

## **PPAT<sup>®</sup> Assessment**

### Library of Examples – Special Education

#### 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 will be called John (pseudonym). John and his family moved to our country a couple of years ago. They are a refugee family that escaped their own country due to harsh situations and were able to find refuge here in America. I am grateful that John is in my class and grateful that I get to learn more about him and his experiences. His family speaks Spanish only in the home. I’m sure they have been through a lot with moving countries and trying to find a safe place to live. I know John’s parents care about

him and want the best for him because of the way they have already taken care of him. They have stopped by the school to check on him and make sure that he is adjusting well to the classroom. When he was feeling sick and under the weather, they kept him home to make sure he was feeling better before they sent him back to school. I am grateful for parents and families that care for these students and truly want the best for them. John brings so much life and personality to our classroom. He is very comical and light hearted. I'm grateful for his personality and the way it contributes to our class environment.

Focus Student 2 will be called Grace (pseudonym). Grace is a non-verbal student. I heard from her previous teacher that at one point she was speaking in the classroom and communicating verbally, but now she won't speak at all. Grace also has epilepsy and battles seizures more often than anyone should have to deal with. Just because Grace doesn't speak any more, doesn't mean she doesn't know what we are saying. I feel that she understands a lot more than what people might give her credit for. She is very capable of knowing what we are saying and can follow directions precisely. Her family also speaks Spanish in the home. The mom knows some English and can communicate proficiently with me about Grace. She even showed up the first day of school to tell me about Grace and her strengths and weaknesses. Due to the epilepsy, the left side of her body is weaker than the right side of her body. This was one of the things her mom wanted me to know so that when we are walking by her we can support her left side. Grace is quiet and shy but brings so much personality to our classroom. She is excited to see her friends and teachers each day she gets to school. One of her favorite things to do is give high fives whenever there is something to be happy about.

- b. One instructional strategy that I felt would be beneficial for "John" would be offering two options when asking him questions. He understands how to say yes but isn't quite sure what we are asking sometimes. I believe if I offered him two options and told him to point to the right answer that would help him be able to respond more appropriately. Where he doesn't have anyone speaking English at home, he is trying to both learn English at school and learn the academics we are teaching. It can be difficult to learn one of those things at a time but to try and do both of those at the same time can be confusing and difficult. If I can provide these two options and have them both in Spanish and English then the student might be able to understand what we are asking better.

John loves to look at books and try and interpret the pictures by describing them to us. He will point and make sounds like he is telling his own story. One of his goals is to start identifying letters and sounds. I think it would be a good learning activity for him if we read a story together and identified the letters and sounds that we were working on while reading through the book. He has done such a great job at identifying the letters sounds when we do our flashcards and so I think it would be beneficial for him to see the letters and sounds in the books. It is taking something that he loves and combining it with his learning experience. When the students are doing things they love, they are likely to learn more in that setting. Reading these stories will also help him listen to the English language more and will help him put English words with pictures that he is probably familiar with.

- c. The instructional strategy that we thought would be beneficial for "Grace" would be a picture communication board. Where she is non-verbal but understands the majority of what you are saying, I think this would be a good way for her to communicate back to us

her thoughts and ideas. When she is hungry at lunch, she will clap her hands and stomp her feet to let us know that she is hungry and ready to eat. We need to give her the tools necessary to communicate those same things, only in an appropriate manner. When we provide this picture communication board, we will have pictures of things that are familiar in her school environment. We can provide pictures of the bathroom, hand washing, pencil, raise hand, playground, reinforcers. Anything that she could put on her board and let us know, either what she wants or what she might be working for.

One learning activity that we thought would be good for Grace would be a work-book of worksheets that had her name, her address, her siblings' names and parents information that she could trace. She isn't to the point where she can write those things independently, so tracing them would help her become more familiar with them to the point where one day she could rewrite them on her own. She does a lot better at tracing than just free writing. And that would be her goal is to one day get to free writing. Where she takes in a lot of the information we are teaching, this will be one way that she can show us she understands. By tracing and using the picture communication board, she will learn how to write and communicate her wants and needs with us appropriately.

**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. The community factor that I chose is whether the school is considered rural, urban, or A: Student A- Student A is a 13-year-old Caucasian female from [city, state]. She qualifies for special services under the category of intellectual disabilities and was born with Down Syndrome. Student A comes from a low-income family with 2 sisters and a mom and dad. Though her family faces some challenges they are overall very loving and take care of this student. Student A excels at reading comprehension and counting money. She is able to answer questions correctly after reading a text and able to count money using different coin amounts. Student A needs to work on correctly expressing emotions and asking for help when its needed. This student has trouble understanding how to express the correct emotions, there are times she will be crying and tell us she is very happy so that is something to be worked on. This student tends to put her head down on her desk when she needs help with something instead of asking. This is an easy skill that can be taught.

Student V- Student V is a 14-year-old Hispanic male from [city, state]. He qualifies for special services under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Student V has come to

school stating facts of maybe not being treated well at home. Student V lives with both parents and a sibling. This student excels at being social and making friends but sometimes makes inappropriate social comments. Student V has difficulty with getting distracted with any task given to him. Reinforcers are very important to keep this student focused on a certain task. This student is a happy person and enjoys learning but has a hard time doing it. When he can stay focused, he excels academically at math but needs extra support with reading and language arts.

- b. For student A we could create a board with pictures of different emotions pictured on it. This board can be taken with her during different times of the day. She could use this board to point to the emotion she is feeling and see what it looks like. This board can be used and slowly faded as the student learns how to appropriately express each emotion.
- c. For student V I can make social stories about appropriate social conversation. We could role play together about things that would be right or wrong to talk about. Something that would be useful for this student would to have him sit somewhere in the classroom where there are not many things to get distracted by. He could sit facing a wall, far away from doors and windows, or in a cubicle.

**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.