

## **Part 2 Narrative:**

### **Content Knowledge and Instructional Practice**

Candidates demonstrate the ability to thoughtfully examine, critically analyze, and insightfully reflect upon the use of content knowledge and assessment, planning, and instructional strategies to implement creative, rigorous, and engaging learning.

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#### **Describe**

**The purpose of the Description is to establish a meaningful context for your narrative. The description includes two elements, which can be addressed in either order:**

**1. Part Theme – Interpret the meaning of the theme (e.g. Part I: The Learner and Learning--What does the theme mean to you?). Address the theme holistically. You do not have to include connections to literature but can do so if it helps you examine the theme.**

**2. Evidence – Describe the context (setting and situation) where you collected evidence and explain how the body of evidence helped you make meaning of the theme.**

I believe that “Content Knowledge and Instructional Practice” refers to the readiness of a teacher to teach in a specific content area, which in turn directly informs their teaching practices. Content knowledge is the teacher’s knowledge of the content they are teaching. The essential part of having a solid base on content knowledge is that it allows a teacher to reflect and grow in their teaching practices. The appropriately informed teacher has practiced the content that they are teaching to the degree that they are also able to give students immediate constructive feedback. A teacher who is well-versed in the content they are teaching is also able to modify the lesson to specific student needs. According to a student’s readiness, such a teacher can make revisions for students who may struggle with the content or who will need more of a challenge with certain materials and or concepts. While paying attention to student needs, the knowledgeable teacher will make appropriate modifications while expecting the best from their students, seeking out ways to challenge them within their abilities to meet rigorous learning goals. Instructional practice is deeply rooted in the understanding of each individual and their needs. A teacher might revise the way they approach a lesson after experiencing that the students did not catch onto the learning goals for that day, and will try it differently the next time. A teacher’s use of formative assessment and self reflection should allow them to see that such changes should be made to their instructional practices. My mentor teacher who guided me through my special education dual endorsement student teaching at Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg, Vermont told me that, “The magic of teaching is that you will never *break* a kid. You can always come back the next day and try something different.”

Formative assessment is a valuable tool in making sure that you are communicating central concepts of the discipline effectively, as well as when to address common misconceptions of the discipline. Teachers can reach every student by adjusting and varying teaching practices frequently, and using a variety of instructional strategies as mentioned in Part 1 to make the discipline more accessible for a diverse range of learners, as well as to encourage students to build skills to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways. With a comprehensive understanding of their learners, a teacher will know whether they have met the learning targets and whether they need to approach the same content in a different way

to solidify their student's knowledge and to get them to their learning goals. Some approaches to inform flexible instructional practices are focused on enhancing the relevance of content, using multiple methods of assessment, and drawing upon knowledge of learners. The evidence for this narrative is from my experience at Champlain Valley Union High School from the first experiences our students had in Intro to Art and from my experience as a remote student teacher, continuing my learning with online modules. Teaching Intro to Art requires a teacher to have content knowledge in a variety of mediums, so that they can support students as they learn skills and concepts for the first time. There is no shortage of questions and misconceptions to be addressed, especially in an Intro to Art class.

## **Analyze**

**The purpose of the Analysis is demonstrate your ability to critically evaluate your performance as an emerging professional. To do so, you will construct a critical evaluation of your achievement of one Performance Criterion for each standard. You will write 10 analyses in total (3 for Part I, 5 for Part II, and 2 for Part III). This narrative should use four elements to analyze a Performance Criterion.**

**1. Performance Criterion – Explicitly interpret the components of the Performance Criterion.**

**2. Literature/Theoretical Framework – Use educational literature or program mission/theoretical framework to support your interpretation of the performance criterion. The *program mission or theoretical framework* can also include the mission or theoretical framework of the institution in which you completed fieldwork.**

**3. Salient Evidence – Select 1-2 pieces of salient evidence from the Evidence Chart for the chosen Performance Criterion. Articulate how your evidence connects to the Performance Criterion and the literature/program mission/theoretical framework. Throughout your analysis you should make explicit/direct connections to your evidence.**

**4. Critical Self-Evaluation – Use the Performance Criterion, literature, and salient evidence to evaluate how well and to what degree you achieved the Performance Criterion. Base your self-evaluation on the correspondence between the performance criterion, the educational literature (or program mission/theoretical framework) and your evidence (see diagram below). Explain what the evidence shows rather than describing in detail what you did.**

**Standard 5:** Content Knowledge- P.C. 5.1 “Candidates engage learners in applying perspectives from varied disciplines in authentic contexts (such as local and global issues).”

To me, this performance criterion is about setting context for our projects in art class so that the information that we are working with is relevant so as to build relationships between the students and their work. This can be done by including stories about the technique or materials being used from real life people who have used them as well. It can also be done by bringing in guest speakers or their artwork into the classroom. Working toward making the materials more relevant to students by connecting it to the outside world in a way that students can relate to, helps to create meaningful and active engagement.

In her article titled *Classroom Management: Guest Speakers Support Learning*, Jannelle Cox writes about her belief that, “A professional, experienced guest speaker can really make an impact on your students” (Cox). Guest speakers are a popular way to switch up a class and introduce perspective on specific topics covered in class from the world outside the classroom. By inviting guest speakers into the classroom, teachers are able to enhance the context of a lesson by asking guest speakers to talk about and demonstrate their skills and knowledge. A guest speaker, “may be able to drive home a concept that you just couldn’t nail down” (Cox). This is especially helpful if you wish to introduce methods or concepts to the classroom that you normally would not teach in order to help students engage with their learning.

In my experience as a student teacher, I was able to collaborate with two professionals in order to enhance the relevance of a Landscape Painting unit. Our students had just wrapped up a unit on painting collages, focusing on basic shapes and then adding detail. Now, students were engaging in warm up activities focusing on the illusion of space and aerial perspective in preparation for their Landscape Unit pieces. Throughout the unit,

students had been painting from pre-picked photographs that my mentor teacher and I found on the internet. I wondered how I could get that part of the lesson to be more relevant to our students who have all experienced what it's like to live in a Vermont landscape. Given that this unit occurred during the cold winter months, plein air painting was not the best option. I contacted my friend who is an established local photographer and he granted us the permission to choose 25 of his landscape photographs for the students to pick from for their reference. On the day that we introduced the unit piece, I started class by telling our students about my collaboration with a local Vermont photographer, and I told them that if they wished to do so, this photographer was interested in accessing photos of their paintings to create a booklet of their efforts. I then explained that we were doing Vermont Landscapes because everyone in that class, no matter how long they've been in this state, has at least some experience living in a Vermont landscape. What makes a landscape painting so exceptional is the context that the artist incorporates into it from their own experience living in that landscape. Students were then asked to take a moment of silence and think about their drive from home to school every day, and count the barns that they see on their way there. This is a common type of landmark, as they are scattered all over Vermont. Then students shared the number of barns they see on their usual way to school. This exercise was geared toward getting students to think about what they have experienced, living among the types of landscapes that they would see in the local landscape photographs. Then students picked their reference photo according to what they relate to the most. The photographer was invited to come in for the final critique but this could not happen due to the COVID-19 outbreak. He was however, able to attend the online version of our critique.

Our students got to further develop their connection with their reference photo through ekphrasis poetry. Ekphrasis poetry is poetry written to develop the author's own interpretation of, or meaning for an image. My mentor teacher and I contacted another teacher from the school who specializes in poetry. I picked out two photos from the photographer for him to make ekphrastic poems from, and he came in to read those poems to our students. He led our students through a workshop on writing their own ekphrastic poem based on the reference photo they chose. This collaboration allowed the art teachers to introduce a way of making meaning from a photograph in a professional manner, despite our lack of poetry instruction experience.

Collaborating with these two professionals in the realms of literature and landscape photography brought excitement to our class. The values of having these two people involved was to get new voices into the space, and to enhance the relevance of painting

landscapes through real life artist examples. In doing so, we explored the valuable relationships that we can make with a place, and how that can bring more life to a painting from a reference photograph. I wonder how else other student teachers have interpreted this performance criterion. I believe I have interpreted it well and that my evidence points to a very specific part of engaging students. However, the possibilities of engaging students through the means of this performance criterion go far beyond one example; that is, collaborating with professionals and bringing in guest speakers.

**Standard 6:** Assessment- PC 6.1 Candidates plan and implement multiple methods of assessment over time, and use the results to inform their instructional practice.

I believe that this performance criterion is aiming to explain how methods of assessment, just like methods of teaching, should be varied and frequent. Assessment can and should take many forms when working with any student. Assessing students in varying ways allows for the teacher to see the students in the places that they struggle, and in the places that they shine. From written responses and verbal critiques to daily one-on-one check-ins and exit cards, students need multiple means of showing their understanding. This not only allows for every student to be heard in the areas that they are able to best show their knowledge. It also contributes to the growth that each student makes toward being flexible in demonstrating their understanding. Assessment allows the assessors to gain a more complete understanding of how each student learns and is developing.

The concept of Universal Design for Learning, also known as UDL, is the framework that supports my belief that multiple means of assessment are necessary in order to have a fair representation of student learning and development. UDL focuses on including all students by using three principles: multiple methods of representation, action and expression, and engagement. Multiple means of representation refers to providing students with multiple ways of presenting information so that all students can access it. Providing students with multiple means of engagement refers to stimulating interests and motivating learners by giving them options that encourage collaboration, relevance, and communication, increasing student engagement. The principle that supports my interpretation of this performance criterion is the second principle of UDL, which advocates for allowing students options and alternatives to express or demonstrate their learning. Teachers can provide options for responding and completing assignments and assessments.

Furthermore, there are two different types of assessment that can be used effectively with UDL, “—formative assessments that allow students to demonstrate their progress as they learn and summative assessments that show what a student has learned from the lesson or at the end of a unit. UDL guidelines can be applied to developing both formative and summative assessments. The teacher can begin by asking the question “How can students demonstrate achievement of the identified goals in varied ways?” (Meo, Rao, 2016). If choices are provided in summative assessment, and multiple ways of formative assessment are conducted, “teachers can provide incremental feedback, and give students opportunities to make progress in their new skills with feedback, helping them feel like more successful learners and building a sense of confidence as learners” (Meo, Rao, 2016).

My evidence for this performance criterion is from the Figure Unit that I wrote for my solo period of student teaching. Formative assessments were scattered throughout the unit taking the form of one-on-one check-ins, the first look at the “I Can” rubric, homework checks, full-group homework shares and critiques, and exit cards.

Summative assessment of student’s learning takes three forms in this unit. A critique, an “I Can” self-assessment rubric, and a written reflection that students can do in any form they would like. This “I Can” rubric is given to students at the beginning of the unit, and at the end, to show how they’ve grown over the course of the unit. The mixture of formative and summative assessments allow for students to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways across the span of this unit. Students are also able to monitor and see their growth with frequent feedback from the teacher, as well as from their comparison between the first and last time they complete the “I Can” rubric.

I believe I have a solid foundation and a growing understanding of this performance criterion, that assessments should be varied and frequent. I do believe however that I can work on the ways that I intend to implement various assessments. In my figure unit, I have various assessments present but I am not completely sure how all three summative assessments would best be implemented. I wonder if it is better to ask students to complete both the self-reflection and the “I Can” rubric, or if it is better to ask them to choose one to complete. I do however like the idea of having the “I Can” rubric filled out in the beginning and end of the unit to show students how they have grown and I see value in a reflection beyond checking boxes where they believe they’ve achieved learning.

**Standard 7:** Planning for Instruction- PC 7.2 Candidates plan instruction by drawing upon knowledge of learners to meet rigorous learning goals.

To meet Criterion 7.2, teachers must use a deep understanding of their students, in what they know of their learning differences, and what their life is like inside and outside of the classroom, to enhance and strengthen their learning toward meeting rigorous learning goals. This is usually done through multiple means of formative assessment, and using what teachers gather about students from conversations with them, observing their progress in class and in other classes, talking to their parents, and communicating with other staff in the building who have worked with the same students. The more the teacher knows about a student of theirs, the easier it is to ensure that they are being led in the right direction to high achievements. However, this whole process takes time. In a semester class, which is often the case in a high school art setting, students are only in a classroom for half a year. Before they know it, a class may be half-way through the semester and the teacher may still not feel like they've gotten to really know their students. I'm going to elaborate on how teachers can start to reach for this performance criterion in the beginning of the semester, or the beginning of the year, when they are still getting to know the basics of their student's interests, strengths, weaknesses, and goals so that teachers can get started on meeting rigorous learning goals with their students.

My research for this topic was done in a module titled *Teaching in a Diverse Setting* from The Art of Ed Pro Learning series. This module led me to some helpful tips in building relationships with students. Building relationships is the fundamental factor in being able to learn more about students, which in turn helps a teacher create a curriculum that challenges them and meets their needs. The first step is classroom management. Building community within your classroom creates a safe environment and supports students in feeling that they can share things about themselves in their art and in interactions with their teacher and peers. Teachers may find that it is difficult to build safe and supportive connections with and between students in a high school setting because of very common depression and anxiety among the student population. Students are likely to also be dealing with "...sensitive spots produced by toxic competition between students from sweeping aggressions of racial or class-based or ability based discrimination under the rug..." (Janani Nathan, AOEU). Creating a setting in the beginning of the semester that encourages students to be honest, open and accountable can start to break down aggressions and bridges between students. Teachers can start the semester by having the class collaborate



in making large posters that outline their ideas for the following questions: “How do you want to be treated by the art teacher? How do you want other art students to treat you? What does respect mean within an art classroom? What do you hope to learn from this art class?” This exercise can be done together on large sheets of poster paper and they can be hung in the classroom as reminders throughout the semester. This activity gathers students and teachers together and starts to create mutual respect and understanding.

The module also led me to the article *5 Ways to Build Relationships with At-Risk Students* which highlighted some ways to build relationships that can be successful with all students. Avoiding preconceived notions of students is helpful because having a clean slate for a student allows you to be open minded to learning about them as an individual, from what they bring to the table in your class. Listening to a student shows them how much you care. Seeking time to listen to students who need to rant or just need someone to talk to strengthens the relationship between the teacher and the student. Trust can also be built through honesty. As a student teacher, my supervisor observed me being honest about sometimes forgetting to tell the class why we are doing certain things in lessons, and that it was something I was working on improving. Transparency and honesty will help build stronger relationships with students. This article also talked about not censoring student work. “Students want to be heard, and there is no better place to share their voice than the art room. Here, students can turn their feelings and thoughts into a work of art. But, these ideas and resulting pieces might not always be positive depending on their current situation. Because of this, it’s important not to censor or limit their artwork. If a student is creating something that is not considered school appropriate, talk with them. Even if you don’t display it, you may find a way for them to finish working on their piece” (Schukei, 2018). Art teachers take the role as a supporter and as a mentor. For this reason, instilling hope is the last method that this article touches on. “By being a mentor, listening, and understanding, a teacher can have a positive impact on how a student reaches their future goals and dreams” (Schukei, 2018).

One piece of evidence that supports my interpretation of the performance criterion is the goal card activity that my mentor teacher and I did at the beginning of the semester at my student teaching placement. By giving students cards to fill out with a goal they had for the class, then collecting those cards and going through them, and revisiting them throughout the semester, my mentor teacher and I were able to make sure that each student was on the way to success. Doing this activity in the first week of the semester allowed us to get a

jump start on guiding students toward rigorous learning goals early in the semester, by learning about each student's values as a student in art class.

One example and another piece of evidence which demonstrates our application of knowledge that we had gained about our students from the goal cards, is the Elements of Art lesson. This lesson was created because my mentor teacher and I had noticed a couple weeks into school that students were still unclear on some of the elements of art. These pieces of knowledge were fundamental to getting closer to their learning goals. By gathering all students into a new exciting space, and giving them elements of art cards to match to a famous artwork, students were able to clarify the definitions and applications for the elements of art. They were also able to see that they were not alone in not understanding all of the elements yet. If a card was misplaced, the group worked together to place somewhere that made more sense. This is a great review activity for students in the beginning of the semester. It helped to build relationships and trust through collaboration and it reviewed the terms that students were struggling with, therefore, helping them all to get closer to their learning goals. As we learned more about students week after week, we were able to reflect back on their goals and discover that they were achieving them. Having more information about students through interacting with them and doing our best to build relationships with them allowed us to challenge them to meet or even go beyond the goals that they set for themselves, showing them that anything is possible. Celebrating their achievements encouraged them to push even further beyond the goals that they had in the beginning of the semester.

I believe I understand the focus of this performance criterion, in that getting students to meet rigorous learning goals is done by drawing upon an understanding of each student as a whole, by building relationships and getting to know students from the perspective of a teacher and a mentor. I do wonder about the methods that art specialists have found helpful in excelling goals beyond what students originally dreamt possible. I look forward to gaining more knowledge in how to be an inspiring art teacher, who can push the boundaries that students tend to put up in the false belief that they can only do so much. Cox, Janelle. "Classroom Management: Guest Speakers Support Learning." *TeachHUB*, [www.teachhub.com/classroom-management-guest-speakers-support-learning](http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-management-guest-speakers-support-learning).

Rao, K., & Meo, G. (2016). Using Universal Design for Learning to Design Standards-Based Lessons. SAGE Open. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244016680688>

Schukei, Abby. "5 Ways to Build Relationships with At-Risk Students." *The Art of Education University*, 4 Sept. 2018, [theartofeducation.edu/2018/09/10/5-ways-to-build-relationships-with-at-risk-students/](http://theartofeducation.edu/2018/09/10/5-ways-to-build-relationships-with-at-risk-students/).

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## **Reflect**

**The purpose of the Reflection is to review your learning and identify areas for continued growth. The Reflection includes two elements:**

**1. Review of your personal learning – Examine specific incidents and points of learning related to the theme of the Part (e.g. Part I: The Learner and Learning), reconsider long-standing perceptions that were challenged or affirmed.**

**2. Plan for ongoing learning – Conceptualize ideas for ongoing growth in this area.**

In the creation of this narrative, I have gained a deeper understanding of why content knowledge, application of content, assessment, planning for instruction, and instructional strategies, are important in a teacher's role. Writing about my first experience of collaborating with two professionals allowed me to reflect on why this action turned out to be a valuable avenue for my learning and my students' learning. I would like to continue to collaborate with professionals from local communities and beyond to bring more voices to the art room, to engage learners by emphasizing the importance of art in our lives and how art can be taken in all different directions. I would also like to work with stakeholders in the future to not only have guest speakers but to also create and implement workshops where students get hands-on experience with professionals in art and other disciplines. This narrative also helped me determine how to build confidence in learners and improve their ability to demonstrate their learning by giving them choices in assessments and projects. With a wide range of learners, it is important to allow students a choice in how to demonstrate their learning. Having choices that fit with the population and interests of

your students is imperative. While some students will thrive on getting to pick a way to do an assignment, others may have a difficult time choosing and this can cause stress. Having built relationships with students, teachers can narrow those choices down for students who may be overwhelmed, or can talk to them about what choice would work best for them as an individual. I also want to provide more creative ways for my students to demonstrate their learning in the future, and to incorporate ways for students to monitor their own growth, much like the “I Can” rubric in my figure unit. I believe that gaining feedback from my learners in the future on what ways they believe they can demonstrate what they’ve learnt will be one of the ways that I can grow as a teacher, learning from my students and encouraging them to value their own voice.

The final analysis of this narrative reminded me of ways that I can support at-risk students in the future, as a teacher but also as a mentor. My pre-existing belief that classroom management is an essential tool in supporting students was affirmed by my analysis research and evidence. Creating a safe environment in the classroom through the classroom management strategies shown in my research can help students and the teacher start to build relationships that are imperative in the sharing of feelings and information that ultimately guide the teacher and other professionals in supporting each student academically and in other aspects of life. I want to continue to take what I will learn from my relationships with students to explore ways to challenge students who may have gotten to their goal but have the potential to do so much more. I want my students to know that they are loved, and that they can do whatever they put their mind to.

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Attached Documents:

[PC 5.1](#)

PC 6.1: [CVU Life Unit for solo teaching](#)

[PC 7.2](#)