

Elementary Edtpa Planning Commentary Example



elementary edtpa planning commentary example

elementary edtpa planning commentary example provides a comprehensive guide for teacher candidates navigating the complexities of the Educational Developmental and Assessment Program (edTPA) for elementary education. This in-depth article delves into the crucial elements of effective lesson planning, offering a detailed elementary edtpa planning commentary example that showcases best practices. We will explore how to articulate pedagogical choices, connect learning objectives to student needs, and demonstrate a deep understanding of subject matter and diverse learners. By examining a sample planning commentary, aspiring educators can gain valuable insights into structuring their own responses, ensuring they effectively communicate their expertise and meet edTPA requirements. This resource is designed to demystify the planning task and empower future teachers to create impactful and well-documented instructional plans.

Understanding the edTPA Planning Task for

Elementary Education

The Importance of the edTPA Planning Commentary in Elementary Teaching

The edTPA planning commentary serves as a critical component of the assessment, requiring teacher candidates to articulate the rationale behind their instructional decisions. For elementary educators, this means demonstrating a thoughtful approach to curriculum design, student engagement, and the assessment of foundational academic skills. A strong commentary not only showcases a candidate's understanding of pedagogical theory but also their ability to translate that theory into practical, effective classroom experiences for young learners. It is where candidates prove they can anticipate student needs, select appropriate resources, and plan for differentiated instruction, all of which are paramount in an elementary setting.

This section will outline the essential components of the edTPA planning task, focusing on the specific requirements for elementary education. Candidates need to understand the interconnectedness of the lesson design, the learning environment, and the assessment strategies. The commentary is not merely a descriptive piece; it is an argumentative one, requiring candidates to justify their choices with research-based principles and an understanding of child development. Effectively addressing these requirements ensures a candidate can demonstrate readiness for the complexities of teaching at the elementary level.

Key Elements of an Effective edTPA Planning Commentary

A successful edTPA planning commentary for elementary education is characterized by its clarity, depth, and direct connection to the provided lesson materials. It should clearly articulate the learning objectives, explain the instructional strategies employed, and justify the assessment methods used to gauge student learning. Furthermore, it needs to demonstrate an understanding of the specific needs of the students in the practicum experience, including their academic, social, and emotional development.

Crucially, the commentary must address how the lesson plan supports diverse learners. This includes students with varying learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. Candidates are expected to explain how they have adapted or modified instruction and assessment to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed. The ability to reflect on and articulate these planning decisions is a hallmark of an effective elementary educator.

Structuring Your edTPA Planning Commentary

The edTPA planning commentary has a specific structure that candidates must adhere to. Typically, this involves responding to a series of prompts or guiding questions that cover various aspects of the lesson plan. These prompts are designed to elicit a detailed explanation of the candidate's thought process and pedagogical choices. Understanding this structure is key to providing a comprehensive and well-organized response.

Key sections within the commentary usually include:

- Context for learning: Describing the class and students.
- Central focus: The main learning objective of the lesson.
- Academic language demands: Identifying and supporting the language needed for learning.
- Standards: Identifying relevant learning standards.
- Learning objectives: Clearly stated, measurable student outcomes.
- Materials and resources: Listing and explaining their purpose.
- Lesson activities and procedures: Detailing the instructional steps.
- Assessment: Explaining how student learning will be measured.
- Planned supports: Describing how learning will be facilitated for all students.

Creating a Compelling Elementary edtpa Planning Commentary Example

Developing a strong elementary edtpa planning commentary example requires careful consideration of each component. It's about weaving a narrative that demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning process. A successful commentary doesn't just list what happened; it explains why it happened and how it will benefit the students. This involves drawing upon educational research and theory to support the chosen instructional strategies and assessment methods.

The following sections will break down how to construct each part of the commentary, using an elementary-level example to illustrate effective practices. The goal is to provide a tangible model that candidates can adapt and learn from, ensuring their own commentary is both informative and

persuasive.

Detailed Breakdown of an Elementary edtpa Planning Commentary Example

Context for Learning: Understanding Your Elementary Classroom

This section of the planning commentary is crucial for establishing the foundation of your lesson design. For elementary education, it involves a thorough description of the learning environment and the students within it. This includes details about the class composition, such as the number of students, their grade level, and any relevant demographic information. Importantly, it requires an analysis of students' prior academic knowledge and skills related to the central focus of the lesson. Understanding where students are starting from is essential for effective planning.

Considerations for elementary classrooms:

- Grade level and subject area.
- Number of students and their learning needs (e.g., English language learners, students with disabilities, gifted learners).
- Students' prior knowledge and experiences with the topic.
- Learning environment characteristics (e.g., classroom arrangement, available resources).
- Social and emotional considerations impacting learning.

A well-articulated context demonstrates that you have a deep understanding of your students and have designed your lesson with their specific needs and abilities in mind. This contextual awareness is a cornerstone of effective elementary teaching.

Central Focus: Defining the Core of Your Elementary Lesson

The central focus of your elementary edTPA planning commentary example should clearly state the main learning goal of your lesson. This is not just a broad

topic, but a specific, measurable outcome that students are expected to achieve by the end of the instructional period. For elementary students, this might involve understanding a scientific concept, mastering a mathematical skill, or comprehending a literary text.

When defining the central focus, consider the following:

- What specific knowledge or skill will students acquire?
- How does this learning connect to prior knowledge and future learning?
- What are the essential understandings students should develop?

For instance, in a third-grade science lesson on the water cycle, the central focus might be "Students will be able to identify and describe the main stages of the water cycle (evaporation, condensation, precipitation) and explain how they are interconnected." This clarity in the central focus guides all subsequent planning decisions, from instructional strategies to assessment methods.

Identifying and Supporting Academic Language Demands in Elementary Lessons

Academic language is fundamental to learning across all elementary subjects. In your planning commentary, you must identify the specific language demands students will encounter and detail how you will support their understanding and use of this language. This is particularly important for English language learners and students who may struggle with vocabulary or complex sentence structures. The edTPA emphasizes that effective teaching involves explicit attention to language.

Key aspects to address include:

- **Vocabulary:** Identifying key terms and phrases students need to understand and use. For example, in a social studies lesson on community helpers, terms like "occupation," "community," and "service" would be critical.
- **Syntax:** Analyzing the sentence structures and grammatical forms students will need to comprehend and produce. This could involve understanding comparative sentences or cause-and-effect statements.
- **Discourse:** Considering how students will be expected to communicate their ideas, whether through discussions, explanations, or written responses. For example, encouraging students to use phrases like "I think..." or "Because..." in discussions.

Your commentary should then describe specific strategies for supporting these language demands. This might involve providing visual aids, sentence frames, glossaries, opportunities for partner talk, or explicit instruction on how to use specific academic vocabulary in context. Demonstrating this intentional support for academic language is a vital part of a strong elementary edtpa planning commentary example.

Aligning with Learning Standards for Elementary Education

The edTPA requires a clear alignment between your lesson objectives and the relevant state or national learning standards. For elementary education, this means identifying the specific standards that your lesson addresses, whether they are Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, or state-specific standards. The commentary should explicitly state which standards are being targeted.

In your commentary, you would typically:

- List the specific standard(s) by number and description.
- Explain how the learning objectives directly support the attainment of these standards.
- Discuss how the activities and assessments within the lesson are designed to measure student progress toward meeting these standards.

For example, if your lesson focuses on developing foundational reading skills for first graders, you might cite a Common Core standard related to phonics and word recognition. The commentary would then detail how your lesson activities, such as practicing letter-sound correspondences or sounding out words, are directly designed to help students meet this standard. This demonstrates a systematic and standards-driven approach to lesson planning.

Crafting Clear and Measurable Learning Objectives for Elementary Students

Well-crafted learning objectives are the backbone of any effective lesson plan, and for elementary education, they need to be both clear and measurable. Objectives tell students what they will be able to do by the end of the lesson and provide a benchmark for assessing their learning. In your edTPA planning commentary, you must articulate these objectives and explain how they are aligned with your central focus and the chosen standards.

Effective elementary learning objectives often follow the SMART criteria: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (though the time-bound aspect is usually implicit within the lesson). They should describe observable student behaviors.

Example of strong elementary learning objectives:

- Students will be able to orally identify three different types of shapes (e.g., circle, square, triangle).
- Students will be able to accurately count by ones up to 20.
- Students will be able to write a complete sentence describing their favorite animal.

Your commentary should explain the thinking behind these objectives. Why these specific objectives? How do they build upon prior learning? How will you know if students have met them? This justification is crucial for demonstrating pedagogical understanding. For example, stating "I chose these objectives because they are foundational for developing spatial reasoning skills and directly address the first-grade math standards for geometry" adds significant weight to your commentary.

Selecting and Justifying Materials and Resources for Elementary Instruction

The materials and resources you select for an elementary lesson play a pivotal role in student engagement and learning. In your edTPA planning commentary, you need to list all materials and resources used and, more importantly, justify their selection. Explain how each item supports the learning objectives and caters to the diverse needs of your elementary students.

When justifying materials, consider:

- **Relevance to the objective:** How does the material directly help students achieve the learning goal?
- **Engagement:** Will the material capture and hold the attention of elementary students?
- **Differentiation:** Can the material be adapted or used in ways to support learners with varying needs?
- **Accessibility:** Are the materials appropriate and accessible for all students?

For instance, if teaching a lesson on addition for second graders, you might list manipulatives like unifix cubes, number lines, and a whiteboard. In your commentary, you would explain: "Unifix cubes will be used as concrete manipulatives to help students visualize the process of combining quantities, supporting those who benefit from tactile learning. The number line will provide a visual representation of addition, aiding students who are developing number sense. The whiteboard will be used for whole-class demonstration and for students to share their strategies, promoting peer learning and varied approaches." This detailed justification showcases thoughtful pedagogical practice.

Detailed Lesson Activities and Procedures: The Heart of Elementary Teaching

This section is where you meticulously detail the step-by-step activities and procedures of your elementary lesson. For the edTPA planning commentary, it's not enough to simply list what you will do; you must explain the pedagogical reasoning behind each step. How does each activity build upon the previous one? How does it lead students towards achieving the learning objectives?

A typical elementary lesson structure includes:

- **Introduction/Hook:** How will you capture students' attention and activate prior knowledge? This could be a story, a song, a question, or a brief demonstration.
- **Instructional Input:** How will you present new information or model a skill? This might involve direct instruction, guided reading, or a demonstration.
- **Guided Practice:** How will students practice the new skill or concept with your support? This is a critical phase for providing scaffolding.
- **Independent Practice:** How will students apply what they've learned on their own or in small groups?
- **Closure:** How will you wrap up the lesson, check for understanding, and summarize the key learning points?

In your commentary, for each phase, you should explain why you chose that particular approach. For example, "I will begin with a short, engaging song about the weather to activate prior knowledge about different weather types and set a positive tone for the lesson. This is important for elementary students who respond well to kinesthetic and auditory learning." Or, "During guided practice, students will work in pairs to solve addition problems using

unifix cubes. This collaborative approach allows for peer support and immediate feedback, addressing the needs of students who require additional scaffolding before independent work." The more detailed and reasoned your explanations, the stronger your commentary will be.

Designing Effective Assessment Strategies for Elementary Learners

Assessment in elementary education is multifaceted, encompassing formative checks for understanding throughout the lesson and summative measures at the end. Your edTPA planning commentary must clearly outline how you will assess student learning, connecting your assessment methods directly to your learning objectives. For elementary students, assessments should be age-appropriate, engaging, and provide clear evidence of learning.

Consider these types of assessments:

- **Formative Assessments:** These are ongoing checks. Examples include observation of student participation, questioning during discussions, review of student work during guided practice, exit tickets, or thumbs up/down signals.
- **Summative Assessments:** These measure learning at the end of the lesson or unit. For elementary, this might be a short quiz, a completed worksheet, a drawing with labels, or a brief oral explanation.

In your commentary, explain the purpose of each assessment tool and how it will provide evidence of whether students have met the stated learning objectives. For instance, "To assess objective 1 (Students will be able to orally identify three different types of shapes), I will observe students during the 'Shape Hunt' activity, noting their ability to correctly name shapes they find. For objective 2 (Students will be able to accurately count by ones up to 20), I will review their completed counting worksheet during independent practice. An exit ticket asking students to draw and label one shape and count to 15 will serve as a final check for understanding of both objectives." This demonstrates a clear link between assessment and learning goals.

Planned Supports: Differentiating Instruction for All Elementary Students

A hallmark of effective elementary teaching is the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Your edTPA planning commentary must detail the planned supports you will provide to ensure every

student can access the curriculum and achieve the learning objectives. This includes strategies for students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted students, and those who may need additional assistance.

Examples of planned supports in an elementary context:

- **Visual Aids:** Using pictures, diagrams, or charts to support understanding, especially for ELLs or visual learners.
- **Graphic Organizers:** Providing templates for students to organize their thoughts, such as a KWL chart or a Venn diagram.
- **Sentence Frames:** Offering partial sentences to help students articulate their ideas and practice academic language.
- **Manipulatives:** Using concrete objects (like blocks, counters, or pattern blocks) to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- **Small Group Instruction:** Working with a targeted group of students to provide more focused support or enrichment.
- **Varied Response Options:** Allowing students to demonstrate understanding in different ways (e.g., drawing, writing, verbal explanation).

When discussing these supports in your commentary, be specific. Instead of saying "I will provide support," explain precisely what that support is and why it is being provided. For example, "For students who are English language learners, I will provide sentence frames such as 'The shape is a _____' and 'It has _____ sides.' This will scaffold their ability to participate in the discussion and meet the objective of identifying shapes. For students who require additional challenge, I will ask them to compare and contrast two different shapes during independent practice, extending the learning beyond the basic objective."

Connecting Pedagogical Choices to Student Needs and Learning

The most insightful part of an edTPA planning commentary is the ability to articulate the connection between your pedagogical choices and the specific needs of your elementary students. This involves moving beyond simply describing what you will do to explaining why those actions are appropriate and effective for your particular class. It requires deep reflection on your understanding of child development, learning theories, and your students as individuals.

In this section of your commentary, you would typically:

- Reiterate how specific activities, materials, or assessment methods address the identified needs of your students (e.g., prior knowledge gaps, learning preferences, language proficiency levels).
- Explain how your instructional strategies are designed to promote student engagement and active learning, which are crucial for elementary-aged children.
- Discuss how you anticipate potential student misconceptions and what strategies you have in place to address them.
- Justify your sequencing of activities, explaining how each step builds logically and supports the overall learning progression.

For instance, you might write, "My decision to use the 'Show Me' strategy with whiteboards during guided practice is a direct response to the need for immediate feedback and engagement for my second-grade class. This allows me to quickly gauge individual understanding of addition strategies and identify students who may need reteaching before moving to independent work. This strategy is particularly effective for students who are hesitant to share their thinking verbally in a whole-class setting." This demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how to tailor instruction to the specific classroom context.

Reflecting on the edTPA Planning Process for Elementary Teachers

The process of creating an edTPA planning commentary is as much about learning as it is about assessment. For aspiring elementary teachers, it's an opportunity to critically examine their own teaching practices and to deepen their understanding of effective pedagogy. This reflection should extend beyond the specific lesson being documented and consider the broader implications for their future teaching.

Key areas for reflection include:

- What did I learn about my students through this planning process?
- Were my learning objectives realistic and appropriately challenging?
- Did my chosen instructional strategies effectively engage all students?
- How could I improve the assessment methods used in this lesson?
- What modifications might I make if I were to teach this lesson again?

- How does this lesson contribute to the overall development of my students in the elementary grades?

Engaging in this reflective practice is essential for continuous professional growth. It helps to solidify the connection between theory and practice, preparing teacher candidates to be adaptable, responsive, and effective educators in elementary classrooms.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key components of a strong elementary EDTPA planning commentary?

A strong elementary EDTPA planning commentary typically addresses the learning objectives, academic language, knowledge of students, assessment design, instructional strategies and resources, and lesson structure and pacing. It demonstrates a clear understanding of the learning progression and how the chosen elements support student learning.

How can I effectively describe my knowledge of students in the planning commentary?

When describing your knowledge of students, focus on specific details relevant to the lesson, such as prior academic knowledge, language needs (e.g., native language, academic vocabulary), cultural assets, and learning preferences. Explain how this knowledge informed your instructional decisions and supports diverse learners.

What makes an assessment 'aligned' in the context of the EDTPA planning commentary?

An assessment is considered 'aligned' when it directly measures the stated learning objectives and is appropriate for the students' developmental level and the content being taught. The commentary should explain how the assessment tasks will provide evidence of student understanding of the key concepts and skills.

How should I articulate the academic language demands of my elementary lesson in the commentary?

You should identify the specific vocabulary (tier 1, 2, and 3), grammatical structures, and discourse practices that students will need to understand and use to engage with the lesson content. The commentary should also explain the scaffolds and supports you will provide to help students acquire and use this

language effectively.

What are some common pitfalls to avoid in the EDTPA planning commentary?

Common pitfalls include vague descriptions, lack of specific examples, failing to connect planning decisions to student needs and learning objectives, not providing sufficient evidence of academic language demands, and not clearly explaining how assessments will measure learning. Overly general statements without concrete examples are also problematic.

How do I demonstrate a 'learning progression' in my planning commentary?

A learning progression shows how the lesson builds upon prior knowledge and moves students towards achieving the learning objectives. Your commentary should explain how the lesson's activities and assessments are sequenced to facilitate this progression, often referencing scaffolding and opportunities for practice and application.

What types of instructional strategies are typically highlighted in a successful elementary EDTPA planning commentary?

Effective commentaries often highlight a variety of strategies that support active learning, differentiation, and engagement. Examples include direct instruction, guided practice, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, use of manipulatives, visual aids, and strategies for supporting academic language development.

How can I ensure my commentary clearly explains the 'rationale' behind my planning choices?

The rationale is the 'why' behind your decisions. For each planning component (e.g., assessment, strategy), explain why you chose it, linking it directly to your learning objectives and your knowledge of your students. For instance, 'I chose this activity because it allows students to practice the target vocabulary in a hands-on way, which is beneficial for my kinesthetic learners.'

What is the purpose of the 'lesson structure and pacing' section in the planning commentary?

This section demonstrates your ability to organize the lesson logically and manage time effectively. You should explain the sequence of activities, the time allocated for each, and how transitions will be handled to maximize student learning and engagement.

How can I best use a planning commentary example to prepare my own?

When using an example, analyze why the commentary is effective. Look for how it connects planning elements, provides specific details, and clearly articulates the rationale for choices based on learning objectives and student needs. Don't just copy; understand the principles and adapt them to your own unique teaching context.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to elementary EDTPA planning commentary examples, each starting with , with short descriptions:

1. *Instructional Design for Elementary Educators*

This book delves into the core principles of designing engaging and effective lesson plans for young learners. It explores various pedagogical approaches, curriculum mapping strategies, and the alignment of learning objectives with assessment methods. Readers will find practical guidance on structuring units, differentiating instruction, and creating a supportive classroom environment.

2. *The Art of Lesson Planning: A Practical Guide*

This comprehensive guide provides educators with a structured framework for creating thoughtful and impactful lesson plans. It emphasizes the importance of clear objectives, logical sequencing of activities, and the integration of diverse learning materials. The book also offers tips for anticipating student needs and incorporating formative assessments to gauge understanding.

3. *Assessment Strategies for Elementary Classrooms*

Focusing on the critical role of assessment in the teaching and learning process, this book offers a wide array of formative and summative assessment techniques. It explains how to design assessments that accurately measure student learning and provide valuable feedback for instructional adjustments. The text also addresses the importance of aligning assessments with learning standards and objectives.

4. *Differentiating Instruction for Diverse Learners*

This essential resource equips elementary teachers with practical strategies for meeting the needs of all students in their classrooms. It explores various methods of differentiating content, process, and product to cater to different learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. The book highlights how to create an inclusive learning environment that supports the success of every child.

5. *Building Effective Learning Experiences: From Theory to Practice*

This book bridges the gap between educational theory and classroom application, providing a roadmap for creating meaningful learning experiences. It emphasizes the importance of student-centered approaches,

inquiry-based learning, and the development of critical thinking skills. Readers will learn how to design activities that foster engagement and deep understanding.

6. Classroom Management for Elementary Teachers: Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Effective classroom management is crucial for successful teaching, and this book offers practical strategies for establishing and maintaining a positive and productive learning environment. It covers topics such as setting clear expectations, developing routines, and implementing positive reinforcement techniques. The text emphasizes building respectful relationships with students to foster a sense of community.

7. The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action

This seminal work explores the importance of reflection in professional practice, particularly for educators. It encourages teachers to critically examine their teaching experiences, analyze student responses, and make informed decisions to improve their instruction. The book provides a framework for developing a reflective mindset that leads to continuous growth.

8. Curriculum Mapping and Development for Elementary Schools

This practical guide assists educators in understanding and developing effective curriculum maps for elementary grades. It outlines the process of aligning curriculum with national and state standards, identifying essential learning outcomes, and ensuring a coherent and progressive sequence of instruction. The book offers tools and templates for effective curriculum planning.

9. Meaningful Literacy Instruction for Young Children

This book focuses on developing a comprehensive approach to literacy instruction in the elementary classroom. It explores various strategies for fostering reading comprehension, writing skills, and oral language development. The text emphasizes the importance of creating engaging and authentic literacy experiences that build a lifelong love of reading.

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