Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment Glossary

Academic language—the abstract concepts, ideas, and higher-order thinking processes associated with a specific content area or discipline. Vocabulary, grammar, instruction, and assessment strategies are used to highlight the particular language of the content area or discipline and are used in the classroom, in curricular materials, and in presentations.

Adaptations—the changes made by a pre-service teacher candidate to content, process, or product to facilitate learning for specific students’ needs (or for the whole class).

Analysis—the examining of the parts of a process or a product to determine their relationship. A response that is grounded in evidence and deals with reasons, rationales, and interpretations of data and information.

Artifact—a document used or produced by a pre-service teacher candidate when planning instruction, during instruction, or as part of an assessment that will help MoPTA raters better understand the activity featured in the task.

Assessment plan—a process of observing, monitoring, measuring, analyzing, evaluating, documenting, and reflecting for the purpose of adjusting teaching to impact learning, resulting in improved performance.

Formative assessment—a process for gathering ongoing data for the specific purpose of influencing status and progress of student performance in a specific body of learning.

Summative assessment—a process for evaluating learning at the culmination of a specific body of learning or at a given period of time to determine if the intended instructional objectives have been met.

Formal assessment—a process for gathering information about performance to make general instructional decisions using a standardized, published test or instrument that includes specific procedures for administration and interpretation.

Informal assessment—a process for gathering information about performance to make general instructional decisions using casual, informal techniques that do not require specified procedures for administration and interpretation.
Assessment technique—methods of assessing student performance.

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

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

Behavior management—the structure and organization of a classroom, including the procedures, rules, and expectations that create a positive learning environment and allow the pre-service teacher candidate to best meet the needs of all students.

Classroom assignment—the placement of the pre-service teacher candidate in a specific classroom (i.e., grade level and subject area).

Classroom demographics—the makeup of a classroom in terms of the diversity of the students.

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

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

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

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

Diversity—the differences among groups of people and individuals based on age, gender, culture, language, race, ethnicity, religion, exceptionalities, or socioeconomic status.
English-language learner (ELL)—a student who has a primary language other than English and who is developing proficiency in English.

Evidence—any information produced and submitted by a pre-service teacher candidate or by a student that documents the candidate’s teaching performance and can be linked to the Missouri Model Standards and Quality Indicators. Evidence can be found in written commentary and artifacts.

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

Feedback—input that a person gives or receives about his or her actions.

Flexible grouping—the range of instructional options for instruction, including whole class, small group, and independent activities.

Focus students—students who are selected for increased analysis, have different learning needs, and for whom the teacher designs different instructional activities and assessments.

Formative assessment—See assessment plan.

Graphic representations of collected data—a way that data has been gathered and visually displayed, e.g., spreadsheet, graph, pie chart, scattergram, color coding.

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

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

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

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)—a plan created in accordance with the law to guarantee that a child who has a disability receives specialized instruction and related services.
Instructional challenges—identified difficulties during instruction that need to be addressed to best meet the needs of all learners.

Instructional decision making—using student achievement data to support the choice of instructional strategies used during a lesson. This can be done before, during, or after a lesson.

Instructional strategies—the approaches used by the pre-service teacher candidate in the classroom to best meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

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

Learning goals—the learning that students master, based on standards and curriculum, as a results of instruction.

Learner needs— the identified needs of individual students or subgroups, as determined by daily observation and assessment data, that suggest modifications to instruction. For example, if a student cannot sit still for very long, the teacher will allow the student to stand. For visual and auditory learners, the teacher will show and tell students the instructions.

Learning outcomes—statements that describe the learning that students have accomplished and can reliably demonstrate. Learning outcomes may include knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Learning outcomes are more specific than goals.

Learning styles—the various approaches or methods through which learning can occur that are particular to an individual and are presumed to allow that individual to learn best. The three most widely recognized categories of learning styles are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Learning theory—the conceptual frameworks that explain how information is taken in, processed, and remembered during learning.

Missouri Assessment Program (MAP)—the statewide assessment program that includes grade-level assessments in math and communication arts for measuring student learning aligned with the Missouri Show-Me Standards in grades three through eight, end-of-course assessments for secondary students in specific disciplines, and other assessments customized for groups of learners.
Modifications—the small changes made by a pre-service teacher candidate to facilitate learning for specific students’ needs (e.g., moving a student to the front of the room).

Monitor—a way to continuously track how students are doing academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

Multiple intelligence—a theory that intelligence encompasses a range of functions and abilities (Gardner, 1943). By recognizing that intelligence can manifest through abilities or agilities other than cognitive nature, teachers can adapt their teaching styles and learning activities to better engage and motivate learners (i.e., verbal-linguistic, mathematical-logical, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and existential learners).

Performance level—the ability of students (groups or individuals) to demonstrate evidence of learning.

Performance task—an authentic assessment that allows a pre-service teacher candidate to apply his or her knowledge and skills. The pre-service teacher candidate is able to show a wide range of skills and knowledge through this type of assessment.

Pre-Service teacher candidate—individuals enrolled in programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level leading to initial licensure/certification as classroom teachers.

Prior knowledge—students’ pre-existing knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes, which influence how they attend, interpret, and organize incoming information.

Rationale—the underlying principle or justification for a decision that is made. A rationale should be related to the teaching and learning context as described by the teacher.
Reflection—an analysis of teaching that notes which students successfully learned the content and which students did not, what happened during the lesson, what the impact of the teaching practice is, and how the pre-service teacher candidate might change the teacher practice to attend to student needs. Reflection includes thinking about pedagogy, student characteristics, and outcomes. It involves using data to review instructional decisions and improve teaching strategies and learning outcomes. Reflective practice is the capacity to reflect on or review specific incidents of practice as a way of engaging in continuous learning for the purpose of increasing overall effectiveness and impact.

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

Rubric—written criteria for judging a performance that indicate the qualities by which levels of performance can be differentiated and that anchor judgments about the degree of success on a candidate’s assessment.

Standards—Missouri Teacher Standards and Quality Indicators. These standards have been identified and adopted by the board and are articulated on the department website: www.dese.mo.gov. The standards articulate expectations of performance for the professional educator in Missouri. The standards are based on theories of teaching and leading and share the expectation that educators will continuously acquire new academic achievement for all students. They are based on a developmental sequence that defines a professional continuum that illustrates how educators’ knowledge and skills mature and strengthen throughout their career. Professional teachers and leaders are expected to exercise good professional judgment and use the standards to inform and improve their own practices.

Student engagement—a psychological investment by the students in learning that goes beyond earning formal indicators of success to incorporating and internalizing content and understanding. Engaged students typically appear willing, interested, and involved and gain satisfaction from their accomplishments.

Student interest inventory—a survey taken by each student that captures what a student likes and dislikes in general and more specifically, about school.

Student teaching—pre-service clinical practices for professional education candidates who are preparing to teach.
Summative assessment—see assessment plan.

Supportive interactions—the ways a pre-service teacher candidate provides emotional and/or academic classroom support to help children develop and feel comfortable in the classroom. This could include teacher sensitivity, classroom behavior, and cognitive/instructional development through concept development, feedback, and modeling.

Teaching strategy—possible approaches used by the pre-service teacher candidate in the classroom to best meet the learning goal(s) and needs of the students.

Technology—the application of electronic and other media to facilitate (1) development, delivery, and assessment of instruction, (2) problem solving, (3) personal and professional productivity, (4) the administration of programs, and (5) access to and the exchange of information.

Written commentary—a written response to or an explanation of the guiding prompts within the task directions from a pre-service teacher candidate.