

Rubric for Final Student Teaching Ratings of Teacher Candidates

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Reviewed by MLC Education Advisors Apr 22, 2025

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Why are new ratings being drafted?

The ratings are being redefined to more clearly highlight a candidate's strengths in teaching ministry. Fewer categories provide more targeted insights into a candidate's unique teaching abilities and growth over time. The additional performance criteria provide richer data about each candidate. The updated ratings also align with those used in the WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process (MGEP), offering candidates clearer feedback to guide their future teaching development.

A contingent of Conference of Presidents members expressed the value of changing the rating system to align with the MGEP. The current system fails to offer a clear rating of performance, benefits from deeper descriptions of candidates, and needs to include distinction in their character for service and activity in congregational life. The group would like clear avenues for sharing initial performance information with administrators in Lutheran Schools.

What has been done with the ratings so far?

Each rating term has been aligned with the WELS Ministerial Growth and Evaluation Process. The descriptions associated with each performance level remain consistent with the intended outcomes of the Education Program at Martin Luther College. Candidates must meet all competencies outlined in a rating descriptor to earn that rating, which includes competencies from prior rating levels.

How will this draft be refined over the next six months?

The descriptors are undergoing a review process involving the Conference of Presidents, Commission on Lutheran Schools, New Teacher Induction, and the MLC Education Department. The MLC Education Department will work to consolidate various standards into two main categories—Teaching and Management—using the revised language for the *Book of Candidates*.

The reorganized standards and updated language will be presented to the Conference of Presidents at the Assignment Committee Meeting in May of 2025. If adopted, the aligned ratings will begin implementation following the COP and other necessary MLC approvals with implementation starting during the 2025-26 academic year.

The proposed standards and associated ratings with descriptors were composed based on the objectives identified in the [Rubric for Final Ratings for Student Teaching](#). The following rubric with ratings and descriptors is being proposed:

Teaching

1. *Initiative in the classroom, respectfully initiates ideas and provides assistance to students*

Distinguished:

- Proactively anticipates and plans for classroom and student needs.
- Manages the entire class effectively while supporting smaller groups and ensuring smooth transitions between lessons and activities.
- Creatively adapts instructional approaches and management strategies to support and challenge students of varying abilities, promoting broad access and engagement with the learning.
- Maintains attention to “small” details that support good order.

- Actively encourages and models Christian living within the classroom and broader community.
- Uses disciplinary techniques that reflect Christian values; consistently sets clear expectations and embeds teaching practices that foster motivation and learning.

Proficient:

- Respectfully proposes solutions and suggestions for improvement.
- Organizes, prepares, and manages classroom procedures to foster inclusive and active participation.
- Demonstrates flexibility in classroom management and instructional methods to support diverse abilities.
- Attends to “small” details that contribute to an orderly environment.
- Promotes Christian living through words and actions.
- Consistently clarifies expectations for students and distinguishes between rules and procedures.

Basic:

- Fosters a cooperative learning environment that promotes respect among students.
- Independently identifies and addresses classroom needs without prompting.
- Communicates in a manner that conveys mutual respect with students.
- Establishes rules and procedures for effective classroom management that support learning.
- Encourages and models Christian values for students and periodically reinforces expectations.

Minimal:

- Willing to support classroom and student needs when directed.
- Encourages Christian values without consistently modeling them.
- Struggles to clearly and consistently communicate expectations to students.

2. *Ability to meet deadlines without prompting or excuses*

Distinguished:

- Proactively aligns long-term goals with current lesson plans.
- Independently prepares all lesson materials for the next day before leaving school.
- Consistently one of the first to arrive at meetings and events.
- Completes assigned tasks and personal responsibilities above and beyond expectations by being consistently early or delivering a high quality of work.

Proficient:

- Consistently submits lesson plans two school days in advance without reminders.
- Prepares all materials for the next day before leaving school.
- Arrives early to meetings and events.
- Completes assigned tasks and personal responsibilities on time and as expected without prompting or assistance.
- Demonstrates effective communication with families, colleagues, and the community.
- Integrates tasks to support students' spiritual, mental, and physical growth.

Basic:

- Regularly submits lesson plans two school days in advance.
- Ensures lesson materials are ready before the school day begins.
- Arrives on time to meetings and events.

- Completes tasks and fulfills responsibilities on time and as expected with occasional prompting or support.
- Understands how teacher tasks relate to students' needs.

Minimal:

- Requires additional time or reminders to submit lesson plans two school days in advance.
- Sometimes lacks necessary materials at the start of the school day.
- Occasionally arrives late to meetings or events.
- Often needs prompting or support to complete tasks and responsibilities.

3. *Lesson planning that includes well-written and implemented plans.*

Distinguished:

- Lesson plans are highly detailed, thorough, and include all required components, demonstrating a deep understanding of individual students' backgrounds and needs.
- Lessons are delivered confidently and enthusiastically, following the intended plan while adapting responsively to both collective and individual student needs.
- Lessons progress logically and sequentially toward achieving objectives, offering opportunities for additional support or challenge.
- Lesson plans make connections between objectives and broader curriculum or real-life applications more than once per week and naturally integrate technology where appropriate without overuse.

Proficient:

- Lesson plans are detailed, thorough, and contain all required components.
- Lessons are confidently and enthusiastically developed and presented, adhering to the intended plan while remaining responsive to student needs.
- Lessons progress logically and sequentially toward objectives.
- Plans include connections between objectives and the curriculum or real-life applications and integrate technology appropriately.

Basic:

- Lesson plans include sufficient detail and all required components.
- Lesson presentations keep students engaged and follow the intended plan.
- Lessons progress logically toward objectives and address collective learning needs.

Minimal:

- Lesson plans lack sufficient detail or do not include all required components.
- Lesson presentations may lack enthusiasm or fail to follow the intended plan.
- Lessons lack logical flow, may not maintain a focus on objectives, or fail to meet students' collective learning needs.

4. *Content knowledge, developmental principles, and ability to make concepts understandable*

Distinguished:

- Demonstrates precise content knowledge, effectively corrects students' content errors, and deepens understanding by providing additional information and connections to prior learning and other subject areas.
- Uses strategies tailored to the developmental characteristics of the age level, accounting for both general patterns and individual student differences.
- Engages students with the central concepts, structure, and inquiry tools of the discipline to create meaningful learning experiences.

Proficient:

- Demonstrates accurate content knowledge, effectively corrects students' content errors, and enriches the material with added information and links to prior learning.
- Uses strategies suited to the developmental characteristics of the age level, considering exceptions to general patterns.
- Instruction is logical and sequential, with clearly articulated explanations and varied approaches to deepen students' understanding.

Basic:

- Demonstrates accurate content knowledge and corrects students' content errors.
- Uses strategies suitable for the developmental characteristics of the age level.
- Instruction follows a logical, sequential structure with clear explanations.

Minimal:

- Makes frequent content errors or does not correct students' content errors.
- Uses strategies that are not developmentally appropriate.
- Instruction lacks logical progression, and explanations are unclear.

5. *Efficiency, creativity, and resourcefulness, Creates and uses a wide variety of methods and materials*

Distinguished:

- Completes tasks efficiently and integrates a wide variety of creative ideas and resources into lessons to foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills in students.
- Develops, implements, and evaluates plans using diverse methods and strategies to maximize learning, incorporating a wide range of materials and technology resources.
- Regularly employs varied instructional resources to enhance a series of lessons.

Proficient:

- Completes tasks efficiently, incorporating a range of creative ideas and instructional resources into lessons.
- Develops, implements, and evaluates plans that use a variety of materials or technology resources to optimize learning.
- Utilizes multiple instructional resources to enrich lessons and adapts instruction based on student feedback, effectively incorporating a variety of technology resources.

Basic:

- Completes tasks in a reasonable timeframe, allowing for the addition of a limited number of creative ideas and resources into lessons.
- Uses a small selection of instructional strategies and resources to improve lessons and incorporates some technology resources.

Minimal:

- Takes longer than expected to complete tasks, which limits opportunities to add creativity or additional resources to lessons.
- Uses instructional resources sporadically to enhance lessons.

6. *Involvement of students in lessons through skillful questioning, discussions, and planned experiences*

Distinguished:

- Questioning Techniques: Consistently poses questions that foster deep, meaningful student-to-student discussions. Questions are open-ended and encourage critical thinking and exploration of diverse perspectives.
- Discussions: Facilitates discussions that are student-led, with students building on each other's ideas and engaging in thoughtful dialogue.
- Planned Experiences: Designs and implements planned experiences that require every student to actively engage in learning, promoting collaboration and inquiry-based learning.

Proficient:

- Questioning Techniques: Uses a variety of questioning techniques to achieve specific purposes, such as probing for student understanding or helping students articulate their ideas and thought processes.
- Discussions: Engages students in discussions that are purposeful and structured, encouraging students to express their thoughts and engage with the content.
- Planned Experiences: Provides planned experiences that encourage active learning, allowing students to explore and apply concepts in meaningful ways.

Basic:

- Questioning Techniques: Asks clearly worded questions that prompt both recall of information and higher-order thinking skills, inviting multiple answers and perspectives.
- Discussions: Regularly engages students in both large and small group discussions, promoting student participation and interaction.
- Planned Experiences: Designs planned experiences that promote student engagement and involvement, though they may be more teacher-directed.

Minimal:

- Questioning Techniques: Asks questions that are either poorly worded, above students' level of understanding, or limited to simple recall or recitation with only one correct answer.
- Discussions: Occasionally engages students in group discussions, which may lack depth and student involvement.
- Planned Experiences: Focuses planned experiences more on teacher demonstration than on student involvement, with limited opportunities for active student participation.

7. Integration of subjects and God's Word where appropriate

Distinguished:

- Plans and integrates God's Word and doctrinal principles into multiple lessons each week, engaging students actively.
- Makes thoughtful connections between God's Word and the lesson content.
- Consistently verbalizes and demonstrates respect for each student as a unique child of God, being sensitive to their individual backgrounds and feelings.
- Conveys a strong belief that all students can learn and succeed.

Proficient:

- Plans and integrates God's Word and doctrinal principles into at least one lesson each week where appropriate.
- Provides connections to God's Word that engage students in inquiry and discovery.
- Consistently verbalizes and demonstrates respect for students as unique children of God, with sensitivity to their backgrounds and feelings.
- Communicates a belief that all students can learn and succeed.

Basic:

- Integrates God's Word into lessons regularly where appropriate.
- Demonstrates understanding of God's Word to engage students in inquiry and discovery.
- Shows respect for students as unique children of God.

Minimal:

- Rarely integrates God's Word into lessons.
- Bible doctrines are either misapplied or lack age-appropriate clarity.
- Occasionally speaks of respect for students as unique children of God but provides few demonstrated examples.

8. Use of assessments to support student learning

Distinguished:

- Selects assessment strategies and materials that align with instructional goals and meet individual learner needs.
- Provides students with positive, specific feedback on their performance, highlighting strengths and areas for further learning.
- Uses a comprehensive range of assessment methods to gain deep insights into student learning and progress.

Proficient:

- Uses assessment techniques appropriate to the content and students' levels.
- Provides timely feedback on students' performance.
- Employs a variety of formal and informal assessment methods to gain insight into student learning.
- Uses multiple types of assessment to support learning.

Basic:

- Provides general feedback to students within two to three days regarding their performance quality.
- Uses a limited range of formal and informal assessments to improve understanding of student learning.

Minimal:

- Uses a few types of assessment.
- Assessments used offer limited insights into students' knowledge and skills.
- Feedback is often delayed or lacks specific guidance on performance quality.

9. Communication that is clear and articulate

Distinguished:

- Proactively conveys ideas and information, asks questions, and seeks understanding from multiple perspectives for instructional purposes.
- Builds relationships with students' parents/guardians through established communication channels.
- Demonstrates exceptional clarity and articulation in both verbal and written communication, adapting style to suit different audiences.

Proficient:

- Communicates pleasantly and effectively, with varied tone.
- Uses a range of verbal, nonverbal, and media techniques.
- Employs effective strategies to convey ideas, information, and questions.
- Demonstrates clear and articulate communication in both verbal and written forms.

Basic:

- Communicates pleasantly and effectively both verbally and in writing.
- Demonstrates knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media techniques.
- Meets basic expectations for clarity and articulation in communication.

Minimal:

- Meets basic requirements for spoken and written communication in the classroom.
- Communication may lack clarity or articulation, impacting understanding.

10. Implementation of changes to lessons based on suggestions and self-reflection

Distinguished:

- Regularly conducts self-evaluations of teaching effectiveness as part of the planning and assessment cycle.
- Openly accepts and applies constructive feedback to improve lesson plans and teaching practices.
- Actively participates in collegial activities, including faculty meetings and professional development, to enhance instructional strategies.

Proficient:

- Reflects on and revises teaching practices using observations, student data, and research.
- Demonstrates self-confidence by utilizing congregational and community resources to support student learning and well-being.
- Is punctual, reliable, organized, and proactive in completing tasks.
- Adjusts lesson plans based on student feedback while adhering to weekly plans.
- Conducts self-evaluations and participates in collegial activities, such as faculty meetings and professional development.

Basic:

- Plans lessons with some attention to students' diverse learning needs.
- Is punctual and dependable in attendance.
- Maintains a professional appearance.
- Is organized and efficient.
- Acknowledges unanticipated input and adjusts plans accordingly.

Minimal:

- Plans lessons with some attention to student needs.
- Delivers lessons as planned.
- Responds to inquiries about individual students when prompted.

Management

1. Support for students by keeping routines and procedures consistent

Distinguished:

- Consistently maintains and reinforces established routines and procedures, ensuring a stable and predictable learning environment.
- Proactively adapts routines to meet the evolving needs of students while maintaining consistency.
- Engages students in understanding and valuing the importance of routines and procedures for their learning success.

Proficient:

- Maintains established routines and procedures effectively, providing a stable learning environment.
- Adjusts routines as necessary to accommodate student needs while ensuring consistency.

- Communicates the importance of routines and procedures to students, fostering a supportive learning atmosphere.

Basic:

- Maintains basic routines and procedures, providing some level of consistency in the learning environment.
- Occasionally adjusts routines to address student needs, though consistency may vary.
- Provides general explanations of routines and procedures to students.

Minimal:

- Establishes few routines and procedures, leading to an inconsistent learning environment.
- Rarely adjusts routines to meet student needs, resulting in limited support.
- Provides minimal explanation of routines and procedures to students.

2. *Ability to state expectations clearly and procedures consistent*

Distinguished:

- Consistently states expectations clearly and ensures procedures are consistently followed, creating a stable and predictable learning environment.
- Proactively clarifies expectations and procedures to accommodate diverse student needs, ensuring understanding from multiple perspectives.
- Engages students in discussions about the importance of clear expectations and consistent procedures, fostering a collaborative classroom culture.

Proficient:

- States expectations clearly and maintains consistent procedures, providing a stable learning environment.
- Adjusts communication of expectations and procedures as necessary to accommodate student needs.
- Uses a variety of strategies to convey expectations and procedures effectively, ensuring student understanding.

Basic:

- States expectations and procedures with some clarity, providing a basic level of consistency in the learning environment.
- Occasionally adjusts communication to address student needs, though clarity may vary.
- Demonstrates knowledge of effective communication techniques for stating expectations and procedures.

Minimal:

- States expectations and procedures with limited clarity, leading to inconsistencies in the learning environment.
- Rarely adjusts communication to meet student needs, resulting in limited understanding.
- Meets basic requirements for communicating expectations and procedures.

3. *Leadership with diverse learners*

Distinguished:

- Demonstrates exceptional leadership by proactively engaging with diverse learners, understanding their unique needs, and adapting teaching strategies accordingly.
- Builds strong, supportive relationships with students from diverse backgrounds, fostering an inclusive and respectful classroom environment.

- Actively seeks out and incorporates diverse perspectives into the curriculum, enhancing learning experiences for all students.

Proficient:

- Effectively leads and engages with diverse learners, showing an understanding of their varied needs and backgrounds.
- Maintains positive relationships with students from diverse backgrounds, promoting an inclusive classroom environment.
- Incorporates diverse perspectives into teaching practices, supporting a broad range of learning experiences.

Basic:

- Demonstrates basic leadership skills in engaging with diverse learners, with some understanding of their needs.
- Maintains respectful relationships with students from diverse backgrounds.
- Occasionally incorporates diverse perspectives into teaching practices.

Minimal:

- Shows limited leadership in engaging with diverse learners, with minimal understanding of their needs.
- Relationships with students from diverse backgrounds are basic and may lack depth.
- Rarely incorporates diverse perspectives into teaching practices.

4. *Use of God's Word in disciplining children*

Distinguished:

- Consistently integrates God's Word into disciplinary practices, using scripture to guide and support positive behavior changes.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of biblical principles and applies them thoughtfully to address individual student needs with wisdom and grace.
- Engages students in reflective discussions about their behavior in the context of biblical teachings, fostering personal growth, repentance, and a Christ-centered approach to reconciliation.
- Models a spirit of love and discipline that mirrors God's guidance and encourages students to develop self-discipline through faith.

Proficient:

- Effectively uses God's Word in disciplinary practices, applying relevant scripture to support behavior management and encourage positive choices.
- Shows a solid understanding of biblical principles and uses them to address student behavior in a way that promotes both accountability and grace.
- Encourages students to reflect on their actions in light of biblical teachings, creating a respectful and supportive environment rooted in Christian values.
- Demonstrates consistency in incorporating scripture into discipline, reinforcing a Christ-centered classroom culture.

Basic:

- Occasionally incorporates God's Word into disciplinary practices, using scripture to support behavior management but with varying consistency.
- Demonstrates a basic understanding of biblical principles and applies them in general ways when addressing student behavior.
- Provides opportunities for students to reflect on their actions in the context of biblical teachings but may not always guide discussions toward deeper understanding.

- Uses scripture primarily as reinforcement rather than an integral part of the discipline process.

Minimal:

- Rarely uses God's Word in disciplinary practices, with limited or inconsistent application of scripture to behavior management.
- Shows shallow understanding of biblical principles in addressing student behavior, often relying on general discipline strategies without a Christ-centered foundation.
- Provides few opportunities for students to reflect on their behavior through a biblical lens, missing chances to connect discipline with spiritual growth.
- Lacks planning to integrate scripture into the disciplinary process.

5. *Implementation of many and appropriate strategies for different instruction*

Distinguished:

- Consistently implements a wide range of instructional strategies tailored to meet the diverse needs of all learners.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of various instructional methods and adapts them effectively to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.
- Proactively seeks and integrates innovative strategies to address individual learning styles and preferences.

Proficient:

- Effectively uses a variety of instructional strategies to address the diverse needs of learners.
- Shows a solid understanding of different instructional methods and applies them to support student learning.
- Adjusts instructional strategies as needed to accommodate different learning styles and preferences.

Basic:

- Utilizes a limited range of instructional strategies to support student learning.
- Demonstrates a basic understanding of instructional methods and occasionally adapts them to meet student needs.
- Provides some differentiation in instruction to address diverse learning styles.

Minimal:

- Uses few instructional strategies, often relying on a single approach.
- Shows minimal understanding of instructional methods and rarely adapts them to meet student needs.
- Provides limited differentiation in instruction, resulting in inconsistent support for diverse learners.

6. *Use of smooth transitions and maximizing time on task*

Distinguished:

- Consistently implements smooth and seamless transitions between activities, minimizing downtime and maximizing instructional time.
- Proactively plans and adjusts transitions to accommodate diverse student needs, ensuring all students remain engaged and focused.
- Engages students in understanding the importance of efficient transitions, fostering a collaborative and time-conscious classroom environment.

Proficient:

- Effectively manages transitions between activities, minimizing downtime and maintaining student engagement.

- Uses a variety of strategies to ensure smooth transitions, adapting as necessary to meet student needs.
- Communicates expectations for transitions clearly, supporting a productive learning environment.

Basic:

- Manages transitions with some effectiveness, though occasional downtime may occur.
- Demonstrates basic strategies for facilitating transitions, with some adaptation to student needs.
- Provides general instructions for transitions, maintaining a basic level of student engagement.

Minimal:

- Transitions are often disorganized, leading to significant downtime and loss of instructional time.
- Uses few strategies for managing transitions, resulting in inconsistent student engagement.
- Provides limited instructions for transitions, impacting the overall flow of the lesson.

7. *Flexibility to adjust to changes and to adapt lessons when needed and without help*

Distinguished:

- Consistently demonstrates exceptional flexibility by independently adjusting to changes and adapting lessons seamlessly to meet the needs of all students.
- Proactively anticipates potential changes and prepares alternative strategies to ensure continuous learning.
- Engages students in the process of adapting lessons, fostering a dynamic and responsive learning environment.

Proficient:

- Effectively adjusts to changes and adapts lessons independently to accommodate student needs.
- Demonstrates the ability to modify instructional strategies and materials as necessary to maintain lesson flow.
- Encourages student engagement by adapting lessons to suit varying learning styles and preferences.

Basic:

- Shows some flexibility in adjusting to changes and adapting lessons, with occasional need for support.
- Demonstrates a basic ability to modify lessons to address student needs, though adjustments may be limited.
- Provides some opportunities for students to engage with adapted lesson content.

Minimal:

- Demonstrates limited flexibility in adjusting to changes and adapting lessons, often requiring assistance.
- Rarely modifies lessons to meet student needs, resulting in a rigid learning environment.
- Provides few opportunities for students to engage with adapted lesson content.

8. *Development of positive relationships with the students while maintaining a professional demeanor*

Distinguished:

- Consistently builds strong, warm, positive relationships with students, demonstrating genuine care and understanding of their individual needs and backgrounds.
- Maintains a professional demeanor at all times, serving as a role model for respectful and ethical behavior.
- Proactively engages with students to foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, encouraging open communication and trust.

Proficient:

- Effectively develops positive relationships with students, showing respect and understanding of their diverse needs.
- Maintains a professional demeanor, balancing approachability with authority.
- Encourages a supportive classroom environment through clear communication and mutual respect.

Basic:

- Develops basic positive relationships with students, demonstrating general respect and understanding.
- Maintains a professional demeanor, though may occasionally struggle with balancing approachability and authority.
- Provides a generally supportive classroom environment with some encouragement for open communication.

Minimal:

- Develops limited positive relationships with students, with minimal understanding of their individual needs.
- Maintains a basic professional demeanor, with occasional lapses in professionalism.
- Provides limited support for a positive classroom environment, with minimal encouragement for open communication.

9. *Organizational skills before, during, and after preparation and teaching*

Distinguished:

- Demonstrates exceptional organizational skills by meticulously planning and preparing lessons, ensuring all materials and resources are ready and accessible.
- Maintains a well-organized classroom environment that supports efficient transitions and maximizes instructional time.
- Reflects on and refines organizational strategies after teaching to enhance future lesson delivery and student engagement.

Proficient:

- Effectively organizes and prepares lessons, ensuring materials and resources are available and aligned with instructional goals.
- Maintains an organized classroom environment that supports smooth transitions and effective time management.
- Reflects on organizational practices and makes adjustments to improve lesson delivery and student engagement.

Basic:

- Organizes and prepares lessons with some attention to detail, ensuring basic materials and resources are available.
- Maintains a generally organized classroom environment, though transitions may occasionally be less efficient.

- Occasionally reflects on organizational practices and makes minor adjustments as needed.

Minimal:

- Demonstrates limited organizational skills, with minimal preparation of lessons and resources.
- Maintains a disorganized classroom environment, leading to inefficient transitions and loss of instructional time.
- Rarely reflects on organizational practices, resulting in minimal improvements to lesson delivery.