

Conducting Strong Virtual Demo Lessons

The “lesson role-play” is often the most critical portion of the interview day and hiring process. While in-person demo lessons best replicate authentic teaching conditions, we do recommend offering a virtual option for non-local candidates. This is especially beneficial to early hiring and expanding your system’s recruitment reach (e.g., out of state college students, candidates interested in relocating to your region, etc.). This document outlines ways to collect the level of nuanced data to making hiring decisions via virtual demo lesson activities.

Virtual Lessons

Before selecting an activity, consider which skills you would like to assess for the hires you are making. Do you want to gauge a candidate’s ability to deliver virtual instruction? Do you want to simulate in-person classes? The first three options focus on virtual instruction, while the following bullets provide suggestions for simulating in-person instruction.

- **Teach a webinar-style demo lesson.** Provide clear guidance to the candidate around length, content, format, how to record, etc.
- **Have students join the virtual lesson.** Use Skype or another virtual platform to have students participate in the lesson to ask and answer questions, complete activities, and provide their feedback following the lessons.
- **Have a teacher record a lesson and solicit feedback from students.** Share the lesson with students (as well as hiring committee members) using an online platform (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo, etc.) and ask them to share their feedback. You can even record student and hiring committee feedback for the teacher to review. In the interview, ask the teacher to respond to the feedback and role-play an example of what they might do differently.
- **Use an existing teaching video from this school year.** If candidates have previously taught, ask if they can share a video of them teaching their former students.
- **Share a sample lesson from your current curriculum.** Have the candidate internalize and lead a portion of that lesson.
- **Have selectors role-play as students.** Make sure staff are trained/normed and have time to practice before the interview. Set clear expectations for both selectors and candidates.

Understanding the Community & Replicating an In-Person Experience

- **Meet with stakeholders.** Have a ready list of key stakeholders (parents, other teachers, students, school leaders, and community members) that candidates can talk with to learn more about the community as part of the interview process or before making their decision.
- **Provide virtual tours.** Share videos or pictures from your campus to help candidates get a better sense of what they might experience. If candidates are new to the community, share links from Chamber of Commerce or other community groups to help them better understand the town or city that they would eventually move to.
- **Think about the materials** that you can send in advance (videos, parts of the website, schedules, etc.).
- **Maximize candidates’ speaking time** to hear from them as much as possible.

Additional Ideas

- **Host a virtual interview fair:** Have pre-screened candidates hold a window of time on a set day. About a week in advance, distribute their applications to school leaders/hiring managers and invite them to sign up for interview slots with candidates they're interested in. You may want to use a shared spreadsheet to manage the interview schedule. Give school leaders/hiring managers a deadline to sign up for interviews, and, following the deadline, share interview schedules with candidates. Be sure to include dates and times of interviews along with the names, titles, and schools of their interviewers.
- **Ask candidates to demonstrate their data analysis/problem solving skills:** In advance of the interview, provide candidates with sample data and instructions to analyze the data and respond to a set of questions. For instance, if provided with student assessment data on state standards, candidates could use that to develop a set of recommendations or curricular materials to ensure all students reach mastery. Have candidates submit their completed exercises before the interview and come prepared to debrief and discuss their findings and process.
- **Use a role-play:** Present candidates with a hypothetical situation they're likely to encounter and role-play the scenario. Provide feedback after a round and have candidates repeat the role-play to assess their ability to take and implement feedback.
- **Ask for a sample lesson plan:** Have candidates submit a sample lesson plan and ask them to articulate how they would engage all students in the classroom, where and how they will need to check for understanding, and how they will measure student success. To avoid bias toward experienced teachers who have more materials to draw from, be sure to focus the interview on how the candidate would implement the lesson plan and ensure all students are successful.

Terms of Use

These tools and resources are provided for informational or educational use only and are not intended as a service. Unless otherwise indicated, the resources provided on the Teacher Talent Toolbox are licensed under the Creative Commons [Attribution Non-Commercial Share-Alike license](#) and are subject to the copyright rules under that license.

Commercial use of the materials is not allowed without explicit written permission from TNTP, Inc. Unless otherwise noted, any distribution of materials posted on this website must credit TNTP, Inc. as follows:

From Teacher Talent Toolbox (2020) by TNTP, Inc., available at <https://tntp.org/toolkit/teacher-talent-toolbox/>

Permission to copy, use and distribute materials as described above shall not extend to information housed on the Teacher Talent Toolbox and credited to other sources, or information on websites to which this site links.