



**Master of Arts in Teaching Program  
Teacher Candidate Work Sample (TCWS)  
Instructions for Foreign Language Teacher Candidates**

**Introduction**

The education profession emphasizes the ability of teacher candidates to enhance student learning through instruction that links standards and assessment with content knowledge. The TCWS provides candidates the opportunity to plan, design, implement, and reflect on the complex relationship between standards, assessment, and instruction. The TCWS is also an importance source of evidence that you have met the program standards for graduation and that you have grown professionally from a novice learner to an emerging professional by applying the knowledge and skills to promote student learning in the classroom setting.

**Core Elements**

The TCWS aligns with the Danielson model for enhancing professional practice by supporting the basic principles that students learn best when the teacher

- Organizes content for student learning and understands how to design appropriate instruction and assessment for all student learners
- Creates an environment for student learning with high expectations for each student
- Plans lessons and selects engaging instructional strategies based on state and national standards and provide appropriate assessment of student learning
- Demonstrates a sense of efficacy to improve instruction, student learning, and support professional relationships with colleagues and parents

The TCWS is one element of the MAT program that shows your preparation for entering the profession of Foreign Language Education. The work sample should contain the following sections with suggested page lengths:

1. Contextual Factors: The Setting for Learning (2-3 pages)
2. Learning Goals (2-4 pages)
3. Assessment Plan (2-4 pages)
4. Design for Instruction (the lesson plans for one full unit of instruction, accompanied by relevant materials and narrative/reflection; length will vary)
5. Instructional Decision Making (2-4 pages)
6. Analysis of Student Learning (3-4 pages plus visuals)
7. Reflection and Self-Evaluation (3-5 pages)
8. References and Credits (1 page)

## Overview of Teacher Candidate Work Sample (TWS)\*

### The Vision

Successful teacher candidates (TC) support learning by designing a Teacher Work Sample that employs a range of strategies and builds on each student's strengths, needs, and prior experiences. Through this performance assessment, teacher candidates provide credible evidence of their ability to facilitate learning by meeting the following TWS standards:

- The TC uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.
- The TC sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals.
- The TC uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during, and after instruction.
- The TC designs instruction to accomplish specific learning goals based upon student characteristics and needs and learning contexts.
- The TC uses regular and systematic evaluations of student learning to make instructional decisions.
- The TC uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.
- The TC reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.

\*Adapted and modified from the Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality, 2004

### The Process

The TWS contains seven teaching processes identified by research and best practice as fundamental to improving student learning. Each teaching process is followed by a TWS Standard, the Task, a Prompt, and a Rubric that defines various levels of performance on the Standard. The Standards and Rubrics will be used to evaluate your TWS. The Prompts (or directions) help you document the extent to which you have met each of the Standards. The underlined words in the Rubrics and Prompts are defined in the Glossary.

You are required to teach a comprehensive unit. Before you teach the unit, you will describe contextual factors, identify learning goals based on the state or district content standards, create an assessment plan designed to evaluate student performance before (pre-assessment), during (formative assessment) and after (post-assessment), and plan for your instruction. After you teach the unit, you will analyze student learning and then reflect upon and evaluate your teaching as it relates to student learning.

**Teaching Processes Assessed by the Renaissance Teacher Work Sample**

<b>Teaching Processes, TWS Standards, and Indicators</b>
<p><b>Contextual Factors</b>  <i>The teacher candidate uses information about the learning-teaching context and student individual differences to set learning goals and plan instruction and assessment.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of community, school, and classroom factors</li> <li>• Knowledge of characteristics of students</li> <li>• Knowledge of students' varied approaches to learning</li> <li>• Knowledge of students' skills and prior learning</li> <li>• Implications for instructional planning and assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Goals</b>  <i>The teacher candidate sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significance, Challenge and Variety</li> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Appropriateness for students</li> <li>• Alignment with national, state, or local standards</li> </ul>
<p><b>Assessment Plan</b>  <i>The teacher candidate uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with learning goals and instruction</li> <li>• Clarity of criteria for performance</li> <li>• Multiple modes and approaches</li> <li>• Technical soundness</li> <li>• Adaptations based on the individual needs of students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Design for Instruction</b>  <i>The teacher candidate designs instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment with learning goals</li> <li>• Accurate representation of content</li> <li>• Lesson and unit structure</li> <li>• Use of a variety of instruction, activities, assignments, and resources</li> <li>• Use of contextual information</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instructional Decision-Making</b>  <i>The teacher candidate uses on-going analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound professional practice</li> <li>• Adjustments based on analysis of student learning</li> <li>• Congruence between modifications and learning goals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis of Student Learning</b>  <i>The teacher candidate uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and accuracy of presentation</li> <li>• Alignment with learning goals</li> <li>• Interpretation of data</li> <li>• Evidence of impact on student learning</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflection and Self-Evaluation</b>  <i>The teacher candidate reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation of student learning</li> <li>• Insights on effective instruction, and assessment</li> <li>• Alignment among goals, instruction and assessment</li> <li>• Implications for future teaching</li> <li>• Implications for professional development</li> </ul>

## Introduction to the Teacher Work Sample (TWS)

### Why is this worth doing?

The TWS provides substantial evidence you are ready to begin your professional career as an educator. The development of a TWS will provide you with an authentic experience designed to develop in you “a teacher’s way of thinking.” In other words, in your future career the systematic development of a TWS may not happen again in a formal written manner. However, very importantly, it will create a professional habit of mind where, as an educator, you will naturally think about the seven processes of the TWS as a matter of best practice.

Compiling a TWS provides you with professional growth experiences and documentation that reflect your ability to impact the learning of students. Many teacher candidates have found their TWS to be a valuable tool in their search for employment.

## Reminders for Submission

### • Ownership

Complete a cover page that includes (a) your name, (b) date submitted, (c) grade level taught, (d) subject taught, (d) your university, (e) course number and title. *Include in your header or footer, this information: UA TCWS FL and page numbers.*

### • Table of Contents

Provide a Table of Contents with page numbers that lists the sections and attachments in your TWS document.

### • Charts, graphs and attachments

Charts, graphs, and assessment instruments are required as part of the TWS document. You may also want to provide other attachments, such as student work. However, you should be very selective and make sure your attachments provide clear, concise evidence of your performance related to TWS Standards and your students’ learning progress.

### • Narrative length

A suggested page length for your narrative is given at the end of each section. You have some flexibility of length across sections, but the total length of your written narrative (excluding charts, graphs, attachments and references) should not exceed twenty (20) word-processed pages, double-spaced in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Be sure to include page numbers!

### • References and Credits (not included in 20 pages for TWS)

If you refer to another person’s ideas or material in your narrative, you should cite these in a separate section at the end of your narrative under References and Credits. Use the American Psychological Association (APA) style (explained in the manual entitled “*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*”). [Available online at: <http://www.apa.org>]

### • Anonymity

In order to insure the anonymity of students in your class, do **not** include any student names or identification in any part of your TWS. You may use fictitious names;

however, you must note this somewhere in the document.

## **Specific Advice for Completing Each Section of the TWS**

The Prompt (directions) and Rubric tell you *what* to do. This section gives you clues on *how* to do it. Letters of advice from teacher education candidates who have completed a TWS, “Tips” and “Pitfalls to Avoid” have been provided for each section. (*Many of the following “tips” were contributed by: Mark Jones, Brenda Malooly, Brenda Schipper, Megan Thompson, in collaboration with NICL Student Teaching Center 2002, Nick Pace, Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA.*)

### **I. Contextual Factors**

*From the start of your field experience placement you need to start noticing your context. Keep in mind your class population will change from the time you begin until the time you actually start teaching, so you will have to re-write this section. Remember that anything you address in your context, you will be accountable for when you are making adaptations for assessments and teaching.*

*Your mentor teachers should help provide input for this section, as they know the school and students best. Also talk with other candidates who are placed at your school to see what they have learned.*

#### **Tips for Success**

1. This section should be written in present tense, because it sets the groundwork and explains how the Contextual Factors relate to student learning.
2. From day one begin taking notes on the following: community, school, classroom, and students.
  - Ask your cooperating teacher and/or other school personnel for information.
  - Read a local newspaper for current and community information.
  - Take a driving tour around town.
  - Pay particular attention to environmental factors that might affect student learning.
3. Define each factor as it relates to the classroom and students. For example, climate does not mean room temperature!
4. For Contextual Factors, use less space for community and district factors and more space for school, classroom, and student factors.
5. After completing the Contextual Factors section, identify 3-5 factors about the students, classroom, school, or community to keep in mind while planning unit goals, assessments, activities, adaptations, and reflection on learning results. Keep these factors “front and center” when doing any of the other sections of the TWS. Each of the following sections should reflect a relationship to your specific Contextual Factors.

#### **Common Challenges**

1. Making sure the Contextual Factors identified are relevant to the design of the TWS.
2. Remembering the Contextual Factors identified should be at the community, student, and classroom levels.
3. Considering the relationship of instructional strategies to specific student/classroom

Contextual Factors.

## **II. Learning Goals**

*As you begin to write your Learning Goals remember they are the foundation for all of your lessons and assessments. Your Learning Goals must match state and district standards. Your mentor teacher should have district, state and national standards. Make your lives easy by writing Learning Goals that can be easily assessed and keep the list short! Most importantly, match your Learning Goals to the needs and abilities of your students.*

### **Tips for Success**

1. Use the format and terminology suggested by your cooperating teacher. The term “goals” is used in the TWS directions to give latitude to the particular institution using the instrument. Some institutions use the term “goals”, others use the term “standards”, and still others use the term “objectives.”
2. Select 3-5 of your most significant Learning Goals for your work sample.
3. Ask for your district’s standards and benchmarks or get them from the Web.
4. Allot time for each of your goals commensurate with the importance of each goal.
5. Make use of a taxonomy of objectives to incorporate higher order thinking skills.
6. State Learning Goals in specific behavioral terms.
7. Use scope and sequence charts to help you justify your goals.
8. Write this section of your work sample in future tense.

### **Common Challenges**

1. Basing your TWS upon Standards, rather than around a “pet project/cute activity.”
2. Writing the appropriate number of goals. (If you have too many, they might be too narrow; if you have too few, they might be too broad.)
3. Establishing Learning Goals that are challenging (have high expectations for learning), significant (based on the standards) and varied (more than one type/level of learning).
4. Writing Learning Goals that are appropriate for your students. They should be written as learning outcomes (what students should know and do) rather than activities.

## **III. Assessment Plan**

*In making your Assessment Plan, here are some tips to assist your planning. Make sure you pre- and post-assess at least two Learning Goals, but they all must be formatively assessed. If your pre-assessment shows a different level of knowledge than you expected, you may need to eliminate or rewrite that goal. Be sure to link your Learning Goal to the best type of assessment for that Learning Goal. You must adapt your assessments based on needs described in your Context. Be sure to use a variety of assessments as this helps maintain student interest and meets the TWS requirements. Most importantly, make sure your pre- and post-assessments measure the same content, so your scores can be compared. That way you will know if learning took place and if your students met the Learning Goal.*

### **Tips for Success**

1. Remember, students learn by doing. Therefore, you will create an Assessment Plan that will actively engage each student in a personally meaningful assessment that provides evidence of individual student’s accomplishment of each Learning Goal.

2. Consult appropriate resources for ideas about assessments, adaptations, and modifications.
3. For the Assessment Plan, justify the pre-assessment you will choose. This may involve using the same pre-assessment and post-assessment instruments. However, if a goal is to be assessed by an authentic project, it may be impractical to have students do the project as a pre-assessment. In such cases, you may pre- and post-assess the conceptual understandings required in the project. Otherwise, you may use a completely different task for the pre-assessment, but one that can be scored with the same rubric as used in the post assessment.

### **Common Challenges**

1. Including multiple modes of assessment (formative and summative).
2. Relating adaptations to the factors identified in the Contextual Factors section.
3. Making the adaptations specific to the needs of individual students.
4. Relating the adaptations to the assessments rather than to instructional activities.
5. Aligning the assessments with the goals in terms of taxonomic levels of learning.
6. Incorporating different types of assessments (authentic, alternative, paper/pencil, etc.).
7. Utilizing a pre-assessment that results in a measurable score or rating.
8. Assuring the pre- and post-assessments will yield individual student scores (e.g., a class discussion is hard to measure and score).
9. Making your scoring methods or criteria clear by correlating the items with specific goals and providing criteria for scoring students' responses.

## **IV. Design for Instruction**

*The Instructional Design section is the part of your TWS that will take the most time and preparation. Make sure you have good communication with your mentor teachers as they will be your greatest resource. Remember that your professors and peers are also excellent sources for lesson plan ideas. Also, remember lessons plans are not written in stone, and you may need to make necessary adjustments when you are actually teaching. Never forget the students are the most important factor of the lesson. You are teaching to benefit them, so do whatever is necessary to achieve this.*

*Make note of all the adaptations, and if you notice you are making them for someone you didn't anticipate you would, be sure to go back to your Context and make note of the special needs. Remember to reflect after each lesson. Don't wait until the end or you will forget. Most importantly, have fun and be flexible!*

### **Tips for Success**

1. Lay out the Design for Instruction in a flowchart or in visual form. This will help you visualize the overall unit.
2. When you are designing activities, keep in mind the various learning styles of your students as described in your Contextual Factors. Plan activities that will incorporate these learning styles.
3. This section of your work sample should be written in future tense.
4. Be sure to relate your Design for Instruction to what the pre-assessment told you about the students.

5. Keep samples of students' work.

### **Common Challenges**

1. Analyzing the results of the pre-assessment to determine how they have impacted your Design for Instruction. What will you do for those students who:
  - are ready to start,
  - are not ready to start, lacking pre-requisite knowledge, and
  - have already achieved the objectives and are in need of an extension?
2. Using Contextual Factors to guide both instruction and the adaptations made to instructional activities.
3. Incorporating a variety of methods and activities in your lessons.
4. Aligning your lesson with Learning Goals. (You may copy and paste from your Learning Goals section.)

## **V. Instructional Decision Making**

*In this section, you have the opportunity to describe your ability to “think on your feet.” Just be sure the incidences you describe are based on your students’ learning and not on things such as your power point presentation not working or a fire drill shortening your course period.*

### **Tips for Success**

1. Throughout the course of your learning unit, keep a journal describing what went well and what you want to change. This information, accompanied with a sample of your students’ work, will facilitate your making more thorough and confident decisions.
2. Make note in your journal of the manner in which you “think on your feet.” Were you able to read students’ body language, behavior, attention, etc. How did you know your lesson was or was not working? How and why did you decide to make changes? Asking yourself these questions will also help when writing the Reflection and Self-Evaluation section.
3. This section of your work sample should be written in present tense.

### **Common Challenges**

1. Describing the decisions you made that were prompted by your observations of students’ reactions/responses throughout the unit.
2. Providing a clear description of the situation including an explanation of the modification(s) made and an explanation of how the modification(s) will help improve student learning.

## **VI. Analysis of Student Learning Results**

*When preparing your Analysis of Student Learning, remember to have all of your data organized so you can easily represent student learning. Experiment with different types of charts and graphs until you find one that clearly shows what you want to represent.*



**Tips for Success**

1. Create computer-generated graphs to highlight the data collected on student achievement. Remember to relate this to the Contextual Factors section of your TWS.
2. Copies of student work, including assessment scores, provide the data needed to generate graphs illustrating evidence of student learning.
3. Only include examples of student work that validate your results.
4. Do **not** include students' names on the examples of their work.
5. This section should be completed in the past tense.

**Common Challenges**

1. Describing criteria for proficiency and discussing what each score means in terms of how closely students came to meeting the Standard.
2. Making your display of data easy to read so that patterns are evident.
3. Relating subgroup selection to Contextual Factors and/or content being studied.
4. Giving your interpretation of and conclusions from data. Making accurate interpretation of and drawing meaningful conclusions from data.
5. Providing a thorough analysis of the pre- and post-assessments in relation to students' achievement of the Learning Goals.

**VII. Reflection and Self-Evaluation**

*You are almost finished! Don't slow down now. Be sure to give this section the time and attention it deserves. It's amazing that the reflection upon an experience can be more valuable than the experience itself! When you think about why some students met the Learning Goals and others did not, be happy with their successes and consider what you can do better next time.*

*Ask your mentor teacher for suggestions for professional development. For example, does the school district offer workshops? To what professional organizations do your mentor teachers belong?*

**Tips for Success**

1. Identify ways in which the completion of the TWS impacted your skills and knowledge as a teacher.
2. Provide reasons for the success or lack thereof in students attaining the Learning Goals. Go beyond description and include the "why" based upon best practice. Remember to ask yourself questions such as:
  - Was the content over your students' heads?
  - Did students lack sufficient prior knowledge?
  - Did you pace your instruction appropriately?
  - Were your Learning Goals appropriate to your students' needs?
3. Create a professional plan that will foster your strengths and help you develop in areas where you need to improve.
4. Be specific when describing your professional growth goals so that your Professional Development Plan is relevant and linked to its impact on student learning. As a professional, you are ultimately responsible for your own growth, development, and improvement.
5. Deliberately and seriously analyze what you can do to improve your own professional

practice.

6. Write this section in past, present, and future tenses as appropriate.

**Common Challenges**

1. Developing a re-design plan and providing a rationale for making modifications in the original TWS and its implementation.
2. Recognizing how your performance as a teacher impacted your students' learning.
3. Examining how this process has impacted your professional behavior and enhanced your development as an educator.