he/she must be able to implement lessons that include appropriate lesson structure and pacing for students who progress at different learning rates.

Example 1:

The teacher says: "Our goal is to be able to draw conclusions and make inferences in oral and written responses about ideas and information in texts, including:

- nonfiction works
- short stories/novels
- five-act plays
- poetry/epics
- film/visual texts

Today, we will focus on drawing conclusions in writing using a poem, "The Sparrow." Based on yesterday's lesson, what might this entail? How might we accomplish this objective? As you draw conclusions, how will you defend your thinking?"

This example demonstrates how the teacher plans questions for students to ensure their understanding of the objective and the focus for the lesson.

The teacher will reference the objective and overarching goal or standard throughout the lesson by using questioning to bring students into the process.

Example 2:

A teacher may model his/her thought process as he/she makes a connection to a specific topic and then leads students to do this through questioning. It may also be accomplished through group projects based on real-life scenarios. For example, students learning measurement may calculate the amount of carpet or paint needed to redecorate their room.

Students learning about the Great Depression may research how policies from Roosevelt's New Deal continue to affect them today.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Standards and Alignment

- How do you decide on the standards/objectives you will teach?
- How do you decide on the method you will use to communicate the standards/objectives to students?
- Why is it important to display the standard/objective for a lesson?
- How do you design activities, materials and assessments that are logically sequenced?
- How do your activities, materials and assessments integrate and reinforce concepts from other disciplines?
- Why is it important to reference that display throughout the lesson?
- How do you communicate your expectations to the students?
- How do you know that your lesson goals are measurable?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?

Additional Resources

Applebee, A. N., Adler, M., & Flihan, S. (2007). Interdisciplinary Curricula in Middle and High School Classrooms: Case Studies of Approaches to Curriculum and Instruction.

American Educational Research Journal, 44(4), 1002–1039.

Meece, J. L., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2006). Classroom goal structure, student motivation and academic achievement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 487–503.

Seidel, T., Rimmele, R., & Prenzel, M. (2005). Clarity and coherence of lesson goals as a scaffold for student learning. *Learning and Instruction*, 15(6), 539–556.



Data and Assessment

Effective assessment is a fundamental part of teaching and learning. The goal of this section is to provide information and examples to help expand knowledge of data and assessment. An effective assessment plan answers the questions, “What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?” and, “How do I know the students learned what I taught?” When these questions are asked and answered regularly, the teacher can effectively plan, diagnose and intervene on a continual basis to raise student achievement.

This dimension focuses on how teachers use formal and informal data and assessments to assess student progress and growth in relation to the instructional goals and content objectives.

Teachers review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure progress and growth, then adjust instructional strategies and lesson delivery, as necessary, to ensure that students are successful in mastering the learning expectations. The descriptors address the quality of the feedback in supporting

student learning, as opposed to feedback that informs students only of the accurateness of their responses. Additionally, these descriptors address how a teacher uses student feedback to make adjustments in instruction.

Checklist for Determining Quality of Feedback

- Feedback relates to the lesson objective or sub-objective.
- Feedback causes students to think.
- Feedback is specific.
- Feedback is timely.
- Feedback is varied to meet the unique needs of the students and classroom.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| DATA AND ASSESSMENT | DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING INCLUDES: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students, shares appropriate diagnostic, formative and summative assessment data with students to engage them in self-assessment, build awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and track their own progress.• Substantive, specific and timely feedback to students, families and school personnel on the growth of students in relation to classroom and campus goals and engages with colleagues to adapt school-wide instructional strategies and goals to meet student needs while maintaining confidentiality.• Analysis of student data connected to specific instructional strategies and uses results to reflect on his or her teaching and to monitor teaching strategies and behaviors in relation to student success. <p>MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Example 1:

Lesson Objective: Students will analyze informational text to identify cause-and-effect relationships.

Assessment: Using a social studies text, students analyze a given passage for examples of cause and effect. Students must justify how and why the examples chosen are cause-and-effect relationships.

Example 2:

There is a clearly defined rubric developed prior to the assignment being given. These criteria could be established by the teacher with student support. Therefore, students would understand the difference between rating a one or five in a particular category of the rubric prior to beginning the assignment.

Example 3:

When assessing students' understanding of the Revolutionary War, the teacher offers students a choice of mastery representation.

Choice 1: Song or Poem

Create a song or poem about a specific person significant to the Revolutionary War. You can use modern music as your background. Record it as a podcast to share on our website. You will also need to turn in a copy of the lyrics or poem.

Choice 2: Oral History/Costume

Become a part of the Revolution. Choose a person to share with your classmates. Come to school dressed as your person of choice. Talk in their manner, explain why they are significant or tell their stories.

Example 4:

Choose to represent the Patriots or the Loyalists. Research the beliefs and causes of your party choice. Write a speech persuading a group either to join your cause or to protest the Revolution. State your solutions to the obstacles your party faces. Deliver your speech in front of the class or record it using a voice recorder. You will need to turn in a copy of the speech. Oral presentation and the written speech will be evaluated based on the rubric created in class.

Example 5:

Examples of performance checks may include:

- Running Records
- Daily Quick Checks of Sub-Objective
- Pre/Post Assessments
- Quick Writes
- Journaling

Suggested Coaching Questions: Data and Assessment

- How was the criteria used in developing or selecting the assessment(s)?
- How did you decide on the types of assessments needed to evaluate student learning?
- How did the assessment(s) used accommodate the needs and interests of individual students?
- How will the results of the assessment(s) be used to impact future instruction?
- How will you determine the type of feedback to provide to students?
- How were the criteria for rating student work communicated and modeled to students?
- Why is it important to clearly communicate the criteria for student work to students prior to their completion of the assignment?
- Why is it important to model expectations for performance as well as communicate expectations to students?
- How were the criteria for student work aligned to the standards and high-stakes test? Why is it important that they are aligned?

Additional Resources

Black, P., Haxrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B., Wiliam, D. "Working inside the black box: Assessment for learning in the classroom." Phi Delta Kappan, Vol, 86, 2004. Available at the following link: http://datause.cse.ucla.edu/DOCS/pb_wor_2004.pdf



Knowledge of Students

This dimension focuses on teachers having a strong understanding of the students they teach, their educational and developmental backgrounds, and individual learning needs. In highly effective classrooms, there is a direct connection between students' learning needs and how the teacher implements proven practices to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development and achievement for all students. Effective teachers incorporate varied strategies in lesson design to assess what students already know and the experiences they bring to the lesson, using this information as a basis for connecting new learning.

For content to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a clearly communicated purpose for student learning. This dimension shows a clear link between Standards and Alignment, Achieving Expectations, and Content Knowledge and Expertise dimensions. Students also need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is important for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their own lives. Lessons that allow students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills enhance the lesson content and motivation for students to learn.

Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity and exploration provide opportunities for students to generate questions and conduct their own research or explore to locate the answers. Finally, when students have opportunities to generate their own questions about a given topic and individualize their learning habits, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes student directed, rather than teacher directed.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS | DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING INCLUDES: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All lessons that connect to students' prior knowledge, life experiences, interests and future learning expectations across content areas.• Guidance for students to apply their strengths, background knowledge, life experiences and skills to enhance each other's learning.• Opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs to achieve high levels of academic and social-emotional success. <p>MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Example 1:

A teacher presents a lesson on immigration during the 1860s. She brings in current newspaper articles on immigrants and refugees moving to the United States. Students also interview individuals who have immigrated to the United States.

These activities make the content studied relevant to the students' lives and personally meaningful. Students also have the opportunity to develop their own questions to ask during the interviews, which provide experiences that value inquiry. This example also provides a real-world application of immigration.

Example 2:

A lesson begins with students looking at a visual and generating a list of topics that may be the focus for the new unit of study. Once the class has identified the new learning (example: poverty-stricken nations), they develop a list of questions that will be addressed as the unit of study progresses. To promote ownership, students will put their initials next to the questions they developed. Questions are charted and as the unit of study progresses, connections are made to the student-generated questions.

Example 3:

A teacher presents a lesson on measurement. Students design a new school cafeteria applying the measurement skills taught. An architect speaks to the students and explains how measurement is used in his profession.

Example 4:

The teacher is introducing two-digit multiplication set in simple word problems. The lesson begins with the teacher posing the question, "What is the meaning of multiplication?"

Students record their thoughts on dry-erase boards. The teacher calls "show me" and all students hold up their boards. Responses are discussed before moving into the lesson.

Before presenting the lesson, the teacher puts this problem on the board: 6×34 . The teacher then asks the students, "What would you do to solve this problem?" Knowing that students struggle with this concept, the teacher opened the lesson with the questions above to assess understanding as well as provide opportunities for students to experience various methods of addressing the problem.

Students are given time to work through the problem with their shoulder partner, recording the work on a dry-erase board. Each pair shares their work with the other pair in the team (small group) and the team decides on one method of working the problem to present to the class. (Teams are formed, mixed by ability to maximize peer support and/or mastery.)

The teacher chooses one student from each team to present their method of solving the problem. Based on student need, the teacher uses manipulatives and builds models (cubes/base 10 strips, drawings) to show the process of multiplication visually. Students are provided problems set in real-life scenarios for continued guided and independent practice. These problems are solved using the manipulatives and talking through the process with a partner. Students complete two or three problems independently, knowing that the manipulatives are available if needed.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Knowledge of Students

- How do you identify the learning styles of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you identify the interests of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?
- How do you organize the content of a lesson so that it is meaningful and relevant to the students?
- How do you develop learning experiences that provide opportunities for students to ask questions and explore?
- How do you reinforce and reward the efforts of all students?
- Why is it important for students to have opportunities to develop their own questions and explore for the answers?
- How do you provide opportunities for students to utilize their individual learning patterns, habits and needs?
- How does student motivation impact student achievement?

Additional Resources

Costa, Arthur L., & Kallick, Bena (Eds.). *Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2009.

Hidi, S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2000). Motivating the academically unmotivated: A critical issue for the 21st century. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(2), 151–179.

McTighe, J., & Brown, J. L. (2005). Differentiated instruction and educational standards: Is detente possible? *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 234–244.

Activities

The Activities dimension addresses opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application. Questioning is an art form that reveals a great deal about a teacher's effectiveness. The rubric descriptors provide a basic framework for the types of questions to ask within a lesson and how teachers should lead students in responding to questions. In this way students will be empowered to generate questions of their own since they have observed a high quality model from their teacher.

The effective teacher has a strong ability to organize and present the content in a manner that motivates students to learn. As the last dimension in the Planning domain, this section focuses on how the teacher individually and collectively plans for engaging, flexible lessons that encourage higher-order thinking and increase levels of achievement for all learners. It addresses the variety and appropriateness of activities and materials that the teacher implements during the lesson.

The criteria used in choosing materials, and activities should clearly support the lesson objectives and relate to the needs of students. Planning includes activities, materials and resources that encourage students' persistence and best effort. A teacher may incorporate a variety of activities and materials within a lesson; however, they must be purposeful in supporting students in meeting the learning objective(s).

There are, therefore, direct connections between this dimension and the Instruction and Learning Environment domains. In addition, the learning environment features a high degree of student engagement through facilitated discussions, student-centered activities, as well as direct instruction which makes the learning clear and meaningful. In order to develop these types of learning experiences, the teacher must have an in-depth knowledge of the students. This dimension, therefore, connects strongly to Knowledge of Students, Standards and Alignment, and Content Knowledge and Expertise.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| ACTIVITIES | DISTINGUISHED INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING INCLUDES: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application.• Instructional groups based on the needs of all students, and allows for students to take ownership of group and individual accountability.• The ability for students to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups.• Activities, resources, technology and instructional materials that are all aligned to instructional purposes, are varied and appropriate to ability levels of students and actively engage them in ownership of their learning. <p style="text-align: center;">MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Example 1:

It may benefit teachers trying to include these descriptors in a lesson to write students' names on Popsicle sticks or strips of paper and pull a name to respond to questions asked.

Teachers may also assign numbers to students and use a deck of playing cards to call on students by their numbers. Students may also choose classmates to call upon. These types of methods help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised. Teachers may also have students respond to a partner before answering a question aloud for the whole class. This method can provide a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and sharing their answer with someone else. When providing wait time for students, it is important for the teacher to label this for students so that he/she may use the opportunity to teach students how to provide wait time for one another.

Example 2: The Ability for Students to Set Goals, Reflect On, Evaluate and Hold Each Other Accountable within Instructional Groups

During an observation, a teacher placed students into learning groups. Each group was expected to illustrate the results of the experiment and present recorded data. She assigned four roles to groups of four students. The roles of "time manager" and "encourager" had no relevant responsibilities, nor were they held accountable for the content. When she walked around, about half the students were not engaged in the activity.

As the teacher, a question to consider when planning grouping activities could have been: Can a student hide? In other words, the purpose of grouping within a lesson is to provide opportunities for students to process the content. If grouping activities/structures are not set up so that all students are held accountable for the content, how will mastery of the objective be accomplished? Roles and

responsibilities are not to be confused with "jobs."

Jobs in a classroom are important, but are more of a procedural routine than opportunities for providing equal time for every student to process the content being taught and for every student to be held accountable for the task assigned. Materials Manager, Encourager, Recorder, and Time Keeper are jobs that ensure that procedures are in place. The next time this teacher tried grouping, she looked at the learning objective for the lesson, identified all of the components needed for successful mastery and developed the group roles based on these components. By focusing on the learning objective, she was able to develop meaningful roles and divide the "work load" evenly. In addition, the teacher modeled the expectations for each role and provided a visual identifying the responsibilities for each individual role. There are four members in each group and the following structure guided the roles and responsibilities, assuring that all students are accountable for the content.

Students were numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and then the experiment was divided into steps or pieces. Student Number 1 thinks aloud to complete the first piece and records the data. At this point, the group may take about 1 to 2 minutes to share reflection/thoughts, with each student sharing about the same amount of time (Number 2 shares, then Number 3 and finally 4). Moving on to the next step, Number 2 takes the lead, thinking aloud and recording the information. Again, the group will reflect on what was done, each sharing about the same amount of time. This process continues until all of the experiment is complete. What occurs is that each student plays an equal role in getting the experiment complete and all are held accountable for the content. This time when the teacher circulated among the groups she noted full participation.

Questions to Ask when Designing Student Group and Individual Accountability

- What outcome do I expect students to accomplish by the end of each group session?
- How will I provide quality feedback on progress? By group? By individual?
- How will I record this information in a grade book and/or student record?
- Is this work expectation appropriate for small groups? Whole group? Individual?
- Are all students held accountable for the work or can a student “hide”?
- How will I ensure equal participation and accountability for all students?

Example 3: Group Work Expectations/ Groups and Individuals are Held Accountable

A teacher implemented group learning using centers in her classroom. She often did this, but complained about the noise. When her classroom was observed, it was evident how she could increase proficiency. Children moved from one center to another when the bell rang. There was no expectation for what the students were to accomplish at the centers. At once, she realized how important it was to have clear expectations and accountability for what students did in groups independently. By answering the questions above, she was able to construct reasonable outcomes for each center. She also provided feedback on student performance. A chart was also placed at each center. This chart provided ongoing feedback to students about what they needed to accomplish. The teacher was also able to provide valuable information to the parents.



Example 4: Instructional Groups Facilitate Opportunities For Students To Set Goals, Reflect On and Evaluate Their Learning

Before conducting an experiment, students are asked to individually develop a hypothesis, then, as a team, determine which hypothesis will help guide the experiment. Students will also work to set a goal or end result for their hypothesis. This will be done by using a structure where Number 1 suggests an outcome and all team members write it down, Number 2 suggests an outcome and all team members write it down, etc. This continues until the teacher sees that all groups have four to five thoughts written down. At the end of the lesson, the students will reflect on/review their hypothesis and outcomes to determine next steps. This will be done individually, and then reviewed as a team with students taking turns presenting their reflection to the group. The group may choose one reflection and plan for "next steps" from the team to present to the class. There must be a rationale for why students are grouped together. There are a variety of grouping patterns, including:

- Whole group (common when a new concept, skill or theme is introduced)
- Heterogeneously grouped by ability (common when students are processing or practicing content for mastery)

In this structure, the group is balanced as much as possible, having a high student, a middle-high student, a middle-low student and a low student. It is also important to consider discipline, special needs, ethnicity, gender and communication skills when forming groups.

Due to the thought that goes into this process, these students may stay together for a period of time (for example, five to seven weeks) before new teams are formed.

- Homogeneously grouped by ability (common when pulling together a small group to work on a specific skill in which students have demonstrated a weakness, or bringing together higher-level students who need to be challenged)
- By demographic balance
- By interest
- By ability to focus
- By ability to communicate
- By language acquisition levels

Regardless of how the grouping arrangements are developed, the grouping should maximize the learning for all students.

The ability of a teacher to group students in this manner is directly connected to his/her knowledge of the students and their individual needs, interests and abilities.



Example 5: Designing a Variety of Activities

A teacher assessed students and realized that they were experiencing difficulty in making inferences. Not only was this a critical reading comprehension skill, but it was also a skill tested on the standardized test. Her objective was: “By the end of this lesson, you will be able to identify details in text and use your own experiences to develop an appropriate inference.” Next, she looked at the descriptors related to content when she began to design her lesson. She designed her lesson with several activities:

- Students were to work in pairs to identify details from the text that connected to the inference question asked.
- Each student would think of an experience or prior knowledge they had that connected to the text and then pair/share this with a partner.
- Each student would complete a graphic organizer with this information.
- Each student would write the inference and include a reflection on how the process had been supportive in making an appropriate inference.

After the activities were designed, the teacher used select descriptors to be certain that students were involved in the referenced activities:

Support: The activities supported the objective for students to make an inference.

Thinking: She determined that when students are asked to infer, they are thinking at a higher level. Questions she was sure to ask were: “How did you develop your inference? Why was it appropriate?”

Reflection: There was time for reflection in the lesson when the students were told to reflect on how the process had supported them.

Relevant: By using their own experiences and/or background knowledge, the lesson became relevant to the students since they had opportunities to make connections to the text.

Interaction: Students also had opportunities for student-to-student interaction when they paired/shared.

Curiosity: Student curiosity and suspense would be provided as students would continue reading text or conducting research to learn if their inference was correct.

Choices: Students were provided choices for the connections they would make to the text and the supporting details they would identify that connected to the inference question.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Activities

- How do you decide on the types of resources you will use during a lesson?
- How do you decide on the types of activities you will use during a lesson?
- How do you develop activities that are aligned to the learning objective?
- Why is it important to provide opportunities for students to interact with other students during a lesson?
- How do you provide students the ability to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups?
- How do you structure your groups to meet the needs of all students?

- How do you provide opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application?
- Why is it important to plan activities that are challenging for students?
- Why is it important for students to reflect during the lesson?

Additional Resources

Costa, Arthur L., & Kallick, Bena (Eds.). Habits of Mind Across the Curriculum: Practical and Creative Strategies for Teachers. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2009.

Hidi, S., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (2000). Motivating the academically unmotivated: A critical issue for the 21st century. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(2), 151–179.



INSTRUCTION

Explanation of the T-TESS Rubric

This section includes resources and information on the five dimensions of the Instruction domain:

The ability to model the use of new information and the teacher’s expectations for student performance is one of the most important aspects of this dimension. Effective modeling is not merely explaining or telling students about the strategy or new learning, or about how to do it. Modeling requires thoughtful planning and the inclusion of a think-aloud that will give students the experience of the strategy so that they can better understand the thought process behind each step of the new learning.

The first tier of the model is showing students what the strategy would look like from a student’s perspective and presenting the strategy as if the teacher is a student doing the strategy. The second tier of the model is the teacher’s thought process (metacognition) as he/she goes through the strategy.

During this think-aloud or metacognition, the teacher is asking critical questions of students about why certain steps or critical pieces are being included and why they are important to include. By explaining the strategy and questioning students about their understanding of it, teachers can best anticipate and meet the needs of their students. In this way the students will truly understand how to achieve the expectations of the lesson and demonstrate mastery.

| INSTRUCTION |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Achieving Expectations2. Content Knowledge and Expertise3. Communication4. Differentiation5. Monitor and Adjust |

| ACHIEVING EXPECTATIONS | THE TEACHER: |
|------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunities for students to establish high academic and social-emotional expectations for themselves.• Persists with the lesson until there is evidence that all students demonstrate mastery of the objective.• Provides opportunities for students to self-monitor and self-correct mistakes.• Systematically enables students to set goals for themselves and monitor their progress over time. |
| | MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS |

ACHIEVING EXPECTATIONS

An effective teacher must be able to model desired outcomes. In order to model effectively, the teacher must be able to do the following:

- Know exactly what the expected outcome is
- Identify the critical elements of the desired outcome
- Create clearly defined steps so learners can achieve the desired outcome
- Provide examples for how the completed project/assignment should look

For a teacher to include the descriptors under Achieving Expectations, he/she must have knowledge of the students he/she is teaching. Differentiated instruction methods that are demanding for every student – and create opportunities for all students to experience success – can be implemented only when a teacher's knowledge of students is developed and utilized during instruction. When a teacher sets high and demanding expectations for every student, he/she is also able to develop and/or select activities and materials that are challenging.

When a teacher regularly reinforces and rewards efforts, students will be encouraged to learn from their mistakes and take risks which will enable them to self-monitor and, eventually, self-correct mistakes. A teacher must be able to create a safe learning environment in which student's efforts are reinforced and valued in order for students to experience success. For a teacher to optimize instructional time, he/she must be able to implement lessons that include appropriate lesson structure and pacing for students who progress at different learning rates.

The second descriptor is of paramount importance and focuses on what the students have learned, as opposed to what teachers have taught. Teachers must first know how evidence will be collected to show students' mastery of learning, including learning over time, as it relates to mastery of the

learning objectives. The key questions are, "What do I expect students to know and be able to do as a result of this lesson, and how will I know that this has happened?" This evidence is tied to both formal and informal data, assessments, and specific tools to measure learning.

In an effort to check for mastery in a given lesson, it is critical to plan so that mastery is possible. In other words, planning so that the objective is attainable in one lesson ensures that instruction is a scaffold for students. For multi-day assignments, there should still be a clear way to assess whether or not students showed mastery for each day's work. While the overall unit objective is still the overarching goal for the lesson(s), the teacher needs to have a way to assess student understanding on a consistent basis. This can be done through backward planning from the overall "unit" goal to the sub-objectives that need to be achieved in order to master the final goal.

Example 1:

The teacher says: "Today we are going to write a paragraph about a character in the story we just read. First, you will complete this graphic organizer. It will provide guidance in describing your character effectively. Next, you can write the paragraph. Use this paragraph checklist when you do your final edit."

This objective is very complex. It requires the student's ability to do many things other than the main objective of writing a paragraph. To what degree the sub-objectives must be taught may vary. As one might expect, there are times when what appeared to be a sub-objective becomes the lesson's objective based on the students' needs. Here are a few of the identifiable sub-objectives for this objective:

- To apply a paragraph format (prior learning)
- To be able to apply the pre-writing graphic organizer (sub-skill)
- To be able to identify the characteristics of characters from a text (sub-skill)
- To be able to access each item on the checklist (process)

Example 2:

The teacher says: "Our goal is to be able draw conclusions and make inferences in oral and written responses about ideas and information in texts, including:

- nonfiction works
- short stories/novels
- five-act plays
- poetry/epics
- film/visual texts

Today, we will focus on drawing conclusions in writing, using a poem, "The Sparrow." Based on yesterday's lesson, what might this entail? How might we accomplish this objective? As you draw conclusions, how will you defend your thinking?"

This example demonstrates how the teacher plans questions for students to ensure their understanding of the objective and the focus for the lesson. The teacher will reference the objective and overarching goal or standard throughout the lesson, using questioning to bring students into the process.

Example 3:

A teacher may model his/her thought process as he/she makes a connection to a specific topic and then leads students to do this through questioning. It may also be accomplished through group projects based on real-life scenarios. For example, students learning measurement may calculate the amount of carpet or paint needed to redecorate their room.

Students learning about the Great Depression may research how policies from Roosevelt's New Deal continue to affect them today.

It is also important for teachers to lead students to make connections for how what they learn in one content area connects to another content area. For example, when measuring or creating graphs in science, a teacher may make connections to math with an emphasis on the math vocabulary students are learning.

In literature classes, connections may be made for what is being read and a historical time period students may be studying in social studies. It is important to make such connections significant and meaningful to students.

Example 4:

When modeling the expectations for the assignment in the example above, the teacher clearly explained the order in which the students would need to complete the steps required for the assignment. First, they would need to select two important characters, with criteria for how to select these. Then students would need to identify specific characteristics of these characters that would be incorporated into their illustrations. The explanation would continue through each step. To support visual learners, the teacher may display a written list of the steps on the board or chart paper.

Example 5:

A teacher explained to the students that the learning objective was for them to be able to identify the physical characteristics of two characters from a novel and compare and contrast their characteristics. She told the students they would be expected to create an illustration of two characters from a novel the class was reading and then complete a Venn diagram to compare their characteristics. She chose two different characters to model her expectations and the thought process she went through in deciding how to draw the characters. She explained various ways the students could approach the project and provided clear criteria through the use of a rubric for how the finished project would be evaluated. She led the students to apply the rubric to her work as an additional way to ensure they understood her expectations for their work. She then modeled how she took the characteristics of the two drawings and used a Venn diagram to organize the similarities and differences in the drawings. Students were able to clearly understand the expected outcome for the lesson and the expectations for their work.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Achieving Expectations

- How do you decide on the types of resources you will use during a lesson?
- How do you decide on the types of activities you will use during a lesson?
- How do you develop activities that are aligned to the learning objective?
- Why is it important to provide opportunities for students to interact with other students during a lesson?
- How do you provide students the ability to set goals, reflect on, evaluate and hold each other accountable within instructional groups?
- How do you structure your groups to meet the needs of all students?
- How do you provide opportunities for students to generate questions that lead to further inquiry and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world application?
- Why is it important to plan activities that are challenging for students?
- Why is it important for students to reflect during the lesson?

Additional Resources

Applebee, A. N., Adler, M., & Flihan, S. (2007). Interdisciplinary Curricula in Middle and High School Classrooms: Case Studies of Approaches to Curriculum and Instruction.

American Educational Research Journal, 44(4), 1002–1039.

Ball, D. L., Thames, M. H., & Phelps, G. (2008). Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(5), 389–407.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2011). *The Purposeful Classroom: How to Structure Lessons with Learning Goals in Mind*. Alexandria: ASCD.

McTighe, J., & Brown, J. L. (2005). Differentiated instruction and educational standards: Is detente possible? *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 234–244.

Meece, J. L., Anderman, E. M., & Anderman, L. H. (2006). Classroom goal structure, student motivation and academic achievement. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 57, 487–503.

Seidel, T., Rimmele, R., & Prenzel, M. (2005). Clarity and coherence of lesson goals as a scaffold for student learning. *Learning and Instruction*, 15(6), 539–556.

Content Knowledge and Expertise

This dimension addresses the teacher’s knowledge of the content he/she is teaching, as well as their ability to implement strategies to support student learning. Also addressed in this dimension is the teacher’s ability to connect the content being taught to other ideas and concepts.

By leading students to connect to these other ideas and concepts, a teacher provides evidence of his/her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to utilize a variety of subject-specific instructional strategies to teach the content. Students are involved in this process. Teachers may make connections while teaching, but the content becomes more internalized when students are able to take the concept and connect it to other powerful ideas, making it meaningful and purposeful.

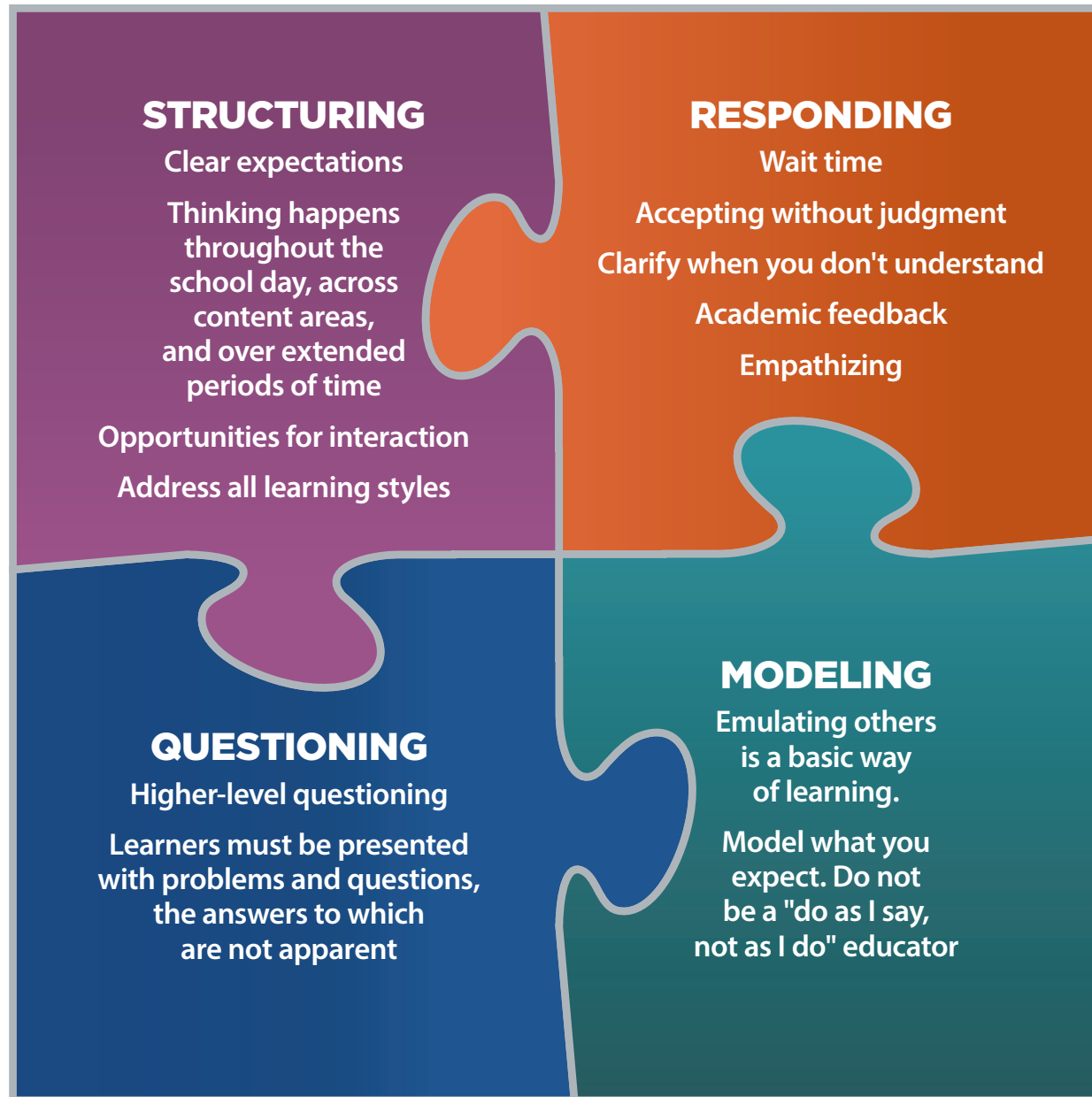
Thinking is something that can and should apply to every observation of a teacher. It is important to note that for students to apply the type of thinking referenced, the teacher must have taught the thinking students need to apply. Before we explore

the different types of thinking, it is important to have a basic understanding of how a teacher should go about teaching these thinking skills.

Research shows that there are four main ways that a teacher can “teach” thinking – through structuring, responding, questioning and modeling. As you think about what research says about teaching thinking, consider the dimensions and/or descriptors in the T-TESS rubric and where they align with these expectations. For example, “wait time” is in the Communication dimension and “structuring” is in the Standards and Alignment dimension. By purposefully implementing the T-TESS rubric and reflecting upon the specific dimensions that align with the research, teachers can effectively teach thinking.

The fourth descriptor discusses four types of thinking that teachers are expected to implement regularly and consistently. These thinking types were compiled based on 20 years of research by the most prominent psychologists in America.

| | |
|--|---|
| CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE | THE TEACHER: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displays extensive content knowledge of all the subjects she or he teaches and closely related subjects.• Integrates learning objectives with other disciplines, content areas and real-world experience.• Conveys a depth of content knowledge that allows for differentiated explanations.• Consistently provides opportunities for students to use different types of thinking (e.g., analytical, practical, creative and research-based).• Sequences instruction that allows students to understand how the lesson fits within the structure of the discipline, the state standards, related content and within real-world scenarios. <p style="text-align: center;">MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |



Example 1:

A teacher is conducting a lesson on immigration in the 1860s and relates immigration from that time period to the present day. News articles about immigrants and refugees are presented during class. Students select someone they know who has immigrated to the United States to interview. Comparisons are made between immigrants of the 1860s and immigrants of today (reasons for immigrating, countries of origin, experiences, etc.). By connecting immigration of the 1860s to immigration of the present day and having students interview immigrants, (and debate the impact of immigrants in their community,) the teacher has highlighted key concepts and connected them to more powerful ideas.

Example 2:

Groups of students are studying the circulatory and respiratory systems. During their study of how the two systems function and support each other, they also study diseases of the two systems. The teacher has students utilize the information they have gained to develop plans for a healthy lifestyle that could help prevent heart attacks, lung cancer, etc. Students present their plans to other students and to the school administration. They also use the plans to develop a healthy menu for the school cafeteria.

Example 3: Analytical Thinking

Language Arts - In language arts, a class is reading "Charlotte's Web." To teach analytical thinking, the teacher will "unlock" his/her thought process. The teacher will not only label his/her thinking, but teach the questions that he/she asks him/herself when thinking through the task.

For example, the students will compare and contrast Wilbur's personality traits with those of Charlotte. Using analytical thinking, the first thing to ask is **1)** What do I know about each character? The teacher may use a Venn diagram or Thinking Map to document

thinking. The next question to ask is **2)** Looking at my thinking (lists, Thinking Map or Venn), what do I see that is the same?

3) What is different? Teachers ask the question and think aloud the process for answering the question (think aloud).

If students have already been taught research-based thinking for fiction text, students may use those questions to go back to the text and find specific character traits or evidence from the text to support their thinking. Questions students may use to guide that research-based thinking are **1)** In what part of the book do I remember reading about Wilbur/Charlotte (beginning, middle and end)? **2)** What event was happening in that part of the text? **3)** What was happening right before or right after?

Math - Students evaluate different methods for solving word problems and explain the method chosen.

Art - Students are studying a specific artist's work. They are asked to observe a painting and identify one thing in the painting or element of the painting that could be removed that would not alter the artist's intent. Students may also be asked to explain what the painting reveals about the artist's attitude towards life, friends, nature, etc.

Understanding that teachers must teach the questions that are necessary to guide student thinking is crucial if we are going to develop independent thinkers. Providing the model of how those questions are answered in your head in order to arrive at an answer or solution will foster thinking processes.

Example 4: Practical Thinking

Language Arts - Persuasive Writing - Students are fed up with the cafeteria food and have decided to do something about it. First, they research the requirements for a healthy lunch.

Next, they design a menu for two weeks. Finally, they create the shopping list and pricing list to ensure that the lunches they are requesting are affordable. After working through each of these issues, the students develop a persuasive paper and present their proposal to the school administration.

Math - A class is working on measurement. The teacher informs students that they will be building tree and plant boxes throughout the school. These planters will be various shapes and sizes and will require students not only to measure and cut different pieces of wood to build them, but also to estimate the sizes of the correct plants and bushes to put in them.

Example 5: Creative Thinking

Language Arts - Students create visual images of what may be occurring in a story or poem that lacks pictures by applying what they previously know about figurative language or the author's purpose. They may also imagine a character's appearance or the elements of a setting. Again, students are applying previous knowledge or experiences to create a visual even if it is in their head.

Math - Students apply knowledge gained during a unit on measurement and geometry to design a new playground for the school.

Physical Education - Students create a football or basketball play during a physical education class by applying what they have learned about other plays and rules of the games.

Music - Students create a song or develop new words for an existing melody based on their knowledge of notes or lyrics

and the message they want to convey through the song.

Example 6: Research-Based Thinking

Language Arts - Students read multiple versions of Cinderella stories. Using evidence from each version that provides support for what a character did and said, students identify a character trait that is well-supported with evidence from multiple readings.

Social Sciences - During a study of the Jim Crow Laws, students also conduct a study of Civil Rights laws. They then compare and contrast the two different groups of laws, identifying strengths and weaknesses. After comparing and contrasting the laws, they debate the need for present laws to ensure that all citizens have equal rights, and create the wording for these laws.



Suggested Coaching Questions: Content Knowledge and Expertise

- How do you prepare yourself to teach (insert the specific topic taught)?
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How do you decide on the ways in which you will connect the content being taught to more powerful ideas?
- Why is it important to provide opportunities for students to highlight key concepts and connect to other powerful ideas?
- How do you plan for activities and/or assignments that teach students different types of thinking or problem solving?
- Reflect on the specific activities and/or assignments utilized within the lesson and then identify the type of thinking and/or problem solving each taught. This type of reflection will provide a means for assessing a teacher's understanding of analytical, practical and research-based thinking and the types of problem solving referenced under this dimension.
- How have you been supporting students' ability to think and problem solve with your instruction?
- What types of thinking have you thoroughly taught to your students?

Additional Resources

A. Costa (Ed.), *Developing minds: A resource book for teaching thinking* (Rev. ed., Vol. 1). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Ball, D. L., Thames, M. H., & Phelps, G. (2008). Content knowledge for teaching: What makes it special? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(5), 389–407.

Phelps, G. Just knowing how to read isn't enough! Assessing knowledge for teaching reading (2009). *Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Accountability*, 21, 137–154.

Communication

For content to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a clearly communicated purpose for student learning. This descriptor shows a clear link between motivating students and Standards and Alignment. Students also need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is important for them to master and how their mastery of this will impact their own lives. Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity and exploration provide opportunities for students to generate questions and conduct their own research or explore to locate the answers. Finally, when students have opportunities to generate their own questions about a given topic, their motivation to learn is usually increased as the learning becomes student-directed rather than teacher-directed.

Planning effective lessons aligned to the standards is dependent upon the teacher's ability to create and communicate clearly defined learning outcomes or objectives appropriate for the students. In many ways this dimension is the foundation for all other dimensions, because if the teacher is not clear about what he or she wants students to know and be able to do as a result of

the lesson, the balance of the lesson cannot be properly developed or implemented. Both the students and the teacher should understand what is to be accomplished during each lesson and the purpose for what takes place.

This dimension focuses the teacher's knowledge of the content, structure of the discipline, as well as the ability to connect the content being taught to other ideas and concepts to help students create cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, address misconceptions, and connect ideas within and across disciplines to real life experiences. This knowledge and expertise is critical to successful teaching and learning.

The teacher must establish various classroom practices that will encourage all students to communicate effectively using visual tools and technology, artistic, spatial, tactile or other media with the teacher and their peers. Words, mental pictures and other clarifying techniques simplify and organize new information for the learner.

| THE TEACHER: | |
|---------------|---|
| COMMUNICATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes classroom practices that encourage all students to safely communicate effectively using visual tools and technology, artistic, spatial, tactile or other media with the teacher, their peers.• Uses possible student misunderstandings at strategic points in lessons to highlight misconceptions and inspire exploration and discovery.• Provides explanations that are clear and coherent and uses verbal and written communication that is clear and correct.• Asks questions at the creative, evaluative and/or analysis levels that require a deeper learning and broader understanding of the objective of the lesson.• Skillfully balances wait time, questioning techniques and integration of student and other resources to support student-directed learning.• Skillfully provokes and guides discussion to pique curiosity and inspire student-led learning of meaningful and challenging content. |
| | MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS |

Application of the methods listed in this descriptor enhances learning in the following ways:

1. **Examples:** When presenting a new concept, carefully selected examples help students to understand information. For example, during a lesson about metaphors, the teacher provided visual examples of metaphors from her own writing. She also modeled her thinking process as she created the metaphors.

This type of example provided opportunities not only for students to view metaphors, but also to gain an understanding for how they were created within the teacher's writing.

2. **Illustrations:** Providing an illustration of what is being studied helps all learners, especially visual learners. For example, before dissecting a frog, students studied an illustration depicting the internal organs. The illustration also demonstrated how to cut into the frog. Teachers may also use paintings or photographs to provide illustrations of new concepts or historical time periods.

3. **Analogies:** There are times when analogies clarify information for learners. For example, to clarify the distances related to the solar system, a teacher introduced nine common spheres of similar proportions as the planets. She then took students out on the playground and had students arrange them at appropriate distances from the sun, making clear connections for how what they were doing related to distances within the solar system.

In this example, students actually participated in the analogy. Another example of an analogy is the comparison of appropriate graphic organizers to the choosing of appropriate tools to hammer in nails or tighten screws. The teacher explains to students that graphic organizers are 'tools' to support their organization of material, and different organizers support different tasks.

4. **Labels:** Labels help clarify information. For example, students were having a difficult time writing complete sentences, so the teacher decided to have students label the parts of their sentences. Pictures with labels may also be used to introduce vocabulary, important people or new concepts. This type of labeling would be strong since it combines the use of illustrations and labels. During a study of the solar system, the teacher modeled for the students how to label planets. During a study of the circulatory system, a teacher modeled how to label the parts of the heart and identify the function of each part.

When a teacher effectively utilizes questions that are purposeful and coherent, then students' responses may be utilized as a formative assessment in determining which students have mastered the learning objective (Achieving Expectations).

For support in third descriptor on generating questions, refer to Bloom's Taxonomy. It is important to note how the use of higher-order questions will impact the evidence for the descriptors of other dimensions such as the thinking descriptors in Content Knowledge and Expertise.

Questions that support the instructional goals are an integral part of student learning. An observer in the classroom should be able to close their eyes and just listen to the questions and have a clear idea of what the objective for the day is. This type of purposeful and aligned questioning needs to be planned before every lesson in order to broaden understanding and achieve a deeper learning.

The effective teacher does not limit the use of questions in a lesson to only teacher-generated questions, but guides students in generating questions that support their own learning. As students are led to generate their own questions, it is also important for them to have knowledge of the different question types. These can be modeled for them through the teacher's questions and through a purposeful teaching of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Example 1:

It may benefit teachers trying to include these descriptors in a lesson to write students' names on Popsicle sticks or strips of paper and pull a name to respond to questions asked. Teachers may also assign numbers to students and use a deck of playing cards to call on students by their numbers. Students may also choose classmates to call upon. These types of methods help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised.

Teachers may also have students respond to a partner before answering a question aloud for the whole class. This method can provide a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and sharing their answer with someone else.

When providing wait time for students, it is important for the teacher to label this for students so that he/she may use the opportunity to teach students how to provide wait time for one another.

Example 2:

When a teacher introduces a lesson, students may be led to complete a "KWL chart." By doing this, each student has the opportunity to generate questions that he/she wants answered as the content is being presented. Students may also generate questions about a topic they are researching. For example, students may be writing biographies on significant figures of the Civil Rights Movement.

The teacher provides specific information that must be included in the biography but also allows students to generate questions they would like answered about the individual. Both sets of questions would guide the student's research. By providing opportunities for students to generate questions, teachers also develop learning experiences where inquiry is valued and provide students with choices.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Communication

- How do you decide on the types and frequency of questions you ask during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher-order questions during a lesson?
- How do you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- How do you provide for wait time during a lesson?
- Why is it important to provide wait time?

Additional Resources

Armendariz, F., & Umbreit, J. (1999). Using active responding to reduce disruptive behavior in a general education classroom. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 1(3), 152–158.

Pagliaro, M. Menna. (2011). Exemplary classroom questioning: practices to promote thinking and learning. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Differentiation

This dimension addresses how instruction is tailored, or differentiated, to meet the individual learning needs of all students. Teachers can differentiate the content that is taught by segmenting the learning objectives; how students are expected to process information through varied instructional strategies; the types of products or outcomes students are to produce; or the learning environment through grouping strategies, student work areas, tapping students' learning styles or other participation approaches.

Differentiated instruction may include activities to address auditory, visual and kinesthetic learning styles, or it may include providing students with choices in assignments that relate to the multiple intelligences. It may also mean that teachers provide students with extended time to complete assignments or abbreviate assignments based on student need. In order to provide a differentiated learning environment the teacher must have knowledge of the individual needs of all students.

By leading students to connect to other ideas and concepts, a teacher provides evidence of his/her knowledge of the content being taught and ability to utilize a variety of subject specific

instructional strategies to teach the content. Students are involved in this process. Teachers may make connections while teaching, but the content becomes more internalized when students are able to take the concept and connect it to other powerful ideas, making it meaningful and purposeful.

Effective assessment is a fundamental part of instruction and learning. As such, assessments must be used to monitor the quality of student participation and performance.

An effective assessment plan answers the questions, "What do I want my students to be able to do as a result of my teaching?" "How will I know if the students have mastered what has been taught?" and, "How do I know the students learned what I taught?"

When these questions are asked and answered regularly, the teacher can effectively plan, diagnose and intervene on a continual basis to raise student achievement. A teacher can more easily support a differentiated learning environment by using multiple strategies to teach and assess students.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| DIFFERENTIATION | THE TEACHER: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapts lessons with a wide variety of instructional strategies to address individual needs of all students.• Consistently monitors the quality of student participation and performance.• Always provides differentiated instructional methods and content to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.• Consistently prevents student confusion and disengagement by addressing learning and/or social/emotional needs of all students. <p>MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Example 1:

A teacher begins a lesson on the causes of the Revolutionary War with an explanation of the learning objective and a preview of the lesson (clear beginning). The teacher then provides direct instruction by modeling how to complete a graphic organizer on the causes and effects of the war. Students are led to finish the organizer on their own as they read the text or other source of information. Students who are below grade level in reading continue to receive direct instruction from the teacher and assistance in completing the graphic organizer. Students who are on grade level or above complete the assignment independently and are provided additional activities to enhance their understanding of the causes (pacing provides opportunities for students who progress at different learning rates). Before students are dismissed, the teacher brings the class together again, reviews the objective and has students identify the causes and effects they included on their graphic organizers (closure). Students complete an exit ticket before leaving class in which they reflect on which cause of the war they believe had the greatest impact (time for reflection).

Example 2:

The teacher is introducing two-digit multiplication set in simple word problems. The lesson begins with the teacher posing the question, "What is the meaning of multiplication?" Students record their thoughts on dry-erase boards. The teacher calls "show me" and all students hold up their boards. Responses are discussed before moving into the lesson. Before presenting the lesson, the teacher puts this problem on the board: 6×34 . The teacher then asks the students, "What would you do to solve this problem?"

Knowing that students struggle with this concept, the teacher opened the lesson with the questions above to assess understanding as well as provide opportunities for students to experience various methods of addressing the problem. Students are given time to work through the problem with their shoulder partner, recording the work on a dry-erase board.

Each pair shares their work with the other pair in the team (small group) and the team decides on one method of working the problem to present to the class. (Teams are formed, mixed by ability to maximize peer support and/or mastery.) The teacher chooses one student from each team to present their method of solving the problem. Based on student need, the teacher uses manipulatives and builds models (cubes/base 10 strips, drawings) to show the process of multiplication visually. Students are provided problems, set in real-life scenarios, for continued guided and independent practice. These problems are solved using the manipulatives and talking through the process with a partner. Students complete two or three problems independently, knowing that the manipulatives are available if needed.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Differentiation

- How do you identify the learning styles of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- Why is it important to consider multiple learning styles when presenting instruction?
- How do you identify the interests of your students and incorporate these into your lessons?
- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert the specific topic being taught)?
- How do you decide on the ways in which you will connect the content being taught to more powerful ideas?
- Why is it important to provide opportunities for students to highlight key concepts and connect to other powerful ideas?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?

Additional Resource

McTighe, J., & Brown, J. L. (2005). Differentiated instruction and educational standards: Is detente possible? *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 234–244.e

Monitor and Adjust

This dimension focuses on how teachers use formal and informal measures to collect, analyze and apply student progress data to make necessary adjustments to lessons and informed instructional decisions. When teachers are methodical about the types of activities they use to gather input from students and track their progress, they are better able to identify students who need additional assistance or some alternate form of instruction. Data should be used to monitor student progress, adjust instructional plans, strategically target activities that build on one each other, and pay close attention to how pacing needs to be adjusted to students' learning patterns.

For content and instruction to be personally meaningful to students, there must be a clearly communicated purpose for learning with connection to students' interests and ideas where they easily relate. Students need to understand why the content or skill being taught in a lesson is important for them to master and how their mastery will impact them personally in real life.

Both questioning and academic feedback strategies are powerful tools to check for student understanding. When using questioning,

the teacher utilizes questions that are purposeful and coherent, then students' responses, including follow-up questions and responses, may be utilized as a formative assessment in determining which students have mastered the learning objective. Teachers understand how the verbs in the questions, e.g., compare, contrast, explain, justify, etc., target specific cognitive functions. The effective teacher does not limit the use of questions in a lesson to only teacher-generated questions, but guides students in generating questions that support their own learning.

Feedback Descriptors Focused on Quality

This descriptor also focuses on how teachers respond to students' comments and questions and addresses the quality of the feedback in supporting student learning as opposed to feedback that only informs students of the accurateness of their responses. Academic feedback may take the form of oral and written feedback that is academically focused, frequent, and high quality; feedback that is frequently given during guided practice and other assignments; cues that prompt student thinking and assess student's progress; and students providing specific, high quality feedback to their peers.

| MONITOR AND ADJUST | THE TEACHER: |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systematically gathers input from students in order to monitor and adjust instruction, activities or pacing to respond to differences in student needs.• Adjust instruction and activities to maintain student engagement.• Uses discreet and explicit checks for understanding through questioning and academic feedback. <p>MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Example 1:

The objective of a lesson was: “Boys and girls, today you will learn about one way to form a paragraph. We formulate a topic sentence and at least three supporting sentences. Then we end the paragraph with a summary statement.” The teacher provided a graphic organizer after they collectively developed a topic sentence. While children wrote the supporting details independently, she provided feedback. The following feedback was recorded:

- “Marie, these are very nice sentences because they include strong details.”
- “Henry, your first detail is a complete sentence. That’s just great. Look at your second detail. What can we add to make a complete sentence?”
- “Louise, if you would like more inspiration, let’s look at the story for paragraph details. Good. It’s right there. I think you will find some great material for writing details.”
- “Jamie, you have three details that will make a great paragraph. What will make a good summary statement?” It is also important for teachers to model for students how to provide each other with high-quality academic feedback.

Example 2:

Following the same lesson objective as provided in the above example, after the students have completed their writing, the teacher pairs them for the purpose of conferencing on each other’s writing. To ensure that students know her expectations for the conferences, she pairs with a student and models the questions and type of feedback she would provide to the student. Within this model, she explains that it is important for students to clearly explain why an area of the writing is strong and why another needs to be strengthened. She does this by providing high-quality feedback that is focused on the lesson objective of writing a topic sentence, supporting details, and a summary statement.

Along with this model, the teacher may also include written feedback on the student’s writing that is focused on the objective. For example, the teacher may provide starter phrases to guide the process such as “the topic sentence is strong because (fill in the blank).” (The teacher will model and provide examples of feedback that may be used. These examples may be on the board/chart for reference.) Students will also need to understand the criteria for successful work. This will also serve as a guide for providing appropriate feedback. The examples and criteria will ensure that the feedback is purposeful and focused on the work, not the “peer/student.” Students will not automatically understand how to provide high-quality feedback to peers. Modeling what this looks and sounds like is crucial as students begin to experience this as a part of everyday instruction.

Example 3:

It may benefit teachers trying to include these descriptors in a lesson to write students’ names on Popsicle sticks or strips of paper and pull a name to respond to questions asked.

Teachers may also assign numbers to students and use a deck of playing cards to call on students by their numbers. Students may also choose classmates to call upon. These types of methods help a teacher avoid repeatedly calling on the same students, or calling only on volunteers who may have their hands raised. Teachers may also have students respond to a partner before answering a question aloud for the whole class.

This method can provide a way to hold each student accountable for formulating a response and sharing their answer with someone else. When providing wait time for students, it is important for the teacher to label this for students so that he/she may use the opportunity to teach students how to provide wait time for one another.

Example 4:

When a teacher introduces a lesson, students may be led to complete a “KWL chart.” By doing this, each student has the opportunity to generate questions that he/she wants answered as the content is being presented. Students may also generate questions about a topic they are researching. For example, students may be writing biographies on significant figures of the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher provides specific information that must be included in the biography but also allows students to generate questions they would like answered about the individual. Both sets of questions would guide the student’s research.

By providing opportunities for students to generate questions, teachers also develop learning experiences where inquiry is valued and provide students with choices.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Monitor and Adjust

- How do you maintain all students’ attention during the lesson?
- How do you decide on the types and frequency of questions you ask during a lesson to monitor and check for understanding?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher-order questions during a lesson?
- How do you provide opportunities for all students to respond to your questions?
- Why is it important to provide wait time?
- How do you decide on the type of feedback you provide to students?
- How do you use student feedback to make adjustments to your instruction, activities or pacing?
- How do you engage students in providing quality feedback to one another?

Additional Resources

Brookhart, Susan (2008). Feedback That Fits. *Educational Leadership*, 65, 54–59.

Brookhart, Susan (2008). *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*. Alexandria, VA:

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on formative feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1),153–189.

Armendariz, F., & Umbreit, J. (1999). Using active responding to reduce disruptive behavior in a general education classroom. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 1(3), 152–158.

Pagliaro, M. Menna. (2011). *Exemplary classroom questioning: practices to promote thinking and learning*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Education.



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Explanation of the T-TESS Rubric

This Section Includes Resources and Information on the Three Dimensions of the Learning Environment Domain:

This dimension deals with the learning environment of the classroom, including the physical arrangement of the furniture and the availability of supplies for students to utilize. When supplies, equipment and resources are easily and readily accessible, then the descriptors in this dimension can be more easily met.

The thoughtfully organized classroom will be the most conducive to allowing students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives.

Building smooth transitions and procedures and developing seamless routines can be done with practice and careful planning. Once these transitions, procedures and routines are in place, students can begin to take ownership and responsibility for them.

Regardless of how the grouping arrangements are developed, the grouping should maximize the learning for all students. The ability of a teacher to group students in this manner is directly connected to his/her knowledge of the students and their individual needs, interests and abilities. There must be a rationale for why students are grouped together.

| LEARNING ENVIRONMENT |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures2. Managing Student Behavior3. Classroom Culture |

| CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishes and uses effective routines, transitions and procedures that primarily rely on student leadership and responsibility.• Students take primary leadership and responsibility for managing student groups, supplies, and/or equipment.• The classroom is safe and thoughtfully designed to engage, challenge and inspire students to participate in high-level learning beyond the learning objectives. |
| MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS |

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT, ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

This dimension focuses on how teachers organize and operate the classroom to ensure that it is safe, accessible, and efficient on a day-to-day basis. Including consistent routines and procedures allows students to understand the teacher's expectations and makes it predictable where students can anticipate and act, accordingly. Classroom instruction is maximized when the learning environment, routines, and procedures are well-managed and organized.

If one of our outcomes is to establish student-center classrooms, then it is important to include students in establishing how the classroom will function to increase their ownership, leadership and responsibility in the learning process. Effective teachers carefully plan and clarify for themselves the types of routines, transitions and procedures that support their personal styles and maximize teaching and learning. Using this information, students are then included in helping design the actual structure and procedures to create a sense of community in the classroom. Routines and procedures are explicitly taught and reinforced. Therefore, in a well-managed classroom, students know what is expected of them, transitions are clear and seamless, learning time is maximized with little confusion or disruptions, and there is a smooth flow with each aspect of the learning environment.

High-performing classrooms include a classroom culture and organizational structures where high expectations for performance are consistently communicated and students are encouraged to take risks, try new skills, and push themselves to learn new information without fear of failure. Effort is rewarded and students are encouraged to set stretch goals and develop plans to monitor their progress and accomplishments. Teachers maintain a culture that is based on high expectations for student performance, behavior, self-motivation and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Classroom Environment

- What evidence supports a welcoming environment?
- How is the environment set up so that it is welcoming to all students?
- How is the environment arranged to promote student independence? (Are materials readily available? Are procedures in place so that students can be prepared for activities/routines?)
- How do you determine the purpose for displaying student work?
- How is student work displayed in order to promote content or enhance the learning environment?
- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?
- Why is it important to think about how you group students? That being said, what are things you consider when forming groups (or partners) and why?
- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles individuals will have when working in groups?
- How do you model or communicate your expectations to students for their own work and that of the group?
- How do you assess the performance of groups and individuals when it is completed in a group setting?
- How do you ensure that the room is arranged to accommodate individual, as well as group work?
- How is information posted in the classroom so that it may be easily referenced by students (e.g., standards, punctuation rules, schedule)?
- Think about challenges that occur when preparing the learning environment for students; how do you address obstacles?

Additional Resource

Hill, B. (2010). *The Next Step Guide to Enriching Classroom Environments: Rubrics and Resources for Self Evaluation and Goal Setting*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



Managing Student Behavior

This dimension focuses on how teachers establish, communicate and maintain clear expectations for student behavior during classroom instruction. One of the teacher's most important responsibilities is managing the classroom effectively, as it has a significant impact on student performance. Teachers with effective classroom management and management of student conduct create an atmosphere that positively enhances learning, as there are no distractions for students. Research consistently shows that the relationship between the teachers and students plays a significant role in classroom and student behavior management, and those teachers that have a high quality, respectful relationship with their students have fewer classroom problems.

For a teacher to manage student behavior effectively, he/she must not only model the expectations, but have knowledge of the students he/she is teaching. Teachers must be aware of and practice a variety of techniques to maintain appropriate behavior, which are dependent upon having knowledge of individual student's needs.

Teachers must also know students' interests in order to motivate them to change inappropriate behaviors. Additionally, these descriptors address how a teacher uses student feedback to make adjustments in instruction.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Managing Student Behavior

- What systems are in place to effectively monitor student behavior?
- How do you plan to address inappropriate behavior, should it become an issue during this lesson?
- How does your grouping enhance student behavior?
- What part does motivation play in student behavior?

Additional Resources

The topic of managing student behavior has generated many books and workshops. A good website for basic tips and information is Adprima at www.adprima.com/managing.htm.

LEARN North Carolina also has great suggestions on classroom management at www.learnnc.org.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR | THE TEACHER: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently monitors behavior subtly, reinforces positive behaviors appropriately and intercepts misbehavior fluidly.• Students and the teacher create, adopt and maintain classroom behavior standards. <p>MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS</p> |

Classroom Culture

This dimension focused on what the teacher does to establish a classroom culture that is mutually respectful, collaborative and consistently represented by students who are authentically engaged in learning, and social-emotional needs are met. Creating a positive classroom climate begins with showing respect to one another. Teachers most often set this in motion when they develop a set of collaborative ground rules for their classrooms and then model these for the students on a regular basis.

Teacher non-verbal cues that indicate respect and interest are:

- Tone of voice
- Eye contact
- Affirmative head nods
- Smiles
- Wait time
- Proximity to student

Suggested Coaching Questions: Classroom Culture

- How are students involved in developing classroom procedures (e.g., classroom rules, procedures for supplies, routines)?
- How do you determine/plan appropriate procedures to ensure a respectful culture?
- How do you build interdependence among students?
- How do you provide opportunities for students to collaborate?
- How do you build safety in the classroom, promoting open communication and/or collaboration?
- How do you plan opportunities to teach, practice and reinforce social skills (e.g., listening to others, providing positive feedback, patience, respect)?

Additional Resources

Comer, J. P. (1999). Creating successful urban schools. Brookings papers on education policy, 2. Available online at www.jstor.org/pss/20067212.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2000). Respect: An exploration. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Williams, A. (2010). Five strategies for creating just, equitable, and inclusive classrooms. School Climate Matters, 4(4), 3.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| CLASSROOM CULTURE | THE TEACHER: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistently engages all students with relevant, meaningful learning based on their interests, abilities to create a positive rapport amongst students.• Students collaborate positively and encourage each other's efforts and achievements. |
| | MOVES TO STUDENT-CENTERED ACTIONS |

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Unlike Domains 1-3, for Domain 4 (Professional Practices and Responsibilities) evidence is collected throughout the year, and this domain is not scored in summative form by the evaluator until after the teacher has been afforded the opportunity to present evidence related to the four dimensions during the End-of-Year Conference.

Domain 4 should be scored by someone who regularly interacts with the educator. In most cases, this will be the appraiser, however, for some educators it may be appropriate to obtain input from another supervisor, in addition to the teacher, to score this domain.

Please remember that you are anchoring the scoring of Domain 4 in the T-TESS Rubric based on the evidence provided.

“Proficient” is the performance level at which initial consideration begins until evidence is substantiated to score at another level.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Professional Demeanor and Ethics
2. Goal Setting
3. Professional Development
4. School Community Involvement



PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This domain specifically addresses “how” teachers fulfill their professional roles and responsibilities, engage in ongoing review and development of their practices, and adhere to legal and ethical requirements of the profession. Research consistently indicates that the primary factor for increasing student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher. Therefore, teachers and other professionals clearly understand the importance of using reflection and ongoing self-assessment to enhance their effectiveness and impact on student performance. The T-TESS system, therefore, focuses on continuous professional growth where teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development to improve their instructional effectiveness, knowledge and skills.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR AND ETHICS</p> | <p>As professional educators, Texas teachers assume responsibility and accountability for their actions and behaviors and conduct themselves according to these expectations at all times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence is there that teachers consistently adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards Practices for Texas Educators? • How do teacher model exemplary practices and performance for the profession? • How do teachers hold each other accountable for legal and ethical behaviors? • What evidence is there that teachers serve as advocates for all students and the profession? |
| <p>GOAL SETTING</p> | <p>Texas teachers assume responsibility and accountability for their performance and growth through strategic goal-setting, ongoing self-reflection, and professional growth in order to refine their knowledge about the content and pedagogy. A goal setting process is used to identify areas of professional growth and also address the needs of the students and school community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What supports are available for teachers to engage in ongoing self-reflection, goal setting and subsequent follow-through with professional development? • How do teachers and other colleagues support one another with the goal setting process, particularly as it relates to the T-TESS domains, dimensions and descriptors? • How are self-reflection and goals used to refine practices and the impact on student performance? • How is time structured for teachers to formatively review their goals and progress towards these goals? |

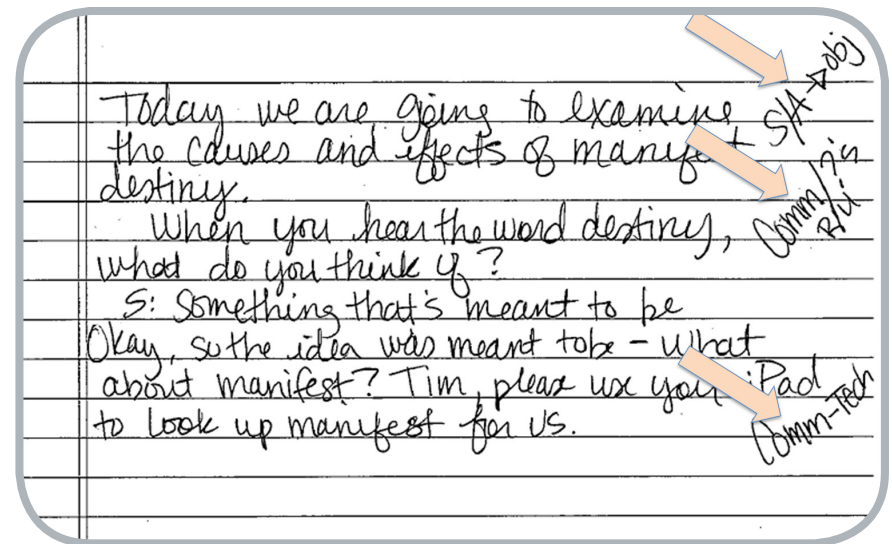
| | |
|--|---|
| <p>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p> | <p>As professionals in the field, it is important to stay current and refine one’s knowledge and skill set. The Professional Development dimension is directly tied to all other dimensions in that the T-TESS process is about continuous improvement and growth in multiple professional development platforms. Based on the self-analysis, goal setting process, and feedback from others, effective teachers focus on continuous improvement so that student performance is ultimately enhanced. Although learning needs to be personalized, in high-performing organizations, a culture of ongoing, sustained, and quality professional development is established and threaded throughout the year, rather than one-time professional development sessions held in isolation. Learning is ideally directed to one or more of the T-TESS dimensions with some aspect of coaching and mentoring to guide the implementation phase. Changes in practice and mastery of new skills are a result of continuous practice with specific feedback about performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are teachers supported in the self-analysis, goal setting, and professional development phases? • How does current professional development align with research about teacher and student learning? • How is job-embedded professional development supported by coaching, mentoring, and feedback loops during the implementation phase? • How does the professional development impact student learning? • How are resources identified and utilized to enhance outcomes and initiatives? |
| <p>SCHOOL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</p> | <p>This last dimension of the Professional Practices and Responsibilities domain – School Community Involvement - focuses on how the teacher assumes and takes on leadership roles and responsibilities in the school community. Effective communication and outreach activities are evaluated over the course of the year to ensure that the teacher is relating to and staying connected through leadership activities with students, colleagues, community members in the school, district, and overall community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are teachers involved in leading learning with all stakeholders? • In what ways do teachers systematically communicate with families regarding students’ academic and social-emotional growth? • How is information provided to families in a language and format that they understand and can use to support their child(ren)? • What forums and media do teachers use to communicate with families and how do they know it is effective? |

Hints for Capturing Evidence

During the Lesson

When capturing evidence, these strategies will help you collect accurate and defensible notes.

1. **Time:** Capture the length of different segments of the lesson.
2. **Abbreviate:** It is difficult to remember everything the teacher and students say and do; so, when possible, abbreviate. After the lesson, review your notes and spell the abbreviations, if necessary.
3. **Verbatim:** Capture verbatim dialogue, when possible. Quality evidence is reflected through direct teacher and student quotes.
4. **Paraphrase:** Use parentheses to indicate that you are paraphrasing. When you review the scripted notes, you will know what is paraphrased and what is verbatim.
5. **Questions, Answers and Feedback:** These three forms of evidence are essential and embedded throughout the rubric. After you complete the observation, review your evidence and label all questions, answers and feedback, respectively.
6. **Upfront Summary:** After you complete the observation, go through your evidence and write a brief summary of the lesson to assist you in recalling what occurred.
7. **Label:** Begin to categorize your notes by labeling evidence according to the dimensions of the rubric. As you become familiar with the rubric, labeling will likely occur during the observation.
8. **Lesson Analysis:** Identify the lesson's primary objective and its sub-objectives.
9. **Circulate:** Circulate as necessary to collect evidence from the teacher, students and student work.



Pre-Conferences

Prior to announced observations, the appraiser conducts a “pre-conference” meeting with the teacher to ask pertinent background questions about the lesson plan and the students in the class in order to provide context for the upcoming observation. The overall purpose of the pre-conference is for the appraiser and teacher to mutually discuss the upcoming lesson observation with a focus on the interrelationships between planning, instruction, the learning environment and student outcomes. Pre-conferences provide quality time for the evaluator and teacher to meet prior to the lesson.

The pre-conference also provides teachers an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills for the Planning domain and its correlating dimensions: Standards and Alignment, Data and Assessments, Knowledge of Students and Activities.

The evidence that is gleaned from reviewing the lesson plan and from the pre-conference is used to support the dimensions/descriptors from the Planning domain, along with team planning meetings and other data collection measures. When reviewing lesson plans or conducting pre-conferences, the following guiding questions may be helpful:

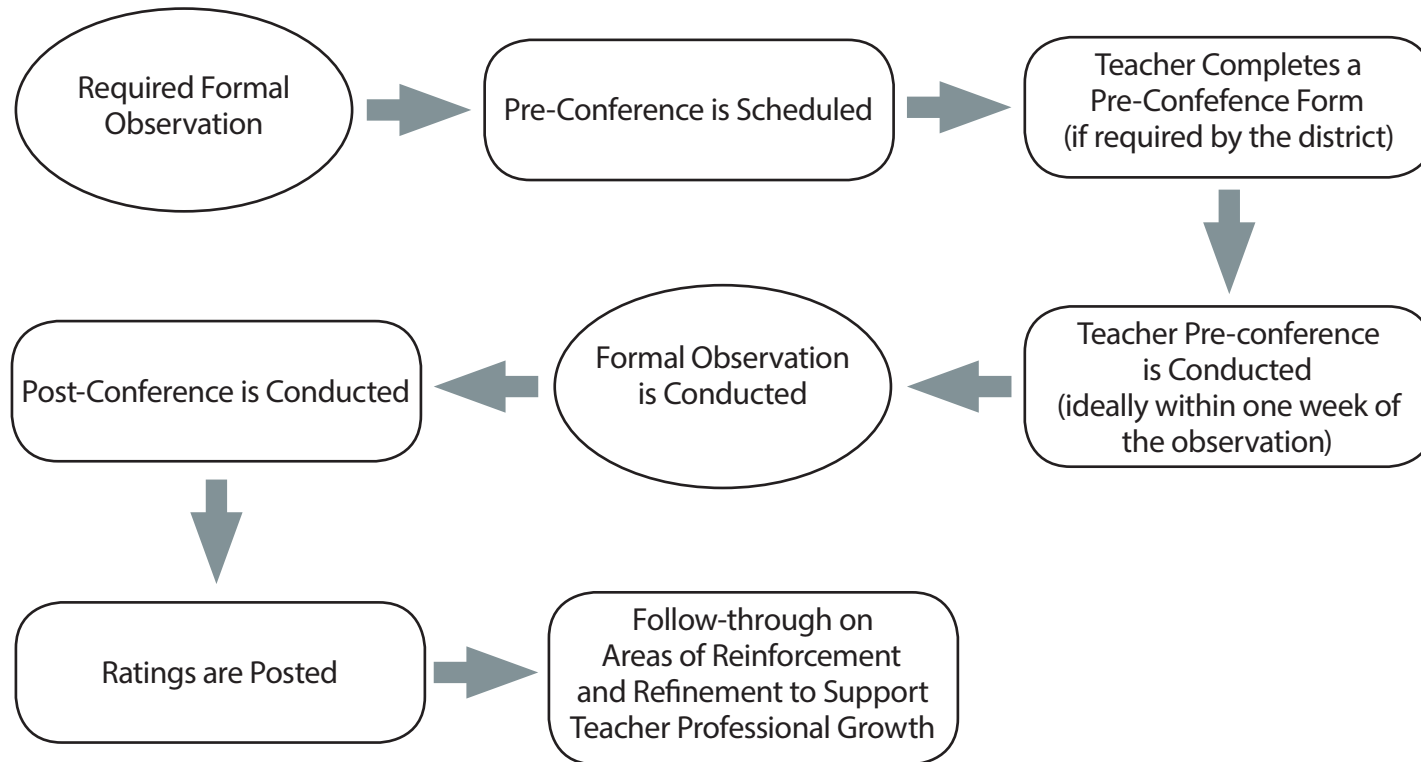
- What should the students know and be able to do by the end of the lesson?
- What will the teacher and students be doing to show progress toward mastery of the objective(s)?
- How will the teacher know that students have mastered the objective(s)?

The flowchart on the next page outlines the recommended process used for pre-conferences.

The pre-conference may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Follow-up on any previously discussed areas of reinforcement or refinement.
- Clarifications for expectations during the observation (appraiser or teacher).
- Clarifications about the learning outcomes, lesson objective/ sub-objectives and planned activities to support student mastery of the standards.
- Discussions regarding data, artifacts or other lesson connections.
- Discussions regarding any anticipated issues or concerns – instructional, behavioral, etc.
- Creating a common understanding about how student learning will be monitored and assessed.
- Opportunities for the teacher to request specific feedback or input from the appraiser.
- Other lesson-related elements that may not be directly observable.
- Connections with past and/or future lessons.

Pre-Conferences



Essential Questions:

- How do teachers individually and collectively use pre-conferences to think through the lesson prior to delivery?
- How are pre-conferences used to create a common understanding between the evaluator and the teacher, including building the relationship and expertise?
- In what ways are the lessons modified as a result of the pre-conference conversations and coaching?
- How is the pre-conference data and evidence used as part of the observation process?

Post-Conference Plan

While the T-TESS Rubric and observation are used to collect evidence regarding planning, instruction and the learning environment (Domains 1, 2 and 3), the primary purpose of the post-conference is to provide quality evidence and feedback which guides professional growth and movement to the left of the Rubric over time. A clear understanding of the descriptors in the Rubric helps both appraisers and teachers understand the expectations for performance across performance levels. This support should be provided in numerous ways from administrators and/or teacher leaders including the modeling of specific dimensions in professional development meetings, in teachers' classrooms and in the post-conference. Modeling of the dimensions in professional development meetings was previously addressed in "Explanation of the T-TESS Rubric." The post-conference will be addressed in this section.

The purpose of the post-conference is to provide teachers opportunities to self-reflect on their lessons with guidance and support from the administrators or teacher leaders who conducted the evaluation. This guidance should be provided through the use of leading questions by the evaluator along with the identification of an area of reinforcement (relative strength of the lesson) and an area of refinement (area of growth). Therefore, the focus of the post-conference is on two dimensions or descriptors from the rubric as opposed to multiple areas.

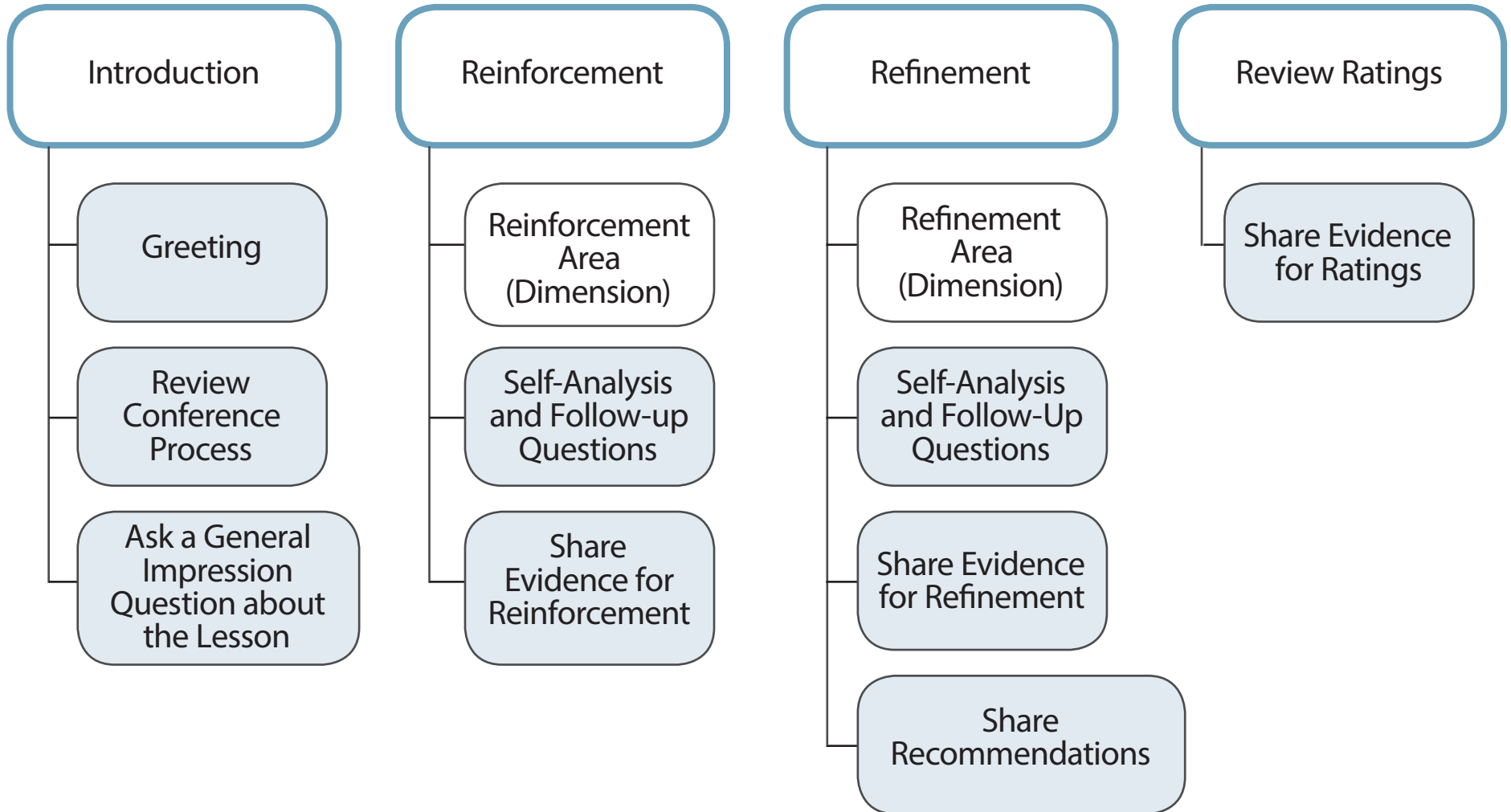
When choosing an area of reinforcement and refinement from the rubric, observers should ask themselves several guiding questions to ensure that a teacher's professional growth will have the maximum impact on the achievement of his/her own students.

Suggested Coaching Questions: Choosing Reinforcement and Refinement Areas

1. Which areas on the rubric received the highest rates (reinforcements) and the lowest rates (refinements)?
2. Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on student achievement?
3. Which of these areas would have the greatest impact on other areas of the rubric?
4. In which area will the teacher have the most potential for growth? For example, with new teachers it might be better to focus on developing objectives and sub-objectives instead of improving a teacher's ability to incorporate high quality activities.
5. Make sure that the reinforcement is not directly related to the refinement. The reason is that if you choose a refinement that is directly related to the reinforcement, it would be like saying, "Your questioning was great, but there were no higher order questions."
6. Choose a refinement area for which you have sufficient and specific evidence from the lesson to support why the teacher needs to work in this area.
7. Select refinement topics with which you have personal knowledge and teaching experience. There is nothing worse than telling a teacher they need to alter their practice and then not being able to provide specific examples for how this can be done or modeling these examples for them.

Once the areas of reinforcement and refinement have been selected, then the post-conference is developed. The next few pages provide a format for developing an effective post-conference. It is important to note that a post-conference does not begin with a presentation of the ratings, but with coaching questions which through reflection lead to the identification of the areas of reinforcement and refinement.

Four Key Elements of the Instructional Post-Conference



Post-Conference Introduction

- 1. Greeting/Set the tone.** This time should be used to put the teacher at ease.
- 2. Establish the length of the conference** (approximately 20-30 minutes). Ensure the teacher that you respect his/her time and have set a time limit for the conference.
- 3. Review conference process.** Review the conference format with the teacher so he/she knows what to expect. Example: "Good afternoon, it was great for me to get to visit your classroom today and observe your lesson. Our purpose in meeting today is for professional growth. We will spend time discussing your lesson with a focus on your instruction and how the students were involved with the lesson. The ultimate goal will be to develop ideas on how to enhance student achievement."
- 4. Ask a general impression question.** This allows the teacher to begin the post-conference by self reflecting on his/her lesson. Example: "How do you think the lesson went?" or "What is your overall impression of the lesson?"

Reinforcement Plan

Refer to "Suggested Coaching Questions" to choose an appropriate reinforcement area.

- 1. Self-analysis question.** Prompt teacher to talk about what you want to reinforce. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric which can lead the teacher to reflect on the dimension you have identified as his/ her area of reinforcement as it relates to the lesson.

Example: "When you plan a lesson, how do you decide on the type and frequency of questions that you will ask?" (Refer to "Explanation of the T-TESS Rubric" sections for additional examples of coaching questions).
- 2. Identify specific examples from script about what teacher did relatively well.** It is critical that the evaluator leading the post-conference provides specific examples for the lesson of when the teacher incorporated descriptors from the dimension being reinforced.

Example: "You asked a variety of questions throughout the lesson to check for student understanding. You asked numerous questions on the knowledge and comprehension level that led students to review previous learning as they identified the elements of a pictograph and defined mean, mode, median and range. You also asked them to define vocabulary within the lesson's aim, which allowed you to restate the aim using their response. As you progressed through the lesson, you continually asked students to explain how they arrived at their answers and to explain their classmates' responses. This type of questioning moves students to a deeper understanding of the content being taught as they must justify their thinking. You also asked questions that required students to evaluate the purpose and advantages of using a pictograph."

Refinement Plan

Refinement area. Refer to “Hints and Questions” to choose an appropriate refinement area.

- 1. Self-analysis.** Ask a specific question to prompt the teacher to talk about what you want him or her to improve.

Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric which can lead the teacher to reflect on the dimension/descriptor you have identified as his/her area of refinement as it relates to the lesson.

Example: “When developing lessons, how do you decide on the pacing of the lesson so sufficient time is allocated for each segment?”

- 2. Identify specific examples from script about what to refine with a model of concrete suggestions for how to improve.** It is critical that the evaluator leading the post-conference provides specific examples from the lesson to support the dimension being refined. This is the most important element of the plan because it models a strong example and labels why it is a strong example. This provides support for the teacher as they apply the model to future lessons.

Example: “You began the lesson with an explanation of the lesson’s aim and an overview of the lesson. Modeling for students how to analyze a pictograph followed and then students were to work in groups to read a pictograph and complete questions on a worksheet. You mentioned earlier that you wanted students to be able to work in groups and then report their findings. However, there was not sufficient time for this to occur during the lesson. As you modeled how to analyze a pictograph, students could have worked with their group members to answer your questions prior to you providing the answer. Then they could have reported to the class their findings. This would have still allowed you to model, but would have also allowed students to work together to analyze the pictograph.”

For students that may not have required this review, they could have worked independently in a group to analyze their own pictograph while the rest of the class participated in your modeling. This would have also allowed you to differentiate the pacing of the lesson to provide for students who progress at different learning rates. This lesson could also have been segmented into two different lessons. Your modeling with class participation could have been one lesson and then the group activity could have been the next day’s lesson. This type of segmenting would also have provided sufficient time for more students to master the lesson’s objective and for you to provide a clear closure based on the lesson’s aim along with your evaluation question.”

- 3. Recommendations.** Provide specific examples to clarify the recommended actions, so that they are concrete and actionable. Also indicate why the examples are strong and how they will improve student learning.

Example: “As you modeled how to analyze a pictograph, students could have worked with their group members to answer your questions prior to you providing the answer. Then they could have reported to the class their findings. This would have still allowed you to model, but would have also allowed students to work together to analyze the pictograph. For students that may not have required this review, they could have worked independently in a group to analyze their own pictograph while the rest of the class participated in your modeling. This would have also allowed you to differentiate the pacing of the lesson to provide for students who progress at different learning rates. This lesson could also have been segmented into two different lessons. Your modeling with class participation could have been one lesson and then the group activity could have been the next day’s lesson. This type of segmenting would also have provided sufficient time for more students to master the lesson’s objective and for you to provide a clear closure based on the lesson’s aim along with your observation question.”

- 4. Share the performance ratings.**

To provide additional guidance in developing an effective post-conference, observers should refer to this rubric, utilized in rating a conference plan.

| POST CONFERENCE WRITE UP SCORING RUBRIC | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | DISTINGUISHED (5) | PROFICIENT (3) | IMPROVEMENT NEEDED (1) |
| Reinforcement Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the standard where the teacher is Distinguished Utilizes language from the Instruction standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a standard where the teacher is Proficient Utilizes some language in the Instruction standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies a standard where the teacher is in need of improvement Reinforcement area is ambiguous |
| Refinement Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies the major area of weakness Refinement area is unambiguous, explicit, and utilizes the language in the Instruction domain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies an area of weakness Refinement area utilizes the language in the standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not address a needed area of improvement Refinement area is ambiguous |
| Reinforcement Self-Analysis Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open-ended questions that focus on the reinforcement area Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction standard to be reinforced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions focus on the reinforcement area Questions use some language from the Instruction standard to be reinforced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are not well focused on the reinforcement area Questions are not well connected to Instruction standards language |
| Refinement Self-Analysis Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open-ended questions that focus on the refinement area Questions use language explicitly tied to the Instruction standard to be refined | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions focus on the refinement area Questions use some language from the Instruction standard to be refined | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions are not well focused on the refinement area Questions do not provide language from the Instruction domain |
| Reinforcement Evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's major strength by explicitly integrating specific examples from the teacher's observed practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies the teacher's strength by providing some examples from the teacher's observed practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies an incorrect area of strength |
| Refinement Evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence clearly exhibits the teacher's major area for improvement by explicitly integrating specific examples from the teacher's observed practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies the teacher's major area for improvement by providing some examples from the teacher's observed practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence identifies an incorrect area of improvement |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are clear, appropriate, aimed at identified area of refinement, logically sequenced and presented in a concise manner that will result in improved instruction in the identified area of refinement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations are clearly connected to identified area of refinement, are appropriate and, if carried out, will result in improved instruction in refined area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations absent, vague, inappropriate, unrelated to identified refinement or not aimed at improved instruction in area refined |

Calibrations

Following the T-TESS training and certification process, districts and campuses establish processes for supporting appraisers with consistency of implementation. Calibration procedures help appraisers maintain scoring accuracy to avoid rater drift. The term “rater drift” refers to changes, or gradual degradation, in rater behavior across different observations over time. As with any scoring procedure, scores assigned by appraisers must be comparable, when used with the same lesson, as a means of maintaining reliability and validity for all teachers observed. Calibrations highlight appraiser behaviors for accurate scoring of observed lessons against the rubric and established T-TESS training benchmarks. This process is intended to identify and correct discrepancies in scoring.

Both individual and team calibrations are available using the Teach for Texas portal videos. These on-demand classroom lessons provide T-TESS appraisers with uniform and authentic experiences to determine accuracy of scoring against standard ratings. Scoring multiple videos at the same grade levels as actual appraisals increases practice opportunities connected to genuine observer roles. In addition, school calibrations are also encouraged where teams of appraisers use actual and recorded lessons - when video recording conditions are met. Though there may be a tendency to front-load calibrations at the beginning of the school year, it is important to conduct these calibrations multiple times throughout the year, particularly prior to established observation windows. When conducting team observations for this purpose, it is also essential to review the evidence each observer collects as a means of generating dialogue about the quality of evidence, to celebrate successes, and to address challenges.

Creating accurate and fair assessments of teacher practices and instituting measures for evaluating the ongoing quality of the T-TESS appraiser process contributes to the fidelity of the model. These repeated spot checks ensure that appraisers are consistent

and are also providing teachers with data that is beneficial for improving teacher practices and increasing student performance.

Contact your Education Service Center appraisal staff to assist with calibration options.



T-TESS Annual Appraisal Process Timeline

| Current Year | | | Next Year |
|--|---|--|---|
| Weeks 1-6 | Weeks 6 through End-of-Year Conferences | At Least 15 Days Prior to the Last Day of Instruction | Weeks 1-6 |
| <p>Teacher Orientation (No later than the first three weeks of school and at least two weeks before the first observation)</p> <p>Goal-Setting and Professional Development (GSPD) Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submitted to the appraiser for approval within six weeks from the day of completion of the orientation. - A GSPD Conference is required for a teacher in the first year of appraisal under T-TESS and teachers new to the district. | <p>Teacher Orientation for Late Hires</p> <p>Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan for Late Hires</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submitted to the appraiser within six weeks from the day of the completion of the orientation. <p>Ongoing review of teacher and student data</p> <p>Ongoing review of the GSPD plan to formatively assess progress towards goals, professional development impact, and teacher and student performance</p> <p>Ongoing collection of evidence to support Domain IV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher and appraiser | <p>End-of-Year Conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review summative scores for Domains I, II and III - Review the data and evidence gathered throughout the appraisal year for Domain IV, including the teacher's evidence for this domain/dimensions - Review results of the performance of the teachers' students - Review potential goals and professional development plans for the next school year <p><i>Note: Domain 4 is not scored until after the teacher has been afforded an opportunity to present evidence related to each of the four dimensions during the end-of-year conference.</i></p> | <p>Teacher Orientation for teachers new to T-TESS, the district, and when district policy has changed from the last orientation. <i>(No later than the first three weeks of school and at least two weeks before the first observation)</i></p> <p>Goal-Setting and Professional Development (GSPD) Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Returning teachers review the goal(s) established at the EOY Conference to determine if changes are needed, and submit within first six weeks of instruction.</i> - <i>New teachers are guided through the GSPD process to self-assess, develop goals, and establish a professional development plan, then submit within six weeks of the orientation.</i> |
| <p>Informal observations and walkthroughs with ongoing feedback to support and develop teacher practices</p> | | | |
| | <p>Formal observation window established per local policy – Excludes/prohibits observations in the two weeks following the orientation</p> | | |

CHAPTER 149

Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards

Subchapter AA. Teacher Standards

149.1001. Teacher Standards.

(a) **Purpose.** The standards identified in this section are performance standards to be used to inform the training, appraisal, and professional development of teachers.

(b) **Standards**

(1) **Standard 1 – Instructional Planning and Delivery.** Teachers demonstrate their understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students, makes appropriate use of technology, and makes learning relevant for today's learners.

(A) **Teachers design clear, well organized, sequential lessons that build on students' prior knowledge.**

- (i) Teachers develop lessons that build coherently toward objectives based on course content, curriculum scope and sequence, and expected student outcomes.
- (ii) Teachers effectively communicate goals, expectations, and objectives to help all students reach high levels of achievement.
- (iii) Teachers connect students' prior understanding and real-world experiences to new content and contexts, maximizing learning opportunities.

(B) **Teachers design developmentally appropriate, standards-driven lessons that reflect evidence-based best practices.**

- (i) Teachers plan instruction that is developmentally appropriate, is standards driven, and motivates students to learn.
- (ii) Teachers use a range of instructional strategies, appropriate to the content area, to make subject matter accessible to all students.
- (iii) Teachers use and adapt resources, technologies, and standards-aligned instructional materials to promote student success in meeting learning goals.

(C) **Teachers design lessons to meet the needs of diverse learners, adapting methods when appropriate.**

- (i) Teachers differentiate instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs including acceleration, remediation and implementation of individual education plans.
- (ii) Teachers plan student groupings, including pairings and individualized and small-group instruction, to facilitate student learning.
- (iii) Teachers integrate the use of oral, written, graphic, kinesthetic, and/or tactile methods to teach key concepts.

(D) **Teachers communicate clearly and accurately and engage students in a manner that encourages students' persistence and best efforts.**

- (i) Teachers ensure that the learning environment features a high degree of student engagement by facilitating discussion and student-centered activities as well as leading direct instruction.
- (ii) Teachers validate each student's comments and questions, utilizing them to advance learning for all students.
- (iii) Teachers encourage all students to overcome obstacles and remain persistent in the face of challenges, providing them with support in achieving their goals.

(E) **Teachers promote complex, higher-order thinking, leading class discussions and activities that provide opportunities for deeper learning.**

- (i) Teachers set high expectations and create challenging learning experiences for students, encouraging them to apply disciplinary and cross-disciplinary knowledge to real-world problems.
- (ii) Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in individual and collaborative critical thinking and problem solving.
- (iii) Teachers incorporate technology that allows students to interact with the curriculum in more significant and effective ways, helping them reach mastery.

(F) **Teachers consistently check for understanding, give immediate feedback, and make lesson adjustments as necessary.**

- (i) Teachers monitor and assess student progress to ensure that their lessons meet students' needs.
- (ii) Teachers provide immediate feedback to students in order to reinforce their learning and ensure that they understand key concepts.
- (iii) Teachers adjust content delivery in response to student progress through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies that maximize student engagement.

(2) Standard 2 – Knowledge of Students and Student Learning.

Teachers work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student’s educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student’s needs.

(A) Teachers demonstrate the belief that all students have the potential to achieve at high levels and support all students in their pursuit of social-emotional learning and academic success.

- (i) Teachers purposefully utilize learners’ individual strengths as a basis for academic and social-emotional growth.
- (ii) Teachers create a community of learners in an inclusive environment that views differences in learning and background as educational assets.
- (iii) Teachers accept responsibility for the growth of all of their students, persisting in their efforts to ensure high levels of growth on the part of each learner.

(B) Teachers acquire, analyze, and use background information (familial, cultural, educational, linguistic, and developmental characteristics) to engage students in learning.

- (i) Teachers connect learning, content, and expectations to students’ prior knowledge, life experiences, and interests in meaningful contexts.
- (ii) Teachers understand the unique qualities of students with exceptional needs, including disabilities and giftedness, and know how to effectively address these needs through instructional strategies and resources.
- (iii) Teachers understand the role of language and culture in learning and know how to modify their practices to support language acquisition so that language is comprehensible and instruction is fully accessible.

(C) Teachers facilitate each student’s learning by employing evidence-based practices and concepts related to learning and social-emotional development.

- (i) Teachers understand how learning occurs and how learners develop, construct meaning, and acquire knowledge and skills.
- (ii) Teachers identify readiness for learning and understand how development in one area may affect students’ performance in other areas.
- (iii) Teachers apply evidence-based strategies to address individual student learning needs and differences, adjust their instruction, and support the learning needs of each student.

(3) Standard 3 – Content Knowledge and Expertise. Teachers exhibit a comprehensive understanding of their content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and their ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards.

(A) Teachers understand the major concepts, key themes, multiple perspectives, assumptions, processes of inquiry, structure, and real-world applications of their grade-level and subject-area content.

- (i) Teachers have expertise in how their content vertically and horizontally aligns with the grade-level/subject-area continuum, leading to an integrated curriculum across grade levels and content areas.
- (ii) Teachers identify gaps in students’ knowledge of subject matter and communicate with their leaders and colleagues to ensure that these gaps are adequately addressed across grade levels and subject areas.
- (iii) Teachers keep current with developments, new content, new approaches, and changing methods of instructional delivery within their discipline.

(B) Teachers design and execute quality lessons that are consistent with the concepts of their specific discipline, are aligned to state standards, and demonstrate their content expertise.

- (i) Teachers organize curriculum to facilitate student understanding of the subject matter.
- (ii) Teachers understand, actively anticipate, and adapt instruction to address common misunderstandings and preconceptions.
- (iii) Teachers promote literacy and the academic language within the discipline and make discipline-specific language accessible to all learners.

(C) Teachers demonstrate content-specific pedagogy that meets the needs of diverse learners, utilizing engaging instructional materials to connect prior content knowledge to new learning.

- (i) Teachers teach both the key content knowledge and the key skills of the discipline.
- (ii) Teachers make appropriate and authentic connections across disciplines, subjects, and students’ real-world experiences.

(4) Standard 4 – Learning Environment. Teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning.

(A) Teachers create a mutually respectful, collaborative, and safe community of learners by using knowledge of students’ development and backgrounds.

- (i) Teachers embrace students’ backgrounds and experiences as an asset in their learning environment.
- (ii) Teachers maintain and facilitate respectful, supportive, positive, and productive interactions with and among students.
- (iii) Teachers establish and sustain learning environments that are developmentally appropriate and respond to students’ needs, strengths, and personal experiences.

(B) Teachers organize their classrooms in a safe and accessible manner that maximizes learning.

- (i) Teachers arrange the physical environment to maximize student learning and to ensure that all students have access to resources.
- (ii) Teachers create a physical classroom set-up that is flexible and accommodates the different learning needs of students.

(C) Teachers establish, implement and communicate consistent routines for effective classroom management, including clear expectations for student behavior.

- (i) Teachers implement behavior management systems to maintain an environment where all students can learn effectively.
- (ii) Teachers maintain a strong culture of individual and group accountability for class expectations.
- (iii) Teachers cultivate student ownership in developing classroom culture and norms.

(D) Teachers lead and maintain classrooms where students are actively engaged in learning as indicated by their level of motivation and on-task behavior.

- (i) Teachers maintain a culture that is based on high expectations for student performance and encourages students to be self-motivated, taking responsibility for their own learning.
- (ii) Teachers maximize instructional time, including managing transitions.

- (iii) Teachers manage and facilitate groupings in order to maximize student collaboration, participation, and achievement.
- (iv) Teachers communicate regularly, clearly, and appropriately with parents and families about student progress, providing detailed and constructive feedback and partnering with families in furthering their students’ achievement goals.

(5) Standard 5 – Data-Driven Practice. Teachers use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed.

(A) Teachers implement both formal and informal methods of measuring student progress.

- (i) Teachers gauge student progress and ensure student mastery of content knowledge and skills by providing assessments aligned to instructional objectives and outcomes that are accurate measures of student learning.
- (ii) Teachers vary methods of assessing learning to accommodate students’ learning needs, linguistic differences, and/or varying levels of background knowledge.

(B) Teachers set individual and group learning goals for students by using preliminary data and communicate these goals with students and families to ensure mutual understanding of expectations.

- (i) Teachers develop learning plans and set academic as well as social-emotional learning goals for each student in response to previous outcomes from formal and informal assessments.
- (ii) Teachers involve all students in self-assessment, goal setting, and monitoring progress.
- (iii) Teachers communicate with students and families regularly about the importance of collecting data and monitoring progress of student outcomes, sharing timely and comprehensible feedback so they understand students’ goals and progress.

(C) Teachers regularly collect, review, and analyze data to monitor student progress.

- (i) Teachers analyze and review data in a timely, thorough, accurate, and appropriate manner, both individually and with colleagues, to monitor student learning.
- (ii) Teachers combine results from different measures to develop a holistic picture of students’ strengths and learning needs.

- (D) **Teachers utilize the data they collect and analyze to inform their instructional strategies and adjust short- and long-term plans accordingly.**
 - (i) Teachers design instruction, change strategies, and differentiate their teaching practices to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.
 - (ii) Teachers regularly compare their curriculum scope and sequence with student data to ensure they are on track and make adjustments as needed.

(6) Standard 6 – Professional Practices and Responsibilities.

Teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, pursue leadership opportunities, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity.

- (A) **Teachers reflect on their teaching practice to improve their instructional effectiveness and engage in continuous professional learning to gain knowledge and skills and refine professional judgment.**
 - (i) Teachers reflect on their own strengths and professional learning needs, using this information to develop action plans for improvement.
 - (ii) Teachers establish and strive to achieve professional goals to strengthen their instructional effectiveness and better meet students' needs.
 - (iii) Teachers engage in relevant, targeted professional learning opportunities that align with their professional growth goals and their students' academic and social-emotional needs.
- (B) **Teachers collaborate with their colleagues, are self-aware in their interpersonal interactions, and are open to constructive feedback from peers and administrators.**
 - (i) Teachers seek out feedback from supervisors, coaches, and peers and take advantage of opportunities for job-embedded professional development.
 - (ii) Teachers actively participate in professional learning communities organized to improve instructional practices and student learning.

- (C) **Teachers seek out opportunities to lead students, other educators, and community members within and beyond their classrooms.**
 - (i) Teachers clearly communicate the mission, vision, and goals of the school to students, colleagues, parents and families, and other community members.
 - (ii) Teachers seek to lead other adults on campus through professional learning communities, grade- or subject-level team leadership, committee membership, or other opportunities.
- (D) **Teachers model ethical and respectful behavior and demonstrate integrity in all situations.**
 - (i) Teachers adhere to the educators' code of ethics in §247.2 of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators), including following policies and procedures at their specific school placement(s).
 - (ii) Teachers communicate consistently, clearly, and respectfully with all members of the campus community, including students, parents and families, colleagues, administrators, and staff.
 - (iii) Teachers serve as advocates for their students, focusing attention on students' needs and concerns and maintaining thorough and accurate student records.

CHAPTER 150

Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Appraisal

Subchapter AA. Teacher Appraisal

150.1001. General Provisions.

- (a) All school districts have two choices in selecting a method to appraise teachers: a teacher appraisal system recommended by the commissioner of education or a local teacher appraisal system.
- (b) The commissioner's recommended teacher appraisal system, the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), was developed in accordance with the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.351
- (c) The superintendent of each school district, with the approval of the school district board of trustees, may select the T-TESS. Each school district or campus wanting to select or develop an alternative teacher appraisal system must follow the TEC, §21.352, and §150.1007 of this title (relating to Alternatives to the Commissioner's Recommended Appraisal System).
- (d) The commissioner may designate a regional education service center to serve as the T-TESS certification provider for the state. The designated regional education service center may collect appropriate fees under the TEC, §8.053, from school districts and open-enrollment charter schools for training and certification.
- (e) Sections 150.1002 through 150.1006 of this title apply only to the T-TESS and not to local teacher appraisal systems.
- (f) The statutorily required components of teacher appraisal are defined as follows.
 - (1) **The implementation of discipline management procedures is the teacher's pedagogical practices that produce student engagement and establish the learning environment.**
 - (2) **The performance of teachers' students is how the individual teacher's students progress academically in response to the teacher's pedagogical practice as measured at the individual teacher level by one or more of the following student growth measures:**

- (A) student learning objectives;
- (B) student portfolios;
- (C) pre- and post-test results on district-level assessments; or
- (D) value-added data based on student state assessment results.

150.1002. Assessment of Teacher Performance.

- (a) Each teacher shall be appraised on the following domains and dimensions of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) rubric that is aligned to the Texas Teacher Standards in Chapter 149 of this title (relating to Commissioner's Rules Concerning Educator Standards).
 - (1) **Domain I. Planning, which includes the following dimensions:**
 - (A) standards and alignment;
 - (B) data and assessment;
 - (C) knowledge of students; and
 - (D) activities.
 - (2) **Domain II. Instruction, which includes the following dimensions:**
 - (A) achieving expectations;
 - (B) content knowledge and expertise;
 - (C) communication;
 - (D) differentiation; and
 - (E) monitor and adjust.
 - (3) **Domain III. Learning Environment, which includes the following dimensions:**
 - (A) classroom environment, routines, and procedures;
 - (B) managing student behavior; and
 - (C) classroom culture.
 - (4) **Domain IV. Professional Practices and Responsibilities, which includes the following dimensions:**
 - (A) professional demeanor and ethics;
 - (B) goal setting;
 - (C) professional development; and
 - (D) school community involvement.



- (b) The evaluation of each of the dimensions identified in subsection (a) of this section shall consider all data generated in the appraisal process. The data for the appraisal of each dimension shall be gathered from pre-conferences, observations, post-conferences, end-of-year conferences, the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan process, and other documented sources.
- (c) Each teacher shall be evaluated on the 16 dimensions in Domains I-IV identified in subsection (a) of this section using the following categories:
 - (1) **distinguished;**
 - (2) **accomplished;**
 - (3) **proficient;**
 - (4) **developing; and**
 - (5) **improvement needed.**
- (d) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each teacher appraisal shall include the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title (relating to General Provisions).
- (e) If calculating a single overall summative appraisal score for teachers, the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title, shall count for at least 20% of a teacher's summative score.
- (f) Each teacher shall be evaluated on the performance of teachers' students using one of the terms from the following categories:
 - (1) **distinguished or well above expectations;**
 - (2) **accomplished or above expectations;**
 - (3) **proficient or at expectations;**
 - (4) **developing or below expectations; or**
 - (5) **improvement needed or well below expectations.**

150.1003. Appraisals, Data Sources, and Conferences.

- (a) Each teacher must be appraised each school year, except as provided by subsection (l) of this section. Whenever possible, an appraisal shall be based on the teacher's performance in fields and teaching assignments for which he or she is certified.

- (b) The annual teacher appraisal, or full appraisal, shall include:
 - (1) **a completed and appraiser-approved Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan that shall be:**
 - (A) submitted to the teacher's appraiser within the first six weeks from the day of completion of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) orientation, as described in §150.1006 of this title (relating to Teacher Orientation), for teachers in their first year of appraisal under the T-TESS or for teachers new to the district; or
 - (B) initially drafted in conjunction with the teacher's end-of-year conference from the previous year, revised as needed based on changes to the context of the teacher's assignment during the current school year, and submitted to the teacher's appraiser within the first six weeks of instruction; and
 - (C) maintained throughout the course of the school year by the teacher to track progress in the attainment of goals and participation in professional development activities detailed in the approved plan;
 - (D) shared with the teacher's appraiser prior to the end-of-year conference; and
 - (D) used after the end-of-year conference in the determination of ratings for the goal setting and professional development dimensions of the T-TESS rubric;
 - (2) **for a teacher in the first year of appraisal under the T-TESS or for teachers new to the district, a Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan conference prior to the teacher submitting the plan to the teacher's appraiser;**
 - (3) **after a teacher's first year of appraisal under the T-TESS within the district, an observation pre-conference conducted prior to announced observations;**

(4) at least one classroom observation of a minimum of 45 minutes, as described in subsection (g) of this section, with additional walk-throughs and observations conducted at the discretion of the certified appraiser and in accordance with the Texas Education Code, §21.352(c-1). Additional observations and walk-throughs do not require an observation post-conference. Additional observations and walk-throughs do require a written summary if the data gathered during the additional observation or walk-through will impact the teacher's summative appraisal ratings, in which case the written summary shall be shared within 10 working days after the completion of the additional observation or walk-through. Section 150.1004 of this title (relating to Teacher Response and Appeals) applies to a written summary of an additional observation or walk-through that will impact the teacher's summative appraisal ratings;

(5) an observation post-conference that:

- (A) shall be conducted within 10 working days after the completion of an observation;
- (B) is diagnostic and prescriptive in nature;
- (C) includes a written report of the rating of each dimension observed that is presented to the teacher only after a discussion of the areas for reinforcement and areas for refinement; and
- (D) can allow for, at the discretion of the appraiser, a revision to an area for reinforcement or refinement based on the post-conference discussion with the teacher;

(6) cumulative data, as described in subsection (f) of this section, from written documentation collected regarding job-related teacher performance in addition to formal classroom observations;

(7) an end-of-year conference that:

- (A) reviews the appraisal data collected throughout the current school year and previous school years, if available;

- (B) examines and discusses the evidence related to the teacher's performance on the four dimensions of Domain IV of the T-TESS rubric, as described in §150.1002(a)(4) of this title (relating to Assessment of Teacher Performance);
- (C) examines and discusses evidence related to the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title (relating to General Provisions), when available; and
- (D) identifies potential goals and professional development activities for the teacher for the next school year; and

(8) a written summative annual appraisal report to be provided to the teacher within 10 working days of the conclusion of the end-of-year conference.

- (c) A teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of an observation, but advance notice is not required.
- (d) Each school district shall establish a calendar for the appraisal of teachers and provide that calendar to teachers within three weeks from the first day of instruction. The appraisal period for each teacher must include all of the days of a teacher's contract. Observations during the appraisal period must be conducted during the required days of instruction for students during one school year. The appraisal calendar shall:
 - (1) exclude observations in the two weeks following the day of completion of the T-TESS orientation in the school years when an orientation is required, as described in §150.1006 of this title; and**
 - (1) indicate a period for end-of-year conferences that ends no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students.**
- (e) During the appraisal period, the certified appraiser shall evaluate and document teacher performance specifically related to the domain criteria, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, and the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title.

- (f) The certified appraiser is responsible for documentation of the cumulative data identified in subsection (b)(6) of this section. Any third-party information from a source other than the certified appraiser that the certified appraiser wishes to include as cumulative data shall be verified and documented by the certified appraiser. Any documentation that will influence the teacher's summative annual appraisal report must be shared in writing with the teacher within 10 working days of the certified appraiser's knowledge of the occurrence. The principal shall also be notified in writing of the cumulative data when the certified appraiser is not the teacher's principal.
- (g) By written, mutual consent of the teacher and the certified appraiser, the required minimum of 45 minutes of observation may be conducted in shorter time segments. The time segments must aggregate to at least 45 minutes.
- (h) A written summative annual appraisal report shall be shared with the teacher no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The written summative annual appraisal report shall be placed in the teacher's personnel file by the end of the appraisal period.
- (i) An end-of-year conference shall be held within a time frame specified on the school district calendar, no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction for students. The end-of-year conference shall focus on the data and evidence gathered throughout the appraisal year; the teacher's efforts as they pertain to Domain IV, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title; the results of the performance of teachers' students, when available, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title; and the potential goals and professional development plans, as identified in subsection (b) of this section, for the following year. The written summative annual appraisal report shall be shared with the teacher within 10 working days following the conclusion of the end-of-year conference but no later than 15 working days before the last day of instruction.
- (j) In cases where the certified appraiser is not an administrator on the teacher's campus, as defined in §150.1005(b) of this title (relating to Appraiser Qualifications), either the principal, assistant principal, or another supervisory staff member designated as an administrator on the campus must participate in the end-of-year conference.
- (k) Any documentation collected after the end-of-year conference but before the end of the contract term during one school year may be considered as part of the appraisal of a teacher. If the documentation affects the teacher's evaluation in any dimension, another summative report shall be developed to inform the teacher of the change(s).
- (l) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, a full appraisal must be done at least once during each school year. A teacher may receive a full appraisal less frequently if the teacher agrees in writing and the teacher's most recent full appraisal resulted in the teacher receiving summative ratings of at least proficient on nine of the sixteen dimensions identified in §150.1002(a) of this title and did not identify any area of deficiency, defined as a rating of Improvement Needed or its equivalent, on any of the sixteen dimensions identified in §150.1002(a) of this title or the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title. A teacher who receives a full appraisal less than annually must receive a full appraisal at least once during each period of five school years.
 - (1) District policy may stipulate:**
 - (A) whether the option to receive a full appraisal less frequently than annually is to be made available to teachers;
 - (B) whether the option to receive a full appraisal less frequently than annually is to be adopted districtwide or is to be campus specific;
 - (C) if the appraisal accompanying a teacher new to a district or campus meets the option as specified in this subsection, whether the appraisal is to be accepted or whether that teacher is to be appraised by the new campus administrator; and
 - (D) whether a certified appraiser may place a teacher on the traditional appraisal cycle as a result of performance deficiencies documented in accordance with subsections (b)(6) and (f) of this section.
 - (2) A school district may choose annually to review the written agreement to have less frequent full appraisals with the teacher. However, at the conclusion of the school year, the district may modify appraisal options through board policy and may make changes to expectations for appraisals that apply to all teachers regardless of a teacher's participation in the appraisal option in the previous year(s).**

(3) In a year in which a teacher does not receive a full appraisal due to meeting the requirements identified in this subsection, a teacher shall participate in:

- (A) the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan process, as identified in subsection (b)(1) of this section;**
- (B) the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title; and**
- (C) a modified end-of-year conference that addresses:**
 - (i) the progress on the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan;
 - (ii) the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title; and
 - (iii) the following year's Goal-Setting and Professional Development plan.

150.1004. Teacher Response and Appeals.

- (a)** A teacher may submit a written response or rebuttal at the following times:
 - (1) for Domains I, II, and III, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title (relating to Assessment of Teacher Performance), after receiving a written observation summary or any other written documentation related to the ratings of those three domains; or**
 - (2) for Domain IV, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, and for the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title (relating to General Provisions, after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report.**
- (b)** Any written response or rebuttal must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving a written observation summary, a written summative annual appraisal report, or any other written documentation associated with the teacher's appraisal. A teacher may not submit a written response or rebuttal to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings in Domains I, II, and III, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, if those ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written

documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to submit a written response or rebuttal.

- (c)** A teacher may request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser at the following times:
 - (1) for Domains I, II, and III, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, after receiving a written observation summary with which the teacher disagrees; or**
 - (2) for Domain IV, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, and for the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title, after receiving a written summative annual appraisal report with which the teacher disagrees.**
- (d)** The second appraisal must be requested within 10 working days of receiving a written observation summary or a written summative annual appraisal report. A teacher may not request a second appraisal by another certified appraiser in response to a written summative annual appraisal report for the ratings of dimensions in Domains I, II, and III, as identified in §150.1002(a) of this title, if those ratings are based entirely on observation summaries or written documentation already received by the teacher earlier in the appraisal year for which the teacher already had the opportunity to request a second appraisal.
- (e)** A teacher may be given advance notice of the date or time of a second appraisal, but advance notice is not required.
- (f)** The second appraiser shall make observations and walk-throughs as necessary to evaluate the dimensions in Domains I-III or shall review the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan for evidence of goal attainment and professional development activities, when applicable. Cumulative data may also be used by the second appraiser to evaluate other dimensions.
- (g)** Each school district shall adopt written procedures for determining the selection of second appraisers. These procedures shall be disseminated to each teacher at the time of employment and updated annually or as needed.

150.1005. Appraiser Qualifications.

- (a) The teacher appraisal process requires at least one certified appraiser.
- (b) Under the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS), a campus administrator includes a principal, an assistant principal, an administrator who holds a comparable administrator/supervisor certificate established by the State Board for Educator Certification, or supervisory staff whose job description includes the appraisal of teachers and who is not a classroom teacher. Only in the event of the circumstances identified in subsection (d) of this section may an individual other than a campus administrator act as a certified appraiser.
- (c) Before conducting an appraisal, an appraiser must be certified by having satisfactorily completed the state-approved T-TESS appraiser training and having passed the T-TESS certification examination, and must have received Instructional Leadership Training (ILT), Instructional Leadership Development (ILD), or Advancing Educational Leadership (AEL) certification. Appraisers without ILT, ILD, or AEL certification before January 1, 2016, may not take ILT or ILD to satisfy this requirement. Periodic recertification and training shall be required.
- (d) An individual other than a campus administrator may act as a certified appraiser if:
 - (1) **the individual has been certified by completing the training required under subsection (c) of this section prior to conducting appraisals; and**
 - (2) **in the case where the certified appraiser is a classroom teacher, the certified appraiser:**
 - (A) **conducts appraisals at the same school campus at which the certified appraiser teaches if the certified appraiser is the chair of a department or grade level whose job description includes classroom observation responsibilities; or**
 - (B) **does not conduct appraisals of classroom teachers who teach at the same campus as the certified appraiser if the certified appraiser is not a department or grade-level chair.**

150.1006. Teacher Orientations.

- (a) A school district shall ensure that a teacher is provided with an orientation of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (T-TESS) no later than

the final day of the first three weeks of school and at least two weeks before the first observation when:

- (1) **the teacher is new to the district;**
 - (2) **the teacher has never been appraised under the T-TESS; or**
 - (3) **district policy regarding teacher appraisal has changed since the last time the teacher was provided with an orientation to the T-TESS.**
- (b) The teacher orientation shall be conducted in a face-to-face setting during a district's first year of T-TESS implementation and include all state and local appraisal policies and the local appraisal calendar. In addition to the orientation, campuses may hold other sessions sufficient in length allowing teachers to actively participate in a discussion of the T-TESS specifics and to have their questions answered.

150.1007. Alternatives to the Commissioner's Recommended Appraisal System.

- (a) District option. A school district that does not choose to use the commissioner's recommended appraisal system must develop its own teacher appraisal system supported by locally adopted policy and procedures and by the processes outlined in the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.352.
 - (1) **The school district-level planning and decision-making committee shall:**
 - (A) **develop an appraisal process;**
 - (B) **develop evaluation criteria, including discipline management and performance of the teacher's students; and**
 - (C) **consult with the campus planning and decision-making committee on each campus in the school district.**
 - (2) **The appraisal process shall include:**
 - (A) **at least one appraisal each year, or less frequently if in accordance with the TEC, §21.352(c);**
 - (B) **a conference between the teacher and the appraiser that is diagnostic and prescriptive with regard to remediation needed in overall performance by category; and**



(C) criteria based on observable, job-related behavior, including:

- (i) the teacher's implementation of discipline management procedures, as defined in §150.1001(f)(1) of this title (relating to General Provisions); and
- (ii) beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title.

(3) The school district-level planning and decision-making committee shall submit the appraisal process and criteria to the superintendent, who shall submit the appraisal process and criteria to the school district board of trustees with a recommendation to accept or reject. The school district board of trustees may accept or reject an appraisal process and performance criteria, with comments, but may not modify the process or criteria.

(b) Campus option. A campus within a school district may choose to develop a local system as provided in this subsection.

(1) The campus planning and decision-making committee shall:

- (A) develop an appraisal process;**
- (B) develop evaluation criteria, including discipline management and performance of the teacher's students; and**
- (C) submit the process and criteria to the district-level planning and decision-making committee.**

(2) The appraisal process shall include:

- (A) at least one appraisal each year, or less frequently if in accordance with the TEC, §21.352(c);**
- (B) a conference between the teacher and the appraiser that is diagnostic and prescriptive with regard to remediation needed in overall performance by category; and**
- (C) criteria based on observable, job-related behavior, including:**
 - (i) the teacher's implementation of discipline management procedures, as defined in §150.1001(f)(1) of this title; and
 - (ii) beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the performance of teachers' students, as defined in §150.1001(f)(2) of this title.

(3) Upon submission of the appraisal process and criteria to the school district-level planning and decision-making committee, the committee shall make a recommendation to

accept or reject the appraisal process and criteria and transmit that recommendation to the superintendent.

(4) The superintendent shall submit the recommended campus appraisal process and criteria, the school district-level planning and decision-making committee's recommendation, and the superintendent's recommendation to the school district board of trustees. The school district board of trustees may accept or reject, with comments, an appraisal process and performance criteria, but may not modify the process or criteria.

150.1008. District Submissions to Regional Education Service Center.

- (a)** The superintendent shall notify the executive director of its regional education service center in writing of the district's choice of appraisal system when using an alternative to the commissioner's recommended appraisal system and detail the components of that system by the first day of instruction for the school year in which the alternative system is used.
- (b)** Each school district shall submit annually to its regional education service center a summary of the campus-level evaluation scores from the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System, or the district's locally adopted appraisal system, in a manner prescribed by the commissioner of education.

Conference Sample Questions

The questions provided are intended to guide thinking and conversation; every question may not be answered or relevant for every observation.

Planning Domain

(Dimension 1.1: Standards and Alignment)

- How are the goals for learning aligned to state content standards?
- How will technology be integrated into the lesson to support mastery of the lesson's goal(s)?
- How do you plan for activities, materials and assessments that are sequenced and relevant to the students?
- How do you decide on the segmenting of a lesson in order to provide appropriate time for student work, lesson and lesson closure?
- How do you decide on activities, materials and assessments that are appropriate for diverse learners?
- How are lesson structure and pacing addressed in this lesson?
- How does the sequence of the lesson address scaffolded learning and complex concepts as it progresses?
- In what ways are other disciplines integrated and supported?
- How do you ensure that your lessons are aligned horizontally with the team? Vertically?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Planning Domain

(Dimension 1.2: Data and Assessment)

- What assessment data was examined to inform this lesson planning?
- What are some ways you communicate your classroom and school goals to stakeholders?
- What does pre-assessment data indicate about student learning needs?
- What formal and informal techniques do you use to collect evidence of students' knowledge and skills?
- How will your assessment data help you identify student strengths and areas of improvement?
- In what ways do you provide specific and timely feedback to students? Families? Other school personnel?
- How is data provided to students to help them identify their own learning needs and track progress?
- How do you compare student results to your own teaching strategies to determine what works for specific students? When are you most successful? When do students struggle? Why? How does this help you plan for future lessons?
- What processes do you use to collect and analyze data over time?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Planning Domain

(Dimension 1.3: Knowledge of Students)

- How will this lesson demonstrate your familiarity with the students' prior knowledge, life experiences and interests?
- How will the instructional strategies provide opportunities for all students' learning needs?
- How will developmental gaps be addressed?
- How do you assess students' learning styles and needs?
- When students have individualized learning plans, how are their needs included in planning for lessons?
- How are students with similar needs grouped and supported during the planning and instruction phases?
- When students are struggling, how do you determine the cause and address their needs?
- How are students' backgrounds, language and/or cultural differences used to plan for instruction?
- How are students' social-emotional needs incorporated into planning for lessons?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Planning Domain

(Dimension 1.4: Activities)

- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher order questions during a lesson?
- How do you plan for questions and opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking and problem solving?
- How do you decide on the instructional grouping of students during a lesson?

- How do you hold groups and individuals accountable for work completed within a group?
- How do you decide on the roles individuals will have when working in groups?
- How do the activities, resources, technology and instructional materials align to the instructional goals?
- How are activities varied to address different ability levels and learning needs?
- What opportunities do you provide for students to set individual goals and hold each other accountable for meetings those goals? How does goal setting happen within instructional groups?
- How do you ensure that the activities planned are engaging and keep students focused and motivated to learn? How do they engage students in ownership of their own learning?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instruction Domain

(Dimension 2.1: Achieving Expectations)

- Why is it important to have academic expectations that are high and demanding for all students?
- How will you obtain evidence that most students have demonstrated mastery of the objective?
- How will students take initiative for their own learning and self-monitor their progress?
- What are some examples of high expectations with this unit of study/lesson/activity?
- What opportunities do you provide for students to set high social-emotional expectations for themselves?
- How are students expected to persist with instruction to demonstrate progress towards mastery of learning? What types of strategies do you use to keep them motivated and focused?

- How do you anticipate student mistakes and/or misunderstandings? What types of common learning pitfall do you generally see with this lesson/unit?
- When you know students will struggle with what is presented, what do you do?
- In what ways are students expected to take initiative for their own learning? What role do you play in this?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instruction Domain

(Dimension 2.2: Content Knowledge and Expertise)

- How do you develop or select instructional strategies to teach (insert topic to be taught)?
- How do you decide on ways in which to you will connect the content to other disciplines and real-world experiences?
- How will you sequence the instruction so students understand how the lesson fits within of the discipline and real world scenarios?
- How do you plan for opportunities for students to engage in different types of thinking?
- What are some examples related to how you model thinking for students?
- What do you believe are the key concepts with this unit of study/ lesson?
- How do you know when to provide differentiated explanations for students?
- What content, if any, do you anticipate will present challenges for students? What cues will tell you that they do not understand what is presented? What might you do to prepare for these misunderstandings up front? What techniques do you/might you use to mitigate those concerns?

- How is instruction sequenced to allow students to see the connections within and across disciplines?
- What are some examples of how you continuously refine your knowledge and expertise?
- How do you stay current in the field?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instruction Domain

(Dimension 2.3: Communication)

- How will the goals for learning be communicated to students?
- How will you provide opportunities for students to elaborate and extend their learning?
- How do you provide for wait time when questioning during a lesson?
- Why is it important for teachers to ask higher order questions that are aligned to the lesson's objective?
- How do you communicate your expectations to your students?
- How is student-to-student communication encouraged and established during instruction?
- How do you make decisions about the types of technology and/or visual tools to use during the lesson?
- How are technology and visual tools used to engage students and communicate learning?
- How do you know when your explanations or direct teach are clear and coherent? What strategies do you use to assess whether students understood what was explained? What happens when students do not understand?
- How are questions leveled to increase complex thinking during the lesson? In what ways do they promote deeper thinking and a broader understanding of the objective(s)?

- What are some strategies you use to provoke and guide discussions with students?
- How are students expected to communicate what they have learned?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instruction Domain

(Dimension 2.4: Differentiation)

- How will the instructional strategies address all students' learning needs?
- How do you provide differentiated instructional methods within your lessons?
- How will the lesson engage and challenge students of all levels?
- Why is it important to provide varied options for student mastery?
- Why is it important to provide multiple strategies to teach and assess students?
- How are lessons adapted and presented using a variety of strategies to reach all students?
- In what ways do you monitor student participation and performance? What do you do when these expectations are not present?
- What student behaviors do you look for during the lesson as signals that differentiation may be needed?
- How do you know when students are confused?
- What do you do when students become disengaged? How do you refocus instruction?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instruction Domain

(Dimension 2.5: Monitor and Adjust)

- How will you check for understanding during the lesson?
- How will you use student feedback to make adjustments to your instruction?
- How does student engagement impact student achievement?
- What strategies do you use to gather input from students? How is this information used to monitor and adjust instruction?
- How are activities adjusted to align with the lesson objective and yet meet students' needs?
- How is pacing monitored and adjusted to maximize learning and keep students progressing towards mastery? What behaviors might you see to indicate that pacing needs to be adjusted?
- What strategies do you use for ongoing checks for understanding?
- What kinds of questions do you ask when purposefully checking for understanding?
- What are some examples of specific, academic feedback you provide to students? How do students provide academic feedback to each other? What are students expected to do with the feedback?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Learning Environment Domain

(Dimension 3.1: Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures)

- How do you ensure that routines, procedures and transitions are efficient in order to maximize student learning?
- How will different grouping strategies be used to encourage student responsibility for resources and materials?
- How do you build safety in the classroom, promoting open communication and/or collaboration?
- What are some strategies for involving students in leading and managing responsibilities within the classroom?
- How are students encouraged to take risks?
- What would students say about the environment – from both instructional and social-emotional aspects? How do you know that?
- If you could refine your routines and procedures, what would you do? Why?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Learning Environment Domain

(Dimension 3.2: Managing Student Behavior)

- What systems are in place to effectively monitor student behavior?
- How do you plan to address inappropriate behavior should that become an issue during the lesson?
- How are students involved in developing classroom procedures (e.g., classroom rules, procedures for supplies, routines)?
- How are clear behavioral expectations communicated and monitored?

- What types of consequences do you use when behavior is inconsistent?
- What types of non-verbal signals do you use with students to re-direct behavior?
- What is the relationship between student behavior and student engagement?
- How does your behavior management system extend beyond classroom walls?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Learning Environment Domain

(Dimension 3.3: Classroom Culture)

- How do you determine/plan appropriate procedures to ensure a respectful classroom culture?
- How do you provide opportunities for students to collaborate?
- In what ways does your classroom culture reflect high expectations for performance and student-centered behaviors?
- How does the classroom culture ensure that relevant, meaningful learning is the norm?
- How are activities structured so that students are expected to collaborate positively with each other?
- How is positive rapport amongst students established and maintained?
- In what ways are students empowered to build a positive classroom culture that they own and respect?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Practices and Responsibilities Domain

(Dimension 4.1: Professional Demeanor and Ethics)

Consider the number of required conferences due based upon the individual teacher.

- How do you model professional ethics as a teacher?
- How do you model respectful behavior and integrity as a teacher?
- How do you maintain a classroom where students are valued and respected?
- In what ways do you advocate for the needs of all your students?
- Why is professional appearance important?
- What is the relationship between teacher attendance and student performance?
- How do you ensure that all legal and statutory requirements are met for students who participate in special programs?
- When student information is shared, how do you ensure that it's attributed to their learning needs?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Practices and Responsibilities Domain

(Dimension 4.2: Goal Setting)

- What types of teacher and student data might you review to self-assess your professional growth needs?
- How do you establish self-assessment of teaching practices as an ongoing process?
- When establishing goals, how do you decide which action items will yield the best results?
- How will your goal(s) help you grow professionally, refine your practices, and stay current in the field?
- What do you know about individuals who continuously set goals and work to meet those goals? How does this parallel your thinking?
- What types of support do you need to reach your goals?
- How will you formatively review your goals and progress towards the goals?
- What are some short and long term professional goals you have set for yourself?
- How have your professional goals had a direct impact on student performance?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Practices and Responsibilities Domain

(Dimension 4:3: Professional Development)

- What are some proactive ways you further your own professional development?
- How have you supported your grade or subject level teams?
- How do you engage in ongoing self-analysis to identify professional learning needs?
- In what ways do you stay current with the profession?
- What are some examples of how you engage in job-embedded learning?
- How are team learning forums scheduled and consistently implemented?
- How does your professional development correlate with student performance?
- How do you collaborate with colleagues to facilitate and lead your professional learning communities/team learning?
- What methods do you use to get feedback from others? Why is this important? What do you do with the feedback?
- In what ways do you work with others to enhance your knowledge and professional skills?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Professional Practices and Responsibilities Domain

(Dimension 4:4: School Community Involvement)

- How do you communicate the school's mission, vision and goals to families? Students? Community?
- How do you communicate a student's academic and social/emotional growth to parents/guardians?
- How have you worked collaboratively with colleagues to enhance student learning?
- What are some examples of how you participate in school outreach activities? Why is it important to do this?
- How do you support/lead learning with all school stakeholders?
- How is a teacher a person of influence in the school community? What is your belief about this role? Why?
- Why is it important to involve families in school affairs?
- In what ways do you participate in decision-making forums? What contributions do you make to attaining excellence within the school community? Why is this important?
- _____
- _____
- _____

Observation Pacing Guide for Your School

- 1. Number of teachers to observe _____ x 1 formal lesson-length observation _____
(Multiply the number of teachers to observe by 2 formal observations (or more,) if applicable.)

- 2. Total number of formal lesson-length observations per year (total from line 1).** _____

- 3. Number of appraisers. _____

- 4. Divide line 2 total by line 3 number (full lessons each appraiser must see). _____

- 5. Divide line 4 by 30 (number of observation weeks). This is the number of FULL LESSONS each observer will need to see each week to keep on track.** _____

Goal Setting and Professional Development Plan

T-TESS fosters professional growth by encouraging teachers to set high standards for their professional development, thereby increasing instructional effectiveness, knowledge and skills. It is important for district and campus leadership to emphasize the significance of continuous improvement and the effect of the Goal Setting and Professional Development process with ongoing professional learning.

Goal setting is intended to establish a positive correlation between the quality of teaching and learning, target instructional decisions based upon student data, create a mechanism for teacher refinement of practices, and increase effectiveness of instruction via the teacher's continuous professional growth. The expectation for goal setting is directly tied to TAC, Chapter 149.1001 which states:

Teachers reflect on their teaching practice to improve their instructional effectiveness and engage in continuous professional learning to gain knowledge and skills and refine professional judgment.

- (i) Teachers reflect on their own strengths and professional learning needs, using this information to develop action plans for improvement.
- (ii) Teachers establish and strive to achieve professional goals to strengthen their instructional effectiveness and better meet students' needs.
- (iii) Teachers engage in relevant, targeted professional learning opportunities that align with their professional growth goals and their students' academic and social-emotional needs.

Two key questions for administrators to consider include:

- How do we—school leaders— establish a culture where goal setting and ongoing learning are valued and embraced in our school community?
- How is the Goal Setting and Professional Development Plan used as the central tool to systematically focus teachers on continuous,

self-directed improvement of practices which impact student performance?

There are specific actions which occur at the beginning, throughout, and at the end of the school year to create the cycle for growth and development over time.

Beginning of Year

Step 1: Orientation (Near the beginning of the school year) - With initial implementation of the T-TESS model, an orientation of the T-TESS process is provided for teachers, followed by ongoing support in understanding the Rubric and its application. Ideally, administrators will so provide an orientation/overview of the Goal Setting and Professional Development process.

Step 2: Self-Assessment (Near the beginning of the school year) – Teachers will independently review both student and teacher data, including the connections to the T-TESS Rubric domains, dimensions, and descriptors to determine the “need.” How do these needs translate to a goal that will have an impact on both teacher and student performance?

Step 3: Formulate Goal(s) (Within three weeks of the orientation) - Teachers formulate the goal(s) based on the data and identified needs. The SMART goal process is recommended to ensure that the goal is specific, measurable, attainable, rigorous/realistic, and timely. The teacher also identifies specific types of professional development, including job-embedded structures and the types of support necessary to accomplish the goal.

Step 4: Review the Goal(s) – (Within the first few weeks of school) – Schedule an in-person Goal Setting Conference with the appraiser (recommended) to review the goal(s), determine if any adjustments to the goal are necessary, identify the types of support needed from the appraiser, outline milestones that will help the teacher know that the goals are on track, and determine the specific types of evidence that will be collected to demonstrate progress/mastery towards the goal(s).

Throughout the Year

Step 5: Formative Reviews (Ongoing) – Teachers regularly monitor their goal progress and how the professional development supports the goal(s). Goals are modified in conjunction with the appraiser, when necessary, based on new data (student and teacher). Formative reviews may occur in varied forums, e.g., conferences (including pre- and post-conferences), staff meetings, department meetings, etc. The objective is for teachers to continuously stay focused on how they are working towards the goal(s). Appraisers are also collecting evidence to support dimensions 4.2 (Goal Setting) and 4.3 (Professional Development) throughout the year, including the impact on dimensions in Domains 1, 2 and 3.

End-of Year

Step 6: Prepare for End-of-Year Conferences (Several weeks before the end of the school year) – End-of-Year Conferences are scheduled. Both teachers and appraisers gather evidence collected throughout the year in preparation for the end-of-year conference discussions.

Step 7: End-of-Year Conferences (At least 15 days prior to the last day of school) – Conferences are held to discuss the final scores for Domains 1, 2 and 3. Teachers and appraisers also share the evidence/data for Domain 4, with an emphasis on Goal Setting and Professional Development. (Note: Domain 4 is not scored in summative form until after the teacher has been afforded an opportunity to present evidence for the dimensions in this domain.) The conversations are focused on how the goal(s) were met and specific professional development and growth that occurred to meet those goals. If goal(s) were not met, the appraiser uses coaching to help the teacher analyze why the goal(s) were not met, what might have happened differently, the effect of not meeting the goal(s), and next steps.

Step 8: Formulate Tentative Goal(s) for Next Year - During this End-of-Year Conference, new goal(s) are formulated for the following year, along with preliminary discussions about potential professional development to meet the goal(s). Data collected all year, including area(s) of refinement, are used to generate these tentative goals which are intended to improve teacher practices and student performance.

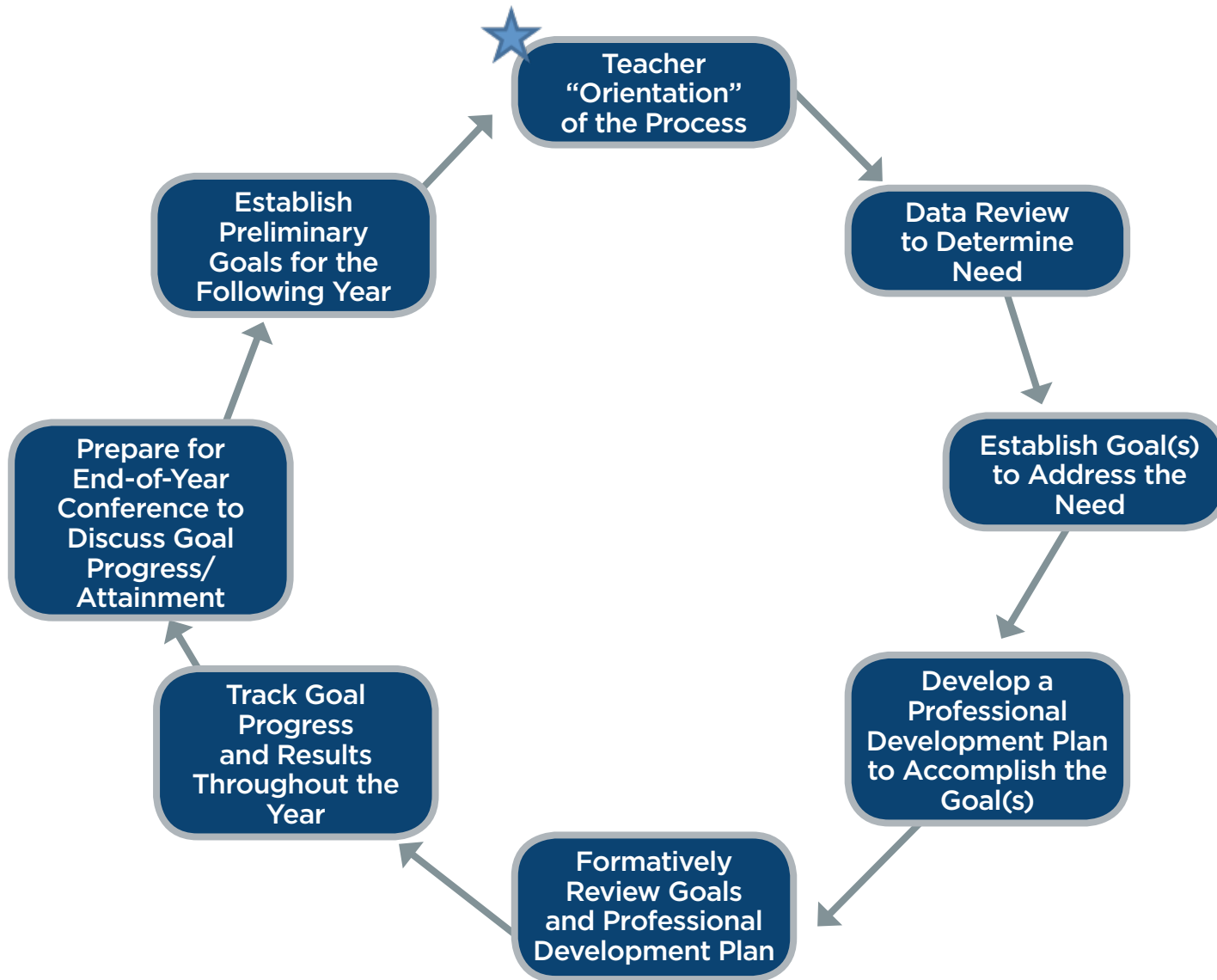
Following Year

Because this is a cycle of continuous improvement, teachers who were already involved in the T-TESS process generated preliminary goal(s) for this next school year. Teachers should revisit the goals at the beginning of the year to determine if the goal(s) are still appropriate and make adjustments with appraiser input, as necessary, based on current data and the new group of students.

The cycle begins again this new school year to target new areas for professional growth and correlating professional development. A question to consider is: *How is the process connected at the beginning of the following year to clearly communicate that learning is ongoing and continuous improvement is valued and embraced by everyone in the school community?*



Cycle of Continuous Improvement



End-of-Year Conferences

This EOY Conference provides an opportunity for the appraiser and the teacher to summarize the year, to collect information that will provide evidence to score Domain 4 of the T-TESS Rubric, and to discuss next year's goal(s) and professional development plan. Designated appraisers should attempt to conduct End-of-Year (EOY) Conferences from mid-April through May, 2015 with all educators evaluated with the T-TESS system.

Unlike Domains 1-3, Domain 4: Professional Practices and Responsibilities, is not scored in summative form by the evaluator until after the teacher has been afforded the opportunity to present evidence related to the four dimensions during the EOY Conference. Domain 4 should be scored by someone who regularly interacts with the educator. In most cases, this will be the appraiser; however, for some educators it may be appropriate to obtain input from another supervisor, in addition to the teacher, to score this domain.

It is important to anchor the scoring of Domain 4 in the T-TESS Rubric based on the evidence provided. "Proficient" is the performance level at which initial consideration begins until evidence is substantiated to score at another level.

Expected Components of End-of-Year Conferences:

- Review final observation data for Domains 1, 2, & 3
- Review teacher/student impact data
- Share and discuss evidence for Domain 4, including attainment of goal(s) and follow-through with activities from the Goal-Setting and Professional Development Plan
- Commend professional progress and area of reinforcement
- Discuss new goal(s) and professional development activities
Ensure teachers prepare to bring their Domain 4 evidence/data prior to the meeting.

There is currently no required form to document the EOY conference. Districts are encouraged, however, to determine their own system of documentation.

With updated goals and professional development activities determined during the EOY Conference, the beginning of the next school year becomes a time to review and revise goals and activities as necessary. Teachers and appraisers will review and analyze student performance data from the prior year (if they didn't have the opportunity to do so at the end of the previous year), will review student performance data for the students the teacher will teach during the new school year, and will determine if the goals and activities agreed upon at the end of the last school year still meet the needs of the teacher and the teacher's current students.

Online Certification Assessment

Directions for the Online Appraisal Certification Process

You will need to login to the training portal with the username and password once your account is approved by your trainer. Once logged in, go to the Appraiser section of the website and click on the "Certification Test" link.

To become a certified appraiser, you will complete a three-step process online.

Step 1:

Complete the Training Survey: Following the required three-day in-person training, please complete this survey about the training session you attended. All responses are anonymous.

Step 2:

View a Lesson: First, you will be asked to watch an entire video recorded lesson. You may take notes while watching video- those notes WILL be access when you rate the lesson.

Rate the Teacher: Having watched the entire lesson video, you are now ready to appraise it. When you click the NEXT button, you will be presented with the Instruction and Learning Environment Domains. Select the best rating for each dimension in these domains.

Step 3:

Post-Conference Questions: In this last section of the test, you will be presented a series of 8 questions regarding the conference process. Upon successful completion of this step, you will be able to print your certificate!



Test Taking Notes and Tips:

Follow all instructions carefully. For additional support, click the FAQs-Support link (at the top of the website) for additional information on the certification test.

Retrieve your Login Information

- If you forgot your login credentials, click Login at the top right of the website, then below the login area click on the Forgot Password or Forgot Username links.
- If you do not receive the email within 10 minutes, check your Junk Folder or Spam Filter. For assistance, please contact your email administrator with the information in this step.

Allow Time to Certify

- Allow 60 to 90 minutes of reliable high-speed internet connectivity to complete the viewing a video. If your wireless service is sometimes unreliable, use a direct cable connection
- Once you click the BEGIN button, do not use your browser's "Back" or "Refresh" buttons. Using either of these buttons at any time throughout the certification test will result in a reload, and the loss of your currently active session.
- If you lose your Internet connection, or otherwise exit the system prior to completion of the current step, you will be required to start at the beginning of the step when you re-enter the system. You will be able to manually fast-forward the video to where you left off.
- Step 1 must be completed prior to moving on to Step 2 (View a Lesson), and Step 2 must be completed and passed before proceeding to Step 3 (Post-Conference).start at the beginning of the step when you re-enter the system.

Check your Web Browser

- For best results, set your pop-up blocker to "allow pop-ups from this website on your web browser"

Print Your Certificate

- Upon successful completion of Step 3, you will be able to print your certificate. You will have the opportunity to print a copy at any time or you can save the certificate as a PDF to your computer.



If You Do Not Pass

- If you do not successfully complete any portion of the process, you can retake that section. You are encouraged to take advantage of reviewing all the online and printed resources before you attempt to take a test again.

Appraiser Handbook

