

**Context for Learning Information Directions:** Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 3 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets following each prompt. Do not delete or alter the prompts; both the prompts and your responses are included in the total page count allowed. Refer to the evidence chart in the handbook to ensure that this document complies with all format specifications. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

## About the School Where You Are Teaching

### 1. In what type of school do you teach?

[The middle school I am student teaching at is an urban, recently renovated, dynamic school. For the purposes of this assessment, I will name this middle school “Winslow Flats.” Winslow Flats officially dubs itself a “neighborhood” school, claiming that 95% of parents report that their children have positive attitudes about attending this school. This high percentage makes sense. Winslow Flats hosts multiple programs that support students’ academic learning. Winslow offers traditional middle school programs, a dual immersion bilingual program, as well as a TAG (gifted and talented) program. 52% of the students who attend Winslow are white. 40% of the students are Hispanic, and the remaining percentage are African American (1.5%), Asian (3%), or multiracial (3%). 38% of students are served free lunches each day. And 23% of students (141) are “English Language Learners.” Accordingly, students who attend Winslow fall in a large range on socioeconomic status, ranging, quite literally, from the top 10% of America’s wealth to the bottom 10%. I do not exaggerate when I write this. There is no doubt that this middle school, Winslow Flats, is diverse, yet dynamic and progressive in its educational practices.]

Middle school: [  ]

High school: [  ]

Other (please describe): [  ]

Urban: [  ]

Suburban: [  ]

Rural: [  ]

### 2. List any special features of your school or classroom setting (e.g., charter, co-teaching, themed magnet, classroom aide, bilingual, team taught with a special education teacher) that will affect your teaching in this learning segment.

[Though Winslow Flats is not officially bilingual, every sign, announcement, and parent handout is available in both Spanish and English. Our classroom setting is likewise unique. We incorporate professionals into our classroom curriculum practices as often as possible. Currently, a professor from the local state university joins our classes in order to research how ELA fosters identity development. Our classroom hosts practicum students from that same university on a weekly basis. Recently, a world-renowned theater director made her way into our classroom, assisting students in performing Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Though these are not formal features that distinguish our classroom setting, the variety and multitude of professionals that assist students in the midst of their learning in our classroom influences our weekly curriculum practices immensely.]

### 3. Describe any district, school, or cooperating teacher requirements or expectations that might affect your planning or delivery of instruction, such as required curricula, pacing plan, use of specific instructional strategies, or standardized tests.

[My cooperating teacher is not expected to teach certain texts or ascribe to specific curricula. However, she is, of course, expected to adhere to Colorado content standards. In terms of standardized tests, though we halt instruction for three weeks in March in order to proctor standardized testing, my cooperating teacher is not required to teach any specific lessons in preparation for testing.]

## About the Class Featured in This Assessment

1. How much time is devoted each day to English-Language Arts instruction in your classroom?

[Winslow Flats employs a semi-block schedule. On Monday, Tuesday, and Friday, English-Language Arts (ELA) class periods are each 48 minutes. On either Thursday or Wednesday, ELA class periods last one hour and thirty minutes. Of that allotted time, each class period begins with ten minutes of prompted journal writing or daily grammar review. From there, with transition and announcements for the day, the remainder of the period is devoted to instruction, with the last 10 minutes set aside for application. Taking the schedule into consideration, roughly 25 minutes (non-block) and one hour (block) respectively are devoted to ELA instruction in our classroom.

2. Is there any ability grouping or tracking in English-Language Arts? If so, please describe how it affects your class.

No, there is no official tracking at Winslow Flats. There are no advanced ELA classes or regular ELA classes. However, I do teach two specially grouped classes. The first is called “Fit-Lit.” During 2<sup>nd</sup> period students, together with both their fitness teacher and ELA teacher(s), engage in fitness class. Next period (3<sup>rd</sup>), students attend ELA class with both their fitness and ELA teacher(s). Students self choose to take “Fit-Lit” based off research that fitness triggers brain functions that aid in critical thinking as well as memory. Although students do not need to meet any specific criteria in order to enroll in “Fit-Lit” thirty of the thirty-six students enrolled in the class routinely play sports and engage in fitness outside of school. Thus, “Fit-Lit” has come to be known as the “jock” class.

Further, I teach a reading intervention class for students who are at least two reading levels below 8<sup>th</sup> grade (as determined by state test scores). The class hosts fifteen students. Ten students speak Spanish as their first language. However, though their reading level groups these students, they still take separate ELA classes that are not officially tracked. In short, students’ academic classifications do not accordingly determine the specific ELA class that they will take.

3. Identify any textbook or instructional program you primarily use for English-Language Arts instruction. If a textbook, please provide the title, publisher, and date of publication.

[The ELA classroom I am student teaching in does not primarily use any textbook or instructional program.]

4. List other resources (e.g., electronic white board, online resources) you use for English-Language Arts instruction in this class.

[Our classroom does not host an electronic white board. However, we routinely utilize a Document Camera that allows us to convey notes, images, students writing, etc effortlessly to all students. We utilize Google Classroom for paperless assignments. A class set of Google Chrome books is available for checkout from the library, and we utilize chrome books and computers multiple times per week. Our classroom is experimenting with Ipads as well. And of course, we leverage the Internet and its many resources for learning.]

## About the Students in the Class Featured in This Assessment

- Grade level(s): [ 8<sup>th</sup> ]
- Number of
  - students in the class [ 16 ]
  - males [ 10 ] females [ 6 ]
- Complete the chart below to summarize required or needed supports, accommodations or modifications for your students that will affect your instruction in this learning segment. As needed, consult with your cooperating teacher to complete the chart. Some rows have been completed in italics as examples. Use as many rows as you need.

Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/supports or accommodations/modifications to instruction or assessment (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 needing greater support or challenge).

Students with Specific Learning Needs		
IEP/504 Plans: Classifications/Needs	Number of Students	Supports, Accommodations, Modifications, Pertinent IEP Goals
<i>504/IEP plans</i>	0	No students fall into either of these categories
Other Learning Needs	Number of Students	Supports, Accommodations, Modifications
<i>Struggling readers</i>	2	Allow extended time for reading; read aloud with students; echo reading; sentence stems; cognates; leverage interest; allow for multi sensory inputs (mostly audio)
<i>English Language Learner (Spanish)</i>	2	Language cognates; provide all assignments and directions visually; reading frames; frequent pausing for clarifying questions; extended time
<i>Gifted Students</i>	3	Provide opportunities to deepen and layer assessments and assignments; do not simply assign more “work”
<i>Underperforming students</i>	2	Leverage student interest; daily “check-in”
<i>Students on the Spectrum</i>	2	Communication with students in regards to group tasks; extended time; alternate assignments; daily personal “check-in”