

Planning Domain – Collecting Quality Evidence

Appraisers: “How do we collect evidence for ‘unannounced’ observations when a pre-conference is not directly tied to the actual lesson?”

Effective planning begins with measurable and explicit learning outcomes aligned to the TEKS and other relevant standards for learning. Planning is initially based on three driving questions:

- (1) What do I want students to know and be able to do as a result of this lesson?*
- (2) How will the students be engaged in the learning to address their individual needs and interests?*
- (3) How will I assess that the students have demonstrated mastery of the identified knowledge, skills, and concepts in the lesson?*

Evidence and data for the planning domain and dimensions are collected over the course of the year during individual and team planning meetings, through the review of lesson plans and artifacts, with student data management systems, pre-conferences and other applicable means. Effective planning is critical to the overall design and delivery of curriculum, instruction and assessments and how these three elements work together.

1.1 Standards and Alignment:

Appraiser Reference Point

- The standards describe the knowledge and skills that students should attain and are often called the “what” of “what students should know and be able to do.” They address the ways of thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, problem-solving, and investigating the important and enduring ideas, concepts, issues and knowledge essential to the discipline with connections across disciplines.
- The standards are selected as presented in the district’s scope and sequence and are aligned and logically sequenced.
- The teacher clearly understands what the standards specifically mean for the grade level and subject taught, including a common understanding among teachers responsible for teaching these standards.
- The verbs in the standards define the observable actions expected in classroom instruction and how students are expected to process the content. They are arranged in order of complexity in thinking.
- The standards and objectives are communicated in multiple ways so that students are clear about what they are supposed to know and be able to do as a result of the lesson.
- The standards are spiraled and woven throughout the year to ensure that consistent exposure is occurring.

- Both content and process standards are strategically included in lesson design and delivery.
- There is a clear understanding regarding the vertical and horizontal articulation of the standards to ensure alignment within and among disciplines.
- Relevant and enriching extensions are incorporated as the standards are addressed throughout the lesson and are appropriate for diverse learners.
- Technology is integrated in deliberate ways as a means of enhancing learning outcomes.

Possible Sources of Evidence

- The learner outcomes or lesson objectives are explicitly communicated – ideally written and verbal - throughout the lesson where both the teacher and students understand what is to be accomplished during the lesson.
- There is a clear connection between the learner outcomes, the TEKS or other standards, and how the lesson is designed in the lesson plan and executed during instruction.
- The teacher continuously makes references to the learner outcomes and connects what students are doing to the lesson's objective.
- Learning objectives are consistently connected to what students have previously learned and their experiences.
- There is a clear beginning, middle and end to the lesson, including logical design and pacing that meets the needs of all learners.
- Sub-objectives are included to review and connect prior learning, teach a new sub-skill that is required in this objective, and/or to teach a process that supports the lesson objective.
- Connections are made with new learning to prior learning, including real-world connections and how learning impacts them (students).
- There are horizontal (other standards across the course/grade level) and vertical (from course to course/grade to grade) connections with the standards.
- Students are involved in some way to reference and reflect on the standards/learner outcomes, including connecting their product outcomes to the standards.
- Technology is incorporated in a way that clearly aligns with the lesson outcomes and supports students in moving towards mastery of those objectives – purposeful by design.
- Activities, materials and assessments support teaching and assessing learning for these specific learner outcomes/lesson objectives.
- Other disciplines are connected through themes, concepts, issues, problems, etc., with the lesson objectives.
- Students can answer the questions: Why am I studying/learning this information? When and how am I going to use this information?

1.2 Data and Assessment:

Appraiser Reference Points

- Data and assessments are used to set individual and group learning goals.
- Teachers consistently review student data in relation to student curriculum standards to ensure instruction is on track and make adjustments, as necessary, to meet the needs of all students.
- Teachers consistently utilize both formal and informal methods of measuring student progress and mastery of learning objectives and content knowledge and skills.
- Learning outcomes are directly linked to assessment measures that most accurately predict and assess student learning.
- Teachers use varied methods of assessing student learning, accommodate students' learning needs with these assessments, and compare data measures, as appropriate to determine trends and patterns over time and develop a holistic picture of students' strengths and learning needs.
- Processes are established to regularly collect, review, analyze and apply data to monitor student progress in a timely, thorough, accurate and appropriate manner.
- Teachers use data and assessments to inform instructional practices, design and delivery, and differentiate their teaching practices to improve student learning based on assessment outcomes.
- Students are involved in self-assessment, goal setting and monitoring their progress with both formal and informal measures.
- Teachers consistently communicate with students and their families using data and assessments to share timely and comprehensible feedback so that both students and families understand the learning goals and how students are meeting these goals.

Possible Sources of Evidence

- It is evident that data is used to plan for how individual and group learning will occur in the lesson plan and during the lesson, as articulated during instruction (use of data binders, assessment results, prior day's instruction, etc.) and evidenced with artifacts during or following the lesson in discussion with the teacher.
- Assessments (formal and informal) are aligned with the lesson outcomes/objectives to measure mastery and include more than one way for students to demonstrate and teachers to measure learning and performance.
- Clear measurement criteria are included (How do we know?) for activities and products.

- Student work, products and outcomes are aligned to the lesson outcomes/objectives and can be used to assess mastery in some form.
- Students are setting goals and self-assessing/self-monitoring learning.
- Connections with families to share data and feedback are discussed and evident.
- Progress charts and other anecdotal measures are used to track progress/learning.
- Use of IEPs, 504s, etc. in designing and delivering instruction, as evidenced in lesson plans and lesson delivery.
- Evidence that the teacher understands what is working/not working during the lesson, e.g., “I see these struggles,” etc.

1.3 Knowledge of Students:

Appraiser Reference Points

- All teachers advocate for their students, believe that students have the potential to achieve at high levels, and accept responsibility to ensure high levels of performance of each learner.
- Teachers are purposeful in utilizing students’ individual strengths as a basis for academic and social-emotional growth.
- Teachers anticipate students’ learning difficulties and incorporate differentiated strategies to address these needs and master what is being taught.
- A community of learners is established where teachers model continuous improvement and differences in learning and background are viewed as an asset and platform for growth.
- Teachers understand the unique qualities of students with exceptional needs, including cultural, educational, linguistic, disabilities, and giftedness, and seek opportunities to learn how to effectively address these needs so that instruction is fully accessible.
- Teachers understand how learners develop and construct meaning and the relationship of these concepts to acquiring specific knowledge and skills as readiness and supporting standards.

Possible Sources of Evidence

- Students’ prior knowledge and experiences are discussed, addressed, and incorporated in the lesson.
- The teacher and students can articulate learning strengths and gaps.

- The lesson capitalizes on students' strengths and learning gaps and is structured in a way that addresses their unique learning needs.
- Learning styles are included using varied modalities in purposeful ways.
- Student choice is evident.
- Teacher practices incorporate student interests and cultural heritage, as appropriate.

1.4 Activities:

Appraiser Reference Points

- Teachers purposefully plan activities which are challenging for all students and keep them engaged and motivated to learn.
- The teacher serves as a facilitator, incorporating activities that best match the content, and move toward student-centered actions that allow for them to take ownership of their own learning.
- Lessons that value inquiry, curiosity and exploration allow students to connect with the learning at higher levels of cognition.
- Teachers model effective questioning techniques and how to respond to students' questions. This modeling leads to lessons which purposefully incorporate opportunities for students to generate questions for student-to-student interactions that lead to thinking and promote complex, higher-order thinking, problem solving and real-world connections.
- Teachers use data and assessments to create instructional groups which are based on the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. These groups are dynamic and change based on the lesson objectives and student needs. During these group activities, clear expectations are communicated which allow students to assume responsibility for both group and individual participation and accountability.
- Ongoing opportunities are available for students to review and understand expectations for performance in relation to their data and current levels of performance. This information is used to set goals and review progress over time for these learning goals. Students reflect on their goals and progress towards these goals and hold each other accountable as they interact within their instructional groups.

Possible Sources of Evidence

- Key questions/essential questions are purposefully planned and presented where students are expected to think and process at higher levels.
- Questions are posed, extended and subsequently generated to promote complex, higher order thinking.

- Student-to-student interactions are evident with planned activities that lead to self-direction and self-monitoring.
- Students are motivated and authentically engaged in learning.
- Students are grouped during the lesson to address their individual strengths and needs. There is rationale for how they are grouped as part of the planning process.
- Student groups are dynamic and change based on data and need.
- Roles and responsibilities are assigned to facilitate the activities and efficiently transition and process activities.
- Students set learning goals and hold each other accountable in groups.
- Students are held accountable for individual and group work.
- Student accountability includes evaluating each other through participation and possibly performance.
- Activities are purposefully tied to the learner outcomes/lesson objectives and structured in a way that leads to deeper, complex learning over time.
- Students are problem solving and thinking at higher levels.
- Instructional materials and resources extend beyond curriculum texts.