

PPAT[®] Assessment

Library of Examples – English-Language Arts

Task 1, Step 1, Textbox 1.1.1: Understanding the Contextual Factors Influencing Instruction and Student Learning

Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 1.1.1 as excerpted from the portfolios of two different candidates. The candidate responses were not corrected or changed from what was submitted. One response was scored at the Met/Exceeded Standards Level and the other response was scored at the Does Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level. This information is being provided for illustrative purposes only. These excerpts are not templates for you to use to guarantee a successful score. Rather, they are examples that you can use for comparison purposes to see the kinds of evidence that you may need to add to your own work.

The work you submit as part of your response to each task must be yours and yours alone. Your written commentaries, the student work and other artifacts you submit, and your video recordings must all feature teaching that you did and work that you supervised.

Guiding Prompt for Task 1, Textbox 1.1.1

- a. Identify your chosen community factor. Based on your chosen community factor, identify and describe one possible instructional strategy **and** one learning activity that you could use in your classroom to further student learning. Provide a rationale that explains how the identified strategy and activity connect to the chosen factor.
- b. Identify your chosen school/district factor. Based on your chosen school/district factor, identify and describe one possible instructional strategy **and** one learning activity that you could use in your classroom to further student learning. Provide a rationale that explains how the identified strategy and activity connect to the chosen factor.

Example 1: Met/Exceeded Standards Level

- a. Guiding Prompt A.
Since [city] is the most racially diverse place in [area name], I find it important to make sure that I am teaching my students with their individual and cultural identities in mind. My community factor is the census information. The 2010 census recorded the racial makeup of [city state] as follows: 83.90% White, 13.9% Hispanic or Latino, 1.0% African American, 1.0% Native American, 3.30% Asian, 0.5% Pacific Islander, 8.0% other races, and 2.3% mixed race. It's rather diverse for a farming valley in [state]. The middle school is in the heart of the District and therefore has the most racially diverse student body of all the middle schools in the valley. Out of my 145 students, 37 of them are students of color. With this in mind I would want to implement interactive instructional strategies. Interactive instruction strategies tend to focus on debates, discussion, group

work, and collaborative brainstorming. This strategy leads to types of activities used to bring different cultural voices to the classroom conversation. By giving my students of color and my white students the opportunity to openly talk about their cultural backgrounds in relation to the literature in a safe environment.

This can be done using interactive instruction with a learning activity focused on *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which my students will read later this school year. It is a beautiful, heartbreaking story of the struggle of an oppressed people in modern times. This book has the potential to resonate well with every student in the class and cause some internal reflection. The best way to express this reflection would be through interactive instruction. Students first express themselves on paper in response to a personal prompt. The prompt would be something along the lines of a diary entry and express something they would want to keep in a diary for generations to later read about their life. It should be something personal to them, but not too personal for them to not share with others. I would then break the students into small groups, preferably with as much racial or ethnic diversity as possible. I would then have the students share their diary entries with their small groups and provide some group questions for discussion afterwards. This activity allows students to be comfortable with themselves and their own identity, then comfortable sharing these ideas in small groups and hearing other students' feelings, then finally sharing what they learned from the experience in a large class group. This step activity along with the focus on openly sharing and collaboration not only teaches my students about teamwork, but helps in their tolerance and acceptance, which is one of the main literary themes of the book. This kind of activity and strategy fits well with the community factor for the same reasons; it helps with tolerance, acceptance, and understanding between students.

b. Guiding Prompt B.

I have a student with a large language barrier in my classroom who is still in the process of learning English, and others that speak English fluently, but it is still their second language. Similar to my community factor, this school factor (254 ELL students) focuses on differences between students. In some instances this kind of barrier can make it hard in an English class if I try too hard to push reading or writing because it can cause more frustration and anger to the students both in me and perhaps in themselves. To help with this I want to try and utilize an instructional strategy that can encourage learning that doesn't necessarily rely on students' language abilities: experiential learning. Experiential learning focuses on types of learning that test academics; things like field trips, experiments, visual work, and creative projects. For my students where English isn't a first language, it could be beneficial for them to express their learning and understand in a unique way.

A learning activity for these students that I would use in my classroom would be an art activity. It would be a small activity where I would assign the students a chapter of a book, a section of a short story, a scene of a play, or a poem, (depending on what we were studying at the time) and they would draw what they envisioned the setting, theme, character, or actions of that reading would be. This learning activity not only helps students envision what some of these literary aspects are, but it fits into my school factor because art is a universal language. My ELL students would just need to understand what I want them to draw and where to find it and then they could use their creativity to create a piece. They won't need an in-depth understanding of all the language in the novel, and

they can express themselves easily in their artwork. Their doing well doesn't depend on their ability to write in a language that is not their first. I think it could help with their confidence as well. It can prove to themselves and me that they understand what's happening in the book even if they are not quite yet comfortable talking about it yet..

Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.1.1 and ask yourself:

In the candidate's response, where is there evidence of the following?

- Does the candidate connect one chosen community factor to an instructional strategy and a learning strategy in order to further student learning?
- Does the candidate connect one chosen school/district factor to an instructional strategy and a learning strategy in order to further student learning?
- Where does the candidate explain how each instructional strategy furthers student learning?
- Where does the candidate explain how each learning activity furthers student learning?

Example 2: Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level

a. The community factor I have chosen is the fact that this public-school system is rural. An instructional strategy that I plan on implementing in my classroom would be small group discussion over young adult novels. Rural areas typically are not as diverse as urban areas; therefore, I believe it is important for these students to read novels that were written from a different perspective than they are used to. Young adult literature is used in schools to teach students empathy through language and themes that they will understand.

An activity that I will have students do will be to pick out a poem by an author who is a person of color during the Civil Rights Movement and they will have to do some background research on why this author wrote the poem. They will also have to understand what this movement was and why it was so important. Then they will have to write a paper over why this poem and author made a statement during the movement and how it did so. This is allowing the student to get out of their comfort zone and look at something from a different point of view.

b. The school factor I chose was a reading specialist. Reading specialists are crucial in a classroom because there are students who need that extra time and help with the basics of reading. Those who especially need the assistance would be the English language learning (ELL) students. The reading specialist could be able to use visual aids to help the English language learner. These students usually find it hard to read the words, so by using visual aids, the students can begin to figure out what is going on in the story. This will be the start of their comprehension of the story. Reading specialists truly help in the classroom because they can take time to work one-on-one with students and help them with their reading through visual aids. Their comprehension skills can be greatly increased with the help of graphic organizers where they are able to see the information they just read and process the information that way.

Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.1.1 and ask yourself:

In the candidate's response, where is there evidence of the following?

- Does the candidate connect one chosen community factor to an instructional strategy and a learning strategy in order to further student learning?
- Does the candidate connect one chosen school/district factor to an instructional strategy and a learning strategy in order to further student learning?
- Where does the candidate explain how each instructional strategy furthers student learning?
- Where does the candidate explain how each learning activity furthers student learning?

Suggestions for Using These Examples

After writing your own rough draft response to the guiding prompts, ask the question, "Which parts of these examples are closest to what I have written?" Then read the 4 levels of the matching rubric (labeled with the textbox number) and decide which best matches your response. Use this information as you revise your own written commentary.

Lastly, using your work and/or these examples as reference, consider what you believe would be appropriate artifacts for this textbox.

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