

MISSOURI PRE-SERVICE TEACHER ASSESSMENT (MoPTA)
TASK 1 SAMPLE

Contextual Factors: Information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences can be utilized by educators to establish learning goals, plan instruction, and interpret assessment information. Student learning is impacted by diverse contextual components. Educators are responsible for evaluating the context in which students are exposed to the instructional components and the context in which the students are using the acquired skills or concepts. Learning occurs when students effectively connect information to their specific frame of reference or meaningful contextual constructions.

Community Factors: Anytown, Anystate is located a rural region located at the intersection of two major highways about one hundred miles south of a major metropolitan area. Anytown is home to approximately 10,500 residents. It is a small agricultural community consisting of very few permanent businesses. A department store, a factory, several restaurants, three car dealerships, and the city/county government dominate the job market in the town. The community has approximately 46.9% male residents and 53.1% female residents. The ethnic/racial distribution in the community includes: 82.9% Caucasian; 10.2% Hispanic; 3.8% Black; 0.5% Asian; 0.3% Native American; 0.1 % Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; and 2.5% Two or More Races. The educational levels of the community members are: 81.2% high school or higher; 15.2% Bachelor's degree or higher; and 5.2 % Graduate or Professional degree. Most of the residents commute to neighboring cities for employment. Although the citizens work out of town, they typically attend one of the three large churches which all support very active youth groups. The estimated per capita income is \$25,884 and the unemployment rate is over the state average at 6.3%. Due to the limited economic conditions, school bond issues are often denied, even though the district is in need of major building improvements and technology

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upgrades. The factor that could impact the students in this community pertains to socio-economic constraints. Students who grow up in households with limited income experience financial challenges that can reduce their exposure to various learning opportunities.

District Factors - The school district has received several accreditations including the A+ Accreditation, Accreditation with Distinction, and the North Central Association Accreditation. The district has clearly shown exemplary educational services for all students. The district's mission is to prepare students for success through commitment to quality teaching and learning. The district's detailed website provides parents with Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) goals and scores, links to assistance websites for families, links to local schools, and the district's mission statement, vision, and the plan describing their goals. The percentage of students scoring proficient on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) is 51.7% for Communication Arts and 48.5% for Mathematics. The district has adopted a five year Comprehensive School Improvement Plan that requires growth in the number of students scoring proficient in Communication Arts and Mathematics to reach 80% by the year 2012. The school district is comprised of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The factor that has the potential to impact students attending schools in this district is the assessment goal to achieve proficiency level for all students. Limited opportunities for assessment accommodations and modifications will potentially reduce the proficient level of achievement for students with individual education plans and other learning challenges.

School Factors - Timewise Elementary is one of the smaller schools with a total of 296 students and 50 staff personnel. The student teacher ratio averages at about 20 students per teacher.

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Within the small school setting, the administration is able to take an extremely active role with the students. Many of the staff members are able to name a majority of the students attending the school creating personal relationships between the student body and staff. A fairly significant level of collaboration between teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, and administration creates a supportive learning community. The staff is currently focused on implementing Positive Behavior Support (PBS) plans throughout the school with a focus on classroom behavior as well. This school-wide discipline plan allows for consistency for the students with little to no differentiation between student expectations from the staff members. The plan was developed by the district and follows state and federal regulations mandating student and school performance. According to the district website the district's general goal for Timewise Elementary is to ensure that the student is prepared academically, socially, emotionally, and physically for educational transitions. One specific goal is to bring state wide district scores of at least 50% of the students attending Timewise Elementary into the proficient or advanced range in the areas of communication arts and math. Other goals aim for a decrease in discipline referrals, maintain building attendance and increase attendance at family school events. The district is in the process of creating a district wide common assessment in several subject areas that will be completed by every student in the district. This assessment follows the grade level expectations (GLEs) specified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and provides the district, school, and teacher with immediate feedback that will help educational professionals address areas of weakness within the classroom. The factor that could impact students is the newly adopted reading curriculum and the math investigations curriculum will need to be supplemented to ensure that all grade level expectations are being met. This is a computer-based

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program; therefore, students who do not have computers at home or have limited Internet access might be unable to participate in the home-based aspects of this program.

Classroom Factors - This classroom inspires a positive learning attitude towards learning. The desks are arranged into three rows of six and one row of two. In every row there are two students that are sitting independently while four students are grouped into pairs of two. Higher level students are paired with lower level students. Students with discipline issues are seated independently on the outskirts of the rows so that there is still a feeling of unity and belonging among all of the students within the row. Students will be able to participate in cooperative learning activities with their shoulder partners or other students in their row which will provide them with opportunities to build the expressive and receptive language skills. The seating arrangement is conducive for the math investigations program which calls for both collaborative and independent problem solving activities with the use of a wide variety of manipulatives. Many centers are positioned around the classroom to allow for a differentiation of learning. The carpet area includes books, calendar, and other group related activities. Many of the students reside in the same community and so the social dynamics of the classroom tends to follow the neighborhood setup. The classroom is colorful and clutter free. An extremely organized and welcoming atmosphere is established in the classroom which seems to positively affect student attitude as well as the attitudes of visitors to the room. The decorations in the room are not only informative, but also somewhat comforting to the students.

Teacher Characteristics - The cooperative teacher enjoys creating a loving and motivating atmosphere for the students to learn. She has been certified and employed as an elementary

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educator for twelve years. This is her fourth year at Timewise Elementary spanning her twelve year career. She is a positive teacher who enjoys encouraging her students and all of those around her with her words and actions. Her values are evident in the techniques she employs when modeling constructive behavior with her students. She is extremely knowledgeable in her field while retaining a high commitment and motivation level to continuously learn more. The teacher often incorporates songs, rhymes, and storybook characters into many of her lessons requiring that she is active and in front of the classroom for extended periods of time. It is evident in all that she does that she thoroughly enjoys working with students. This enthusiasm is reflected in the classroom atmosphere which in turn is motivating and sincere.

Classroom Demographics - The classroom contains twenty-three extremely motivated students. The class size continuously fluctuates due to transient student population. Approximately half of the students in the class have attended Timewise Elementary since Kindergarten. The class is composed of ten boys and thirteen girls. Of the twenty-three students in the room, eighteen students receive free or reduced lunch. The class is composed of five Hispanic American students, six African American students, and twelve Caucasian American students. Two students speak English as a second language and two students have Spanish spoken at home as the main language. Three students have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or a Programmatic Behavior Plan (PBP) in the class. Six above-level learners have been identified in math and reading. One of these learners struggles in math; however, that student does excel in reading, writing and spelling. The group of average-level learners includes eight students and the below-level learners include five students. Two students pose serious behavior issues and are monitored closely.

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Knowledge of Student - Developing lesson plans will need to consider the classroom factors and characteristics of the students in this class. The high motivation level to learn will make motivating the students throughout the lessons inspiring and fun. Diversifying the lesson to ensure that the students meet the desired mastery level of the lessons is where the challenge lies. Students are strategically seated ensuring that shoulder partners will interact and benefit from each other. A substantial use of pair sharing and shoulder partner discussions taking place so that the entire class involvement level is at 100%. Questions addressed to the class will be answered using these techniques rather than just sampling the class where the involvement level is lower. Activating prior knowledge will be the start of every lesson so that the students are able to connect the new knowledge with the old.

Available Resources to Enhance Student Learning - The class has a Smart Board and computer stations with access to the Internet. These resources promote utilizing electronically accessible components as instructional tools to enhance student learning. The Smart Board permits students to visually, auditorially, and kinesthetically connect with their learning. Computers provide additional opportunities for students to support the learning environment. Access to the Internet through the Smart Board and the classroom computers will allow students to improve their background knowledge to address any prior knowledge issues that could limit student understandings.

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Student Inventory - Students appear to exhibit preferred ways of learning. Teachers can utilize different learning style inventories to identify how their students prefer to learn and incorporate some of those learning elements in their lessons.

- **Student Interest Survey Instrument** - The student is interested in outdoor activities. The student resides on a farm and is responsible for various farm-related chores. The student enjoys reading about outdoor topics such as hunting, camping, riding horses, and sports.
- **Learning Modalities** - The student is a tactile learner. The Education Planner web site states tactile learners learn best by touching and doing. Tactile learners are able to understand and remember things through physical movement. Tactile learners are hands-on learners who prefer to touch, move, build, or draw what is learned and tactile learners tend to learn better when some type of physical activity is involved. It is important to allow tactile learners to be active and take frequent breaks.
- **Multiple Intelligences** - The inventory information indicates that the student probably uses body movement - kinesthetic quite often to learn. The score indicates the student likes to move, dance, walk, and participate in sports. Allowing the student to have opportunities at various times to move throughout the classroom period should be permitted.

Communicating with Students and Families - Establishing regular lines of communication with parents is an essential responsibility for all teachers. Addressing individual learning needs unique to each student demonstrates that the teacher is sincerely concerned about the academic and personal well-being of that student. Interactive communication will build trust among all of the stakeholders: parents/guardians, students, and teacher.

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Rules and Procedures - Students are taught morning routines which provide opportunities for responsibility as the students unpack backpacks, turn in homework, move lunch cards, and complete morning work. Classroom rules adhering to the school PBS plan are located in the front of the room at eye level. The three main rules are: be respectful, be responsible, and be ready to learn. Explanations are posted below each rule to describe how to accomplish these goals. The rules and procedures for the classroom are designed to impact student learning in the following manner: students need to respect one another to develop a supportive learning environment; students are empowered to be responsible for their learning; and students recognize their role as learners in the dynamics of the classroom environment. The students are taught online etiquette which correlates with being respectful and being responsible even in an online format. Technology is a tool that can enhance student learning and online etiquette in technology directs socially acceptable conduct in an online forum or digital situation. Students are digital natives; therefore, they need to be able to effectively perform in both the physical face-to-face and digital realms.