

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP TOOL: Early Childhood Special Education

PURPOSE:

This resource is intended to assist Local Education Agency (LEA) administrators with information and evidence to support performance evaluations for teachers of students with disabilities served in inclusive classroom settings. It is not intended to supplant any documents or resources adopted by the LEA to support the employee evaluation process. The considerations and discussion points provided are intended to help administrators guide their own thinking, teacher thinking, and purposeful conversations. This tool is designed to align with Domains 1-3 of the T-TESS evaluation system. It is recommended for use in any stage of the T-TESS process, especially during the Pre-Evaluation Conference and Post-Evaluation Conference meetings.



INSTRUCTOR	ADMINISTRATOR	SCHOOL YEAR

DATE:

PRE-CONFERENCE NOTES:

DATE:

POST-CONFERENCE NOTES:

DATE:

END-OF-YEAR-CONFERENCE NOTES:

DOMAIN 1: PLANNING

T-TESS DIMENSIONS	ECSE CONSIDERATIONS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>1.1 Standards and Alignment</p> <p>The teacher designs clear, well-organized, sequential lessons that reflect best practice, align with the standards, and are appropriate for diverse learners.</p> <p>Standards Basis 1A, 1B, 3A, 3B, 3C</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Guidelines are used to determine prerequisite skill level. 2. Lesson Plans are standards based. 3. Hands on learning activities align with Pre-K and Kindergarten (K) curriculum. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the Pre-K Guidelines and Early Childhood Outcomes Alignment document used in planning? 2. Describe the lesson planning process and how to account for individual student variation.
<p>1.2 Data and Assessment</p> <p>The teacher uses formal and informal methods to measure student progress, then manages and analyzes student data to inform instruction.</p> <p>Standards Basis 1B, 1F, 2B, 2C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data collection consists of anecdotal notes, parent input, student work samples, behavioral logs, informal assessment, formal assessments, and individualized education program (IEP) data documentation. 2. Formal instruments and tools are aligned with local education agency (LEA) Pre-K/K assessment windows. 3. Data collection to report progress of IEP annual goals is addressed and embedded in lessons and are not isolated or supported as pull out skill assessment. 4. Data collection is used to determine appropriate assessment and accommodations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the methods used to collect assessment data and how the data informs instruction. 2. Describe the types of data collected and how the data is utilized. 3. Describe the process for addressing IEP goals and data collection in daily lesson plans. 4. How is data collected and maintained to ensure that modifications and accommodations are being implemented as documented in the student's IEP?
<p>1.3 Knowledge of Students</p> <p>Through knowledge of students and proven practices, the teacher ensures high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement for all students.</p> <p>Standards Basis 1A, 1B, 1C, 2A, 2B, 2C</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher demonstrates awareness and understanding of student's qualifying eligibility and characteristics. 2. The teacher demonstrates understanding of student's functioning level in relation to state's content standards. 3. The teacher uses Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statement when considering student access to lessons. 4. The teacher demonstrates understanding of student interests and strengths and uses them when designing instruction. 5. The teacher encourages and assists students to acknowledge and celebrate their own learning. 6. The use of inclusive practices supports students' learning goals and objectives. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an example of how individualized student strengths are incorporated in planning a lesson. 2. Describe how knowledge of a student's IEP and the impact of their disability are utilized and informs lesson design. 3. How is an appropriate assessment determined for a student?

DOMAIN 1: PLANNING

T-TESS DIMENSIONS	ECSE CONSIDERATIONS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>1.4 Activities</p> <p>The teacher plans engaging, flexible lessons that encourage higher-order thinking, persistence, and achievement.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The teacher uses process rather than product focused teaching methods. Open ended, hands-on strategies with concrete, real world materials are used in place of worksheets or flashcards.2. The teacher uses differentiated materials and expectations dependent on student level of access. Some examples include larger manipulatives, adapted access, high interest, and real life materials.3. The teacher applies appropriate language communication supports, such as communication boards or AT tools, to support student response modes that include pointing, picture exchange, eye gaze, switch access, and verbalization.4. Clear expectations of activities and student expectations are displayed visually, if necessary, for students at their level of symbolic understanding. Examples can include objects, photos, or line drawings.5. There is evidence that accommodations, AT, and adapted materials are utilized.6. Ideas extended through multiple strategies such as watching and listening to children, imitating children's actions, using children's words, presenting on children's physical level, letting children be the leaders, and following children's suggestions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide an example of a differentiated activity designed to incorporate student interests.2. How does a student know what is expected during a lesson?3. Describe how to plan and implement communication supports in classroom lessons.4. Discuss the steps taken to plan and address individual student accommodations, AT, and adaptive material needs.

DOMAIN 2: INSTRUCTION

T-TESS DIMENSIONS	ECSE CONSIDERATIONS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>2.1 Achieving Expectations</p> <p>The teacher supports all learners in their pursuit of high levels of academic and social-emotional success.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1B, 1D, 1E, 2A, 2C, 3B, 4A, 4D, 5B</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grade-level content at appropriate skill level, including prerequisite skill levels, is the focus of instruction. 2. Data collection and objectives are based on student levels of skill acquisition. 3. Students complete tasks and activities to demonstrate understanding rather than paper and pencil assessments. 4. The teacher uses cues, prompts, and fading of support to build student independence and skill mastery. 5. The teacher provides immediate and specific feedback. 6. Children construct knowledge through active engagement, play with peers, and hands-on activities. 7. Differentiation of instruction is based on children's individual ability levels and specific needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the Pre-K Guidelines and Early Childhood Outcomes Alignment document used in planning? 2. Describe the process used to determine the appropriate skill level for individual student acquisition.
<p>2.2 Content Knowledge and Expertise</p> <p>The teacher uses content and pedagogical expertise to design and execute lessons aligned with state standards, related content, and student needs.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1A, 1C, 1E, 1F, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning objectives and concepts are achieved through purposeful play activities, games, and interactive large and small group times. 2. Task analysis is used to break skills into the smallest steps necessary for student understanding. 3. Academic content is cross curricular and linked to concrete activities that rely on children's previous experiences and interests. 4. The teacher asks questions sparingly, questions are open-ended in order to discover the child's ideas and thought process, and questions relate directly to what the child is doing. 5. The teacher uses pictures, graphics, manipulatives, etc. to deliver content. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an example of how students engage in purposeful play to support learning objectives. 2. When designing a lesson how are the prior experiences, interests, and unique learning needs of a student embedded?

DOMAIN 2: INSTRUCTION

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<p>2.3 Communication</p> <p>The teacher clearly and accurately communicates to support persistence, deeper learning and effective effort.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1D, 1E, 2A, 3A, 4D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher provides accommodations and AT to support students limited or no verbal language. 2. Lessons are supported visually or paired with language based on student's symbolic level of understanding. 3. Adults participate in children's play and share control of interactions during activities. 4. Adults utilize silent wait time to encourage children to initiate interactions or respond to questions. 5. Use of visual, concrete, and interactive activities are presented in small steps with communication as the focus. 6. The students use manipulatives, pictures, verbal responses, tactile responses and non-verbal response to indicate learning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What questioning strategies are used to encourage responses from students at all communication levels?
<p>2.4 Differentiation</p> <p>The teacher differentiates instruction, aligning methods and techniques to diverse student needs.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1C, 1F, 2A, 2B, 2C, 3C, 4A, 5A, 5C, 5D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher incorporates student interests, IEP-related accommodations, and AT supports. 2. Data is collected to determine the most appropriate assessments and accommodations. 3. The teacher uses a multi-modal, concrete, hands-on approach for instruction. 4. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of student needs and incorporates components to meet sensory needs throughout the instructional day. 5. Language considerations are evident. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is AT (AT) integrated throughout instruction? 2. Share some samples of differentiated activities used effectively in the classroom.
<p>2.5 Monitor and Adjust</p> <p>The teacher formally and informally collects, analyzes, and uses student progress data and makes necessary lesson adjustments.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1D, 1F, 2B, 2C, 3B, 4D, 5C, 5D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher demonstrates awareness of lesson length and opportunities for state changes such as movement, music, manipulatives, whole group, small group, and individual work. 2. The teacher incorporates engagement elements into lesson design by leveraging student interests. 3. The teacher demonstrates an understanding of visual behavior supports with evident application as appropriate. 4. The teacher uses formative assessment and communication supports to provide access for student responses. 5. The pace and length of instructional activities or conversations are appropriate for the student's individual developmental levels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What practices are used to monitor student engagement? 2. How is the pacing of lessons determined? When might adjustments be needed?

DOMAIN 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

T-TESS DIMENSIONS	ECSE CONSIDERATIONS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>3.1 Classroom Environment, Routines and Procedures</p> <p>The teacher organizes a safe, accessible, and efficient classroom.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1D, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A consistent daily routine is represented in pictures or symbols that children can understand, are modeled frequently, and are posted at eye level with the child. The schedule is referred to throughout the day using words such as first, next, and last. Some students may require an individual schedule that utilizes objects to communicate the daily routine. 2. Instructional areas, centers, and materials are at the child’s level and are accessible to all students, including those that are non-ambulatory. 3. Instructional areas, centers, and materials are clearly labeled with visuals in order for students to navigate the environment with the highest level of independence. 4. A sufficient amount and variety of materials are provided for each child that match individual interests and abilities. 5. Differing levels of classroom “noise” is indicative of active learning and communication. 6. Transition between routines are few, planned and smooth, and utilize children’s interests and ideas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are the Pre-K Guidelines and Early Childhood Outcomes Alignment document used to create or adjust the classroom and outdoor learning environments? 2. How is the learning environment designed to provide accessibility for students to be independent?
<p>3.2 Managing Student Behavior</p> <p>The teacher establishes, communicates, and maintains clear expectations for student behavior.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classroom expectations are visually supported. 2. Explicit social skills instruction is provided daily. 3. Behavioral expectations are clearly modeled and reinforced using child-friendly language as well as picture and photo cues. 4. Classroom management is enhanced by a daily routine reflecting appropriate amounts of time for child-directed learning, small group, large group, and individual activities with all children actively engaged. 5. Learning experiences promote independence and social skills such as conflict resolution, turn taking, self-regulation, and self help skills. 6. The teacher uses positive narration to highlight students following routines well. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type of social skills instruction is provided? 2. How are classroom expectations made accessible to all students?

DOMAIN 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

T-TESS DIMENSIONS	ECSE CONSIDERATIONS	DISCUSSION POINTS
<p>3.3 Classroom Culture</p> <p>The teacher leads a mutually respectful and collaborative class of actively engaged learners.</p> <p>Standards Basis: 1E, 1F, 3B, 4C, 4D, 5A, 5B, 5D</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Materials used throughout the day are open-ended, authentic, and reflect the community's culture in unbiased ways. 2. Lessons are differentiated so that all students can access content based on their individual levels of understanding. 3. Classroom activities in the learning environment are based on real life using an interactive, hands-on approach. 4. Varying levels of structure are in place to support students during independent and group work. 4. The teacher is knowledgeable about student interests and incorporates them into instruction and behavior supports. 5. Student strengths are taken into consideration when lessons are developed and are incorporated when applicable. 6. The teacher implements short-term and long-term reward systems tied to both student individual behavior and learning, as well as, class overall rewards. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share some examples of how community culture is expressed in the learning environment.

T-TESS Rubric: https://www.teachfortexas.org/Resource_Files/Guides/T-TESS_Rubric.pdf

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