

Missouri Pre-Service Teacher 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 — changes made by a teacher candidate to a lesson or to assessment components, usually to the lesson format or to a test, that allow students to participate in the lesson or the assessment. For example, adaptations can include additional time on an assessment, assistance being provided by another student or an adult, or a student's use of different or additional materials, resources, or technology.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires all schools, districts/local education agencies (LEAs), and states to show that students are making adequate progress in their learning. The law requires a set target for all students and student subgroups that if met would result in all students scoring at or above the proficient level on the state's assessment by 2014.

Analysis — examination of the parts of a process or a product to determine their relationship. It is 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. These might include but are not limited to teacher instruction, student work, a lesson plan, an assessment instrument, a rubric, and assessment directions. An artifact as evidence can assist a rater in understanding a teacher candidate's analysis and rationale.

Teacher instruction — items from a teacher candidate’s practice used to foster student learning (e.g., teacher lessons, activities, or assessments). Evidence of teacher instruction should be provided in the written commentary.

Student work — work that comes directly from students and that demonstrates student voice, including evidence of their reflection and understanding (e.g., excerpts from student reflections, exit tickets, writing, or surveys). This work is used by the teacher candidate as evidence to support and enhance the written commentary.

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. There are formal and informal ways of eliciting evidence of intended student learning.

Formative assessment — a process for gathering evidence of student learning that will be used to adapt the teaching to best meet the learning needs of the students.

Summative assessment — a process for evaluating student learning at the culmination of a specific body of learning or at a given period of time to determine if 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 — a method of eliciting evidence of intended student learning.

Assessment tool — an instrument used to formally or informally measure intended student learning.

Baseline data — see “Data.”

Background information — the information students come into the classroom already knowing based on a variety of contextual factors.

Classroom 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. This also includes specific strategies that a teacher candidate might employ in order to get a student, a group of students, or the whole class to better engage with the content.

Classroom assignment — the placement of the teacher candidate in a specific classroom (i.e., grade level and/or content area).

Classroom demographics — the makeup of a classroom in terms of the diversity of the students. This generally includes a breakdown of the classroom by ethnicity, gender, cultural characteristics, and special needs, including the needs of gifted students and of students with physical needs.

Communication techniques — techniques that are generally of two types: verbal and nonverbal. These are methods of transferring information, ideas, concepts, processes, images, actions, etc., from one source to another, often from the teacher candidate to student(s) or vice versa.

Content area — an academic discipline, such as English language arts, mathematics, science, or history/social studies.

Content integration — the ability to connect and incorporate varied subject matter across the curriculum.

Contextual information — discovering student characteristics, prior knowledge, and background information to figure out how each student learns best.

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, and solving problems.

Cultural attributes — the specific behaviors, characteristics, and beliefs of the individuals in a particular group or population.

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

Baseline data — data collected at the beginning of a lesson, series of lessons, unit, etc., to establish where students are in their learning before new instruction begins.

Data collection — a method of gathering data that will allow the teacher candidate to analyze student progress and then plan for future instruction.

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

Diversity — 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 English learner (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 Missouri Teacher Standards and Quality Indicators. Evidence should be included in the written commentary and artifacts, including the video.

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

Feedback — information given by the teacher candidate or a colleague to a student, group of students, or the whole class about whether a specific learning goal is being met. Effective feedback is goal-referenced, tangible, transparent, actionable, user-friendly (specific and personalized), timely, ongoing, and consistent.

Flexible grouping — a range of instructional 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 and differentiate instruction and assessment, make adaptations, and reflect on the teaching and learning. This includes a range of students who reflect different learning needs.

Formative assessment — see “Assessment.”

Future instruction — a lesson, series of lessons, or unit that will be taught during the next period, day, week, month, year, etc. Regarding the MoPTA, the future teaching must occur while the same students are in the class.

Graphic representations of collected data — a visual way that data have been gathered and visually displayed (e.g., spreadsheet, graph, pie chart, scatter gram, color coding).

Guiding prompt — a question or statement within the MoPTA that elicits a teacher candidate’s response.

Higher-order thinking — critical, reasonable, reflective thinking that focuses on deciding what to think or do by questioning assumptions and using a process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information.

Implications for instruction — focusing on the concepts or strategies teacher candidates will need to apply in response to new learning.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) — a plan created in accordance with the law to guarantee that a student who has a disability receives specialized instruction and related services.

Instructional challenges — identified difficulties during instruction that need to be addressed to best meet the needs of all learners.

Instructional decision making — using 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 — approaches used by the teacher candidate in the classroom to best meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students and to engage them in the content.

Instructional support and resources — strategies and materials used to enhance instruction, promote student learning, and provide assistance to students who may need additional help.

Interactions — of two main types: 1) teacher to student and 2) student to student. During teacher-to-student interactions, the teacher candidate is generally leading the exchanges, which occur between one or more students and the teacher. During student-to-student interactions, the teacher candidate may act as a facilitator, but the exchanges occur between students.

Introductory communication — a form of introducing one's self to both students and parents in an effort to provide information and open the lines of consistent communication.

Knowledge of Students — the information that a teacher candidate acquires about each of his or her students to promote student achievement.

Learning activities — the design of the learning environment and the experiences provided to students that support and facilitate their learning.

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

Learner needs — 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 might allow the student to stand. For visual and auditory learners, the teacher candidate might show and tell instructions to the students.

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 theory or method — conceptual framework that explains how information is taken in, processed, and remembered by students during their learning. This varies depending on the content.

Lesson plan — a detailed plan to deliver a lesson to a particular cohort of students. The plan usually includes, but is not limited to, content standards, learning goals, instructional strategies, learning activities, student groupings, assessments, materials, resources, and technology.

Materials — the spectrum of educational materials that teacher candidates use in the classroom to support specific learning goals, as set out in lesson plans.

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) — a statewide assessment program that includes grade-level assessments in math and communication arts for measuring student learning aligned with the Missouri Show-Me Standards in grades three through eight, end-of-course assessments for secondary students in specific disciplines, and other assessments customized for groups of learners.

Modifications — small changes made to the instruction by a teacher candidate to facilitate learning for specific students' needs (e.g., moving a student to the front of the room).

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 level 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 demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and skills through this type of assessment.

Prior knowledge — students' preexisting knowledge, skills, abilities, beliefs, and attitudes, which influence how they attend, interpret, and organize incoming information.

Positive learning environment — a classroom setting, created by the teacher and students, that meets students' behavioral and emotional needs, allows students to feel safe to take academic risks, and enhances student learning, development, and communication.

Questioning skills — the ability to ask questions of two main types: 1) diagnostic questions and 2) discussion questions. Diagnostic questions are questions focused on common misconceptions related to a topic. The teacher candidate uses diagnostic questions to efficiently elicit evidence of student understanding of a concept and to elicit quick, on-the-fly information from every student in the class that can be used to immediately inform instruction. Discussion questions are used to purposefully generate a small-group or whole-class discussion. With this type of question, the teacher candidate tries to get several students to explain, expand, clarify, or justify their thinking. By engaging students in this type of discussion, the teacher candidate can raise the cognitive level of an activity.

Rationale — the underlying principle or justification for a decision or a response. A rationale for the MoPTA 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 is, and how the teacher candidate might change the teaching practice to attend to anticipated 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 the student learning impact.

Research-based instruction — principles of instruction that come from three main sources: 1) research in cognitive science, 2) research on master teachers, and 3) research on cognitive supports.

Resources — tools and personnel used by the teacher candidate to provide additional support to meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Rubric — written criteria for evaluating a response. The MoPTA rubrics indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated and that anchor judgments about the degree of success achieved on a teacher candidate's assessment.

Standards — Missouri Teacher Standards and Quality Indicators. These standards have been identified and adopted by the board and are articulated on the department website: www.dese.mo.gov. The standards articulate expectations of performance for the professional educator in Missouri. The standards are based on research and theories of teaching and learning, and they 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, physical, and intellectual investment by the students in learning, which goes beyond earning formal indicators of success to incorporating and internalizing content and understanding. Engaged students typically appear willing, interested, and involved, and they gain satisfaction from their accomplishments.

Student groupings — methods of clustering students for teaching and learning during a lesson. Clusters generally include individuals, pairs, small groups, and the whole class. These clusters may change during various parts of a lesson, as appropriate.

Student interest inventory — a survey taken by each student that captures each student's likes and dislikes. The survey results include information relevant to a student's interests and learning.

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 set of specific concepts or skills within the content area that is being taught and that is the focus of the lesson.

Summative assessment — see “Assessment.”

Supportive interactions — ways a teacher candidate provides emotional and/or academic classroom support to help children 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 postbaccalaureate level, leading to initial licensure/certification as a classroom teacher.

Teacher instruction — see “Artifact.”

Technology — a variety of equipment that can be used as tools 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, and adaptive technology.

Written commentary — a written response to, or an explanation of, the guiding prompts of the MoPTA. Written commentary is provided by the teacher candidate.