

PPAT[®] Assessment

Library of Examples – English-Language Arts

Task 1, Step 2, 1.2.2: The Focus Students

Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 1.2.2 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 1.2.2

- a. Describe each identified Focus Student’s cultural and linguistic assets, lived experiences, and academic strengths and learning needs. Explain how each of these two students contributes to the learning environment of your classroom.
- b. Based on your knowledge of Focus Student #1, identify and describe one possible instructional strategy **and** one learning activity that you and this student could create together to use in your classroom to support this student. Explain how the identified strategy and activity reflect your understanding and appreciation of this student’s cultural and linguistic assets lived experiences, academic strengths, and learning needs.
- c. Based on your knowledge of Focus Student #2, identify and describe one possible instructional strategy **and** one learning activity that you and this student could create together to use in your classroom to support this student. Explain how the identified strategy and activity reflect your understanding and appreciation of this student’s cultural and linguistic assets lived experiences, academic strengths, and learning needs.

Example 1: Met/Exceeded Standards Level

- a. Focus student #1 comes from a Native American cultural background. Family is extremely important to this student and is the student's core. This student defines their family to be not only immediate siblings and parents but cousins, grandparents and also close family friends who are not blood related. Student #1 expressed that the majority of their summer was spent camping with their family, eating traditional Native American foods and playing games. Student #1 notes that they are competitive with their family when

they play games. Linguistically, this student speaks English in the classroom with an accent that supports that English is not their first language. Academically, this student has an IEP for reading but the student has great strength in writing. Student #1 can always identify the subject and verb quicker than the rest of the class with about 80% accuracy. When it comes to writing paragraphs, student #1 can create a paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting details. Punctuation and grammar are a learning need for student #1. When completing a writing assignment, they often score low in the spelling and grammar category. Student #1 can have both a positive and negative effect on the class learning environment. Some days student #1 is engaged and vocal which encourages the student's peers to participate in class discussion as well. Other days, student #1 will be quiet, reserved and shrug their shoulders and because the student is a natural leader, some peers follow the behavior which hinders the learning environment.

Focus student #2 comes from a typical American culture background. This student was raised in an agricultural setting and enjoys the outdoors. This student rides and raises horses and is very fond of animals. Student #2 is creative and is good at art. This student is constantly doodling or writing in fancy letters during their free time as a way to express herself. Family is also an important factor in this student's life. Student #2 is hard-working and has a positive attitude all the time. This student is a social butterfly and carries on conversations with any peer in the class when it is an appropriate time. Student #2 is a fluent English speaker and does not speak any other languages. An academic strength of student #2 are writing; specifically explaining and elaborating in paragraphs, they can grasp interesting and relevant details that enhance their paragraph. A learning need for this particular student is reading fluency and spelling. This student averages 61 words per minute with an average of 91% accuracy on grade level. Students should be at 120 words per minute with 98% accuracy on grade level. Student #2 has a very difficult time spelling words. It is difficult for this student to decode a word mentally and then write down each individual letter on the paper, so the majority of the time is left to guess.

- b. For student #1 an appropriate instructional strategy for me to use would be to use the MITS evidence-based curriculum, which focuses heavily on spelling, grammar and punctuation. Another strategy is to provide small group instruction using guided practice with gradual release for student #1 until they reach a goal to move onto independent practice. When student #1 participates in independent practice, it will be critical for me to give feedback immediately following the student handing in their work. It will also be critical for me to provide immediate feedback during guided practice, so the student does not keep practicing spelling, punctuation or grammar incorrectly. The use of this instructional strategy and learning activity reflects my understanding of and appreciation of the students' linguistic background and the students learning needs because it focuses on the skills the student needs help in. One learning activity would be to play the "you me game" for five minutes. Using a task from the MITS program that has questions regarding spelling, punctuation and grammar errors both student #1 and I can each work on an assignment independently. For every correct question answered, we get one point and at the end of the five minutes we will count our correct answers and earn points for a reward. The learning activity promotes a safe learning environment by incorporating a game to add a motivator to enhance the student's skills. This learning activity reflects my appreciation and understanding of this student because I know competition is a motivator to their and that a learning need for them is spelling, grammar and punctuation.

c. For student #2 an instructional strategy I can use is a think-pair-share before being asked to spell a word. Having the students think about how they would spell the word and then turn to a partner and share their answers to see if they both came up with the same spelling or not. I would strategically pair student #2 with a peer who has a strength in spelling to increase the chance of the word being spelled correctly in that partnership. I would then walk around to each partnership and have them share and provide corrections if the spelling is wrong and praise them if the spelling is right. Using this instructional strategy would show my understanding and strengths of the student because it shows that I recognize the student's desire to be in social settings. I recognize the student's strength in communication that is centered around both academic and other social aspects. A learning activity that student #2 and I could create is a spelling wall in the classroom. When there is a word that is difficult to spell and is critical to the reading passage, writing prompt or unit we are learning we could learn the correct spelling of the word and then connect it to our spelling wall. The learning activity shows my understanding of student #2 specific learning needs. It also shows my understanding of the student's lifestyle, culture and learning needs because the activity is creative and artistic and motivates them to increase their skills in spelling.

Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.2.2 and ask yourself:

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

- Does the candidate identify each Focus Student's cultural and linguistic assets, lived experiences, and academic strengths and learning needs?
- Where does the candidate explain how each of these two students contributes to the classroom's learning environment?
- Does the candidate identify and describe one possible instructional strategy and one learning activity that can be created together with each focus student to support that student?
- Where does the candidate explain how the identified strategy and activity reflect an understanding and appreciation of each focus student's cultural and linguistic assets lived experiences, academic strengths, and learning needs?

Example 2: Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level

a. For my first Focus Student, strong military background was observed. This student has dual military parents, and grandparents that are active duty as well. During my time of observation, this student had experienced a great amount of change in a short period of time. His father had just returned from a tour overseas, and his mother was set to ship out within the next few months. This student also was on an IEP from a previous base's behavioral health program for his diagnosis of Autism. This focus student was very high functioning, but struggles with a language disorder that caused him to process his information at a slower rate than the rest of his counterparts that may not have had this same flaw.

My second Focus Student was an ELL learner who has a parent that worked for the federal government. This student is raised in a Spanish dominant household, where his parent and himself have to translate for the rest of their family members. Each of these students provide diverse approaches to the way instruction is led in our classroom. There have to

be accommodations and alternative approaches/lessons available to these students upon demand/need, so this alters the way we go into each day with our students.

- b. Based on the information we already know about Focus Student #1, an appropriate learning activity would be one that includes movement, both inside, and out of the typical classroom setting. Being at [name], we do have the available space that we need for an activity like this. One activity that comes to mind would be a scavenger hunt for our spelling words of the week. The students would go around their hallway and observe objects that fit into their spelling word(of the day) category. This includes objects, teachers, and other staff that may hold clues to solve their scavenger hunt. All of the students would be required to participate in this activity for their own, personal grades, but this learning activity would cater directly to Focus Student #1's need during instruction. A fabulous instructional strategy that fits this activity would fall under the experiential learning category, being that this takes all of our students out of their traditional setting, and lets them explore their hallway/school-building in order to learn their new materials for the day. These activities and learning strategies aid in making Focus Student #1 feel comfortable, and confident enough to learn and also make mistakes in his learning, as he is doing it alongside his peers who are in the same boat.
- c. Based on the information that we know for Focus Student #2, adding visual aids to all of our assignments would be extremely appropriate for our ELL student. For example, as we work our way through our math word-problems, adding in visual cues/examples throughout the problem will ensure that Focus Student #2 is making the appropriate word-object connection that is needed for the student to succeed. This also pieces together everyday life that the student will need in order to make their English stronger during school, and also out of school when they are acting as translators for their loved ones. One instructional strategy would include indirect instruction in the form of reflective, group discussions. The students would all be placed into groups of 4, or less, to discuss their answers that they get on their word problems.

Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.2.2 and ask yourself:

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

- Does the candidate identify each Focus Student's cultural and linguistic assets, lived experiences, and academic strengths and learning needs?
- Where does the candidate explain how each of these two students contributes to the classroom's learning environment?
- Does the candidate identify and describe one possible instructional strategy and one learning activity that can be created together with each focus student to support that student?
- Where does the candidate explain how the identified strategy and activity reflect an understanding and appreciation of each focus student's cultural and linguistic assets lived experiences, academic strengths, and learning needs?

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.

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