Texas Classroom Teachers Association

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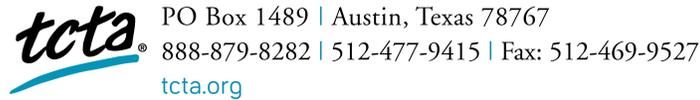tcta.org

TCTA's T-TESS Video Tools

The Observation Cycle: Pre-Conference; Observation; Post-Conference
PARTS 3-6: Observation I-IV

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 continues a series on the observation cycle: pre-conference, observation, post-conference, with a multi-part look at T-TESS observations. We will post a transcript on www.tcta.org.

Please note that much of what we cover in this series on observation comes not from the enforceable rules, but from guidance TEA offers to describe the new system and represents our impressions about how T-TESS should function.

Appraiser Scripting

The state has high expectations for what appraisers do during a T-TESS observation.

During certification, appraisers were taught to carefully, and in detail, script <u>what a teacher says and does and what students say and do</u>. (The training encouraged appraisers to copy wording from visuals used in the lesson and to record time segments. It has been suggested

that appraisers could take pictures of the objectives on the board and classroom walls. That could be a good practice for teachers, too.)

During the certification process, trainees repeatedly scripted videotaped lessons and worked with the scripted lesson to apply the rubric. According to Teach for Texas, descriptors play a critical role in appraisal:

> "During the observation, appraisers capture detailed, strategically-scripted evidence and use this evidence in conjunction with the T-TESS dimensions and descriptors of the rubric to determine performance levels."

The Teach for Texas module "Capturing Quality Evidence," describes the type of evidence that TEA expects appraisers to create by careful scripting. https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Articulate/Teachers_Observation_Cycle/Observations/T-TESS_Capturing_Quality_Evidence/presentation.html, starting at segment 7.

> "Sufficient evidence is needed to accurately rate each dimension."

> "[S[cripting provides factual, concrete evidence for the appraiser to apply with the T-TESS rubric…."

> "It is essential capture objective evidence during observations."

The Teach for Texas module goes on to state that an appraiser should "[b]egin by analyzing evidence in your observation scripted notes…" against the standard that the evidence is "[c]lear, concise, focused on what the teacher says and does, e.g., direct quotes, teacher actions." That should apply also to evidence of what students say and do. According to the module, evidence that does not meet the expected standard is "[v]ague, unclear, leaves you wanting to know more…."

Mapping

Teach for Texas indicates that:

> "Analyzing evidence is important to ensure that the evidence accurately and fairly represents what occurred during the lesson." https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Articulate/Teachers_Observation_Cycle/Observations/T-TESS_Capturing_Quality_Evidence/presentation.html, segment 10.

After scripting an observation, an appraiser should "map" the evidence to the rubric. That means to work with the descriptors, starting in proficient, and draw out of the scripted notes the objective, detailed evidence from which the appraiser can evaluate performance.

Fairness

Interestingly, the state has clear ideas how appraisers should think as they map the thoroughly scripted lesson to the descriptors. According to the "Implementation Guidebook,"

> "After an observation, appraisers should map evidence collected during the observation to the rubric and allow the evidence to drive the ratings for each dimension rather than selecting evidence to justify perceptions of the lesson."

Appraisers should connect the evidence to the descriptors rather than select the evidence that justifies a perception of the lesson. The "Appraiser Training Guide" (page 49) states that

> "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."

Teach for Texas offers several tools for districts to use to "calibrate" appraisers to insure fidelity to the model; i.e., districts can ask appraisers to evaluate the same lesson or the same teacher and then review the evaluations of a group of appraisers to determine consistency with T-TESS expectations. The site presents videos (https://www.teachfortexas.org/Views/Appraiser) and a form, "T-TESS Calibration Protocol.docx" (https://www.teachfortexas.org/Views/Teachers) that districts can use in the continuing process of calibration.

The expectation of fairness cuts both ways. It means that an appraiser who has concluded that a teacher is not a good teacher should put aside those preconceptions and consider what actually happened during the lesson and fairly score the rubric. After doing so, the appraiser can use the observation to support growth. It also means that an appraiser, after carefully reviewing the scripted evidence, could conclude that a very good lesson revealed areas in which an excellent teacher could improve. After doing so, the appraiser can use the observation to support growth.

Some teachers have heard districts say, "No one gets more than proficient in this first year of T-TESS." We understand that Accomplished and Distinguished represent aspirational goals and that appraisers must anchor their analysis in Proficient before moving left or right based on the evidence, but a blanket statement such as no one gets more than proficient means that an appraiser is not mapping the evidence to the descriptors and evaluating a teacher's performance within the parameters of T-TESS.

I'm Dohn Larson. Thank you for watching this TCTA T-TESS video tool.