edTPA stems from a twenty-five-year history of developing performance-based assessments of teaching quality and effectiveness. The Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (Stanford and AACTE) acknowledges the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, and the Performance Assessment for California Teachers for their pioneering work using discipline-specific portfolio assessments to evaluate teaching quality. The edTPA handbooks have been developed with thoughtful input from over six hundred teachers and teacher educators representing various national design teams, national subject matter organizations (ACEI, ACTFL, AMLE, CEC, IRA, NAEYC, NAGC, NCSS, NCTE, NCTM, NSTA, SHAPE America), and content validation reviewers. The edTPA is built for the profession by the profession. All contributions are recognized and appreciated.
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Introduction

This support guide will help you make good choices as you create and implement your edTPA learning segment. It is not a substitute for reading the handbook. Read the entire handbook before you start your edTPA work. The handbook is dense. Reading it thoroughly before your start will help you navigate the requirements once you begin the work. Don't skip any sections, text boxes, or footnotes. Everything in the handbook provides important information that will help guide you in your decision-making.

Once you have read the entire handbook, Making Good Choices in Special Education will support your decision making as you develop artifacts and respond to commentary prompts in each of the three tasks. By reading and reflecting on the questions and suggestions in Making Good Choices in Special Education, you will develop a deeper understanding of edTPA and have many of your questions addressed. This document will help you think about how to plan, instruct, assess, and reflect on learning, not only for completing edTPA, but also for effective teaching well into the future.

You can and should discuss with your teacher preparation instructors how the various aspects of edTPA connect with each other and to your coursework and field experiences. However, the specific choices that go into the planning, instruction, and assessment tasks within your portfolio should solely reflect your thinking, based upon your knowledge of pedagogy and your focus learner’s strengths and needs. Knowing your focus learner and how you will support his/her learning should be your major focus.

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1 The September 2015 version of Making Good Choices in Special Education replaces earlier versions posted on the edTPA.com and edtpa.aacte.org websites. SCALE recognizes Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell, Kelli Appel and John Snakenborg for their contributions to Making Good Choices.
On the pages that follow, each section of this document addresses key decision points that you will encounter as you complete your edTPA. Use the live links from the questions in the overview chart to locate answers to inform your decisions. **Bold text in the answers provides specific directions to guide your choices.**

You may find some questions repetitive across tasks. This “repetition” is intentional. The questions that appear across tasks represent threads that tie all the tasks together, e.g., your knowledge of the focus learner or the central focus of the learning segment. Questions that appear to be similar are couched in terms of the task that you are completing. For example, you will respond to questions about how your knowledge of your focus learner was used to plan, instruct and assess. When considering your understanding of your learner in Task 1, you should include references to how the learner’s assets are reflected in your instructional strategies and materials. When you respond to a similar prompt in Task 2, you should describe and provide evidence for what you and the learner actually said and did in the video clips submitted. Therefore, when you encounter a prompt that seems similar to one you already answered, think about how the context in which the prompt appears might guide your response.

### Getting Started

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Planning Ahead

How do I get started with my edTPA preparation?

Since it is important to understand the whole edTPA before you begin, read through the edTPA handbook, including the rubrics and glossary, and any other support materials you may have been given by your preparation program. Once you have done this reading and understand the assessment, you are ready to begin.

How much time do I need?

The edTPA is composed of 3-5 consecutive lessons. The exact length of time will be determined by the length of each lesson, how many lessons you include in your learning segment, and how long it takes you to respond to the commentary prompts and assemble and submit your work for scoring. Although the edTPA can be completed in a matter of a few weeks, you should not assume you will be able to do this, as student teaching is typically composed of many requirements. As a result, time management is critical for successful completion of edTPA. Begin planning your edTPA portfolio as soon as possible, but be sure you know your focus learner well enough to plan with knowledge of his/her strengths and needs. Do not procrastinate.

Back to Getting Started Key Decisions Chart

How do I represent my thinking and teaching in writing?

Although the rubrics do not address the quality of your writing (and you will not be penalized for writing errors in spelling, grammar, or syntax), you should be mindful that your written work reflects your thinking and your professionalism. Try to let your own voice come through in your writing. Writing errors may change or cloud the meaning of your commentaries, so proofreading is essential. When writing your edTPA, consider the following guidelines:

- **Read each prompt carefully and completely. Be sure to respond to all parts of the questions using simple straightforward prose.** Incomplete, superficial, and unelaborated responses are not sufficient. One or two sentences for each prompt will not contain enough information for a reviewer to understand your intentions, what or how you have taught, or what your focus learner has learned.

- **Move beyond summarizing your classroom practice** and show that you understand your learner and how to support his/her development of knowledge and skills, as well as...
to identify and analyze the evidence of his/her learning to support further learning and inform your future instruction.

- **Provide specific, concrete examples to support your assertions.** Do not merely repeat prompt or rubric language as your responses to commentary prompts—you must always include examples and evidence of YOUR teaching. If you suggest that the focus learner was able to understand a concept, provide concrete examples from the focus learner’s written, oral, or other performance work that demonstrate and support your claim. For example, you might point to a specific aspect of the focus learner’s response or behavior on an assessment that supports your statement. Your assertion that the focus learner understands what you have taught must be backed up with evidence that you specify.

Back to Getting Started Key Decisions Chart

**Organizing**

**What evidence do I submit?**

**All of the requirements (and information about the optional elements) are listed in the Evidence Chart at the end of each handbook.** Read the Evidence Chart and be sure that you understand the requirements before you start working and verify that you have all the appropriate evidence before submitting your edTPA for scoring. Portfolios with missing or inaccessible evidence will receive condition codes (see the Submission Requirements at [http://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/edTPASubmissionRequirements.pdf](http://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/edTPASubmissionRequirements.pdf)).

For edTPA, you will submit artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, video clips, copies of assessments and materials for your lessons) and commentaries. Response templates are provided as a structure for organizing your response. Templates are provided for the Context for Learning Information and the three task commentaries. There are page limits for commentary responses in the templates, but please note that additional information you may be directed to add to the end of commentaries as needed does not count towards those limits (e.g., citations of materials from others, transcriptions of inaudible portions of videos, copies of assessments analyzed). You may find it helpful to use the Summary Chart found at the beginning of your handbook or the Evidence Charts as a checklist.

Back to Getting Started Key Decisions Chart
Understanding The Rubrics

How do I understand the rubrics?

Each edTPA task has 5 rubrics and each rubric has 5 levels of scoring. As you work on responding to the commentary prompts, refer to the associated rubrics and read them again before and during your writing process. Carefully read the qualitative performance differences across levels found in bold text in each of the rubric descriptions. Pay attention to the conjunctions (“and”, “or”) in the descriptions so that you are sure to provide all of the information required. Be sure to review the level 1 rubric descriptors carefully as these point out particular issues to avoid.

Back to Getting Started Key Decisions Chart

How do rubrics and commentary prompts align?

In general, the rubrics and commentary prompts align as depicted in the charts below.

### Planning Commentary & Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric #</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentary Prompt</td>
<td>1a-d</td>
<td>1a-d, 2a-d, &amp; 3a-d</td>
<td>2a-d &amp; 3a-d</td>
<td>4a-b</td>
<td>1c, 2a-d, &amp; 5a-b</td>
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### Instruction Commentary & Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentary Prompt</td>
<td>3a-b</td>
<td>4a-c</td>
<td>5a-c</td>
<td>6a-b</td>
<td>7a-b</td>
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### Assessment Commentary & Rubrics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric #</th>
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<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commentary Prompt</td>
<td>1a-f</td>
<td>1d-f &amp; 2a-c</td>
<td>2b-c</td>
<td>3a-c</td>
<td>1d-f &amp; 4a-b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to understand that all of the artifacts submitted and all responses to commentary prompts (even those not noted in the charts here) are taken into account in the scoring process. The Context for Learning Information, for example, informs scorers about the focus learner you are teaching and the teaching environment. Your lesson plans, assessments, instructional materials, and video recordings are key artifacts in the scoring process. So while you will not find a rubric that “scores” these items in isolation, they inform and are all part of what will be used in evaluating your responses.

[Back to Getting Started Key Decisions Chart]
### Task 1: Planning for Instruction and Assessment

#### Key Decision Points

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<td>What do I include as baseline data?</td>
<td>How do I identify the communication skill for the learning goal?</td>
<td>What kinds of assessments should I choose for my edTPA learning segment?</td>
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<td>How do I select a learning segment?</td>
<td>What information should I convey about my focus learner?</td>
<td>How do I support my decisions for instruction and assertions about my focus learner regarding his/her learning needs and strengths?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do I select a learning goal and plan specific supports?</td>
<td>How do I support my decisions for instruction and assertions about my focus learner regarding his/her learning needs and strengths?</td>
<td>How specific do my references to research and theory have to be?</td>
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<td>What should I include in my lesson plans?</td>
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<td>What instructional arrangement(s) should I consider in my planning?</td>
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<td>What else should I think about?</td>
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</table>
Planning for Alignment and Learning

Tasks 2 and 3 are dependent on your choices in Task 1. Re-read all of Task 1, including the rubrics. Be sure you understand the key concepts, description of requirements, and components of the Task. Read the footnotes to clarify “IEP” and terms in the rubrics. Additionally, use the glossary to ensure you understand critical terms (e.g., baseline data, communication, generalization, learning goal, maintenance, and self-determination).

How do I select a focus learner?

The focus learner must have an exceptionality identified on his/her individualized educational program/plan (i.e., IEP, IFSP or other plan). Select a learner that is representative of the varied/range of learner needs on your caseload or in your class. The focus learner selected should have multiple learning or support needs (do not select a focus learner with the fewest needs). You want to be able to demonstrate your ability to meet the complex needs of a learner. A learner with varied challenges will provide opportunities for you to demonstrate your skill in planning, instruction, and assessment. At least one of these needs (academic needs, identified by an IEP goal or support needs, identified by either an IEP goal and/or required accommodations/modifications) must be aligned with the focus learner’s IEP. The learning goal you develop or the specific planned supports to help the focus learner achieve the learning goal must be based on the focus learner’s IEP. Finally, because you are required to document that learner’s performance over a number of days, you will want to choose a focus learner that typically has consistent attendance.

How do I select a learning segment?

When developing a learning segment for your edTPA, identify your focus learner’s individual learning needs for instruction (this must be based on an IEP goal the learner is working toward or a support need identified in the IEP). However, if your focus learner is learning any academic content (including early literacy, early numeracy, or functional academics), the learning segment must address an academic learning goal. The learning segment itself may be part of a larger unit of instruction. The learning segment you plan should be consistent with your normal teaching responsibilities. One on one teaching is not a requirement for edTPA, rather, you teach in the context in which the focus learner is typically taught (whole class, small group, pull out, etc.).
In addition, the learning segment should provide opportunities for instruction and assessment of a learning goal and allow you to provide specific planned supports for your focus learner. As with any learning segment, decisions about what to teach should be driven by what the focus learner is expected to learn at his/her particular grade level as well as the content of the learner’s individualized education program/plan. You will want to think carefully about how much content to address in your edTPA learning segment; this is a significant decision about manageability, not only for the scope of your edTPA portfolio but also for the capacity of the focus learner to learn within the three to five lessons of the learning segment. District guidelines, school goals, and learner interests must be considered as well. While your cooperating teacher must not choose a learning segment for you, his/her input can be useful in guiding you to consider all of the relevant factors.

Back to Planning Task Choices

**How do I select a learning goal?**

After identifying the content of the learning segment, you will need to specify the learning goal, the standards and objectives and the specific planned supports that will help your focus learner to achieve this learning goal.

**Specify one learning goal:** The learning goal is selected first.

- For a focus learner with academic learning needs, the learning goal should address academic content that the focus learner can reasonably be expected to achieve in three to five lessons. Academic content includes traditional subjects of the general education curriculum (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies), functional academics, and early literacy/numeracy. The learning goal may or may not align with an IEP goal. However, if the learning goal does not align with an IEP goal, the specific planned supports must be related to an IEP goal or the required modifications and accommodations identified in the focus learner’s IEP.

  - General education curriculum is the same curriculum as that established for students without disabilities.

  - Functional academics are composed of academic skills needed for independence in everyday life. This includes skills in traditional content areas: reading, writing, math, social studies and science. See the definition in the glossary of the handbook for examples in each of these areas.

  - “Early literacy … [refers to] the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that precede learning to read and write in the primary grades (K–3)” (Roskos, Christie, & Richgels,
2003), including “[developing] alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, letter writing, print knowledge, and oral language” (National Institute for Literacy, 2009).

- Early numeracy represents a collection of skills that develop during the pre-kindergarten years including number and operations, geometry, measurement, patterns and algebra, and data analysis and classification” (Wackerle-Hollman, 2014).

- For a focus learner not working on any academics, functional academics, or early literacy/numeracy content (e.g., infants/toddlers or learners with the most severe and profound learning needs), the learning goal may address functional skills that the learner is working toward achieving (e.g., physical or motor skills; social, emotional, or behavioral goals; vocational or career readiness goals; or communication skills). However, in this case the learning goal AND specific planned supports (see Selecting Specific Planned Supports in the next section) must then align with an IEP goal and/or required accommodations and modifications.

Back to Planning Task Choices

What do I do after I select a learning goal?

Align with Standards

After determining the learning goal for the segment, you should identify the standard(s) (early childhood, academic content, modified, or alternative standards) that you will address in the learning segment. Though you may find many standards that relate tangentially to your planned learning segment, choose only one standard for the learning goal. If you are teaching academic content to a class, be sure to select a standard that reflects your focus learner’s applicable IEP goals, strengths, and needs, which may or may not differ from those of the rest of the class. In your planning commentary, complete the table in prompt 1 by listing the standard you have selected that is central to the learning goal. You may include the standard(s) on your lessons plans, but that is not required for this assessment. If your state does not have early childhood, modified, or alternative standards, there may not be a relevant standard related to some learning goals. In that case, state that there is none when asked in the planning commentary prompt 1 table.

Create and Sequence Lesson Objectives

Next, you will create measurable lesson objectives, which contain explicit, operationally defined criteria related to the learning goal. Identify them on the lesson plans and in the table in planning
commentary prompt 1. **Daily lesson objectives must be measurable**, describing what you expect your learner to exhibit by the end of the lesson. Pay particular attention to the behavioral verb you choose. For instance, if you say that your focus learner will “understand” something, you may be creating an objective, which is not measurable, since it is not possible to observe and measure what someone “understands”. It is better to use a verb such as “identify”, because it would be possible to tell whether a focus learner was able to correctly “identify” a piece of information. Your lesson objectives should be sequenced to build on one another, moving the focus learner toward achieving the learning goal. This generally means the objectives will be different for each lesson. However, for some learners, lessons may focus on the use of planned opportunities, repeated trials, or repeated practices to enhance skills, acquisition, and/or use. In these cases, the lesson objectives and learning goal may overlap and lesson objectives may not differ across the lessons. If this is the case there are other ways to demonstrate a “logical sequence” in the lessons. You can use slightly different, more challenging materials from lesson to lesson or you may fade the use of supports through the learning segment. You will have the opportunity to explain the logical sequence of the lesson objectives, learning tasks, materials and planned supports in planning commentary prompt 1d. The educators who score your edTPA will carefully examine the match between your learner strengths and needs, the learning goal, and lesson objectives to determine if such overlap is appropriate.

**Develop Specific Planned Supports**

Next you will develop specific planned supports to assist the focus learner in achieving the lesson objectives and, ultimately, the learning goal. You will identify the planned supports in the table in planning commentary prompt 1a and also illustrate their use in the lesson plans. Furthermore, you will explain how the supports are aligned with the learning goal and/or the focus learner’s IEP. These supports should provide the focus learner with opportunities to participate in or demonstrate learning for the learning goal. Specific planned supports may include changes to the learning environment, the use of explicit instructional strategies, learning tasks or materials tailored to meet the individual needs of the focus learner, providing accommodations or modifications, the use of assistive technology, the use of a prompting strategy or a scaffolding strategy.

The specific planned supports must be associated with either an IEP goal or required modifications/accommodations if:

- the academic/functional academic/early literacy or numeracy learning goal is not associated with an IEP goal OR
the learning goal is non-academic

Back to Planning Task Choices

What should I include in my lesson plans?

You will submit lesson plans for every lesson taught and documented in your edTPA learning segment. The plans should provide enough detail so that educators scoring your edTPA can determine the sequence of the lesson objectives and learning tasks and activities, the plan for assessment, and a description of what you and the focus learner will be doing during each lesson. If you are teaching a group, including working as a co-teacher, write the plans for the group lesson. While you are planning for the group and may have specific strategies and adaptations for learners other than the focus learner, you may remove the strategies or adaptations that apply solely to other learners if you are over the lesson plan page limit. In that case, include only those strategies and adaptations that apply to the focus learner. Confirm that the specific strategies and adaptations for the focus learner are clearly delineated in the group plan.

Be sure to address all lesson plan components described in your edTPA handbook while making sure that each submitted plan is no more than 4 pages in length. If you are using a lesson plan model that extends beyond that limit, you will need to condense them or excerpt the necessary components listed below. Planned assessments/data collection forms will be attached as separate artifacts as noted in the Evidence Chart.

Each Day’s Lesson plan should include:

- One measurable lesson objective, with explicit operationally defined criteria per lesson (more lesson objectives obligate you to collect more assessment information)
- A list of instructional resources and materials
- A description of the lesson activities, learning tasks, instructional strategies and specific planned supports including adaptations or modifications for the focus learner
- List of assessment tools and data collection procedures for the lesson objective

Note: Do not put explanations and rationale in your lesson plans. Scorers will not search your lesson plans for explanations and rationale. Use the commentary prompts to explain your thinking and justification for your plans.
What if I have particular lessons that I am required to teach in a prescribed way? What if my school or grade level has a standard curriculum I must follow?

Many teachers plan lessons that are from published or prescriptive curriculum guides that are required in a particular district, school, or department. In some cases, pedagogy is prescribed by the curriculum or IEPs. If this is the case for you, your plans and commentary should describe the requirements. **If the curriculum needs modification to meet your focus learner’s needs, the commentary should also address what you did to make the curriculum more appropriate:**

- how you selected or modified curriculum materials with your focus learner’s background, strengths, and needs in mind, and/or
- how you adapted a lesson to meet your focus learner’s learning needs (e.g., alternative examples, additional questions you ask, or supplementary activities).

**Back to Planning Task Choices**

What instructional arrangement(s) should I consider in my planning?

**The learning segment should occur in the setting in which it would normally occur.** Whether that is a general education classroom, preschool classroom, job setting, or some other place. Additionally, you should use the instructional arrangement(s) normally used in your setting. For example, if instruction in your classroom typically includes using cooperative groups, you should teach your lessons within the context of cooperative group activities. Unless your focus learner requires individualized instruction as the regular setting, there is no advantage working with your focus learner in a 1:1 instructional arrangement and it may in fact work against you, as the focus learner may not be used to working in a novel arrangement and may not respond in a way you would typically anticipate. Teaching the focus learner in the typical instructional arrangement will provide more opportunities for you to demonstrate your skill in planning, instruction, and assessment. Additionally, for learners who regularly participate in group instruction, it provides you with greater opportunities to demonstrate dynamic, active learning by capitalizing on the interactions between and among learners.

What else should I think about?

You will be asked to describe the strategies used to foster greater independence for your focus learner – maintenance, generalization, self-determination, self-directed learning, self-instruction, etc. Think about what you can do to support the focus learner to move toward greater levels of
independence, even if the learner has not yet mastered the targeted knowledge/skills. For example, you can model or prompt the learner to focus on cues to help shape a response or direct the learner to engage in verbal rehearsal to set the stage for him/her being able to do this independently.

Back to Planning Task Choices

Knowledge of the Focus Learner

What do I include as baseline data?

You need to have baseline data for the learning goal. Baseline data is broadly defined in the handbook glossary. Baseline data tell you what the focus learner knows or can do before you begin instruction in the learning segment toward the learning goal. As such, they are crucial to show learner progress as well as to justify strategies and supports. You can collect the data yourself prior to planning the learning segment, or you can obtain information from your teacher or relevant records. However, baseline data should be directly related to the learning goal. When possible, collect baseline data that will mirror what will be collected in the assessments during the learning segment. Academic/Functional Academic learning goals should have baseline data in the form of a pretest, performance assessment, or previously completed assignment.

What information should I convey about my focus learner?

The Planning Task requires you to demonstrate your depth of knowledge of your focus learner in relation to the learning goal you have planned. Making casual references or surface level connections to the learner’s background, interests, strengths, and learning needs will not be enough—you will need to collect baseline data. You also need to describe your focus learner in terms of strengths, needs, and interests.

When describing how your knowledge of the focus learner affects your instructional and support decisions for Task 1, your response should provide detail about your focus learner’s prior learning/experiences, development, and strengths (including personal, cultural, language and community assets) in addition to his/her learning needs. Your written commentary and lesson plans should reveal what you plan to do in the learning segment to capitalize on your focus learner’s strengths and to meet his/her varied needs. Your commentary responses should clearly communicate how you structured the learning segment to meet the needs, assets, and interests of the focus learner.
Be sure that your descriptions are based on your observations of your focus learner and not on assumptions or stereotypes associated with his/her disability, age, or ethnic, cultural, or socio-economic background. A good way to ensure you are avoiding stereotypes or assumptions is to ask yourself if you can back up your assertions with evidence and to then be sure to include that evidence in your responses.

How do I support my decisions for instruction and assertions about my focus learner regarding his/her learning needs and strengths?

Provide specific, concrete examples to support your assertions. It is vital that you use concrete examples to support your assertions. When describing your focus learner’s strengths, personal/cultural/community assets or their prior academic/functional or academic learning experiences, specifically describe what the asset or prior learning encompasses and how it is related to your learning segment. In order to support your explanations, refer to the baseline data and the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Task 1.

Do not merely repeat prompt or rubric language as your responses to commentary prompts—you must always include examples and evidence of YOUR teaching.

Provide specific and concrete examples of strengths and needs from your focus learner’s prior written, oral, or demonstrated work that demonstrate and support your claim. Two different examples of academic and non-academic prior instructional histories are:

Academic: When tested at the beginning of the year, Terry could read 24 simple CVC words independently. By January, he was reading 62 words correctly with several self-corrects. He is now working on CVCe (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant with silent e) words to reach his IEP goal of 75 CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) and CVCe words read correctly by the end of the year.

Vocational: Sonya is good about using her checklist to complete regular tasks in her work placement. However, if she completes these tasks early, she does not check to see if there are additional tasks that could be done. She also did not notify her supervisor last week when she was sick. She gets very upset when she makes mistakes and shuts down. Therefore, I am working with her on communication in the workplace, identifying different scenarios and using role-play and error prevention to help her learn what she might say.
How specific do my references to research and theory have to be?

When justifying your instructional choices in your plans, reference the theories and research you have learned during coursework in your preparation program. Draw upon educational philosophy and specific theories of development, learning, group work, and motivation, as well as conceptions and research-based practices of the subject-specific discipline you are teaching. You do not need to use formal citations, but you should explain the theoretical concepts and lines of research that support/inform what you have planned to do (i.e., why you think that your plans should be successful with your focus learner). Don’t merely name drop (e.g., Vygotsky or Bloom said…), cite a textbook author, or describe a concept. You need to be explicit about the theory or research finding, how it reflects knowledge of YOUR focus learner, and how both are reflected in your plans for instruction. Be sure your justification centers on instructional and support choices that move the learner toward meeting the lesson objectives and learning goal.

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Communication Skill

How do I identify the communication skill for the learning goal?

The communication skill used in a learning task may include receptive communication skills (i.e., listening; reading text, pictures or signs) and/or expressive communication skills (i.e., speaking, writing, demonstrating), and in some instructional content areas, representational language skills (e.g., using symbols, notation, etc.), needed by the focus learner in order to engage in the learning task and demonstrate learning successfully. Communication skills are so embedded in instructional activities that you may take many for granted.

The communication skill should make clear what the focus learner will do with communication to participate in learning tasks and/or demonstrate learning for the learning goal. Often, the standards and/or objectives for the learning segment will include communication skills embedded in the content to be learned—look to the verbs used (i.e., explain, signal, compare, argue, request). Choose one communication skill that the focus learner will need to develop in order to participate in instruction or demonstrate learning across the learning segment for the learning goal.

You are also asked to explain how you will support the focus learner in developing and using the communication skill. The support strategies should be specific to the use of the communication skill and not merely related to helping the focus learner in achieving the learning
goal. Be specific and explicit about how you plan to support the focus learner in developing and using the communication skill to participate in learning activities and demonstrating learning for the learning goal.

Back to Planning Task Choices

Planning Assessment

What kinds of assessments should I choose for my edTPA learning segment?
The assessments and daily assessment records for your selected learning segment should be aligned with and directly measure the focus learner’s progress toward the learning goal. As a result, they should provide opportunities for learners to show their understanding of content or skills in relation to ALL of the lesson objectives of the learning segment. A simple way to show that you have planned to measure each lesson objective is to include, not only the assessments you will use to measure each lesson objective, but to create an assessment record in a table format, which lists the learning goal, summarizes the baseline data, lists each of the lesson objectives, and allows you to describe whether or not the individual lesson objectives have been met. You must include both formal and informal assessments throughout the learning segment.
### Summary of Planning Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Include</th>
<th>What to Avoid!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A focus learner that has multiple learning and support needs as identified in his/her IEP</td>
<td>• Avoid assumptions or stereotypes associated with the focus learner’s disability, age or ethnic, cultural, or socio-economic background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A learning goal, which for the vast majority of selected focus learners addresses academic content</td>
<td>• Content inaccuracies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Standards and IEP goal(s) for the learning goal.</td>
<td>• Inappropriate, unreasonable scope and sequence in the learning segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One lesson objective for the learning goal per lesson in daily lesson plans.</td>
<td>• Generic, unrelated support strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific support strategies to assist the focus learner in achieving the lesson objectives, which are based on the needs of your focus learner.</td>
<td>• Lack of alignment between IEP goals, standards, the learning goal, lesson objectives, learning tasks, and assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>All rationales and explanations</strong> for your instructional choices written in your commentary (not elaborated in your lesson plans)</td>
<td>• Responses to commentary prompts that are too brief or that do not directly address the prompt (if you feel like you are repeating yourself, you may not be detecting the different nuances between the prompts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Explicit justification</strong> of why your instructional strategies, materials and specific planned supports are appropriate for YOUR focus learner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identification of and support for the learner’s use of an expressive/receptive communication skill for the learning goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explanations of assessments and a daily assessment record that show how you plan to monitor the focus learner’s progress toward all lesson objectives and the learning goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Three to five lesson plans, each no more than 4 pages in length</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Up to 12 pages of commentary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional artifacts to help scorers better understand the learning segment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Task 2: Instructing and Engaging the Focus Learner

### Key Decision Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video Tips</th>
<th>Learning Environment</th>
<th>Engaging the Focus Learner</th>
<th>Deepening Learning</th>
<th>Analyzing Teaching Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - What if video recording is not allowed in my placement?  
- What are my professional responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality?  
- What are the features of a quality edTPA video?  
- How do I prepare my edTPA video recordings for my learning segment?  
- What resources do I need to consider (software, equipment, and tutorials)? | - What do I look for when selecting clips that demonstrate respect and rapport?  
- How do I show a respectful and positive learning environment that supports and challenges the focus learner? | - How do I select my video clip(s) to show active engagement of the focus learner in developing knowledge and skills related to the learning goal? | - How do I show that I am deepening the focus learner’s understanding of knowledge and skills related to the learning goal? | - What is important to remember as I identify changes I would make to the learning segment? |
Re-read all of Task 2, including the rubrics. Be sure you understand the key concepts, description of requirements, and components of the Task. Read the footnotes to clarify terms in the rubrics. Additionally, use the glossary to ensure you understand critical terms (e.g., respect, rapport, and challenge).

**Video Tips**

*What if video recording is not allowed in my placement?*

Some placement settings (e.g., psychiatric facilities, juvenile correctional institutions, and hospitals) do not allow video recording for safety or security reasons. If you are placed in one of these settings with such a policy, then contact your edTPA coordinator for guidance in developing alternative evidence. **Candidates are expected to provide video recorded evidence of instruction for all other placement settings. If video recording is not allowed because of a district, school, or institutional policy, which is not related to safety or security, then contact your university supervisor to either gain assistance in securing permission or finding another placement.**

[Back to Instruction Task Choices]

*What are my professional responsibilities for maintaining confidentiality?*

You are required to collect consent forms for all learners who may appear in the video clips — not just the focus learner – and from any adults who appear in your video clip(s) for edTPA. Your program will provide you with a consent form to use. The video clips should only be used for the purpose of completing your edTPA and not shared with others publicly, including job interviews and sharing with your family (unless you get additional permissions specifically allowing this.) **Clips of your teaching should NEVER be posted in public venues like YouTube, Facebook, etc. or shared with people not involved with the edTPA assessment, as this violates the confidentiality of the learner(s) you teach and their families. Even when intending no harm, this is a serious breach of professional ethics.**

*What are the features of a quality edTPA video?*

There is no requirement or expectation for you to create a professional-quality production. The use of titles, opening and closing credits, a musical soundtrack, or special effects must be left to Hollywood as reviewers will be examining only what the video shows you and your learner(s) doing within the learning segment. However, while it is not necessary to be technically perfect, it
is important that **the quality of the video (clarity of picture and sound) be sufficient for scorers to understand what happened in your classroom.** In most cases, the sound quality will be most important, but if the learning task demands skills or communication (e.g., American Sign Language) that are best understood through viewing, then the video quality will be important. If communication that is important to understand is not audible or, in the case of sign, visible, in the clip(s), you may provide a transcript following directions in the Task 2 Evidence Chart. It is also now permissible to insert captions of the communication on the video clip in this instance.

**Back to Instruction Task Choices**

**How do I prepare my edTPA video recordings for my learning segment?**

- **Advise your cooperating/master teacher and the principal at your school of your need to video record** lessons for your learning segment. Although a camera operator is often unnecessary, be sure to discuss with these school personnel any arrangements for using one and look to people who already have approval to be in classrooms: e.g., your cooperating teacher or a teaching assistant.

- **Collect the necessary consent forms from a parent/guardian of your learner(s) or, if eligible, from the learner(s), as well as adults who might appear in the video.** Respecting learners’ privacy, as well as protecting yourself and your cooperating teacher, is a professional responsibility that should not be ignored.

- **Make arrangements** for the necessary video/audio equipment well in advance. If you do not have ready access to video equipment, reach out to peers, family members, your cooperating/master teacher, university supervisor, or technology staff.

- **Location. Location. Location.** Think about where you and your learner(s) will be located in the “classroom” during the activities to be portrayed in the video and where to place the camera. If you are filming in a public community-setting (e.g., store), visit the setting at the time of day when you plan to film to assist in your planning. Regardless of location, ask yourself the following questions: What evidence do the rubrics call for that the camera will need to capture? Where will the camera/microphones need to be placed in order to optimize sound quality? In particular, think about where to place any other learner who may have withheld permission to be filmed so that s/he can participate in the lesson off-camera. If you do need a camera operator, meet in advance to share the lesson plan and video needs.
• **Practice the video recording process BEFORE the learning segment.** This will provide a chance to test the equipment for sound and video quality as well as give your learner(s) an opportunity to become accustomed to the camera in the room.

• **Try to record the ENTIRE set of lessons.** This will provide you with plenty of footage from which to choose the clips that best provide the evidence called for in the commentaries and rubrics.

• **Be natural.** While recording, try to forget the camera is there (this is good to explain to your focus learner as well) and teach like you normally do. If possible, record other lessons prior to the learning segment so that the camera is not a novel item. If using a camera operator, advise him or her not to interject into the lesson in any way and to minimize camera movement.

• **Be sure to select and submit clips with quality audio** so that those viewing your clips can hear you and the focus learner as well as any relevant discussion the focus learner may have with other learners. It is often helpful to watch the video recording each day so you can check for audio quality. As you watch, note possible examples of evidence with time stamps for later consideration in choosing the clip(s). It will be important to identify specific instances of the video recording with time stamp references in your commentary responses. While it is fresh in your mind, record a transcription for occasionally inaudible parts for the video that you might want to include in your submission.

• **Transcribe inaudible portions.** As you view and listen to the video clips, note any inaudible portions where understanding what was said would help an educator better understand and evaluate the teaching and learning. You may either provide a transcript or add captions for these portions. Be selective - you do not need to address all inaudible comments, but the majority of the video should be clearly audible and show both you and your focus learner.

• **Choose clip(s) that meet requirements for content and length.** Review the video, using any notes you have made, to identify excerpts that portray the focus required in Task 2. Then go back to select the clip(s) and identify starting and stopping times for the
excerpts. Any break in the continuity of events signals the start of a new clip to scorers, so count the number of clips/excerpts carefully. Caution: you may receive condition codes if you exceed the number of clips permitted, if the total time of your clips exceeds the maximum, OR if the total number of minutes represented in your clips is less than three minutes.

- **Be sure to review the instructions for downloading the video unless you use the camera often.** As soon as the video recording is downloaded, make a backup copy of the video on a hard drive, a USB drive, or a CD/DVD.

**Back to Instruction Task Choices**

**What resources do I need to consider (software, equipment, and tutorials)?**

edTPA does not require any particular software, cameras, or editing equipment, although there are formatting requirements outlined in the evidence chart in the handbooks. An expensive camera is not necessary for the demands of this assessment. Many low-end cameras are capable of producing a picture and sound quality that is suitable for your video needs. However, certain situations (groupings where the learners are not facing the camera microphone, lots of ambient noise, etc.) may necessitate the use of some kind of external microphone. **Make sure to test the equipment while teaching.**

**Back to Instruction Task Choices**

**Video Equipment and Editing Tutorials**

If you are new to video recording or to the camera you are using, be sure to read the instruction manual that comes with the camera. Even if the manual has been lost, most are available online at the manufacturer's website. Manufacturers sometimes have online tutorials to help you learn how to use the camera. **YouTube also has a plethora of videos that demonstrate how to set up and operate a camera.**

As soon as the recording is finished, copy a backup of the video onto a hard drive, a USB drive, or a CD/DVD. Be sure that you read the instructions on how to download and save the audio as well as the video prior to downloading.

Your submitted clips for edTPA must consist of a continuous scene without any edits. However, you will need to use editing tools to extract a clip from the longer video you record.

The free video editing software that comes with most computers is perfectly adequate for preparing and saving the clip(s) in the format required in your edTPA handbook. PC's have the program Windows Movie Maker (found in the START menu under PROGRAMS) while
Macs provide you with iMovie. There are many online tutorials that will support you in learning how to use these programs.

- Tutorials for using Windows Movie Maker to edit your video (click here)
- Tutorials for using iMovie to edit your video (click here)

Learning Environment

What do I look for when selecting clips that demonstrate respect and rapport?

Establishing respect and rapport with your focus learner and all other learners is critical for developing a mutually supportive and safe learning environment. Respect is the positive feeling of esteem or deference toward a person and the specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem. Rapport is a close and harmonious relationship in which members of a group understand each other’s ideas, respectfully collaborate and communicate, and consider one another’s feelings. Both respect and rapport are demonstrated by how you treat learners and how they treat each other, and you should work to make them evident in your videos. While you may be working with learners who face challenges in these areas, your video should show you are actively working to create an environment of respect and rapport within the context of your learner(s)’ disability-related characteristics. Learners with disabilities may require very individualized strategies over a length of time to develop respect and rapport, and each learner may demonstrate rapport in a very unique way. For learners who have severe challenges in social and communication skills, respect and rapport may be revealed in learners’ body posturing, proximity, or eye contact, as well as absence or lower levels of undesirable behavior. Be sure to consider the modes of communication and all levels of social behavior most applicable to your target learner when identifying evidence of respect and rapport. In your commentaries, cite specific scenes (time stamps are very helpful) from the video clips that illustrate the respect and rapport you have established with all learners.

How do I demonstrate a positive learning environment that supports and challenges the focus learner?

Examples of support and challenge should be related to the learning goal. Choose a video clip that shows you using supports that are consistent with the focus learner’s needs and prior learning experiences. These need not be unique to the focus learner if s/he has common needs.
with other learners in the video. Challenge is defined as probing ahead of the focus learner's current ability levels. **Challenge can be demonstrated by including prompts or opportunities for the focus learner to learn content or demonstrate learning beyond his/her current performance level.** It is difficult to demonstrate challenge if your focus learner appears to automatically know and understand all of the content of the lesson.

**Engaging the Focus Learner**

*How do I select my video clip(s) to show active engagement of the focus learner in developing knowledge and skills related to the learning goal?*

The evidence you need to collect for edTPA Task 2 should demonstrate how you engage the focus learner while teaching. **The video should feature instruction where there is focus learner-candidate or focus learner-other learner interaction with an opportunity to engage in learning tasks that increase the focus learner’s understanding related to the learning goal. In addition, the clip should provide evidence of how you link prior learning to new learning to engage and motivate the focus learner.**

**Deepening Learning**

*How do I show that I am deepening the focus learner’s understanding of knowledge and skills related to the learning goal?*

The video clip(s) should show how you elicit responses (by providing instruction related to the learning goal) from the focus learner and how you respond to the focus learner's performance and application of learning. The purpose of this interaction should be to deepen learning by helping the learner develop greater understanding of the skills/knowledge related to the learning goal or more fluency in their application. You can draw upon any of the interactions in the video to highlight how you prompt, listen to or observe the focus learner and respond in such a way that you are supporting him/her to develop and/or apply their new learning. Your feedback can be verbal or non-verbal (such as pointing) and should be more specific than “yes” or “no” or other general comments. At a minimum, **the clip should show you eliciting responses, closely monitoring learner progress, and providing feedback to the learner.**
When possible, it should also include giving the focus learner additional opportunities to respond.

Back to Instruction Task Choices

**Analyzing Teaching Effectiveness**

*What is important to remember as I identify changes I would make to the learning segment?*

Analyzing teaching effectiveness requires you to answer two primary questions:

1. **Considering my learner’s responses to instruction, if I could teach this lesson again, what would I do differently?**

   Answer this question by analyzing and describing what you have learned about teaching toward the learning goal to this focus learner. Base your analysis on your observations of how the learner responded to the instructional strategies and materials you used in the video clip(s) submitted.

2. **Why would I make the changes?**

   Use the analysis from question 1 to identify what you would do to improve your teaching to better facilitate learning. **Be specific about any changes you would make if you were able to teach the lesson(s) again.** The changes may address some logistical issues (time management, giving directions, etc.) but **should focus mostly upon how you would improve the actual instruction to draw upon the focus learner’s strengths and to address and support the focus learner’s’ needs in relation to the learning goal.** You will also need to cite evidence that explains why you think these changes will work. Consider how research and theory inform your decisions about needed changes. Be sure to **cite specific examples of what the focus learner understood/could do and did not understand/could not do** (as well as any other strengths and needs), and describe the concepts from theory and/or research that support your proposed changes. ([Click here to return to the Planning Task explanation of citing research.](#))

Back to Instruction Task Choices
### Summary of Instruction Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Include</th>
<th>What to Avoid!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Clip(s) that contain evidence addressing each criterion in the rubrics.</td>
<td>• Sharing your video PUBLICLY on YouTube, Facebook, or any other website. Please respect the privacy of learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• References in your commentary responses to <strong>specific examples</strong> found in your video clip(s)</td>
<td>• Choosing a clip that shows you making significant content errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time stamps identifying evidence from the video clip(s) in every response</td>
<td>• Showing disrespect to any learner or allowing learners to be disrespectful to each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mismatches between instruction and support choices and focus learner’s needs and strengths.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Task 3. Assessing Learning

Key Decision Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of Focus Learner’s Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What kind of assessment data should I analyze for edTPA?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What types of learner feedback should I include in my portfolio?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do I explain how the focus learner will use the feedback I give?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analyzing the Focus Learner’s Use of Communication</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How do I identify evidence of the focus learner’s use of the targeted communication?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Assessment Informing Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What do I need to think about when determining “next steps” for my teaching?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Re-read all of Task 3, including the rubrics. Be sure you understand the key concepts, description of requirements, and components of the Task. Read the footnotes to clarify terms in the rubrics. If necessary, re-read the glossary for terms used in “what do I need to do?” (e.g., baseline data, assessment)

Analysis of Focus Learner Performance

What kind of assessment data should I analyze for edTPA?
You will use the baseline data, daily assessment records, and a completed work sample to inform your analysis of performance for the learning goal. There are multiple options for the format of your submitted focus learner work sample (document, time stamp in video clip, or an additional video clip), so read the handbook specifications closely. These options make a work sample possible for any type of learning goal. It is important for you to provide the
analysis of the work sample and evidence you provide. Scorers will not interpret the meaning of the focus learner’s work. You must do this. Successful candidates do much more than simply state whether the focus learner was able to achieve the lesson objectives and learning goal. Analysis requires you to dig into the evidence to uncover patterns of the focus learner’s performance, identifying strengths and needs as well as how successfully your instruction and specific planned supports facilitated learning toward the learning goal for the focus learner. Again, if you suggest that the focus learner was able to understand a concept, provide concrete examples from the focus learner’s written, oral, or other performance work that demonstrate and support your claim.

Back to Assessment Task Choices

What types of learner feedback should I include in my portfolio?

The feedback should be related to the learning goal. Feedback should offer the focus learner clear and specific information about his/her performance around the lesson objectives and align with the analysis of learning for the learning goal. At the very least, your focus learner should be made aware of his/her strengths and errors. Effective feedback should specifically identify areas where he/she did well and where he/she needs to improve related to the specific learning objectives. Percent correct and non-specific comments such as “Good job” are not sufficient, as the focus learner will have little idea what exactly s/he did well. In contrast, comments such as “Great job recognizing that ‘who’ questions refer to people.” [Academic learning goal] or “You are doing better waiting for Mr. Johnson [BOSS/SUPERVISOR] to finish before you start speaking,” [vocational or communication learning goal] direct attention to the details of performance, deepening the focus learner’s understanding of the learning goal.

The same expectation applies to feedback on how the focus learner can improve. For example, citing the number of problems the focus learner completed incorrectly [academic learning goal] is not sufficient. In order to identify an area for improvement, the focus learner needs to know what it is that needs correction. Your feedback must be related to the learning goal. Following are two examples of feedback addressing needs and reinforcing strengths related to both an academic and non-academic learning goal.

- [Written on the focus learner’s paper] “You’ve got a great idea for the content of this paragraph. Now work on your topic sentence. It needs more focus” (academic)
“Great job cutting on the line but you seem to be having trouble holding the paper still as you cut. Watch what I do.” [Teacher models holding paper to cut.] See how my thumb is on the top of the paper and pointed up when I hold it? Make your thumb look like mine” (motor skills)

How do I explain how my focus learner will understand and use the feedback I give?

The purpose of giving feedback is to help your focus learner understand what he or she knows and can do and what he or she still needs to work on. Research shows that the opportunity to apply feedback promotes learning. When responding to this prompt, make sure you address how the focus learner understands and uses feedback. What are you going to do to ensure that the focus learner understands the feedback that he or she was given? Think about strategies for feedback that address patterns in the focus learner’s performance and also attend to unique student work. Then think about the upcoming lessons and the feedback given to the learner. What opportunities are there in the next lessons for the focus learner to apply the feedback? Would revision of the work sample be a more powerful learning experience? Is there additional support that might scaffold the application of the feedback and support learning? Does the focus learner have different needs that imply different choices? Your explanation should demonstrate that you have considered how and when the focus learner might best apply the feedback to support or extend his/her learning.

Analyzing the Focus Learner’s Use of Communication

How do I identify evidence of the focus learner’s use of the targeted communication skill?

You will explain in your analysis and provide evidence that your focus learner used or attempted to use the targeted expressive/receptive communication skill related to the learning goal. The communication skill was identified in Task 1. You must support your explanations by citing specific evidence from video clip(s) using a time stamp and/or the learner work sample. The evidence cited must clearly demonstrate how the focus learner used or attempted to use the identified communication skill to participate in instruction and/or demonstrate learning related to the learning goal.
Assessment Informing Instruction

What do I need to think about when determining “next steps” for my teaching?

Informed by your analysis of the focus learner’s performance on the learning goal in the learning segment, "next steps” should detail the instructional moves you plan to make going forward for in relation to the learning goal. These next steps may include additional feedback to the focus learner, a specific instructional activity/learning task, or other strategies. The next steps should aim to maintain, support or extend learning of the learning goal. You will also need to justify your next steps with principles from research and/or theory.

(Click here to return to the Planning Task explanation of citing research.)
## Summary of Assessment Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to Include</th>
<th>What to Avoid!!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Completed daily assessment record (and baseline assessment, if not evident in daily assessment record).</td>
<td>• Superficial analysis of the focus learner’s performance without citing evidence from the baseline data, daily assessment records, and the work sample.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes the focus learner’s progress toward the learning goal.</td>
<td>• Misalignment between the daily assessment records, learning goal, lesson objectives, and/or analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Description of performance patterns in relation to specific planned supports used.</td>
<td>• Feedback that is developmentally or age-inappropriate or contains significant inaccuracies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed work sample for the learning goal (the work of the focus learner only, not a group project).</td>
<td>• Identifying next steps for learning that are not related to your analysis of the focus learner’s progress toward the learning goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of the feedback that you provided to the focus learner related to the learning goal.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific references to the focus learner’s work sample and/or assessments to support your commentary responses.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concrete evidence of the focus learner’s use of the communication skill (video clip or work sample)</td>
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