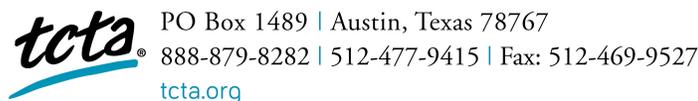


Texas Classroom Teachers Association



TCTA's T-TESS Video Tools

PART 1: Lesson Plans

Notes

The links in this background information take the reader to the state's T-TESS website: Teach for Texas, www.teachfortexas.org. Teach for Texas resources include training manuals, guidebooks, rubrics, videos, templates, documents, subject matter modules, and other resources that explain the components of the T-TESS process. This information is not part of the Commissioner's adopted rules that are enforceable by law. This information represents TEA's explanations of how the new appraisal system should work and TCTA's impressions about the new appraisal system.

This background material does not constitute legal advice or create an attorney-client relationship. TCTA provides this for information purposes only. TCTA members with questions about this information may call the TCTA Legal Department at 888-879-8282 to speak with a staff attorney.

For more on T-TESS, go to www.tcta.org/t-tess

Expanded Transcript

I'm Dohn Larson, Director of Legal Services for Texas Classroom Teachers Association.

Welcome to this TCTA T-TESS video tool.

Today, the TCTA Legal Department debunks the myth that T-TESS requires teachers to prepare scripted, multi-page lesson plans.

On the contrary:

The T-TESS rubric and training materials provide guidance to teachers about effective lesson planning, but T-TESS does not require any type of lesson plan. Knowledgeable T-TESS appraisers find evidence of effective planning in several ways.

The Commissioner's rules took effect on July 1. The rules do not require any type of lesson plan; they say nothing about lesson plans. <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter150/ch150aa.html>

The rubric has four domains, 16 dimensions, and 271 descriptors that describe various types of skills with transitions from teacher-centered to student-centered activities.

T-TESS rules do not mention descriptors. T-TESS designers created descriptors to link T-TESS to the new aspirational teacher standards, which never mention lesson plans. (See: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter149/ch149aa.html> for teacher standards.)

Of the 271 descriptors, one—just one—mentions a lesson plan.

Dimension 1.2, Data and Assessment

Accomplished

Formal and informal assessments to monitor progress of all students and incorporate appropriate diagnostic formative and summative assessments data into lesson plans.

Besides the fact that descriptors are not part of the rules, we can learn things from this descriptor.

The descriptor does not appear in Proficient, the “rock solid” performance level. It appears in Accomplished, a level of aspirational goals.

It does not mention multi-page, scripted lesson plans. It says nothing about any required length; it mentions assessments. And that gets convoluted.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, a district cannot require a lesson plan that includes more than a brief and general outline of the information the teacher plans to present to students.

Texas Education Code § 11.164.

- (a) The board of trustees of each school district shall limit redundant requests for information and the number and length of written reports that a classroom teacher is required to prepare. A classroom teacher may not be required to prepare any written information other than:
 - (6) a unit or weekly lesson plan that outlines, in a brief and general manner, the information to be presented during each period at the secondary level or in each subject or topic at the elementary level....

Ysleta ISD required teachers to include assessments in their lesson plans. A Texas court of appeals ruled that assessments did not constitute information to be presented to students and held that the District violated the law. *Ysleta Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Porter*, 2015 Tex. App. LEXIS 3594.

T-TESS Resources at Teach for Texas

Since neither the rules nor the rubric require detailed, scripted lesson plans, we looked for information online and from the appraiser certification course.

Teach for Texas offers a lot of T-TESS information for teachers and appraisers. Nothing on teachfortexas.org says that a teacher must submit a lesson plan or a particular kind of lesson plan.

During their three-day T-TESS certification training, trainees practiced reviewing lesson plans, scripting video-taped lessons, scoring the rubric, and conducting post-observation conferences.

One of the lesson plans looked like this:

4th Grade Math

2. Number and operations. The student applies mathematical process standards to represent, compare and order whole numbers and decimals and understand relationships related to place value. The student is expected to:

E. Represent decimals, including tenths and hundredths, using concrete and visual models and money;

G. Relate decimals to fractions that name tenths and hundredths; and

3. Number and operations. The student applies mathematical process standards to represent and generate fractions to solve problems. The student is expected to:

G. represent fractions and decimals to the tenths or hundredths as distances from zero on a number line.

This lesson plan complies with the law because it briefly and generally describes the information presented during the period.

There were other plans, one included the TEKS and a few general statements about the information presented during the lesson.

If we shift the focus to the T-TESS process, we get a better answer of how knowledgeable appraisers find evidence of planning.

The Appraiser Training Guide says that appraisers and teachers mutually discuss interrelationships between planning, instruction, learning environment and student outcomes during pre-conferences.

During PLCs, appraisers can observe groups of teachers planning instruction.

Using the rubric and the descriptors for Domain I, for example Dimension 1.1, during an observation, an appraiser can see evidence of rock-solid performance when the teacher:

aligns goals to state standards,
aligns lesson objectives to lesson goals, and
uses sequenced and relevant activities, materials, and assessments that fit into the broader unit, and are appropriate for diverse learners.

During conferences, appraisers should ask open-ended questions and let teachers explain how they plan. The Teach for Texas document “T-TESS Appraiser Sample Conferencing Questions” (https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Evaluation_Process/T-TESS_Appraiser_Sample_Conferencing_Quesions.pdf) gives appraisers 36 sample questions to ask that relate to Domain I, Planning.

Questions an appraiser may ask related to planning include:

How do you decide on activities, materials, and assessments that are appropriate for diverse learners?

How are lesson structure and pacing addressed in the lesson?

How does the sequence of the lesson address scaffolded learning

The bottom line?

T-TESS does not require exhaustive, detailed, scripted lesson plans that take up the time a teacher would use to prepare lessons.

That's not T-TESS.

T-TESS give teachers guidance about planning and structuring lessons. Appraisers can find evidence of effective, student-centered planning by talking to a teacher, observing a teacher during the work day, looking at a lesson plan, accepting information from the teacher that relates to planning, and understanding how a lesson shows evidence of planning.

That's T-TESS.

Thank you for watching this TCTA T-TESS video tool.

Note: *While T-TESS does not require teachers to prepare lesson plans, school districts may require teachers to create them in compliance with Texas Education Code sec. 11.164(a)(6).*