HISD Teacher Appraisal and Development System

Supplemental Instructional Practice Guide for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners

Introduction to Supplemental Instructional Practice Guides

- This document provides guidance to campus administrators on appraising teachers of English Language Learners. During the design of the district’s teacher appraisal and development system, feedback from teachers and principals indicated that some administrators would benefit from additional guidance on appraising teachers in classrooms in which student characteristics or subject content may differ significantly from other courses or subjects. As a result, groups of teachers, administrators, and central office staff members with expertise in teaching English Language Learners contributed content to create this guide to assist appraisers.

- This document is intended to be neither a separate rubric for teachers of English Language Learners, nor a comprehensive guide for good instructional practice in classrooms with students who are English Language Learners. The Instructional Practice criteria and rubric indicators apply to teachers in all grades and subjects, and this document only seeks to present more context for administrators to consider when applying the rubrics, especially in cases where they have not previously appraised classrooms with students who are English Language Learners.

How to Read this Document

- Feedback from teachers, administrators, and central office staff indicated six criteria that required additional guidance for appraisers. For each of those criteria, this document includes an Instructional Practice rubric identical to what appraisers have already received. Below the rubric for each criterion, this guide provides a set of considerations for appraisers.

- Prior to conducting an observation or walkthrough, or when writing feedback for a teacher, administrators can review this guidance to help inform their application of the rubric.

Instructional Practice Criteria Included in This Document:

- **PL-1:** Develops student learning goals
- **PL-3:** Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments
- **I-1:** Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons
- **I-2:** Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding
- **I-3:** Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies
- **I-4:** Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills

For More Information:

- If you have feedback on this guide, or would like additional information about using it as a part of the teacher appraisal and development system, please email effectiveteachers@houstonisd.org.
### PL-1 Develops student learning goals

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 1 in this criterion:**

- Teacher develops annual student learning goals that do not align with appropriate standards and curricula, or are not measurable, or the teacher does not develop student learning goals.
- Teacher does not communicate the annual learning goals to students or does not communicate how those goals will be assessed.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 2 in this criterion:**

- Teacher develops annual student learning goals that are:
  a) aligned with appropriate district content standards and curricula,
  b) measurable using end-of-course assessments and/or rubrics, and
  c) targeted to the class as a whole, rather than differentiated to meet the needs of individual and groups of students.
- Teacher communicates annual learning goals to students and explains how those goals will be assessed.
- Students demonstrate awareness of annual student learning goals, but do not show investment in achieving them.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 3 in this criterion:**

- Teacher develops annual student learning goals that are:
  a) aligned with appropriate required content standards and curricula,
  b) measurable using end-of-course assessments and/or rubrics,
  c) ambitious and feasible given student skill levels diagnosed at the beginning of the year, and
  d) differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students.\(^1\)
- Teacher uses goals to develop an annual plan that:
  a) prioritizes content and skills that are a prerequisite for or utilized in future courses,
  b) includes specific content and skills for enrichment and remediation of students, based on their starting points, and
  c) groups and sequences content and skills into logical units so students build upon prior knowledge and master a variety of objectives at an increasing level of sophistication.
- Teacher consistently communicates annual learning goals to students and explains how those goals will be assessed.
- Students demonstrate investment in achieving annual student learning goals.\(^2\)

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 4 in this criterion:**

- All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:
  - Students collaborate with the teacher to develop and invest themselves toward individual annual student learning goals.
  - Students articulate their annual learning goals and how achievement of those goals will be assessed.

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**Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to:** classroom observations; reviews of annual, unit, and lesson planning materials; reviews of student work products; conversations during teacher/appraiser conferences; and direct questioning of students during an observation.

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**Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:**

- As in all classrooms, student learning goals should be aligned with state standards. For teachers of English Language Learners, appraisers are encouraged to refer to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Spanish Language Arts and English as a Second Language, [http://www.texaseducator.com/teks/spanish/index.html](http://www.texaseducator.com/teks/spanish/index.html) and English Language Proficiency Standards (ELP), [http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter074/ch074a.html#74.4).

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**Notes:**

\(^1\) Appraisers should take into account the number of students that an individual teaches when evaluating the degree to which learning goals are individualized. An effective teacher in a departmentalized secondary classroom may have differentiated learning goals for groups of students rather than for individual students.

\(^2\) This indicator can be assessed through direct interactions with students or when the teacher creates opportunities for students to discuss annual learning goals.
### PL-3 Designs effective lesson plans, units, and assessments

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 1 in this criterion:**

- Teacher selects or develops student learning objectives that do not align to annual goals or do not align to required curricula, or the teacher does not plan objectives and units in advance.
- Teacher selects or develops assessments that do not accurately measure student mastery of learning objectives or does not assess student mastery of objectives.
- Teacher writes lesson plans that describe learning activities that are not aligned with lesson objectives, do not describe lesson objectives, do not describe how student learning will be assessed, or the teacher does not write lesson plans.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 2 in this criterion:**

- Teacher selects or develops student learning objectives that cover required content and skills but may not be closely aligned to annual goals.
- Teacher plans units that include lessons, objectives, and assessments that accurately measure mastery of student learning objectives, though lessons, objectives, and assessments may not be closely aligned.
- Teacher writes lesson plans that describe lesson objectives, learning activities, and assessments, though the learning activities and assessments are only partially aligned to mastery of lesson objectives.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 3 in this criterion:**

- Teacher selects or develops student learning objectives that are tightly aligned to annual goals and are measurable using assessments or rubrics.\(^1\)
- Teacher plans backward-designed units by:
  a) first, selecting or developing assessments and/or rubrics that accurately measure student mastery of unit learning objectives, and
  b) then designing a sequence of lessons that leads students towards mastery of unit learning objectives as determined by those assessments.
- Teacher writes lesson plans that describe: lesson objectives, learning activities that are sequenced to lead students towards mastery of those objectives, and how student mastery of objectives will be assessed.
- Teacher allocates adequate time within a unit for students to master each objective while maintaining fidelity to district curriculum requirements.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 4 in this criterion:**

All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:

- Teacher organizes units based on key concepts, enduring understandings, essential questions, or important themes.
- Teacher writes lesson plans that describe opportunities within each lesson to check for student understanding and assess student mastery of lesson and unit objectives.\(^2\)
- Teacher designs and implements unit and lesson plans that include cross-disciplinary connections to key concepts or enduring understandings in more than one content area.

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### Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to: reviews of annual, unit, and lesson planning materials and conversations during teacher/appraiser conferences.

### Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:

- **“Assessments” may include:**
  - TELPAS: All limited English proficient (LEP) students in grades K-12, including LEP students with parental denials will take TELPAS to measure their English language proficiency.
  - Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and Tejas LEE: The TPRI/Tejas LEE is given to kindergartners in the middle and end of the school year and to first- and second-graders in

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### Notes:

1. The unit objectives, annual goals, and individual learning goals should be the same objectives assessed in Criterion PL-1 - “Develops student learning goals” and PL-2 - “Collects, tracks, and uses student data to drive instruction.”

2. This criterion only assesses a teacher’s planning. The way in which a teacher checks for student understanding during a lesson should be assessed under Criterion I-2 - “Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding.”
the beginning, middle, and end of the year. All limited-English-proficient students in K-2 must take the assessments in the language in which their formal reading instruction is given.

**Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners (continued from previous page):**

- **Aprenda:** All ELL students in grades 1-8 who receive reading and language arts instruction in Spanish will take the Aprenda.
- **STARR in Spanish:** Spanish-speaking English Learners served in Bilingual programs where Spanish is used in reading and language arts instruction, in grades 3-5 will take STARR in Spanish.

- In classrooms with students representing a wide range of English language ability, appraisers should expect to see student work assessed against different rubrics for different levels of language proficiency.
### I-1 Facilitates organized, student-centered, objective-driven lessons

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 1 in this criterion:**

- Teacher states an objective that does not convey what students are learning and doing in a lesson, does not state an objective, or there may not be a clear objective to the lesson.
- Teacher uses instructional strategies that do not successfully lead students toward mastery of lesson objectives.
- Students have limited or no opportunities to practice what they are learning during the lesson or lesson activities are not aligned to the lesson objective.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 2 in this criterion:**

- Teacher states the lesson objective and its importance, although it may be unclear whether students understand what they are learning and what they will be doing in a lesson.
- Teacher selects instructional strategies that align to lesson objectives, but may not be cohesively sequenced to lead students towards mastery of the objective.
- Teacher provides information about assessments, though students may be unclear about how their understanding will be assessed.
- Teacher explains connection between lesson content and prior student knowledge, but it is unclear if students make the connection.
- Students have opportunities to practice and demonstrate the skills and knowledge they are learning during the lesson although those opportunities may be brief, unsubstantial, or infrequent.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 3 in this criterion:**

- Teacher facilitates a cohesive lesson in which all lesson elements are sequenced and organized in order to lead students toward mastery of the objective.
- Teacher selects and executes instructional strategies that effectively support lesson objectives.
- Students connect lesson content to prior knowledge in order to build new learning.
- Students explain the lesson’s objective and what they will be doing in the lesson in their own words.
- Students articulate how their work will be assessed or what assessment the teacher is using to measure their learning.
- Students practice, apply, and demonstrate the skills and knowledge they are learning during the lesson through meaningful learning activities.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of lesson content and skills through correct responses in student work or by asking relevant clarifying or extension questions.

**The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 4 in this criterion:**

All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:

- Students explain how the lesson connects to previous learning and broader unit learning goals.
- Students take a leadership role during most of the lesson and require little or no guidance from the teacher to maintain momentum.

Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to: classroom observations, reviews of planning materials, reviews of student work products, and direct questioning of students during an observation.

### Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:

- Appraisers should be aware that ELL students will communicate their understanding of the lesson’s objective, how their work will be assessed, and their understanding of lesson content and skills according to their language proficiency, which may include communication:
  - in their native language
  - through performance or non-verbal cues
  - through drawing pictures
  - through using basic English skills (e.g., using incorrect English grammar or mixing English with their native language)

### Notes:

1. For example, students connect lesson content to personal experiences or interests.
2. This indicator can be assessed through direct interactions with students or through teacher-created opportunities for students to discuss the lesson objective(s).
## I-2 Checks for student understanding and responds to student misunderstanding

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<tr>
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<th>The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 4 in this criterion:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher infrequently or never checks for student understanding, or the checks are ineffective in accurately assessing student understanding.</td>
<td>• Teacher accurately checks for student understanding during the lesson, although may miss key opportunities to identify misunderstanding and adjust instruction accordingly.</td>
<td>• Teacher checks for understanding and accurately diagnoses student misunderstanding at key moments during a lesson using a variety of methods.</td>
<td>All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher does not address student misunderstanding, or the attempts to address misunderstanding are unsuccessful.</td>
<td>• Teacher addresses student misunderstanding in response to checks, although response may not be immediate, may not fully meet student needs, and/or the flow of the lesson may be interrupted.</td>
<td>• Teacher adjusts lesson to ensure student understanding in response to assessments during the lesson and without interrupting the flow of the lesson.</td>
<td>• Teacher obtains a thorough understanding of individual students’ progress, academic needs with regard to the lesson objective, and root causes of misunderstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher provides incorrect feedback or no feedback during the lesson, and students are unclear if they correctly understand the content.</td>
<td>• Teacher provides limited feedback to students during the lesson but students are aware if they correctly understand the content.</td>
<td>• Teacher provides feedback throughout the lesson that affirms correctly understood content, clarifies misunderstood content, and extends student thinking.</td>
<td>• Teacher creates opportunities for students to self-assess their understanding of lesson objectives and provide feedback to the teacher.</td>
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### Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to:
- classroom observations,
- reviews of planning materials,
- reviews of student work products,
- and direct questioning of students during an observation.

### Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:

- Students in ELL classrooms may demonstrate understanding in a manner appropriate to their English language proficiency. For instance, teachers may solicit students to demonstrate understanding through:
  - Non-verbal cues (e.g., hand signals, nods, pointing)
  - Performance tasks (e.g., drawing, acting out)
  - Sorting or manipulating written text
  - Formulating English responses with additional support from teacher (e.g., sentence stems)
  - Formulating English responses appropriate to language proficiency (e.g., one or two word answers, mixing English and native language in answers, responding using incorrect English grammar)

- Teachers may check for understanding in small group settings rather than in a whole-group setting, particularly in classrooms with a range of languages represented, or with students representing a wide range of English proficiency.

### Notes:

1. Examples of systems and routines to check for student understanding include but are not limited to: “fist-of-five,” individual whiteboards, wireless student response tools, or exit slips.
I-3 Differentiates instruction for student needs by employing a variety of instructional strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students engage with lesson content in only one way throughout the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher adapts few or no elements of the lesson to meet different student needs.</td>
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<td>• Students are not able to access the lesson at an appropriate level of challenge.</td>
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<th>The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 2 in this criterion:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Students engage with lesson content in multiple ways that are appropriate to lesson objectives but not necessarily responsive to their learning needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher adapts some elements of the lesson’s depth, pace, or delivery to meet the needs of most learners, although individual students may not be able to access the lesson in an effective way and/or at an appropriate level of challenge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher works to ensure that the needs of most students are met by providing extra support as needed.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Students engage with lesson content in multiple ways that are appropriate to lesson objectives and responsive to their needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher adapts the depth, pace, and delivery mode of what is taught in a lesson to allow students to access the lesson at multiple levels of challenge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher strategically utilizes flexible instructional groups and varied instructional arrangements that are appropriate to the students and to the instructional purposes of the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students engage in learning experiences or performance tasks that allow for interest- or skill-based choice in processes or products.</td>
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<th>The following best describes a teacher performing at Level 4 in this criterion:</th>
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<td>All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher offers individualized instruction based on assessment of student progress towards mastery of lesson objectives to ensure the lesson is challenging and accessible to all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students collaborate with the teacher to design interest-based learning experiences or performance tasks that demonstrate mastery of the lesson or unit objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students know their academic needs and actively seek learning experiences or tasks that suit their level of mastery and their learning profile.</td>
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</table>

Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to: classroom observations, reviews of planning materials, reviews of student work products, and direct questioning of students during an observation.

Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:

• Students may be placed in “flexible instructional groups” based on language proficiency and/or skill or content needs. For instance, appraisers may see teachers assemble a small group of students with similar language proficiency needs in a small group to review and/or modify instruction to enable the students to meet the lesson objective(s).

Notes:

1 For example, multiple learning modalities.

2 Appraisers should pay particular attention to whether teachers are applying best practices for differentiating depth, pace, delivery mode, and providing additional support and enrichment for special student populations including English Language Learners, gifted and talented students, and students with special learning needs.

3 This includes meeting any required student modifications based on IEP goals or language proficiency levels. Potential strategies for providing extra support include flexible grouping, leveled texts, tiered assignments, extension assignments, or enrichment projects.
I-4 Engages students in work that develops higher-level thinking skills

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<tr>
<td>• Teacher provides limited or no opportunities for students to engage in work that requires higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>• Teacher uses instructional tasks that require students to use higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>• Teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies and questioning techniques to develop students’ higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>All indicators for Level 3 are met, and some or all of the following evidence is demonstrated:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students do not employ higher-level thinking skills during the lesson.</td>
<td>• Teacher provides limited guidance and support to students in employing higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>• Teacher provides students the support and guidance (e.g., scaffolding) needed to exercise higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>• Students synthesize diverse perspectives or points of view during the lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Students employ higher-level thinking skills during the lesson but may not do so in a way substantially connected with the mastery of the lesson objectives.</td>
<td>• Teacher embeds higher-level thinking skills into the lesson objective so that mastery of the objective requires students to meaningfully employ higher-level thinking skills.</td>
<td>• Students communicate their thinking and reasoning processes, and encourage their peers to do the same when appropriate.</td>
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<td>• Students employ higher-level thinking skills to engage with lesson concepts, questions, and tasks and to demonstrate understanding of the lesson’s objectives.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Possible sources of evidence for this criterion include, but are not limited to: classroom observations, reviews of planning materials, and reviews of student work products.

**Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners:**

- Teachers may determine which “instructional strategies” apply depending on students’ English language proficiency.

- Appraisers may see teachers using “various instructional strategies” to develop students’ higher-level thinking skills that may include:
  - *Wait Time:* Teacher may provide additional time for ELL students to respond to questions or may allow students to respond at a later time.
  - *Native Language Responses:* Some students may need to respond in their native language.
  - *Supplemental Materials:* Some students may have an English to native language dictionary at his/her desk or a small handheld electronic translator.

**Notes:**

1. Examples of instructional tasks requiring higher-level thinking skills include: solving problems with predictable and non-predictable solutions, noticing patterns and finding relationships, generating hypotheses, planning tasks to address problems, generating reasonable arguments and explanations, predicting outcomes, assessing progress toward goals, communicating about learning, and engaging in advanced level reading and writing tasks.

2. Examples of higher-level thinking skills include: reflecting on learning, generating new insights, asking questions, making decisions, analyzing, classifying, comparing, evaluating, explaining, summarizing, synthesizing, and solving problems. Teachers are encouraged to refer to Bloom’s Taxonomy and the Rigor/Relevance Framework as reference guides for understanding higher- and lower-order cognitive skills and their application.
Supplemental Guidance for Appraising Teachers of English Language Learners (continued from previous page):

- **Active Learning:** Appraiser may observe controlled group interaction that allows students to process information through kinesthetic movement or by verbal interactions with one another.
- **Oral Language Development:** Appraiser may observe students rhyming or singing, especially in primary grades.
- **Skits and Role-Play:** Appraiser may observe students acting out concepts learned.
- **Graphic Organizers:** Teacher may provide graphic organizers to help students see relationships, organize their thoughts or show connections.
- **Total Physical Response:** Appraiser may observe students respond with overt physical action to verbal commands in English.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Appraisers may see students working with peers to complete tasks, pool information, solve problems, or get feedback.
- **Pre-teaching:** Appraisers may see teachers pulling LEP students into small groups prior to teaching a concept to provide students with background information before the lesson is taught to the whole class.