TASK 3: ASSESSMENT COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 10 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Commentary pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored. Attach the assessment you used to evaluate student performance (**no more than 5 additional pages**) to the end of this file. If you submit a student work sample or feedback as a video or audio clip and you or your focus students cannot be clearly heard, attach a transcription of the inaudible comments (**no more than 2 additional pages**) to the end of this file. These pages do not count toward your page total.

1. **Analyzing Student Learning**

   a. Identify the specific learning objectives measured by the assessment you chose for analysis.

   The learning targets identified in this assessment are a synthesis of all that the students have learned in the three-lesson unit. This assessment was created to evaluate student achievement with analyzing the connections between major key signatures, relative minor keys, and the perceived tonic (home) of a musical passage. In addition, the students were asked to analyze a passage of music using La-based minor solfège to demonstrate their literacy development. I integrated this summative assessment into Lesson 3: Using La-based Minor Solfège to Sight-Read.

   b. Provide a graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes student learning for your whole class. Be sure to summarize student learning for all evaluation criteria submitted in Assessment Task 3, Part D.

   This chart represents the distribution of letter grades on the Final Assessment (Instructional Material 3.2) of this learning segment. There were 44 possible points on the assessment, one point per question, and the letter scale is the following: A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, and F = 0-50%. There were two students absent from the lesson who did not take the assessment and are recorded as having "no response."

edTPA Assessment Commentary

Lindsey Reinhard
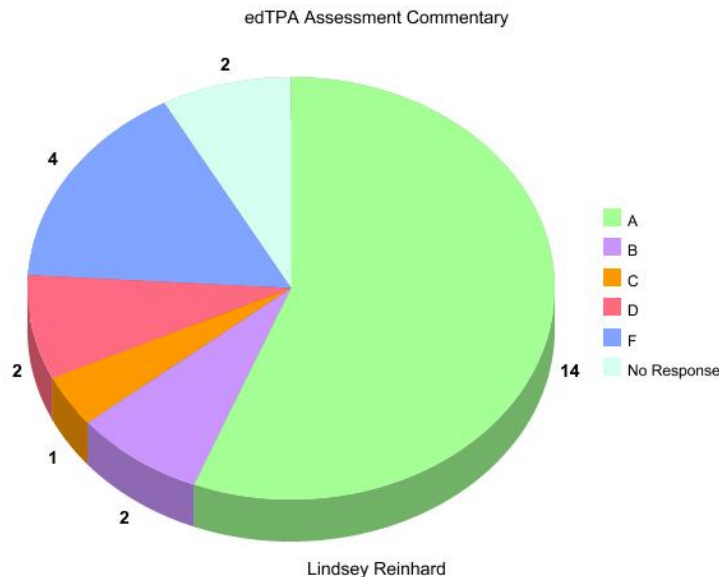
   c. Use evidence found in the **3 student work samples and the whole class summary** to analyze the patterns of learning **for the whole class** and differences for groups or individual learners relative to applying the following within music/dance/theater:

- ■ knowledge/skills (e.g., tools/instruments, technical proficiencies, processes, elements, organizational principles)

- ■ contextual understandings (e.g., social, cultural, historical, personal reflection)

- ■ artistic expression (e.g., interpretation, creativity, exploration/improvisation, individual choices)

Consider what students understand and do well, and where they continue to struggle (e.g., common errors, weaknesses, confusions, need for greater challenge).

The student work samples selected from my focus students represents learners of three main levels: low, middle, and high achieving in the content area. As the chart in question 1b represents, the majority of the class achieved a high level of learning by earning the letter grade A with a score ranging from 90-100%. There was a solid core of 5 middle-achieving students with scores between 70-89% who earned a B or a C grade. Finally, there were about 6 low-achieving students who garnered a D or an F grade with scores between 50-69%. When analyzing patterns of learning, I found that students' grades were strongly boosted by content examples that showcased their knowledge and skill ability. Student 1 was definitely not the strongest performer on this assessment, and while she received a failing score, her facility in the content examples was stronger than in the contextual understanding portion. Student 1 was able to reason her way through three of these questions quite well and approach success through deductive reasoning with the other three. Students 2 and 3 did incredibly well with the content examples in the final assessment, and their work was more representative of the class as a whole.

In terms of contextual understandings, I created the opportunity for students to engage with the learning content by analyzing an excerpt of one of their concert pieces. This allowed the students to correlate theory to practice with their performance repertoire and understand that La-based minor can help them to learn practical sections of music in addition to isolated sight-reading examples. Students could personally reflect on their previous knowledge of the excerpted piece to inform their understanding of the isolation section. Student 3 excelled in her analysis of the piece using La-based minor solfège. Student 2 was still successful, though she superimposed an unnecessary alteration of a solfège syllable onto one note in her analysis. Student 1's work in the analysis example of the final assessment was particularly interesting. Had the piece been written a whole step higher, her solfège syllables would have been correct; it was as though she misread the lines and space of the treble clef when analyzing her music. This is good food for thought moving forward so that she and others like her will not misinterpret those simple rudiments of music literacy. On the whole, the class did very well analyzing this question in their assessments, and it generally provided a nice supplement to their overall scores.

Finally, evidence of artistic expression can also be found in the content examples through the lens of creativity. Student 3, the most high-achieving of my focus students, may have scored so well because she took the time and creative power to generate matrixes for the first six content examples on her assessment (these can be seen directly on her student work sample). Because of her individual choice to engage in this thoughtful practice, Student 3 had more evidence from which to deduce her correct answers. By contrast, Student 1 did not choose to create a matrix for herself in the content examples and she did not have the same amount of context to inform her responses. In summation, I believe that the adage "what you give is what you get" is quite prudent in this assessment. The students who set themselves up for success by relating the isolated content examples to prior knowledge through a matrix or the analysis to the context of their performance repertoire inevitably scored higher on the assessment. General patterns of high achievers through the whole class did likewise. I will encourage the whole group of students to strengthen their responses through creative engagement with the material as well.

d. If a video or audio work sample occurs in a group context (e.g., discussion), provide the name of the clip and clearly describe how the scorer can identify the focus student(s) (e.g., position, physical description) whose work is portrayed.

NOT APPLICABLE

2. **Feedback to Guide Further Learning**

Refer to specific evidence of submitted feedback to support your explanations.

a. Identify the format in which you submitted your evidence of feedback for the 3 focus students. **(Delete choices that do not apply.)**

   ■ Written directly on work samples or in separate documents that were provided to the focus students

   If a video or audio clip of feedback occurs in a group context (e.g., discussion), clearly describe how the scorer can identify the focus student (e.g., position, physical description) who is being given feedback.

NOT APPLICABLE

b. Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to the learning objectives measured.

When beginning to examine these assessments, I endeavored to provide feedback that catered to the individual learning needs of each focus student. It was important to me that the responses I gave would serve as constructive supports for future success with the content material. Student 1 was an example of a low-achieving score on this assessment, but her feedback did not automatically write off her learning process. This student has been classified with an IEP for emotional disturbance, and one of her accommodations mandates positive affirmation and encouragement to ensure success. The feedback that I wrote on her final assessment validated the correct portions of her work while providing constructive ways to improve. In each portion of the assignment, I was able to not only display what the correct response would have been but also how to reach that correct response. For example, on the first set of content examples, I affirmed and simultaneously critiqued the student's third response by saying, "So close! Beside to cross-reference the key signature and include any accidentals in the key signature!". I then circled the note in the key signature that would indicate the correct answer, Eb minor. This type of feedback addressed the accommodation plan for Student 1 while enabling her to perform better moving forward.

Student 2 was moderately successful with this final assessment, yet there was definitely room for improvement. In addition to confirming the content examples and analysis that this student performed correctly, I made a conscious effort to provide kernels of knowledge that would hopefully garner higher levels of achievement farther down the road. Using my knowledge of this student as a whole, I made the decision to structure feedback to Student 2 on this assessment as a guide rather than simply handing her the answers. She did not need a complete learning overhaul because her general awareness of the content was sound. I wrote prompts on her work to show how she could use her existing framework to reach the right response. An example of this prompt would be in the first segment of Student 2's work sample. Her third response seemed to be a simple calculation error when thinking of the process for identifying a relative minor key by counting up a minor sixth from the tonic. I chose to write the major scale correlating to the Gb major key signature underneath her own work, stopping at the minor sixth, Eb minor. By visually showing the process in more detail, I am hopeful that Student 2 will be able to extract meaningful understanding of how to complete content examples like this in the future.

When examining the work of Student 3, a very high-achieving individual, it was important for me to do more than simply congratulate her on a job well-done. I chose to provide feedback that extended past acknowledging success by validating the process that Student 3 used to determine the correct responses. Rather than processing each question without support, Student 3 took my instructional advice to create charts and tools to inform various questions and ensure that there was no skipping of steps. As I explained to the class, it is imperative to think carefully through each step of any music theory example as the final answer is predicated on success through the process. On her final assessment, I wrote what I liked about her well thought-out work in each section. For example, this student created a matrix to identify the major key signature before finding the relative minor key in the second section of the final assessment. Many students struggled with this portion because they did not correctly identify the integral step of the major key before writing the key signature for the minor. I wrote "I love that you created these matrixes for yourself" on Student 3's final assessment to encourage similar behavior moving forward. The assessment clearly benefitted Student 3 in subsequent classes when she independently chose to read a new passage of music in La-based minor and found great success in her first read-through. It is clear that the correlation between understanding theory and utilizing that knowledge in practice was present with Student 3.

c. Describe how you will support each focus student to understand and use this feedback to further their learning related to learning objectives, either within the learning segment or at a later time.

Using constructive feedback written directly on the students' work samples in conjunction with the Evaluation Criteria enabled me to give students both qualitative and quantitative observations of how they performed on this assessment. When delivering my feedback to these students, I offered the ability to consult with me on their questions as well as to seek peer tutoring in music theory should they find that necessary. Specifically, I plan to support Student 1 by pairing her up with Student 3 when working in sectionals during rehearsal to reinforce concepts in a low pressure, comfortable environment. This will also support Student 3 in her learning as she gains the benefit of explaining concepts to others. I will support Student 2 by reviewing the alteration of solfège syllables (or lack thereof) in both Do and La-based minor so that she understands where the two differ.

3. **Evidence of Language Understanding and Use**

When responding to the prompt below, use concrete examples from the clip(s) and/or student work samples as evidence. Evidence from the clip(s) may focus on one or more students.

> You may provide evidence of students' language use **from ONE, TWO, OR ALL THREE of the following sources:**
>
> 1. Use video clips from Instruction Task 2 and provide time-stamp references for evidence of language use.
>
> 2. Submit an additional video file named "Language Use" of no more than 5 minutes in length and cite language use (this can be footage of one or more students' language use). Submit the clip in Assessment Task 3, Part B.
>
> 3. Use the student work samples analyzed in Assessment Task 3 and cite language use.

a. Explain and provide concrete examples for the extent to which your students were able to use the

■ selected language function,

The language function for this Beginning at 1:03 of the "Language Use" video clip, Emily displays the ability to *analyze* the connection between relative major and minor keys and use that knowledge to create a minor key signature. She clearly displays this analysis by talking through each step of the process aloud for the class. Although she faltered later on in her verbal explanation, once prompted by my reminders, she was able to get back on track and deliver a great analysis of the process for crafting minor key signatures.

■ vocabulary/symbols, **AND**

While there were multiple instances of language use in the learning segment, I especially appreciated how articulately Emily was able to explain the use of the "whole step/half step" process to figure out the key signature for a given minor key in the "Language Use" video clip from 1:00-1:30.

■ syntax or discourse to develop content understandings.

Beginning at 3:17 in the "Language Use" video clip, Meg uses syntax to explain the principles used to organize relative minor keys into the prescribed system of La-based minor solfège. She says "if you take G minor, then that's going to be your 'La.'" This connection shows her ability to relate the syntax to practical use by relating the minor key name to the tonic pitch in La-based minor solfège. After some guidance through teacher-student discourse, Meg describes the relationship between La (G) and Do (Bb) and correlates their connection to relative major and minor keys.

4. **Using Assessment to Inform Instruction**

a. Based on your analysis of student learning presented in prompts 1b–c, describe next steps for instruction to impact student learning:

■ For the whole class

Student learning was interestingly distributed between high and low-achieving students in this final assessment. In an effort to ensure that all students come to a common ground in their development with this learning content, I will continue to reinforce how to identify minor keys given the existing key signature. Through the pursuit of relating theory to practice, we will make sure that these examples are extracted from their concert repertoire so that the students make meaningful connections to their artistic pursuits. In addition, the students complete a sight-reading example in every choral rehearsal, and the responses collected from this final assessment will help to guide how we approach the solfège in those exercises. I will plan to encourage the students who felt comfortable labeling the solfège analysis using La-based minor to read their sight-reading examples in that system while others who are facile in both Do and La-based minor can choose whichever system works best for them. This differentiated instruction will hopefully help the overall ability of the choir to read notes off the page at sight.

■ For the 3 focus students and other individuals/groups with specific needs

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

Following this final assessment, I plan to follow up with Student 1 in a one-to-one, informal conference setting. This will fulfill her IEP accommodations by ensuring that she feels cared for and recognized for her correct responses while simultaneously made aware of areas for improvement presented in my feedback. After our conference, I will suggest that she

interact with Student 3 as a peer tutor for music theory so that she can feel completely comfortable moving forward to more advance material.

To further the instruction for Student 2, I will ensure that she participates in small and large group discussions. These informal settings provide the opportunity for Student 2 to showcase progress in her articulation of the assessed subject material to both peers and the teacher. By evaluating her responses within a discussion setting, Student 2 will not feel targeted in any way, but encouraged to actively participate in the given lesson.

Because Student 3 performed so well with this content, the challenge will be to see how she can strengthen her already advanced knowledge. I will make sure to touch base with Student 3 to validate her solid grasp on this information and encourage her to speak up in class discussions. In addition, I will clue her in as a peer tutor in music theory for the school chapter of the music honor society. She would be a great asset to other students, and the content reinforcement that comes from teaching others would benefit her learning as well.

b. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of students' learning. Support your explanation with principles from research and/or theory.

The recommended steps for learning advancement above follow linearly from my analysis of students' learning. Rather than focusing only on my pedagogy, I employed the education principle of andragogy in my plan for the continued learning of Student 2. This principle mandates that the learner is the educational focus and is led through group work or discussion (Knowles et al., 2005). By making Student 2 the focus in a discussion context, she will be able to build upon what she already knows in the content area with the constructive help of others. The pairing of Student 1 with Student 3 in a tutoring environment would expand on the concept of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (1931-1934). Student 3, of course, would act as the "more knowledgable other" who would raise the learning acumen of Student 1 to a higher level. This scenario also coincides with the educational theory of humanism by ascribing to the idea that learning is a caring act to fulfill a student's greatest potential through facilitating a comfortable space for trial and error until success is won (Rogers, 1983). The two students engaging in a peer tutoring situation would surely be a relaxed setting for learning to occur, especially knowing the kind hearts of Student 1 and Student 3. Using a synthesis of these educational theories, I hope to facilitate the education of these students to reach each individual's highest potential.