

PPAT[®] Assessment

Library of Examples – Science

Task 1, Step 2, 1.2.3: Communicating with Your Students' Families

Below are two examples of written responses to Textbox 1.2.3 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 1.2.3

- a. Explain how your method of communication conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families. Use examples from your communication to support your explanation.
- b. Explain how your method of communication fostered interaction among you, your students, and your students' families. Use examples to support your explanation.
- c. Describe the overall response you received from your communication. How will this response impact an instructional decision you will make in your classroom? Use examples from the responses you received to support your analysis.

Example 1: Met/Exceeded Standards Level

- a. As my communication channel, I chose to create a simple newsletter that I could send to parents. This way, I can follow social distancing guidelines while keeping parents informed. The newsletter included/will include my contact information, the teacher's contact information, any important upcoming events, a general overview of the week, and a miscellaneous section—in this case the "Getting to Know Me." My method of communication fosters cultivating positive relationships with students and their families for three reasons. The first reason is the "Getting to Know Me" section. Without an introduction as to who I am, a basis for a positive relationship could never be formed. It would be like sending a child to a stranger and feeling at peace about it. I want parents to know who I am, and why they should trust me with their child. Essentially, I am extending

a distanced handshake to parents. The second reason is because I left my contact information. If I did not want to communicate with parents, I would not have provided a way to do so. This conveys the importance of cultivating a relationship with the families because I am inviting them to introduce themselves to me. This would be the reciprocal distanced handshake. The final reason is that I addressed this letter to not only the parents, but to the students as well. I want the family as a whole to feel equal in terms of communication, information, and trust in me. Even if one family member feels marginalized, it could through a wrench in conveying the want for a positive teacher-family relationship.

- b. My method of communication fostered interaction with my students and their families for three major reasons. The first is that I introduced myself like I normally would face-to-face. This gives the parents and students a sense of who I am, and why I can be trusted with their child. When people have trust in someone, it helps open up genuine interaction. This is especially true when the entire family can trust the teacher, thus facilitating teacher-family communications. The second is that I left my contact information and invited the families to form messaging groups. This way, parents and students feel equally involved and informed. This kind of communication fosters interaction because everyone feels included and accounted for; both the parents and students have a voice. The final reason is that I did not include a single negative comment about any students. To foster positive interaction, the first step is to start with positive communication.
- c. The overall response from my method of communication was positive. About half* of the families in my class have introduced themselves and just want the newsletter as the main form of communication. The other half* have formed group emails with me. These group emails include myself, the parents, and the student. With these groups, I am able to give quick updates, voice concerns, or ask a polling question and get the opinion of everyone involved. One such polling question I asked was how often parents/students would like the newsletter sent. The question was answered within the week and 70% of parents wanted it weekly, 25% wanted it biweekly, and 5% wanted it monthly. Because of the overwhelming positive response, I will continue to use the newsletter and emailing groups to take polls when making instructional decisions. For example, a future lab will involve chocolate candies. I will use the group emails and newsletter to ask parents if they can provide the candy for the lab. If most can, the lab will proceed. If most cannot, an alternative will be made.

*I did not receive responses from all parents. Just the majority.

Refer to the [Task 1 Rubric](#) for Textbox 1.2.3 and ask yourself:

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

- Does the candidate explain a method of communication that conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate explain how this method of communication fostered interactions among you, your students, and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate describe the overall response received from the communication?

- Where does the candidate explain how the response impacts an instructional decision that is made in the classroom?
- Does the candidate use examples from the received responses to support this explanation?

Example 2: Did Not Meet/Partially Met Standards Level

- a. My method of communication with parents gives them an insight on who I am. It shows them my background and allows me to try to create a relationship with them. In my communication, I let them know that they can contact me for anything. I also let them know that I am very excited to get to know them and their students. I want to make sure and let them know that I am an advocate for them and their student. Even though I am not the contracted teacher of the class, I want them to know that I can help their student almost as much as my cooperating teacher can.

Positive relationships are grown when each party gets to know each other and can assess each other's' needs. If I can get to know them and their student, we can work collaboratively as a team. Since I am a native of this area, my goal is to relate to the students and parents so that I can get an understanding of what they are going through in their personal lives. I want to let them know that I have experience living in the area and there are many resources I have acquired in the area.

- b. My method of communication fostered an interaction between me and my students' families because it gives them a way to know about me. My form of communication also gives the students a way to contact me whenever they need to. For example, I give parents and guardians my district-issued email so that they can have my contact information. Parents are invited to communicate with me even if it does not necessarily concern the student. For example, if a parent would like to get to know me and who I am, I am more than happy to set up a virtual conference with them and my cooperating teacher. In our meetings we can also discuss what their student needs and set up goals and expectations for their student.

By contacting parents, my students will know that I am involved. I want them to know that I care about them and am not reaching out to their parents just to get them in trouble. If a parent who is fluent in Spanish is able to speak to me in Spanish, it often makes them more comfortable to express their concerns and questions to me; I have already witnessed this once at the student level. In our classroom, we have a student who is more fluent in Spanish than they are in English. This student became comfortable with me when I let them ask their questions in Spanish and would respond in English. This student has gotten closer to me and we often talk about our families in Mexico.

- c. There were a few parents who responded to my communication methods. A couple of parents were those who were concerned about making sure their child's educational needs and accommodations are met. Their responses will make me more aware of how I conduct experiments in the laboratory. For example, when we are working with equipment, I need to make sure that it is accessible to all and it is user friendly so that students can understand what the equipment does. I also need to make sure that my assignments and activities are ones that are accommodated to all students.

While I did receive some parent response, there were also a significant number of parents who did not respond to my method of communication. Our district is planning to use virtual meeting software to conduct conferences between teachers and students. Even though I did not get a big number of responses, I think it is important for me to take the first step in communicating with parents who did not respond and did not attend parent/teacher conferences. When parents notice my effort to communicate with them, they will know that I have their student's best interests,

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

- Does the candidate explain a method of communication that conveys the importance of cultivating positive relationships with students and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate explain how this method of communication fostered interactions among you, your students, and their families?
- Does the candidate use examples to support this explanation?
- Does the candidate describe the overall response received from the communication?
- Where does the candidate explain how the response impacts an instructional decision that is made in the classroom?
- Does the candidate use examples from the received responses to support this explanation?

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 an appropriate artifact for this textbox.