

Fall 24 MAT Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Respondents:

Jordan	Amy	Pulaski County Special School District (Mills HS)	Partner district other school leader
Stiles	Stephanie	Maumelle Charter High School	Partner district mentor teacher
Pitman	Gavin	Substitute - Springdale Schools	Current MAT Student/Candidate
Mason	Alyson	Fort Smith School District	Partner district mentor teacher
Morrison	Melissa	eStem Public Charter Schools	Partner district mentor teacher
Cole	Meredith	Izard County Elementary School	Partner district mentor teacher
Eaves	Angela	Bentonville Schools	Partner district administrator

Question #1:

A. Attached you'll find the current Lesson Plan and Lesson Analysis templates used by MAT candidates in the program.

Lesson planning skills are developed over the course of the MAT program through several courses and projects. During the internship semester (final MAT course), candidates submit three lesson plans. Each submission includes a lesson plan and lesson analysis document. The plans submitted by each intern are used as evidence to support the intern's performance related to TESS Domain 1. MAT Supervisors provide feedback related to strengths and areas of improvement.

The MAT program wants to be sure candidates are well prepared to plan effective and engaging lessons no matter the content or circumstance they encounter.

Lesson Plan:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k67wD-A5M5muWzQCKox-PsC4gWd0gG8/view?usp=drive_link

Lesson Analysis:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CTjhKScO3reM9iFiTMs6oTuP7J_GJoma/view?usp=drive_link

Given changes in lesson planning expectations at the district level, district pacing guides, HQIM, and other changes to the way teachers now plan instruction, are these documents relevant to current practice?

If not, what do you suggest given your position and experience?

If so, to what extent? Which portions are most important? Do you suggest any changes/revisions for improvement?

Please be specific. Thanks! Here's a summary of the main points from each area based on the feedback you received:

Summary of Responses:

Reasons to Keep Lesson Planning Documents

1. ****Core Skills for New Teachers****: Respondents believe that lesson plans are critical for MAT candidates to build foundational skills in planning, questioning, assessing, and analyzing student understanding.

2. **Internalizing Teaching Rationale**: Detailed lesson planning helps candidates think through each step, which is essential for understanding the "why" behind their instructional choices.
3. **Real-World Relevance**: Even with district pacing guides, these documents reflect essential planning practices that align with what experienced teachers consider in evaluating instructional materials and student needs.
4. **Differentiation and Accommodations**: Many respondents emphasized the importance of these documents in helping candidates practice differentiation and consider special needs, which is crucial for today's diverse classrooms.

Reasons to Discontinue or Modify Current Requirements

1. **Time Constraints and Feasibility**: Some responders, especially those in high-volume or multi-grade-level teaching environments (like PE), found the extensive planning requirements impractical, suggesting that realistic time constraints should be considered.
2. **Simplification for Practicality**: The depth of the current lesson plans may be overwhelming and could detract from the essence or creativity of a lesson. Simplifying or streamlining some sections may make planning less daunting and more aligned with everyday teaching needs.
3. **Overlap and Redundancy**: Certain sections, such as analysis guide questions, may repeat information already covered elsewhere in the plan, which could be consolidated.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. **Focus on Essential Components**: Key elements suggested as "vital" include standards, objectives, essential questions, material links, basic "Will/say/do" actions, and formative assessment strategies, with a less detailed approach to data usage.
2. **Adaptations for Specific District Needs**: Some suggested adding a section for interns working with districts that use distinct lesson structures or pacing guides to make the planning more district-specific.
3. **Collaboration and Integration**: Encouraging collaborative planning with peers or alignment with PLC data could offer candidates experience in team-based planning, reflecting real-life teaching dynamics.
4. **Keep Questions Focused**: Specific analysis guide questions (like 1, 3, 4, and 10) were identified as the most beneficial, suggesting a focus on these for clarity and impact.

Overall, the consensus supports maintaining the planning documents for their developmental value but with refinements to make them more realistic, streamlined, and adaptable to district-specific practices.

Question #2:

B. All MAT interns must write and submit a unit plan. They teach this unit during their internship. Please review this unit planning guide:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LpXCyKxIfuAsqxj9IDg2AVGejEjaOUSQ/view?usp=drive_link

Similar to the previous question about the lesson plan documents, given changes in lesson planning expectations at the district level, district pacing guides, HQIM, and other changes to the way teachers now plan instruction, is this assignment relevant?

If not, what do you suggest given your position and experience?

If so, what parts of the unit plan seem important for us to keep? Do you suggest any changes/revisions for improvement?

Please be specific. Thanks!

Summary of Responses:

Reasons to Keep the Unit Plan Document

1. **Essential for Novice Teachers**: Many respondents find unit planning crucial for teacher candidates, especially those without a formal education background, as it builds foundational skills in organizing, setting goals, and aligning with standards.
2. **Intentionality and Reflection**: The process encourages candidates to plan intentionally, reflect on each activity's purpose, and prepare for the next steps. This type of planning helps ensure that lessons flow cohesively and meet student needs.
3. **Differentiation and Learner Development**: Several respondents highlighted the benefit of distinguishing learner development from accommodations, a distinction that supports targeted planning for diverse needs within the classroom.
4. **Time Management Practice**: Unit plans help candidates allocate time for each lesson effectively, an important skill for novice teachers who may struggle with pacing.

Reasons to Consider Modifying the Unit Plan Document

1. **Potential Overload of Documentation**: Some noted that extensive documentation could detract from actual teaching, as detailed written responses for every rationale might be better suited as reflective prompts rather than written requirements.
2. **Redundant with HQIM Support**: For districts with high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), requiring full documentation of rationale, scaffolding, and support might be excessive. It could be sufficient for candidates to explain why they chose the HQIM rather than detailing it extensively.
3. **Template Adaptability**: PE instructors noted that a unit plan with "day-by-day" structure fits their needs better than other extensive formats, suggesting that templates might be streamlined for certain content areas.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. **Simplified Rationale Requirements**: Instead of written answers, encourage candidates to reflect on rationale questions as part of the planning process, potentially through brief, summarized responses.
2. **Flexible HQIM Justifications**: When using district-provided HQIM, have candidates explain their selection process without requiring an exhaustive breakdown.
3. **Encourage Focus on Key Elements**: The unit plan's structure could emphasize priorities like engagement, differentiation, alignment with standards, and appropriate time allotment, allowing flexibility in documentation depth based on content area.

Overall, the feedback underscores the value of unit planning as a structured, intentional process but suggests adjustments to prevent the process from becoming overly burdensome. Streamlining rationale sections and adapting templates could help balance rigor with practicality.

Question #3:

C. Please feel free to share any general feedback you have about the MAT program based on your experiences. We appreciate your time!

Summary of Responses:

Positive Feedback

1. **Well-Prepared Candidates**: Respondents praised MAT candidates for being well-prepared and successful in the classroom, with many reporting that the candidates they have worked with have become great teachers.
2. **Successful Use of Recorded Lessons**: The ability to record and submit lessons for evaluation was appreciated, providing an effective way to assess teaching skills remotely.

Areas for Improvement

1. ****In-Person Observations****: There is a desire for more face-to-face, in-person observations in addition to recorded lessons. This allows supervisors to better assess classroom dynamics and reinforce the importance of the assignment.
2. ****Addressing Professional Expectations****: There was a concern that non-academic aspects such as punctuality, cell phone use, attendance, eating during class, and professional attire may not be sufficiently addressed in training. Respondents suggested that these professional expectations might need to be explicitly taught, as some candidates may not have learned them in their previous experiences or may take them for granted.
3. ****Classroom Management and Soft Skills****: Many respondents emphasized the importance of preparing candidates for classroom management, handling student behavior, parent communication, and inclusive practices (like co-teaching). These areas, they noted, are often more challenging for novice teachers than content knowledge.

Suggestions for Improvement

1. ****Increased Focus on Non-Academic Skills****: The program could benefit from more focus on teaching professional behavior expectations and classroom management techniques, as well as improving communication skills for managing parents and working collaboratively with other educators (e.g., co-teaching).
2. ****Support for Novice Teachers in Key Areas****: Including additional training on inclusive practices, student behavior management, and parent communication could better equip interns for real-world teaching challenges that go beyond lesson planning and content delivery.

In summary, while the MAT program receives praise for preparing capable teachers, there is a call for further development in areas of professional conduct, classroom management, and soft skills, which are critical for novice teachers' success in the classroom.