Retake for Task 3 on a Special Education Portfolio: Developing Commentary Responses

The following commentary responses were submitted for retake on Task 3. The new submission earned five additional points. All student details - such as standardized test scores and names of tests, along with other background information - have been changed to ensure anonymity. Original and new responses shared with permission of the author.

Original Task 1 Response (284 words)	New Task 1 Response (892 words)
The Focus Learner's interests include computers, technology, calendars, and dates. The Focus Learner has a terrific memory for important dates in all of her friends' lives and likes to talk about birthdays of her peers and teachers, but this is a very specific skill that has not been generalized to other areas of knowledge. She has been able to do this for many years now, and honestly never forgets anyone's birthday. The Focus Learner, seems to learn best when she can work in a quiet environment, receive frequent reinforcement for correct responses and material is presented to her in small segments. She is kind to others and very helpful. She always knows the schedule each day and keeps the teachers on top of important events that are happening, and is responsible for reminders about almost everything. The Focus Learner is always very neat and orderly, and we often find her cleaning and organizing the classroom during her breaks. Focus Learner has suffered from medical challenges since a very young age and this and other health impairments continue to adversely impact her ability to learn. Focus Learner spent much of her early childhood receiving medical treatment for various ailments, and as a result did not encounter many of the developmental opportunities that most children are exposed to in early childhood. She needs and receives specially designed instruction in functional academics, adaptive behavior and transition to make adequate progress toward graduation. She receives individual and small group instruction depending on the topic, and learns best when tasks are broken down and she is frequently reinforced. The curriculum that the Focus Learner	The Focus Learner has been building her writing skills throughout the entire year. At the beginning of the year we focused on many of the preliminary skills required to write a complete paragraph. In the first few lessons students were asked to respond to a short prompt using one or two sentences. These prompts were basic prompts that provided students with a significant amount of assistance when writing their sentences, an example prompt might have been "What did you do over the weekend?" and the assist response was "Over the weekend, I…". Then we moved on to different parts of a sentence. According to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale (WI-I), presently Focus Learner's writing (spelling) scores fall in the low range and approximate a second grade level, which is relatively unchanged since the 2012 reevaluation. Focus Learner had a standard score on the WI-I of 46 with a grade equivalency score of 2.0. The IEP team and school psychologist agreed that at present and in the foreseeable future the instructional emphasis in writing for the Focus Learner will continue to be on functional writing. The Focus Learner is still working on gaining a functional understanding of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the beginning of this unit series the Focus Learner participated in a baseline assessment to measure her current ability to determine whether a word used in a sentence is a noun, verb, and adjectives. During this baseline assessment the Focus Learner was provided 5 sentences that each contained at least 1 noun, verb, and adjectives. Focus Learner was able to identify the noun 2 out of 5 times which is an accuracy rate of 35%. Focus Learner was able to identify the verb 2 out of 5 times which is an accuracy rate of 35%. When identifying adjectives, Focus Learner had a much more difficult time and was only able to identify the adjective 0 out of 5 times for an

receives is created by the teachers at her skill level to meet IEP goals and future needs.

accuracy rate of 0%. When asked to write a paragraph and provided with adequate support and scaffolding, Focus Learner has difficulty writing the paragraph. During the baseline assessment when asked to write a paragraph, Focus Learner was only able to write three sentences about the topic. In order to more accurately assess the Focus Learner, I had to create a rubric for her writing that provided more information than just a simple yes or no on whether or not the Focus Learner completed the paragraph. The rubric is a ten point assessment that breaks down each part of a paragraph and measures whether or not each part was completed. Below is an example of this break down. Both the Focus Learner and I will assess the Focus Learner's writing using this scale. There is also a place on this assessment that allows the student to demonstrate her own understanding of a few of the major components of the learning segment. Using this scale, the Focus Learner received a score of 6 out of 10 on her baseline assessment.

Scoring Rubric Baseline   Name: _____

1. How many sentences were written?   _____ point(s)
   (1 point each. Up to 5 points possible)

2. Is there capitals at the beginning and periods at the end of each sentence?
   (1 point possible)   (yes = 1, no = 0)   _____ point

3. Do the sentences follow one topic? (yes = 1, no = 0)   _____ point
   (1 point possible)

4. Write a noun that you used.   _____   _____ point

5. Write a verb that you used.   _____   _____ point

6. Write an adjective that you used. _____   _____ point

7. I know what a noun, verb, and adjective are.

8. I can write a complete sentence.

9. I know the parts of a paragraph.

10. I know what a topic sentence is and can write one.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of the Focus Learners present levels, I was able to perform a standardize adaptive behaviors measurement called the Connective Adaptive Behavior Scores Second Edition, Teacher Rating Form (also referred to as the Connective-II BeSS). Adaptive behaviors are those day-to-day activities that are

| | necessary for students to get along with others and take care of themselves. As a student grows older and becomes less dependent on the help of others, these activities change. But at every age, certain skills are required in the home, school, and community.

Learning about the Focus Learner's adaptive behavior helped to gain a total picture of the Focus Learner's performance. Along with information about a child's level of cognitive functioning, school achievement, and physical health, knowledge of a child's adaptive behavior and skills can help in planning for her education and for any special needs at home or in school. In order to determine the level of a student's adaptive behavior, someone who is familiar with that student, such as a parent, caregiver, or teacher, is asked to describe the Focus Learner's activities. Focus Learner's performance of these activities was then compared with that of other students of the Focus Learner's age, to find out in which areas the Focus Learner has skills and behaviors typical for the age range, and in which areas the Focus Learner needs help to acquire skills not yet learned. I performed this assessment with Focus Learner and describe Focus Learner's abilities using the Connective-II BeSS.

Several types of scores are reported for Focus Learner's performance overall and in four main areas. These scores indicate how the focus learner's adaptive behavior compares with a group of typical students from across the United States the same age as the Focus Learner. One score, the percentile rank, indicates the percentage of students who had scores lower than Focus Learner's score. For example, the Focus Learner's percentile rank of 2 for the Connective-II BeSS tells you that only 2 percent of students Focus Learner's age in the norm group had lower scores than Focus Learner. This score indicates a lower level of performance overall relative to individuals in the norm group. Focus Learner's percentile ranks in the assessed areas of adaptive ability are less than 1 for Communication, 9 for Living for Today, and 4 for Social Interactions and Relationships. |
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| **Original Task 3 Response (151 words)** | **New Task 3 Response** |

The primary learning target for lesson one is "Focus Learner will be able to answer the prompt 'If I Were principal' by writing 5 complete sentences in paragraph form using nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives. Each sentence will have a capital at the beginning and a period at the end". The primary learning target for lesson two is "Focus Learner will learn more information about some of the things that the principal of the school does, and they will use this new information to add more detail sentences to their paragraph 'If I were principal." The final primary learning target in the lesson sequence is "Focus Learner will discuss and learn how to use planning strategies to revise and complete the paragraph 'If I were principal….'" The secondary learning target throughout every lesson is to increase the ability of the Focus Learner to make eye contact with other individuals during conversations.

The primary learning target that will be used during this unit will be that the Focus Learner will be able to write a complete paragraph with 5 complete sentences that follow a topic. In order to determine if the Focus Learner has achieved this I created a rubric of what is expected in order to create a complete paragraph. The rubric has 10 points possible, this rubric rates the student's ability to write complete sentences, in paragraph form, that include: a topic sentence, three supporting sentences, and a closing sentence and ability to identify one noun, verb, and adjective that were used in the student's paragraph. There is a section for students to report their own understanding of the unit. During the baseline assessment using this rubric the Focus Learner achieved a score of 6 out of 10 on her pre-assessment of the material. The vocabulary that the students have learned in this writing unit are topic, conclusion, nouns, verbs, and adjectives which she will be using to create write a paragraph. According to the Wechsler Intelligence Scale (WI-I), presently the Focus Learner's writing (spelling) scores fall in the low range and approximately the second grade level, which is relatively unchanged since the 2012 reevaluation. The Focus Learner had a standard score on the WI-I of 52.6 with a grade equivalency score of 2.2. The IEP team and school psychologist agree that at present and in the foreseeable future the instructional emphasis in writing for the Focus Learner will continue to be on functional writing.

The Focus Learner is still working on gaining a functional understanding of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. At the beginning of this unit series the Focus Learner participated in a baseline assessment to measure her current ability to determine whether a word used in a sentence is a noun, verb, and adjectives. During this baseline assessment the Focus Learner was provided 5 sentences that each contained at least 1 noun, verb, and adjectives. This was used to gain a better understanding of the Focus Learner's present levels for writing. The Focus Learner was able to identify the noun 3 out of 5 times which is an accuracy rate of 60%. Focus Learner was able to identify the verb 2 out of 5 times which is an accuracy rate of 40%. When identifying adjectives, Focus Learner

	had a much more difficult time and was never able to identify the adjective, answering correctly 1 out of 5 times for a rate of 20%. The secondary learning target throughout every lesson is to increase her ability to make eye contact with other individuals during conversations. In order to measure the level of achievement for this learning target, I decide that the Focus Learner would be assessed based on frequency of whether or not she makes eye contact during an interaction. During the pre-assessment, I took data 22 times to track the amount of times that the Focus Learner and I made eye contact during our interactions, and found that she only made eye contact 12 out of 22 times or 54.5% while I was taking data.
Original Task 3 Response (18 words)	**New Task 3 Response (357 words)**
There were no changes made to the any of the assessments that were described in the lesson plan.	As we went through the first activity of lesson 1, I had originally planned on having students identify the nouns, verbs, and adjectives in each sentence as they went through the sentence. This was actually a much more difficult task than I had originally planned, and I had to modify how to work through this activity with all of my students. Focus Learners were having difficulty switching between the three parts of speech, so instead I instructed them to read through all of the sentences and identify all the nouns that they see. Then I had them find all the verbs in all the sentences, and finally we finished the activity by identifying all the adjectives in the sentences. Focus Learners were much more confident in their answers and required less support when they were only identifying one part of speech at a time. If I were to do this lesson over, I would separate the tasks and present them one at a time using the same sentences each time. In that same lesson, I determined that the last activity of writing five sentences using some of the words that each student had written down should be decreased to only three sentences. By this time, students had been working very well for a long period of time and seemed to be losing their focus. I believed at the time, and stand by my decision still, that writing three sentences displayed the same skills required to meet the lesson objective as writing five sentences would have.

During the second lesson, I again gave too many directions to the students at one time. I asked them to circle the topic sentence and underline the summary sentence. This was confusing for my students at first, so I decided to focus on identifying the topic sentences first. Once I transitioned to only focusing on one at a time, I found that students did much better on the activity. In the future, I would present all five paragraphs and ask students to identify the topic sentences. Then, I would present all five paragraphs again and ask students to identify the summary sentence.

Original Task 3 Response (27 words)	New Task 3 Response (93 words)
The work sample that I will be using for the final assessment is a written paragraph that was not included in the video clips from task 2.	The work sample that I will be using for the final assessment of the secondary learning target is a frequency chart that tallies each of the times that the Focus Learner either made eye contact during one of our exchanges or did not make eye contact. An example of this data measure that was used is located below and there is no time stamp from the video clips used in task 2.

Eye Contact Frequency Data   Name: _____

Lesson	Made Eye Contact	No Eye Contact
Pre-Assessment		
Lesson 1		
Lesson 2		
Lesson 3		
Post-Assessment		

Original Task 3 Response (18 words)	New Task 3 Response (274 words)
When I had a chance to sit down and go through the self-assessment with the Focus Learner she was enthusiastic about circling yes on all the questions on the rubric. Though we disagreed about the students last sentence, she was able to write five sentences and gave himself the same overall score that I ended up giving her as well. I believe that	During the pre-assessment I found that the Focus Learner struggled to report an accurate understanding of her progress toward the learning target. According to her self-assessment the Focus Learner reported that she should receive a score of 8 out of 10 on the rubric that we used together, while I only gave her a score of 6 out of 10. The Focus Learner seemed to be guessing on the questions about nouns, verbs,

she had a very realistic understanding of her progress towards the learning target.	and adjectives and still believed that she received a point for the correct answer. I instructed the Focus Learner to look back through her writing while she self-assessed and check to see if she met all the requirements. After I was able to sit down and assess the Focus Learner's work for myself, I had the chance to discuss the differences with the Focus Learner. We discussed what was required to get points in each section, and by the end of this conversation the Focus Learner seemed to have a better understanding of how to accurately self-assess. After each lesson, I had each student rate themselves with the fist, representing zero, to five finger response on their understanding of the lesson. The Focus Learner did very well on all of the activities and reported a four or five after about 3-5 seconds of hesitation each time. On the final self-assessment the Focus Learner was much more accurate in reporting her own score and personal understanding. She gave himself a score of 10 out of 10, but I confirmed again that she was still having difficulty identifying adjectives and through her reporting I determined that she doesn't quite understand what they are.