

# Lesson Planning: Standard 11

To learn more about how programs are scored on this standard, including how individual indicators are satisfied, please see its [scoring methodology](#).

For information on resources for this standard, please see the [resources section](#).

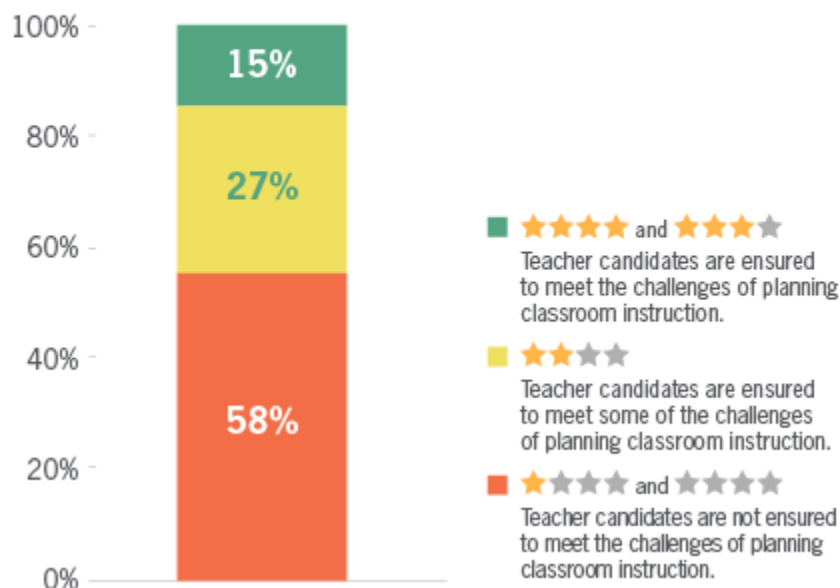
## Background

Planning how to adjust and enhance instruction to meet students' diverse needs lies at the heart of effective teaching. Teacher candidates should be able to demonstrate these skills in culminating assignments near the end of their course of training. Good lesson plans address the needs of students who are English language learners, have special needs or have already advanced beyond proficiency in a lesson objective. Teacher candidates should also know how to address state standards and determine if technology could facilitate learning.

Requirements for all culminating assignments, such as those pertaining to the content of lesson plans used in student teaching, are examined to ensure that elementary and secondary teacher candidates must demonstrate that they can make the necessary adjustments to accommodate diverse students and to use technology effectively.

## Overview

Distribution of scores on  
Standard 11: Lesson Planning  
(N=668 elementary and secondary programs)



Sample for this standard: Our original intent was to evaluate on this standard all programs in the *Review's* sample about which we received data. We reluctantly decided not to do so after determining that document processing was imposing too great a burden. Beyond an extensive back-and-forth with IHEs to obtain specific materials that we had requested but which had not been provided, the standard demands that we engage in intensive and time-consuming document processing. Instead, we established a time limit for analysis that would nonetheless ensure that we could evaluate a sample of sufficient size to provide credible information about the nature of teacher preparation in this area. Once this time limit was established, we prioritized the evaluation of programs in IHEs that produce larger numbers of teachers each year.

### **What are common reasons that programs earn few or no stars on the Lesson Planning Standard?**

- *Requirements for planning are unrealistically expansive, overly specific or vague, and terminology is inconsistent.* Ideally, requirements for lesson planning for a month-long unit and a daily lesson should be coordinated so that each has an appropriate level of expansiveness and specificity. In both cases, requirements for teacher candidates should be clearly defined using common terminology that has been consistently conveyed throughout the course of study.
- *Programs encourage pseudo-scientific methods of planning instruction.* Three-fourths of programs evaluated on this standard encourage the pseudo-scientific practice of planning in accordance with learning styles. If programs instead had uniformly eschewed learning styles, 34 more (5 percent of the total sample) would have earned four stars, and 147 (22 percent of the total sample) would have earned three stars.
- *Programs do not require teacher candidates to explain how technology use would support student learning.* While requirements that candidates list the technology that they will use in a given lesson are ubiquitous, programs almost never go so far as to demand that candidates explain their specific rationale for doing so. Requirements that candidates provide a rationale for how the technology to be used supports student learning are rare - only 15 percent of the sample satisfy this indicator. Moreover, programs often require candidates to supply a rationale only if they do not plan to use technology, suggesting that they see any technological tool as valuable regardless of the objectives of the lesson or the specific learning needs of students.

## **Programs of Distinction**

There is no capacity for a program to earn a strong design designation on this standard, but one IHE, **University of Maine at Farmington**, has the distinction of having both its undergraduate elementary and undergraduate secondary programs earning four stars on the standard. Five other IHEs have at least one program that earns four stars: for graduate elementary, **Sonoma State University (CA)**, **California State University - San Bernadino**, and **California State University - Long Beach**; and for graduate secondary, **California State University - San Marcos** and **California State University - Fullerton**.

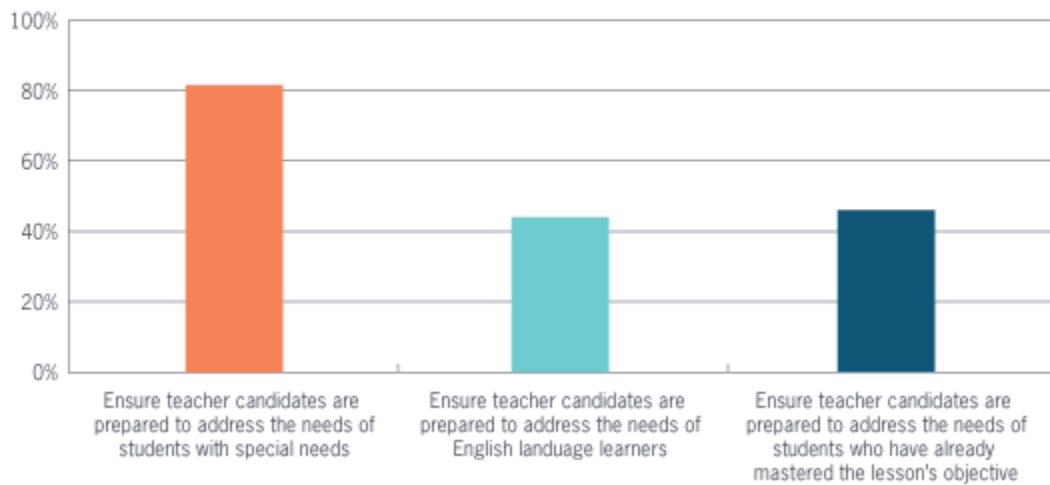
## Findings

Three of the standard's six indicators address the guidance that programs give to candidates on how to adjust instruction to meet the needs of different groups of students:

- Students with special needs
- English language learners
- Students who have already mastered the lesson's objective

The following graphic illustrates the proportion of programs that satisfy each of these three indicators:

**Proportion of programs satisfying the Lesson Planning Standard's indicators regarding adjusting instruction to meet the needs of different groups of students**



*A large majority of programs require that teacher candidates demonstrate that they can plan instruction to meet the needs of their students with special needs, but less than half of programs do so with regard to the needs of English language learners and of students who are already proficient.*

✓+ **Armstrong Atlantic State University's** (GA) undergraduate elementary program's lesson plan format clearly notes that instructional plans for students with special needs, students for whom English is a second language and students who are proficient should be included in the section on accommodations. **Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's** undergraduate elementary and undergraduate secondary programs both use a lesson plan template that does likewise through providing a separate accommodation section for each of the previously mentioned groups of students.

Fifty-two percent of the programs earning three or four stars in lesson planning are implementing some form of teacher performance assessment (TPA).<sup>1</sup> Programs using TPAs require candidates

to demonstrate mastery of important teacher practices such as lesson planning. Except for the CalTPA, the TPAs we examined all required candidates to specifically and separately address the learning needs of students with special needs, English language learners and students needing further challenge.<sup>2</sup>

This demonstrable effect on the clear communication of expectations regarding instructional planning is one of the reasons that NCTQ endorses TPAs as capstone projects or culminating assignments.

Another beneficial feature of TPAs is that none that we examined includes any requirement that the teacher candidate plan instruction based on students' "learning styles." As discussed in this standard's rationale, there is no scientific basis for the practice of using learning styles in designing instruction. Indeed, the American Psychological Association has denounced the practice as unproductive.

We note, however, that the CalTPA is the only TPA we examined which has requirements satisfying the standard's indicator on technology. The 15 percent of the sample satisfying this indicator do so by requiring candidates to go beyond merely listing technology to provide a rationale for how the technology they use supports student learning.

✓+ Teacher candidates at **James Madison University's** (VA) graduate secondary program must complete a teacher work sample that includes explicit requirements to describe how the use of technology will support student learning.

Nearly one-third (30 percent) of programs in our sample do not communicate clear expectations to their teacher candidates regarding how they are expected to plan lessons during their student teaching experience. Programs satisfying this indicator state that candidates must have a lesson plan, written in a format approved by the program (or containing specified minimum components), for every lesson taught.

✓+ In **University of Montevallo** (AL) sets a clear and high bar for planning expectations for its undergraduate elementary and graduate secondary student teachers, explicitly stating that anyone teaching without a written plan will be "sent home."

While teacher candidates may be required to follow the lesson planning format of the districts in which they are student teaching, the program can ensure that both its requirements and those of the district are satisfied by the student teacher's plans.

✓+ **Indian River State College's** (FL) undergraduate secondary program outlines minimum expectations as to what must be included in a lesson plan, regardless of the format expected by the hosting district, school or cooperating teacher.

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1. Only 18 percent of the programs in the sample use one of the following TPAs: edTPA, CalTPA, PACT, or an IHE-specific TPA.
2. The CalTPA does not meet our indicator on adapting instruction for students needing further challenge because candidates must choose a student who "presents a different instructional challenge." Rubric language indicates that this could mean students with "special needs OR abilities" (emphasis added). This language could only credit one indicator and defaults to crediting the requirement for planning for students with special needs.