

**What's a PPAT? Coaching Strategies for Pedagogical Assessment Success**

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## Introduction

Teacher effectiveness can be measured through the characteristics and behaviors a teacher exhibits in the classroom (Roberts & Dyer, 2004; Rosenshine & Furst, 1971). Variability, task-oriented behavior, providing students opportunities to learn, the ability to plan and execute lessons, and monitor student learning and behavior are some characteristics and behaviors said to be demonstrated by effective teachers (Rosenshine & Furst, 1971; Young, 1990). These characteristics are assessed by states to award teacher licensure through certifying examinations such as the Praxis® Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT®). The PPAT® “measures how teacher candidates apply content knowledge and teaching skills in the classroom” (ETS, 2022). This authentic assessment of preservice teachers occurs during their student teaching semester and is required for the attainment of teacher licensure in Oklahoma (OSDE, 2023). The PPAT® Assessment consists of four different tasks: (1) knowledge of students and learning environment, (2) assessment and data collection to measure and inform student learning, (3) designing instruction for student learning, and (4) implementing and analyzing instruction to promote student learning (ETS, 2022). Task 1 is formative and tasks 2-4 are summative; each submission requires both written commentary and artifacts. Score levels are determined using a 4-point rubric and the overall assessment score is the combined totals of task 2, task 3, and task 4 (ETS, 2022).

Lesson plans, scoring guides, anecdotal notes, student work samples, test scores, and video are examples of artifacts which make up the portfolio to be submitted for review. The PPAT® provides evidence of pedagogical content knowledge of preservice teachers. The goal of faculty was to provide preservice teachers with ample preparation for each PPAT® task. The increase in pass rate of the PPAT® on first submission is attributed to the innovation. A passing PPAT® score is 38 in Oklahoma (ETS, 2023). A score below 38 requires a resubmission of any task the student feels they can revise for a better score.

## How It Works

To achieve the increased pass rate in PPAT® scores, the following innovation was implemented to better prepare preservice teachers for the assessment. A peer-to-peer panel session was facilitated during the first week of the student teaching semester. Recent PPAT® completers shared their experience preparing and completing the assessment. These student testimonials allowed future test takers to put the test into a manageable context. In addition to hearing from peers, a graduate teaching assistant was charged with creating templates that broke the tasks into manageable chunks that served as a writing template for the required PPAT® Tasks. These templates contain tables with prompts and textboxes for each PPAT® Task. Within each prompt selected terms are highlighted and italicized to assist student teachers in focusing their writing on the important terms and concepts. An example of this is bolding key writing prompts like “provide a rationale” so student teachers remember to provide an explanation and example situation within their reply to the prompt. Templates also include more detailed agricultural education specific examples for artifacts and situations than the PPAT® prompts may require. These templates are then submitted to University Supervisors via Canvas at least a week in advance of ETS deadlines where annotation tools are then utilized to provide individualized feedback to each student teacher. Student teachers apply feedback and then copy their submission from the template into ETS.

### **Results to Date/Implications**

Eighty-two percent of agricultural education student teachers at Oklahoma State University pass the PPAT® Assessment on the first attempt. The remaining 8% pass after submitting a selected task for resubmission. Program completers shared their experiences with the innovation and provided the following statements:

*The template created by Ag-Ed faculty made filling out the PPAT® Assessment stress-free. It gave me a space to organize artifacts, write, receive feedback, and edit all my work before logging in to the ETS system. When I was ready to submit, it was as easy as copying and pasting from the template to ETS. The only thing I had to worry about was linking my artifacts.*

*Feedback I received on the PPAT® from my university supervisor was extremely helpful. My university supervisor worked with me to ensure I was using proper grammar and punctuation, and that my content was hitting the benchmark for each task.*

University Supervisors noted that compared to the system previously used for feedback, the new process was more streamlined. These faculty stated:

*The templates are much more user friendly and help student teachers turn in higher quality work on their first draft. Students are able to continue using Canvas for PPAT® reviews the same way they have in all of their previous courses at OSU.*

### **Future Plans**

In the future, we would like to collect data on the experiences of student teachers and the impact of the PPAT® on their student teaching experience. There is also potential for collaboration with other teacher certification programs at Oklahoma State University to help them implement use of the template into their teacher preparation curriculum. These strategies and resources for coaching students through the PPAT® Assessment could also be shared with other agricultural education programs whose students complete the assessment.

### **Costs/Resources Needed**

The Agricultural Education, Communications & Leadership Department covers the \$200 cost for the initial registration for the PPAT® through scholarships. Students are responsible for paying for their resubmission if necessary. The resubmission fee is \$75 per task. The template assignment was completed as a summer project by the GTA and considered a part of the assistantship. There is considerable cost in terms of time. Faculty and GTA's invest approximately 30-45 minutes reviewing each task so approximately three hours is dedicated to the review process. Several faculty review as many as five students so 15 hours is spent over the course of the semester on this service to students. Additional resources include training and collaborating with supervisors to ensure there is a level of consistency regarding reviews.

## References

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