

## PPAT<sup>®</sup> Assessment

### Library of Examples – Social Science

#### 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. Both of my chosen focus students have many surface level attributes in common. For example, both are Caucasian, speak English at home, have siblings that also attend the school, and are friendly and out-going. When it comes to academic needs, they start to vary sharply.

My first focus student has proven to need more of a challenge in the classroom. When the class is asked to provide answers, she usually is the first to raise her hand and provides the correct answer. She reads quickly, comprehends well, and is timely in turning her work in. Despite having to be quarantined for two weeks, not only did she have no problem staying caught up with her work, she received better scores than her classmates. In a class of sophomores, this student is a freshman. The fact that she is taking this class a year early demonstrates her abilities and her eagerness to learn.

Focus student number two needs more support in the classroom. She is given preferential seating in the classroom, so it is easier for her teachers to check in with her. It is hard for her to stay on task but responds well to redirection. Her IEP includes needing oral instructions along with written instructions; tests, quizzes, and assignments read aloud; extended time on work; checking for understanding; and access to the testing center when completing assessments. While she is out-going and the other kids are nice to her, it doesn't appear that she has any real friends in the class.

- b. In her starter pack activity, focus student number one noted that her favorite subject is history. To help this student get the most out of class, it would be beneficial to design activities that have built in extra challenges she could capitalize on. Specifically, any sort of activity that has a research aspect has the potential for students to work at their own level without having individualized assignments or instructions for everyone. The social studies department has a set of district-owned laptops available for our use. Using those, I could create a learning activity where students do research on one of the four river valley civilizations. There would be a set of required topics for each student to research, and I could encourage this student to go beyond what is expected of the other students.

I believe that inquiry-based learning could be quite effective for focus student number one. If that was implemented, she could take more control over her own learning. She is very motivated to learn, and this would allow her to learn about things that she cares about and go at her own pace.

- c. For focus student number two, I would create an assignment that would help her feel less overwhelmed in the classroom. Assignments for this student work best when they have direct and simple instructions. Going through the instructions orally means there's a better chance of her completing the assignment, but a learning activity with modeled responses and then a gradual release of responsibility would likely work well for her. A graphic organizer would be a great learning activity that I could use to implement the aforementioned ideas. Visually, I could keep a graphic organizer simple enough that it wouldn't be overwhelming. By breaking up parts of the assignment into manageable chunks, would help with that as well. If the student needs the assignment to be modified, that sort of structure would make it easy to take away parts of the assignment or to let her know what's important to focus on.

Unlike focus student number one, this student is not motivated to learn. A more effective learning strategy for focus student number two would be to implement a number of simple learning activities throughout the lesson. I would make sure that we spend no more than ten or fifteen minutes on a task without taking a break or switching to a new task. After observing and talking with this student, I've learned that spending a lot of time on one task is hard. For students like her, spending long periods of time on an assignment

stops being productive. However, switching things up ensures that I am better able to keep her attention on what we are doing in class.

**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. Focus student one is a female Caucasian. She comes from a religious family who lives on a multi-generational ranch/farm. Her work ethic is strong and she has a disposition to better herself through her own actions. Her strengths are she is confident in her ability to change learning strategies when they don't work while also planning. She is a problem solver. As a member of the Oral interpretation team and student council member, this student has exemplary linguistic abilities in terms of public speaking and writing. These skills translate quite well into academic strengths as the student understands reading and writing norms. Focus student one has higher level aspirations. Focus student one contributes to the learning environment. She takes leadership roles in group work and is quick to offer advice or support during instruction time.

Focus student two is a male Caucasian from a Christian family but has experienced familial upset. He lives with guardians in the form of grandparents rather than parents. This experience puts pressure on the student both inside and outside the classroom. The semi-independent nature of living without parents places a burden on the student to be more self-sufficient. This student is not involved in any activities that might enhance his learning experience. The academic strengths of this student are having high expectations for himself. He enjoys core subjects at school such as science and math, and desires to go to college after graduation. The learning needs of this student are to acquire stronger linguistic skills. This student enhances the learning environment through their need for more direction and better explanations when attempting a task.

b. Based on my knowledge of Focus Student One an instructional strategy that I would use is cooperative learning. The learning activity I would use is peer teaching. The activity engages one student in the instruction of another student in material on which the first is an expert and the second is a novice. The strategy and activity show an understanding of the students' background, strengths, and needs because it leads to the student using their writing and reading abilities in a leadership position that is focused on learning and teaching rather than just competition as is the case in the activities they are involved in already. This transition of ready held linguistic and academic skills to a new domain helps the student to work on their learning needs as they will work on deepening their

understanding of content and ideas through the support and teaching of others that are not as skilled.

- c. Based on my knowledge of Focus Student Two an instructional strategy I would use is inquiry-based learning strategy. It allows the student to experience resources such as museums, guest speakers, workshops, and even job and higher ed. opportunities during school rather than having to set aside time on their own which is extremely difficult due to their living situation. I understand that this recommendation can be expensive in both time and effort, but I believe that by having such an option, that is even an aspect of just a unit, which is much more manageable, the students' learning needs will be met.

**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.