

PPAT® Assessment Glossary

Academic Content Language

Abstract concepts, ideas, and higher-order thinking processes associated with a specific content area or discipline. Vocabulary, grammar, instruction, and assessment strategies are used to highlight the particular language of the content area or discipline and are used in the classroom, in curricular materials, and in presentations.

Adaptations

The changes made by a teacher candidate to a lesson or assessment components, usually to the lesson or test format, that allows students to participate in the lesson or the assessment. For example, adaptations can include the use of different or additional resources, assistance from another student or adult, or additional time.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires all schools, districts/local education agencies, and states to show that students are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The law requires a set target for all students and student subgroups to meet in a progressive nature that is intended to result in all students scoring at or above the proficient level on the state's assessment.

Analysis

Examination of the parts of a process or a product to determine their relationships. A response that is grounded in evidence and deals with reasons, rationales, and interpretations of data and information.

Artifact

A document used or produced by a teacher candidate when planning instruction, during instruction, or as part of an assessment that will help raters better understand the activity featured in the task. Artifacts might include, but are not limited to, student work, a lesson plan, a unit plan, an assessment instrument, a rubric, task directions, assessment directions, photographs, etc.

Assessment

A process of observing, monitoring, measuring, analyzing, evaluating, documenting, and reflecting for the purpose of adjusting teaching to impact learning, resulting in improved performance.

Formative assessment

A process for gathering evidence of student learning where that evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching to meet the learning needs.

Summative assessment

A process for evaluating student learning at the culmination of a specific body of learning or a given period of time to determine whether the intended learning goals have been met.

Formal assessment

A process for gathering evidence of student learning to make general instructional decisions using a standardized, published test or instrument that includes specific procedures for administration and interpretation.

Informal assessment

A process for gathering evidence of student learning to make general instructional decisions using casual, informal techniques that do not require specified procedures for administration and interpretation.

Assessment technique

Methods of eliciting evidence of intended student learning.

Assessment tool

An instrument used to measure intended student learning formally or informally.

Baseline data

Initial data used to monitor changes or the improvement in an individual or group performance.

Behavior management

The structure and organization of a classroom, including the procedures, rules, and expectations that create a positive learning environment and allow the teacher candidate to best meet the needs of all students.

Classroom assignment

The placement of the teacher candidate in a specific classroom (i.e., grade level and subject area).

Classroom demographics

The makeup of a classroom in terms of the diversity of the students.

Classroom management

The wide variety of skills and techniques that teacher candidates use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive.

Content area

An academic discipline, such as English language arts, mathematics, science, or history/social studies.

Critical thinking

An intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. This includes seeing both sides of an issue; being open to new evidence that disconfirms one's ideas; reasoning dispassionately; demanding that claims be backed by evidence; deducing and inferring conclusions from available facts; solving problems.

Cultural attributes

The specific behaviors, characteristics, and beliefs of the individuals in a particular group.

Data

The information, facts, and statistics gathered to measure student learning. This information may include both quantitative and qualitative findings (e.g., anecdotal notes).

Differentiation

Different or altered learning activities employed by the teacher candidate within a lesson to meet the different needs or learning styles of specific students, allowing them to process constructs or make sense of concepts and ideas.

Diversity

The differences among groups of people and individuals based on age, gender, culture, language, race, ethnicity, religion, exceptionalities, or socioeconomic status.

English-language learner (ELL or EL)

A student who uses a primary language other than English and who is developing proficiency in English.

Evidence

Any information produced and submitted by a teacher candidate or by a student that documents the teacher candidate's teaching performance and can be linked to the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards. Evidence can be found in the written commentary and artifacts, including the video.

Evidence of learning

The data gathered through formal and informal assessment strategies that demonstrate student progress toward the learning goals.

Feedback

Information given to a student about how he or she is doing in reference to a learning goal. Effective feedback is goal referenced, tangible and transparent, actionable, user-friendly (specific and personalized), timely, ongoing, and consistent.

Flexible grouping

The range of options for instruction, including whole-class, small-group, and independent activities.

Focus students

Selected students who allow a teacher candidate to demonstrate his or her ability to collect information, plan instruction and assessment, make adaptations, and reflect. This includes a range of students with different learning needs.

Formative assessment

See 'Assessment.'

Graphic representations of collected data

Gathered data displayed in a visual manner (e.g., spreadsheets, graphs, pie charts, scatter diagrams, color coding).

Guiding prompt

A question or statement (within the *PPAT*[®] Assessment) that elicits a teacher candidate's response.

Higher-order thinking

Critical, reasonable, reflective thinking that focuses on deciding what to believe or do by questioning assumptions and using a process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information.

Implications for instruction

The concepts or strategies teacher candidates must apply in response to new learning.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A plan created in accordance with the law to guarantee that a child who has a disability receives specialized instruction and related services.

Instructional challenges

Identified difficulties during instruction that must be addressed to best meet the needs of all learners.

Instructional decision making

The use of student achievement data to support the choice of instructional strategies used during a lesson. This can be done before, during, or after a lesson.

Instructional strategies

The approaches used by the teacher candidate in the classroom to best meet the learning goals and needs of the students.

Learning activities

The design of the learning environment and the experiences provided to students that support and facilitate student learning.

Learning goals

The intended learning that students should master, based on standards and curriculum, as a result of instruction.

Learner needs

The identified needs of individual students or subgroups, as determined by daily observation and assessment data, that suggest modifications to instruction. For example, if a student cannot sit still for very long, the teacher candidate will allow the student to stand. For visual and auditory learners, the teacher candidate will show and tell students the instructions.

Learning outcomes

Statements that describe the learning that students have accomplished and can reliably demonstrate. Learning outcomes may include knowledge, skills, and dispositions and are more specific than goals.

Learning styles

The various approaches or methods through which learning can occur that are particular to an individual and are presumed to allow that individual to learn best. The three most widely recognized categories of learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Learning theory

The conceptual frameworks that explain how information is taken in, processed, and remembered during learning.

Modifications

The small changes made to instruction or assessment by a teacher candidate to facilitate learning for specific students' needs (e.g., moving a student to the front of the room; giving more time to complete a task; having a student answer fewer questions on a test).

Monitor

A way to continuously track how students are doing academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Multiple intelligences

A theory that intelligence encompasses a range of functions and abilities (Gardner, 1983). By recognizing that intelligence can manifest through abilities or agilities other than those of a cognitive nature, teacher candidates can adapt their teaching styles and learning activities to better engage and motivate learners (i.e., verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential learners).

Performance level

The ability of students (groups or individuals) to demonstrate evidence of learning.

Performance task

An authentic assessment that allows a teacher candidate to apply his or her knowledge and skills. The teacher candidate is able to show a wide range of knowledge and skills through this type of assessment.

Prior knowledge

Students' preexisting knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes, which influence how they attend to, interpret, and organize incoming information.

Rationale

The underlying principle or justification for a decision that is made. A rationale should relate to the teaching and learning context as described by the teacher candidate.

Reflection

An analysis of teaching by the teacher candidate that notes which students successfully learned the content and which students did not, what the impact of the teaching practice was, and how the teacher candidate might change the teaching practice to attend to future student needs. Reflection includes thinking about pedagogy, student characteristics, and outcomes. It involves using data to review instructional decisions and improve teaching strategies and learning outcomes. Reflective practice is the capacity to reflect on or review specific incidents of practice as a way of engaging in continuous learning for the purpose of increasing overall teaching effectiveness and student learning.

Research-based instructional strategies

Approaches that are grounded in recent, quality research and used by the teacher candidate in the classroom to meet the learning needs of the students and improve achievement.

Resources

The tools used to provide additional support to meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Rubric

Written criteria for evaluating a performance that indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated and that anchor judgments about the degree of success on a teacher candidate's assessment.

Standards

InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards: These standards articulate expectations of performance for professional educators. The standards are based on theories of teaching and learning and share the expectation that educators will continuously acquire new academic achievement for all students. They are based on a developmental sequence that defines a professional continuum that illustrates how educators' knowledge and skills mature and strengthen throughout their career. Professional teachers and leaders are expected to exercise good professional judgment and use the standards to inform and improve their own practices.

Student engagement

A psychological investment by the students in learning that goes beyond earning formal indicators of success to incorporating and internalizing content and understanding. Engaged students typically appear willing, interested, and involved and gain satisfaction from their accomplishments.

Student interest inventory

A survey taken by each student that captures a student's likes and dislikes.

Student teaching

Pre-service clinical practices for professional education candidates who are preparing to teach.

Student work

See 'Artifact.'

Subject matter

A strand or branch of content within a content area or discipline. Or, the specific concept(s) or skill(s) within the content area that is being taught and that is the subject (or focus) of the lesson.

Summative assessment

See 'Assessment.'

Supportive interactions

The ways in which a teacher candidate provides emotional and/or academic classroom support to help students develop and feel comfortable in the classroom. This could include teacher sensitivity, classroom behavior, and cognitive/instructional development through concept development, feedback, and modeling.

Teacher candidate

An individual enrolled in a program at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level leading to initial licensure/certification as a classroom teacher.

Teacher instruction

See 'Artifact.'

Technology

Expertise in using a variety of equipment as a tool to enhance teaching and learning. This could include, but is not limited to, computers, recorders, microphones, camcorders, scientific calculators, electronic boards, document cameras, electronic microscopes, adaptive technology.

Written commentary

A written response to or an explanation of the guiding prompts within the task directions provided by a teacher candidate.