# TASK 1: PLANNING COMMENTARY

Respond to the prompts below (**no more than 9 single-spaced pages, including prompts**) by typing your responses within the brackets. Do not delete or alter the prompts. Pages exceeding the maximum will not be scored.

## 1. Central Focus

a. Describe the central focus and purpose of the content you will teach in the learning segment.

[ The central focus of this volleyball unit is to help students build their fundamental volleyball skills—like serving, bumping, setting, and spiking—while also learning how to work together as a team. The main goal is to guide students from practicing individual skills to actually using them in small-sided games. Along the way, they’ll also develop communication, teamwork, and sportsmanship, which are just as important as the physical skills.]

b. Given the central focus, describe how the standards and learning objectives within your learning segment address the development of student competencies in the psychomotor domain and at least one other learning domain (cognitive and/or affective) related to

* movement patterns,
* performance concepts, and/or
* health-enhancing physical fitness.

[ The standards and learning objectives in this volleyball unit mainly support student growth in the **psychomotor domain** by focusing on skill development like serving, passing, setting, and spiking. Through drills, stations, and gameplay, students get hands-on practice with proper technique and movement patterns, which helps improve their overall coordination and performance.

At the same time, the unit also supports the affective domain by encouraging teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship. Activities like small group drills and three versus three games require students to support each other, give constructive feedback, and show respect. This helps them grow socially and emotionally in a physical activity setting.

As for performance concepts, students are not just doing the skills. They are learning when and how to use them during gameplay. They get to apply strategies like positioning and communication, which ties into both the psychomotor and affective domains. So overall, it is about building physical skill, understanding how and when to use it, and doing it all while being a good teammate.]

c. Explain how your plans build on each other and include tasks that develop the student competencies described above while making connections between the psychomotor domain and at least one other learning domain (cognitive and/or affective).

[ The lessons are designed to build on each other by starting with basic skill development and gradually moving toward applying those skills in more game-like situations. On the first day, students focus on simple drills like tossing and passing with a partner. This gives them a chance to understand and practice the correct movement patterns for bumping and setting.

On the second day, the drills become more structured and involve combining skills, like in the bump, set, spike activity. Students begin to recognize how each role connects to team success. They also start thinking more strategically and using their skills in a more game-like flow, which brings in the cognitive domain as they make decisions and adjust their actions based on what's happening during the drill.

By the third day, students rotate through skill stations and play modified games. These activities challenge them to use everything they’ve learned so far, both physically and mentally. During stations, they give each other feedback using specific volleyball terms. This encourages them to reflect on their performance and communicate clearly, which connects the affective domain to their psychomotor progress.

Throughout the unit, students are always building on what they learned previously, and they are encouraged to think, communicate, and reflect while developing physical skills. This combination helps them grow as well-rounded players who can perform, understand, and work well with others.]

d. Explain how you will structure the learning environment to be **both emotionally and physically safe**.

[ To keep the learning environment emotionally and physically safe, I plan to start each class with a positive and welcoming tone. Music will be playing as students come in, which helps create a relaxed vibe and makes them feel comfortable right away. I’ll also go over clear expectations and rules from the start so students know what respectful behavior looks like during activities.

Physically, I’ll make sure all equipment is safe and age-appropriate, like using foam or lightweight volleyballs. I’ll also keep drills and games structured in a way that avoids overcrowding or risky movements. I’ll demonstrate skills clearly and give reminders about spacing and body control to help prevent injuries.

Emotionally, I’ll encourage teamwork, respectful communication, and positive peer feedback. Students will be reminded that everyone is learning and mistakes are okay. I’ll support students who might need extra help or encouragement, and I’ll pair students strategically so everyone feels included and supported. Overall, the goal is to make sure every student feels safe to try, learn, and have fun.]

## 2. Knowledge of Students to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a–b), describe what you know about **your** students **with respect to the central focus** of the learning segment.

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, students with higher/lower proficiency levels, underperforming students or those with gaps in content knowledge, or students needing greater support or challenge).

a. Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—**Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

[Most students already have some experience with basic movement skills like running, jumping, and changing direction, and basic activities that require hand eye coordination. They also know how to follow rules, work with a partner or small group, and move safely in a shared space.

What I know students can do is perform some basketball-related skills, like dribbling with control, passing to a partner, and shooting toward a target. Many are able to stay in their space during activities and show effort when working with teammates. They also have some understanding of how to play offense and defense in a very basic way.

What they are still learning is how to consistently use proper technique when dribbling, passing, and shooting. They are also working on decision-making during gameplay, like when to pass or shoot. On the social side, they are learning how to communicate effectively, encourage teammates, and show good sportsmanship.

b. Personal, cultural, and community assets related to the central focus—**What do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural and language backgrounds and practices, and interests?**

[Many of my students have experience playing sports or being active outside of school, whether it’s through town leagues, playing at recess, or just shooting hoops in their driveway. A lot of them are familiar with basketball because it's a popular sport in their community and something they see or play regularly. That connection helps them feel more confident and excited during the unit.

Culturally and socially, the group is pretty diverse, but nearly all students are English speakers, so communication during activities and instruction is clear for most of them. A few students come from bilingual households, and I make sure to support them with visual cues, peer partners, and simple language when needed.

In terms of interests, many students enjoy competitive games, fast-paced drills, and the chance to show off what they’ve learned. Others prefer practicing skills on their own or in smaller groups. I keep that in mind when planning, so there’s a good mix of structured gameplay and individual or partner work. This helps meet students where they’re at while keeping them engaged and involved.]

## 3. Supporting Students’ Physical Education Learning

Respond to prompts 3a–c below. To support your justifications, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans you have included as part of Planning Task 1. **In addition,** **use principles from research and/or theory to support your justifications.**

a. Justify how your understanding of your students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials/equipment. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students’ prior academic learning, their assets, and research/theory.

[My understanding of students’ prior learning and their personal, cultural, and community assets helped shape the way I designed the basketball unit to meet them where they are and keep them engaged. Since most students already have some experience with basic movement skills and have been introduced to basketball through recess or community sports, I knew I could build off that foundation by including familiar skills like dribbling, passing, and shooting right away. This connects to what they already know and gives them a sense of confidence early on.

Because I also know that many students enjoy fast-paced, competitive games, I made sure to include a mix of partner drills, small-sided games, and skill challenges. This keeps the learning active and taps into their interests, which increases motivation. For students who prefer working individually or need more time to develop confidence, I included skill stations and small group practice so they can focus on improvement without the pressure of gameplay.

I also considered that nearly all students are English speakers, with a few from bilingual backgrounds, so I used clear language, visual demonstrations, and peer partners to make sure instructions are accessible to everyone. This supports all learners while creating an inclusive environment, which is backed by research on effective instruction in diverse classrooms.

In terms of theory, the structure of the lessons is supported by the idea of scaffolding. Starting with simpler tasks and gradually increasing difficulty as students build skills and confidence. The mix of skill development and application through games supports both psychomotor and affective growth, aligning with physical education best practices and standards. Overall, the learning tasks reflect what students already know, what they enjoy, and how they learn best.]

b. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for **the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs**.

[The instructional strategies and supports I’m using are meant to work for the whole class while also giving extra help to students who need it. I’ve got a mix of demonstrations, peer modeling, and visual aids, which help make sure everyone understands the skills, no matter their learning style. Most students benefit from seeing the skill in action before trying it themselves, so I make sure to demo things clearly and break it down step by step.

For students who need more support, like those who are still building confidence or who struggle with coordination, I’ve built in modifications and options. For example, using different types of balls (like lighter or bigger ones) helps make the skills more manageable. I also use stations and small group work so students can go at their own pace or get more one-on-one feedback if they need it.

Peer partnerships are a big part of it too. Pairing students strategically helps with both skill development and social interaction. Some students do better when they’re learning from a classmate or getting positive feedback from a peer. It keeps things low pressure and more fun.]

c. Describe common student errors or misunderstandings within your central focus and how you will address them.

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, students with higher/lower proficiency levels, underperforming students or those with gaps in content knowledge, or students needing greater support or challenge).

[Some common mistakes students make during the volleyball unit are things like using their wrists instead of their forearms when bumping, slapping the ball when setting instead of pushing it, or tossing the ball too low when serving. A lot of students also forget to communicate with teammates during gameplay, which leads to confusion or missed plays.

To help with this, I plan to go over the technique step by step and use a lot of visual demos so they can actually see what proper form looks like. During drills, I’ll give quick, specific feedback like “straighten your arms more” or “push the ball up, don’t slap it.” I’ll also use peer feedback checklists so students can help each other notice these things too.

When it comes to communication and teamwork, I’ll build that into the activities—like having students call “mine” or encouraging positive talk during drills and games. A lot of these misunderstandings just come from not having enough practice, so I’m keeping the environment low pressure and making sure everyone gets plenty of reps to improve as they go.]

## 4. Supporting Physical Education Development Through Language

As you respond to prompts 4a–d, consider the range of students’ language assets and needs—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

a. **Language Function**. Using information about your students’ language assets and needs, identify **one** language function essential for student learning within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate to your learning segment.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Analyze | Compare | Evaluate | Sequence | Signal | Summarize |

[For this volleyball unit, one language function that’s really important is **signal**. Students need to use short, clear words or phrases during gameplay and drills to let their teammates know what they’re doing—like calling “mine,” “set,” or “serve.” This kind of signaling helps build teamwork and prevents confusion on the court.

Since most students are English speakers and already familiar with basic commands, they can usually pick this up pretty quickly. For students who need a little more support with language, I’ll model the key terms often and include visuals or cues to help them remember when and how to use them. We’ll also practice using these signals during drills so it becomes part of their routine and helps with both skill development and communication.]

b. Identify a key learning task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

[A key learning task where students get to practice the language function signal happens during the gameplay part of Lesson 2. In this part of the lesson, students play three-on-three games and are expected to communicate with their teammates by calling out things like “mine,” “set,” or “serve” during live play. These quick signals help players coordinate with each other, avoid confusion, and make sure the ball stays in play.

This task gives students a natural and meaningful opportunity to use those verbal cues while actually playing the game. Since most of them are familiar with casual basketball or playground talk, they’re comfortable using short phrases, and this helps make the transition to volleyball communication feel more natural. Plus, using signals during gameplay supports teamwork and builds confidence in both their movement and their language use on the court.]

c. **Additional Language Demands.** Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following associated language demands (written or oral) students need to understand and/or use to successfully participate in the learning task:

* Vocabulary
* **Plus** at least one of the following:
* Syntax
* Discourse

[For students to successfully use the language function signal during the gameplay in Lesson 2, there are a few key language demands they need to understand and use effectively.

Vocabulary: Students need to know and consistently use terms like *“mine,” “set,” “pass,” “serve,” “out,”* and *“help.”* These are short but important for quick communication during fast-paced gameplay. Understanding what each word means in the context of volleyball helps students coordinate with teammates and react appropriately during each play.

Discourse: In this case, discourse is all about how students use those vocabulary words in real-time communication with their teammates. It’s not full sentences—it’s quick, in-the-moment phrases that signal action and teamwork. For example, calling *“mine”* tells teammates not to go for the ball, and saying *“set”* shows what the player plans to do next. Even though it’s simple, this kind of talk helps keep the team organized and is a big part of playing successfully as a group]

d. **Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt below.

* Identify and describe the planned instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) to help students understand, develop, and use the identified language demands (function, vocabulary, syntax, or discourse).

[ To help students understand and use the language demands during the volleyball unit, I’ve built in a few supports throughout the lessons. Before the gameplay task in Lesson 2, I take time to explain and model the key vocabulary like mine, set, serve, and pass. I also give examples of how and when to use those words during drills so students get used to hearing and saying them in context.

During the bump, set, spike drill earlier in the lesson, students start practicing calling out their role or signaling to their teammates using those same terms. This gives them a chance to use the language in a slower, more controlled environment before moving into full gameplay.

I also remind students of these cues right before we start the game, encouraging them to use clear and quick communication. If needed, I’ll pause the game briefly to highlight good examples of signaling or give a quick correction. For students who need extra support, I pair them with strong communicators so they can hear the terms being used regularly. These supports help all students get comfortable using the language naturally while playing. ]

## 5. Monitoring Student Learning

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Planning Task 1.

a. Describe how the assessments **throughout** the learning segment will provide direct evidence of students’ development of competencies in the psychomotor domain and at least one other learning domain (cognitive and/or affective).

[ The assessments I’m using throughout the volleyball unit are designed to show how students are growing in both the psychomotor domain and the cognitive domain. For the psychomotor side, I’ll be using a skills checklist during activities like the bump, set, spike drill and skill stations. This checklist focuses on technique, control, and form while students are performing the different volleyball skills. It gives me direct evidence of how well they’re applying what they’ve learned and whether they’re showing improvement in their movement patterns.

For the cognitive domain, students will complete a short exit slip at the end of the lesson. This will include a couple of questions about volleyball strategies, rules, and vocabulary. It gives students a chance to show what they understand about the game and how the skills we practiced fit into a real game setting. Combining both assessments gives me a clear picture of how students are developing both physically and mentally as they move through the unit. ]

b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their learning.

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, students with higher/lower proficiency levels, underperforming students or those with gaps in content knowledge, or students needing greater support or challenge).

[The assessments are designed to be flexible and supportive so that all students, including those with specific needs, have a fair chance to show what they’ve learned. The skills checklist for the psychomotor domain is based on observation during drills and gameplay, which works well for students who might struggle with written tasks or need more movement-based opportunities to demonstrate learning. It focuses on key actions like form, control, and effort, so students can show growth even if they are still developing full accuracy.

For the exit slip in the cognitive domain, I’ve kept the questions short, clear, and focused on key concepts we’ve covered in class. For students who need it, I can read the questions aloud, offer sentence starters, or let them respond verbally. This makes sure that language or reading challenges don’t get in the way of showing what they know. Overall, the assessments are designed to be simple, clear, and adaptable, so every student can participate and feel successful.]