

# The Basics of Assessing Student Learning

## Task 3 - Special Education

### INTRODUCTION

Task 3 of the edTPA focuses on assessment. For Task 3, candidates will analyze the focus learner's progress toward meeting the learning goal.

### DESIGNING AN ASSESSMENT PLAN

For success on Task 3, plan the learning segment while collecting baseline data. Collect this baseline data, related to the learning goal, from pre-existing data (i.e., previous test results) or from a pre-assessment designed by the candidate and given before the learning segment. As the candidate creates the lesson plans for the learning segment, they should design measurable learning outcomes and daily assessments to measure those learning outcomes. Assessments completed by the focus learner can be written, formal assessments, or they can also be oral or observation-based such as asking the focus learner questions or observing the focus learner completing a task. Regardless of the type of assessment, measure and track each learning outcome in the daily assessment record.

### ANALYZING THE ASSESSMENT

Candidates will analyze the focus learner's patterns of learning during the learning segment. When analyzing the patterns of student learning, it is important to understand that grades are not necessarily indicative of what the student learned. Rather, candidates should focus their analysis on the daily learning outcomes and learning goal.

A common misconception regarding Task 3 is that candidates should present data that shows their focus learner meeting all of their learning outcomes and

their learning goal. Passing edTPA, however, is not dependent on your focus learner passing all of their assessments. Rather, Task 3 is intended to showcase candidates' abilities to use assessment to support student learning and drive future instructional decisions. It is more important to present an honest analysis of your focus learner's progress than to skew the assessment data to present a positive picture.

### GIVING STUDENTS FEEDBACK

What does good, quality feedback look like? Very simply, candidates should tell their focus learner both what they did well and in what ways the student can improve. To be successful on the edTPA, candidates should ensure that the feedback they give is aligned to the learning goal and daily outcomes. Candidates should also give the focus learner specific strategies to improve performance. Don't just tell students what is wrong with their work; use the feedback as a teaching tool to help students grow.

To use feedback as a teaching tool, the edTPA prompts you to consider how you will get students to understand and use the feedback you gave them. Consider how frustrating it is when you spend hours of time grading papers and giving meticulous feedback to students for them to only glance at their grade and not use the feedback in a meaningful way. How can you avoid this in your practice? Think through how you will foster students' ability to use feedback as a truly teachable moment and include these thoughts in your Task 3 commentary.

## **CLOSING THE LOOP: USING ASSESSMENTS TO DRIVE INSTRUCTION**

The last set of prompts in the edTPA asks candidates to describe how they will use the information gathered from this assessment to drive further instruction and what implications these data have on the learner's IEP. When answering these prompts (and any of the reflection prompts in edTPA), it is imperative that candidates' responses be specific and centered on student learning. This means the next steps should include research-based pedagogical strategies, interventions, and supports. It may be helpful to conceptualize next steps relative to skills rather than content. Candidates likely won't repeat the content of the learning segment, but the higher order skills practiced will likely be used throughout the year. For example, candidates who are teaching English Language Arts might not teach the same short story twice; however, the reading comprehension or textual analysis skills practiced in their learning segment will likely be repeated in a later unit.