FACTOR I: CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

**IS#3.** The candidate makes educational decisions (i.e. plans instruction and/or administrative) based on a Christian philosophy of education and promotes Godly principles among students, colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community.

**IS#8.** The candidate is a reflective, transformed educator who uses research, research findings, contextual information, and other evidence to adapt his/her practices to meet the needs of each learner.

**IS#18.** The candidate demonstrates an understanding of individual differences and diverse communities by creating inclusive learning environments and educational opportunities that allow each learner to reach his/her full potential.

**Discussion:**

A) Describe *community environmental factors* that affect planning, teaching, and learning. These should include such considerations as location (e.g., rural, intercity), socio-economic (e.g., high income level), unique characteristics of the population (e.g., drug problems, mostly farming), etc.

B) Describe the district, school, and classroom *environmental factors* that affect planning, teaching, and learning. These should include the district and school environmental considerations (e.g., district regulations about books), the physical classroom setting (e.g. self-contained, portable), non-traditional students (e.g., handicapped), and the number of students in the school and in the classroom. (See the Contextual Information Form)

C) Describe the important characteristics of students in your classroom. Describe these factors: ethnic/cultural make-up, gender make-up, school socio-economic status make-up, students with special needs and those at risk, and previously demonstrated academic performance/ability, developmental characteristics. Include a brief, general description of students in your class and then identify the groups for whom you will separate (disaggregate) data for analysis in Factor 6. Below are some websites to help better understand developmental characteristics.

Toddlers and kindergarten
http://www-personal.ksu.edu/~anippert/characteristics.html

Five and six year old
http://www.pnc.edu/ed/Eisenhauer/develcharact.html

All ages
http://homepages.utoledo.edu/kpugh/5-7320/ITcomponents/development.html

You may use a table to illustrate discussion items A, B, and C above. The Sample Optional Contextual Factor Table below provides several illustrative examples. You may have more or less contextual and environmental factors to address and they may be entirely different. The examples are provided only to help clarify your task, not to indicate the number you should have or to provide an exhaustive list of factors. Implications for instruction will not be specific in nature at this point of your planning. Specific instructional plans, including specific adaptation, will be included in later TWS Factors. A thoroughly prepared contextual table will reduce or completely eliminate the need for additional narrative but be sure there is sufficient information to address the *rubric* items. If there is no implication for instruction for a contextual or environmental factor, be sure to explain why.
D) For the rubric, discuss the implications for your instruction in consideration of environmental, personal, demographic and background characteristics, and the knowledge, skill, cognitive capacities, dispositions and readiness of your students. Discuss the learning needs of individual or clusters of students and how these considerations will influence your approach to instruction in order to address the learning and affective needs of all students in your class.

I. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION SHEET
Complete the Contextual information sheet provided in the appendices to determine the following:

- What are some important characteristics of the learning context for your students in your classroom environment?
- Resources available for the Classroom
- Personnel Resources
- Individual Student Differences
- Students in Pull-out/Supplementary Programs
- Describe School’s Immediate Community

II. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION NARRATIVE

A. Description of the Learning Environment (See Sample Optional Contextual Factor Table)

- What implications will these factors have on your teaching methods, instructions, assessments, and activities?
- Describe the specific learning needs of individual students that require you to change your plans.
- Your response will be judged on the specificity of your decisions.
- If no changes are made, a rationale must be stated and supported.

B. Specificity

- Describe developmental characteristics of students (intellectual, social, physical)
- Your description must include (but is not limited to) previously demonstrated academic performance/ability, including students with special needs.
- Include factors that will help the evaluators of this assignment better understand your instructional decisions.
## Sample Optional Contextual Factor Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual and Environmental Factors</th>
<th>Identify source of Factor: Community, District, School, or Classroom</th>
<th>Implications for Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Include farming illustrations in my teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Socio-economic Community</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Be careful not to ask students to bring or use materials that would cost money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a great deal of drug related activities</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Include information the dangers of drugs in as many lessons as possible, some unobtrusively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District office specifies textbooks that can be used</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Be sure all supplemental books meet district guidelines before using them in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 student in wheelchair</td>
<td>School and Classroom</td>
<td>Be sure school facilities are handicapped accessible. Adapt psychomotor activities to match student’s physical ability to perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No air conditioning in the school</td>
<td>School and Classroom</td>
<td>Avoid strenuous activities on hot days; think of ways to provide air movement in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First graders’ fine motor skills are still developing</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to color and cut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First graders are still egocentric</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Use small group size or pairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed ethnic backgrounds among students</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Provide guidance and opportunities for cooperation among all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 boys, 13 girls</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Provide mixed gender grouping during cooperative learning activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 below, 17 at grade level, 5 above grade level</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>Provide extra time for the below grade level students and challenging work for above grade level students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Suggested total page length for the narrative component of the Contextual Information: 2 pages (the Contextual Information Form is not included in the 25 page maximum number)]
**FACTOR 1  CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

**Checklist:** The Candidate Describes *Context Data and Environmental Factors:* N  Y

Complete Contextual Information Sheet

0  1

**Total Checklist Score:** ______/ 1

**Rubric:** Instructional Implications--The degree to which the candidate specifically describes and uses contextual information to plan and describe instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable (Minimal Performance)</td>
<td>Acceptable (Standard Performance)</td>
<td>Competent (High Performance)</td>
<td>Exemplary (Exemplary Performance)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td>The candidate did not complete, or only partially completed the Contextual Information sheet.</td>
<td>The candidate completed all components of the Contextual Information sheet.</td>
<td>The candidate addresses implications that the contextual information has for planning instruction, assessment, and student learning for the classroom as a whole, but only describes the implications for some of the following: specific student individual differences, groups for whom you will <em>disaggregate</em> data, community, school, and classroom environment.</td>
<td>The candidate addresses implications that the contextual information has for planning instruction, assessment, and student learning for the classroom as a whole, and describes the implications for all of the following: specific student individual differences, groups for whom you will <em>disaggregate</em> data, community, school, and classroom environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Rubric Score:** ____/ 4

**Total Score for Factor 1:** ____/ 5

Complete and attach Contextual Information Sheet.
Please indicate:

Semester (Fall or Spring)_____ Year: 20_____

Your certification/licensure level (check all that apply):

_____ Early Childhood (Birth - Grade 3) _____ Secondary (Grades 6 - 12)
_____ Elementary (Grades K - 6) _____ Dual (Elem. and Secondary, Grades PK - 12)
_____ Middle School (Grades 5 - 8)

Your certification/licensure area(s) (check all that apply):

_____ Art _____ Lang. Arts, Middle Level _____ Physics
_____ Biology _____ French _____ Psychology
_____ Business _____ Health _____ Science, General
_____ Chemistry _____ Journalism _____ Science, Middle Level
_____ Early Childhood Ed. _____ Mathematics _____ Social Studies-Middle Level
_____ Early Child., handicap _____ Mathematics, Middle Level _____ Social Studies
_____ Earth-Space Science _____ Music _____ Spanish
_____ Elementary _____ Physical Education _____ Speech and Theatre
_____ Language Arts _____ Physical Science _____ Other: _______________
_____ ESOL

Identify the course, unit content area, (e.g., “Language Arts,” “Biology,” “Math,” Social Science,” etc.), and grade level(s) of your Teacher Work Sample.

Course __________________________ Content Area ________________________________

The grade(s)/level of students in your classroom (check all that apply):

_____ Preschool _____ 4th Grade _____ 9th Grade
_____ Kindergarten _____ 5th Grade _____ 10th Grade
_____ 1st Grade _____ 6th Grade _____ 11th Grade
_____ 2nd Grade _____ 7th Grade _____ 12th Grade
_____ 3rd Grade _____ 8th Grade
Please note: Some of the following information must be obtained directly from the teacher or the school’s administrator(s)

A. Class/Classroom Information

Grade levels in class (List all that apply.)

Ages in class (List all that apply.)

Number of students enrolled in class

Number of students typically present

Time available each day to teach all students (in this class)

How would you rate the overall socio-economic status represented in classroom? (Provide approximate percentages of students that represents each category.)

Upper class
Middle class
Lower class

Ethnicity(ies)/Cultures represented (please specify):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender make-up:

Number of males
Number of females

Number of students who perform at the following levels:

Below grade level
At grade level
Above grade level
If students are above or below grade level, identify the different grade levels represented.
Teaching interruptions (ex. frequent intercom messages, student, parents, or teachers who enter class etc.):

- Few
- Some
- Many

B. **Resources (equipment and supplies) available for this class (Mark all that apply.)**

- Overhead/Elmo projector
- Number of computer(s)
- Video projector
- Phone/intercom
- TV

Please list additional resources (ex. maps, lab equipment, manipulatives, reading resources, etc.—please list):

C. **Personnel resources available to you (Indicate all that apply.)**

- Instructional assistants(s)
- Peer (student) tutors
- Parent volunteers
- Resource Teachers (describe)
- Other (describe)

D. **Individual Differences**

- Number of ESL students in class
- Number of non-English speaking students
- Number of students in class with IEP’s
- Number of identified 504 students in class
- Number of identified gifted students in class
E. Number of students in pull-out or supplementary programs

Title I  ______
Gifted  ______
Other (please list, for example: remedial reading, math, etc.)
______________________________________________________________________________

F. Please briefly describe the school’s immediate community:

Population (city or town)  __________

Please list major industry(ies) (ex. oil, farming, steel mills, technology, automotive, etc.):
________________________________________________________________

Please list major employer(s) (ex. American Airlines, IBM, Wal-Mart, etc.)
________________________________________________________________

Students in your classroom mostly from:

- Rural areas  ______
- Urban areas  ______
- Suburban areas  ______

Describe the school district:

- Number of elementary schools  ______
- Number of junior high or middle schools  ______
- Number of high schools  ______
- Other types of school configurations (i.e. 4th & 5th grade centers, etc.)  ______

Are there any of the following in your community? (Mark all that apply):

- Community Colleges  ______
- Career Technology schools  ______
- Colleges or University  ______