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The *PRAXIS®* Study Companion

Reading Specialist (5302)

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Reading Specialist (5302)

Test at a Glance

The *Praxis*® Reading Specialist test is designed to measure knowledge and competencies that are important for safe and effective beginning practice as a reading specialist.

Test Name	Reading Specialist
Test Code	5302
Time	150 minutes
Number of Questions	95 selected-response questions; 2 constructed-response questions
Format	The selected-response questions account for approximately 75% of the total test score. The constructed-response questions account for about 25% of the score. This test may include questions with an audio or video component.
Test Delivery	Computer Delivered

Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
I. Curriculum and Instruction	47	37%
II. Assessment	29	23%
III. Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles	19	15%
IV. Application	2	25%

About The Test

The Reading Specialist test is intended primarily for persons who have advanced academic preparation and/or who are being considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading instruction in grades K–12. The test is most appropriate for candidates with advanced preparation (i.e., those with a master's degree or course work comparable to the training needed for a master's degree) who expect to have specialized responsibilities related to the teaching of reading at any level from kindergarten through twelfth grade. It also is appropriate for individuals who wish to be considered for supervisory or instructional positions related to the teaching of reading—those seeking positions as reading clinicians, consultants, supervisors, specialists, coaches, coordinators, or resource persons and thus intending to be responsible for more than the teaching of developmental reading in a regular classroom setting.

The content of the test is based largely on the 2017 Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals created by the International Literacy Association. This test consists of 95 selected-response questions and 2 constructed-response questions, one of which, is a case study. The test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Content Topics

This list details the topics that may be included on the test. All test questions cover one or more of these topics.

Note: The use of "e.g." to start a list of examples implies that only a few examples are offered and the list is not exhaustive, whereas the use of "i.e." to start a list of examples implies that the given list of examples is complete.

Discussion Questions

In this section, discussion questions are open-ended questions or statements intended to help test your knowledge of fundamental concepts and your ability to apply those concepts to classroom or real-world situations. We do **not** provide answers for the discussion questions but thinking about the answers will help improve your understanding of fundamental concepts and may help you answer a broad range of questions on the test. Most of the questions require you to combine several pieces of knowledge to formulate an integrated understanding and response. They are written to help you gain increased understanding and facility with the test's subject matter. You may want to discuss these questions with a teacher or mentor.

I. Curriculum and Instruction

A. **Foundations and Curriculum Design**

1. Is familiar with factors that affect literacy development (e.g., medical, environmental, cultural, linguistic, social, and emotional)

2. Understands the developmental continuum of oral language, phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), concepts of print, alphabetic principle, decoding skills, printed-word recognition, spelling, reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and written expression

3. Knows characteristics of diverse literacy profiles (e.g., students with dyslexia, gifted and talented, English learner

4. Is familiar with design, implementation, and evaluation of the literacy curriculum materials and the role of standards for all students

B. **Instructional Design**

1. Is familiar with ways to support classroom teachers and education support personnel to implement research-based instructional approaches for all students

2. Is familiar with aspects of cognition and behavior in literacy development, including attention, automaticity, verbal memory, processing speed, and graphomotor control and their effects on literacy development

3. Is familiar with methods to create a literacy-rich environment (engaging classroom library, word wall, authentic children's work, digital technology, reading nooks) that meet the specific needs, interests, and abilities of diverse learners

4. Knows strategies that foster students' engagement, increase desire to read, and promote growth as readers

5. Knows strategies to support the language needs of English learners

6. Understands how to individualize instructional materials and approaches to meet the needs of students who need additional support with literacy skills

C. Implementation

1. Is familiar with instructional approaches that support the development of reading strategies required for different types and forms of texts (i.e., digital and print, disciplinary literacy)

2. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for concepts of print

3. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for phonological (including phonemic) awareness

4. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for alphabetic principle, phonics, high-frequency words, decoding, and encoding

5. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for morphological analysis (e.g., affixes, roots, and base words)

6. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for vocabulary

7. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for fluency

8. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for listening and reading comprehension (e.g., text dependent questioning, close reading)

9. Understands research-supported instructional approaches and interventions for use of writing mechanics and written expression

Discussion Questions: Curriculum and Instruction

- What is the difference between phonics and phonological awareness?

- In what ways do students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds affect comprehension?

- What is the difference between fluency and prosody?

- What is the relationship between fluency and comprehension?

- What is the relationship between learning to read and learning to write?

- What are the strands of the Reading Rope by Scarborough?

- What are the four phases of Ehri's word reading?

- What are Ehri's phases of reading development?

- What are the strands of the Reading Rope by Scarborough?

- What are the four phases of Ehri's word reading?

- What are Ehri's phases of reading development?
- What strategies can students use to acquire and use effectively to learn academic and domain-specific words and phrases?
- How can students apply their knowledge of morphology, by using root words, prefixes, and suffixes, to derive meaning from unknown words?
- What strategies can teachers use to teach multiple meanings of words?
- What is the purpose of using a semantic gradient during vocabulary instruction?

II. Assessment

A. Types and Purposes of Assessment

1. Understands the function and purpose of formal and informal assessments, including screening measures, to determine the literacy needs of the student (i.e., diagnostic, progress monitoring, and measuring outcomes)
2. Knows basic technical vocabulary associated with assessments (e.g., criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, reliability, validity, fairness, and equity)
3. Understands how to select, administer, and interpret appropriate assessments for students, especially for those who need additional literacy support

B. Interprets Data for Instruction

1. Understands how to analyze individual reader's performance using multiple data sources and plan instruction and intervention
2. Understands how to analyze and use assessment data to examine the effectiveness of specific intervention practices and students' responses to instruction
3. Knows ways to support teachers in analyzing and using individual, classroom, grade-level, and school wide assessment data to make instructional and grouping decisions
4. Understands how to analyze and present assessment data according to the needs of students, parents, and school members
5. Knows how to promote student reflection and self-efficacy through goal setting

Discussion Questions: Assessment

- What is the purpose of formal and nonformal assessments?
- What is the function of informal assessment?
- For what purpose are norm-referenced assessments used?
- Based on assessment data, what are some ways teachers can modify instruction for students with diverse learning profiles?
- How can the reading specialist promote student reflection and self-efficacy?

III. Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles

A. Diverse Learners

1. Is familiar with the relationship between first- and second-language acquisition and literacy development and ways to support educators in meeting the unique needs of English learners

2. Knows how to refine educator practice in providing differentiated instruction for all students

3. Knows ways to promote family and community engagement to support literacy development

B. Professional Development and Leadership

1. Understands how to model and support teachers in using data to inform practices to meet the diverse literacy needs of students

2. Is familiar with effective collaboration and conflict resolution strategies that facilitate communication and literacy improvement

3. Knows methods to collaborate in planning and facilitating professional learning for individuals and groups of teachers using data to enhance the quality of literacy instruction. This may include working individually with teachers (e.g., modeling, co-planning, co-teaching, and observing) or with groups (e.g., teacher workshops, group meetings, and online learning)

4. Is familiar with how to provide evidence that supports effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community members

5. Knows methods to collaborate with leadership teams in order to support multi-tiered systems of support and advocate for students who are at risk for not reading and writing at grade level

Discussion Questions: Professional Leadership and Specialized Roles

- What is the relationship between first- and second-language acquisition and literacy development?

- Which is one aspect of professional development that contributes to an effective reading program?

- How does a reading specialist facilitate professional learning for teachers?

- What are effective ways to communicate students' reading progress to stakeholders (i.e., parents and administration)?

- What are a few of the universal strategies to promote family engagement to improve literacy skills?

IV. Application (Constructed-Response)

A. Professional Leadership

1. Will apply knowledge of professional learning and leadership to prepare an organized written response to a topic related to the development of student literacy.

B. Analysis of Individual Student Case Study

1. Will apply knowledge of reading assessment and instruction to prepare an organized written response to a case study of an elementary student.

Reading Specialist (5302) Sample Test Questions

Sample Questions

The sample questions that follow represent a number of the types of questions and topics that appear on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. A science teacher asks the school reading specialist for strategies to help students acquire content-area vocabulary and improve their comprehension of the science textbook. Which of the following strategies is most appropriate for the reading specialist to recommend for this goal?

   (A) Introducing key vocabulary terms in context before reading the text
   (B) Selecting words from the text and having students write down definitions from the glossary
   (C) Pretesting students on the vocabulary terms from the textbook
   (D) Comparing the dictionary definitions of the vocabulary terms with the definitions found in the textbook glossary

2. A reading specialist collects data at four-week intervals on several third-grade students. The data indicate that the students' accuracy, fluency, and comprehension are at an end-of-first-grade level. The reading specialist is most likely to recommend focused instruction in which of the following?

   (A) Developing a sight-word vocabulary
   (B) Rehearsing the 42 alphabet sounds
   (C) Reading a variety of texts from various genres
   (D) Teaching phonics explicitly, followed by the use of decodable text

3. Which of the following best describes the concept of fairness in educational measurement?

(A) The idea that test takers with equal proficiency in the construct being measured should have the same probability of answering a particular test question correctly
(B) The idea that test results are consistent over time and across test questions
(C) The idea that a test taker's performance should be assessed based on the constructs being measured and not on the test taker's group membership
(D) The idea that a test should measure what it purports to measure

4. Students in elementary school often have a wide range of reading abilities. Which of the following approaches will best meet the needs of all students?

(A) Establishing three ability-level groups for each subject
(B) Using the same text for all students but modifying assignments
(C) Asking the reading specialist to work with the reading group that has the lowest ability level
(D) Using flexible grouping and a variety of materials to provide additional support to students

5. A mentor teacher notices that during English language arts instruction, a new teacher asks many recall questions related to a novel the class is reading. The mentor teacher plans to suggest a few higher-order thinking questions that would be appropriate. Which of the following questions best reflects how point of view can affect a story?

(A) What would happen in the story if the antagonist were the main character?
(B) Who are the memorable characters appearing in the first three chapters?
(C) How successful was the protagonist in dealing with the problem in the story?
(D) Why did the author choose the particular setting for the story instead of another place?

6. A teacher is working with a small group of students on phonological skills and has students verbally replace the first letter of the word "pill" with each of the following letter pairs: "sk," "fr," and "dr." On which of the following phonological skills is the teacher most likely focusing?

(A) Phoneme segmentation
(B) Phoneme addition
(C) Phoneme manipulation
(D) Phoneme isolation

7. Which of the following strategies does a teacher build into a read-aloud to ensure students practice a selected strategy during reading?

    (A) Preplanning questions
    (B) Highlighting the text
    (C) Summarizing sections
    (D) Chunking the text

8. A reading specialist is collecting data on a kindergarten student's knowledge of phonemic awareness skills. The reading specialist asks the student, "Which word does not belong: 'man,' 'mat,' 'hat,' 'mad'?" Which of the following phonemic awareness skills is the teacher assessing?

    (A) Deletion
    (B) Categorization
    (C) Substitution
    (D) Segmentation

9. After a four-week cycle of reading intervention targeting blending words with consonant blends (CCVC), several students are not making adequate gains. To help the students succeed, the best step that the teacher can take is to focus intervention on which of the following?

    (A) Segmenting words with consonant blends
    (B) Maintaining students' attention
    (C) Blending words with variant vowels
    (D) Blending CVC words

10. A fifth-grade teacher conducts a whole-class lesson on methods of citing textual evidence before students read a passage and write a response to it. The teacher explains that if students incorporate any evidence from the passage into their response, they should have a reason to do so. Which of the following best identifies the primary rationale for a student to use a direct quotation when responding to the passage?

    (A) To add credibility and authority to the response
    (B) To focus on a specific source cited in the passage
    (C) To communicate an overview of the information in the passage
    (D) To provide supporting facts and details for a claim

11. Which of the following activities is most appropriate to use with emergent readers who are in the early stages of developing their phonemic awareness skills?

    (A) Identifying rhyming word pairs in poems, songs, and stories
    (B) Clapping out the syllables in words from around the classroom
    (C) Stretching out the phonemes in three-syllable words
    (D) Counting the number of words in short sentences

Word in Text	Teacher's Recording of Student Responses (written phonetically)
bigger	bī jər
even	ĕv ĕn
recess	rĕk ēs
inside	ĭns ĭd
accident	ăk ĭd ĕnt
interrupt	ī tər ŭpt
skeleton	skē lĕt ȯn

12. A third-grade student makes the errors listed while orally reading a passage. Based on the information, on which of the following word-analysis skills should the teacher focus instruction to best meet the student's needs?

    (A) Consonant blends
    (B) Phonemic awareness
    (C) Syllabication
    (D) R-controlled vowels

cab	in

ca	per

13. A reading teacher uses the preceding letter boxes as a visual aid to help students understand the difference between closed and open syllable types. Which of the following will best ensure that the students learn the distinction?

(A) Changing the color coding of the letter boxes to colors that students agree to associate with closed and open
(B) Providing additional word pairs such as "level/legal" and "visit/vital" for the students to contrast
(C) Including words starting with the /a/ sound found in words such as "away" and "against"
(D) Having students examine words that fit into three or more boxes and contain a different syllable type

14. During a fifth-grade literature circle unit, students in each circle choose a novel to study and work together to complete various activities. Which of the following activities best empowers students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the novel they read?

(A) Taking a fill-in-the-blank or cloze test created by the publisher of the novel they selected
(B) Keeping a personal reflection journal of reading performance while reading their novel
(C) Designing art for a new cover for their novel to display in the library and entice others to read it
(D) Creating a Web site with multiple organized sections to house information about each circle's novel

15. After a student completes a reading fluency assessment, the teacher notes that the student can read the passage correctly, without hesitation, and at an appropriate pace. However, the student does not demonstrate expression while reading. The student needs further instruction primarily in

(A) prosody
(B) speed
(C) automaticity
(D) decoding

16. A group of teachers are compiling a bank of strategies that struggling students can use to develop their reading comprehension skills. Which of the following is the best student strategy to add to the bank?

    (A) Practicing silent reading for a prescribed length of time each day
    (B) Performing frequent oral reading fluency exercises with the class
    (C) Listening to a text while reading it and forming mental models
    (D) Studying lists of content-specific vocabulary and completing word maps

17. Which THREE of the following are the most important factors for a teacher to consider when planning differentiated instruction to maximize learning for all students in a literacy class?

    (A) Assessing students' mastery and application of a wide range of literacy skills
    (B) Using a variety of evidence-based instructional approaches to learning
    (C) Planning fast-paced instruction to spark and maintain student interest
    (D) Employing flexible grouping and regrouping practices
    (E) Adapting assignments to meet the needs of a diverse student population

18. Mr. Santos, a fifth-grade teacher, meets with the building reading specialist to share concerns about a paraprofessional assigned in a language arts class. Mr. Santos describes the paraprofessional, Ms. Stanley, as hovering over the four students who have Individualized Education Programs, watching their work, and constantly correcting them. He is concerned that while he is implementing a guided instructional approach to probe students' thinking with questions that require literary analysis, the paraprofessional is interfering with the students' learning processes of response, review, reflection, and adjustment. Which of the following instructional approaches best fits the needs of the paraprofessional as the reading specialist plans for her professional development?

    (A) Small-group instruction
    (B) Gradual release of responsibility
    (C) Differentiated instruction
    (D) Project-based learning

19. Which of the following is the most significant impact that early attainment of decoding skills has on a student's literacy development?

    (A) Enhancing a student's motivation to read curriculum-based texts during times allotted to independent reading
    (B) Enabling a student to organize cooperative reading activities involving texts on topics of shared interest
    (C) Serving as a strong predictor of a student's later success in meeting the level of proficient in reading comprehension
    (D) Allowing a student to process complex texts at the same reading rate as is used to process texts at more accessible levels

20. At the beginning of a school year, a group of classroom teachers are looking over assessment data from the previous year with the reading specialist. They notice that some students in each class scored lower than expected. Which of the following actions will best help the students during the upcoming school year?

    (A) Placing similar-scoring students in skill groups for acceleration
    (B) Retaining students who historically score low on assessments
    (C) Tutoring students in each area of need individually
    (D) Switching lower-scoring students to classrooms with higher-performing teachers

21. A third-grade teacher asks a reading specialist for help with grouping students. The teacher and reading specialist discuss data from curriculum-based reading assessments and standardized reading scores from an online reading program. Which of the following types of assessments will be most effective for providing data for placing students for small-group instruction?

    (A) An interim assessment that measures students' readiness for a future test
    (B) An interim assessment that measures students' self-evaluation skills
    (C) A summative assessment that measures students' retention of content
    (D) A formative assessment that measures students' word-reading accuracy

22. Members of the staff at an elementary school comprise a curriculum development team that is to conduct an in-depth analysis and revamping of the school's literacy program. During the planning and development phase of the project, which of the following is the best first step for the team to take?

    (A) Developing a multi-grade-level scope and sequence document and a curriculum map
    (B) Analyzing state and national standards to formulate a philosophy and rationale for a revised curriculum
    (C) Recruiting trainers and mentors responsible for professional development sessions using new curriculum materials
    (D) Reviewing local, state, and national test data and stakeholder survey results to guide the selection of a curriculum

23. Which of the following is the best way for a reading specialist who plans and facilitates professional learning sessions to collaborate with a group of teachers?

    (A) Selecting professional literature that teachers must read
    (B) Observing lessons and writing evaluations for teachers
    (C) Structuring meetings during which teachers focus on goals
    (D) Encouraging the principal to meet with teachers resistant to change

24. Of the following, which is the most effective way for a reading specialist to empower classroom teachers and educational support personnel to implement evidence-based instructional approaches?

    (A) Encouraging personnel to join the International Literacy Association
    (B) Providing coaching for staff members as the need arises
    (C) Observing staff as they locate resources about recommended practices
    (D) Testing students every two to four weeks to measure their progress

Answers

1. Option (A) is correct. Although there is no single method for providing explicit vocabulary instruction, teachers must help students improve their ability to construct word knowledge within a meaningful context.

2. Option (D) is correct. Poor accuracy indicates poor decoding, and accurate decoding is what leads to fluency and comprehension. Teaching phonics explicitly followed by the use of decodable text is the cornerstone of effective reading instruction.

3. Option (C) is correct. "Fairness" is a technical term used in educational measurement that refers to the idea that construct-irrelevant, personal characteristics of a test taker (gender, ethnicity, religion, race, etc.) should have no appreciable effect on test results or the interpretation of test results.

4. Option (D) is correct. Flexible grouping is a teaching strategy that allows for student placement in various groups based on factors such as skill need, interest, or personal choice. The flexible groups may change on a daily basis or may exist for several days or more. Using a variety of literary materials in different genres at various reading levels also addresses a wide range of reading abilities within a classroom.

5. Option (A) is correct. Asking what would happen if the antagonist in the story were the main character requires students to evaluate the character and that person's actions and infer how the story would be different if the antagonist were the main character. It requires students to consider how point of view affects a story and how knowing more about an antagonist can change a reader's opinion of the antagonist.

6. Option (C) is correct. The teacher is focusing on the advanced skill of manipulating phonemes by having the students delete the /p/ in the word "pill" and substitute the phonemes "sk," "fr," and "dr" to form new words.

7. Option (A) is correct. Preplanning questions allows for strategic placement and timing as well as higher-order thinking.

8. Option (B) is correct. In phoneme categorization, students must listen to four words and identify which one has a sound that is different from those of the other words.

9. Option (D) is correct. After CVC words, look at words that have two consonants in the initial or final position of a word. It is more effective for students to move from CVC words to CCVC words to learn blends because the only difference between a CVC word and a CCVC word is one extra consonant.

10. Option (A) is correct. Directly quoting from an author's text indicates to a reader that the author's words are powerful or highly informative. By quoting an author, a student indicates a belief that the author writes from a perspective of high authority and that the author's reputation gives credibility to the supporting evidence in the student's written response.

11. Option (A) is correct. Distinguishing rhymes is one of the most basic skills an emergent reader needs to have in order to develop phonemic awareness. All other phonemic awareness skills build off this concept.

12. Option (C) is correct. The errors indicate that the student has difficulty applying syllabication rules to unknown words. The focus of further instruction should be helping the student decode multisyllabic words by learning ways to split a word into its syllables. Such ways include stopping between two middle consonant sounds, such as /g/ and /g/ in "bigger," and before a single middle consonant sound, such as /d/ in "accident."

13. Option (B) is correct. The word pairs are designed to compare and contrast closed and open syllables. Students must examine many pairs of words to firm up their understanding of each syllable type.

14. Option (D) is correct. Creating a Web site with multiple sections requires the students to demonstrate in-depth knowledge about various story elements while showing organizational skills. These are higher-order processes, and they also give students the chance to engage in twenty-first-century learning.

15. Option (A) is correct. Prosody is the ability to read with expression and appropriate tone.

16. Option (C) is correct. The ability to listen to a text while reading it and form mental models or schema removes the effort involved in decoding and gives students the opportunity to analyze rich text.

17. Options (B), (D), and (E) are correct. Option (B) is correct because in providing differentiated instruction, it is important for a teacher to use multiple strategies that are selected to best meet specific needs. Option (D) is correct because it is best practice for a teacher to use a combination of whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction when planning differentiated instruction. Option (E) is correct because it is best practice for a teacher to adapt assignments that students should complete based on their learning needs.

18. Option (B) is correct. The method described by the teacher who expressed concern (guided instruction) is the second stage of gradual release, and the paraprofessional is directly interfering with this phase of instruction.

19. Option (C) is correct. Research has shown that a student who acquires good decoding skills early is much more likely to be successful in reading for understanding as he/she progresses through the grades.

20. Option (A) is correct. After reviewing the data, teachers can adjust small-group instruction based on student need.

21. Option (D) is correct. Formative assessments are used to guide reading instruction. In this case, a formative assessment would be used when assigning students to small-group instruction.

22. Option (B) is correct. The review and revision of a literacy curriculum begins by analyzing state and national standards. Focusing on establishing standards for what students should learn is a first step in creating the philosophy and rationale that will serve to guide the development of a revised curriculum.

23. Option (C) is correct. The reading specialist working collaboratively with teachers provides structure by helping the teachers focus on goals.

24. Option (B) is correct. Students make the most literacy growth when the reading specialist provides help or coaching to classroom teachers and support personnel as they implement evidence-based instruction and when all school personnel work together as a team.

About the Constructed-Response Questions

The Teaching Reading: K-12 test consists of three constructed-response questions that require the candidate to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and theory of reading to specific students' needs and classroom scenarios.

Each task will be scored on a 0–3 scale using the following general scoring guide:

General Scoring Guide for Constructed- Response Questions

Score of 3

The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Clearly and specifically answers all parts of the question in a way that directly addresses the instructional situation described.
- Shows strong knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors of fact or terminology are minor and do not detract from the thorough understanding shown.
- Provides strong supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 2

The response demonstrates general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Adequately answers most or all parts of the question in a way that is appropriate for the instructional situation described.
- Shows general knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. Any errors of fact or terminology do not detract from the general understanding shown.
- Provides adequate supporting evidence and rationales.

Score of 1

The response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Answers some part (or parts) of the question at a basic level.
- Has one or more of the following weaknesses:
  - Fails to answer most parts of the question and/ or fails to address crucial aspects of the instructional situation described
  - Shows weak or limited knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question. The weakness may be indicated by errors or misconceptions.

– Any evidence or rationales provided are weak or limited.

Score of 0

The response demonstrates no understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

A response in this category

- Fails to respond appropriately to any part of the question.
- Shows no knowledge of concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question; or any information presented about reading and reading instruction is seriously in error.

Note: The mere presence of reading-specific words or phrases that might be used in an adequate response does not by itself indicate knowledge.

Also receiving a score of 0 would be responses that are blank, completely off-topic, or not written in English.

Constructed-Response Question with Sample Responses and Annotations

Directions

Read the scenario and then respond to the TWO tasks in the answer sheet booklet. The suggested time to spend on this question is 10 minutes.

Scenario: At the beginning of the school year, the professional staff in a K-5 school meets to review the results of test data collected during the previous year to identify the specific literacy needs of the school's diverse student population. Following an analysis of students' strengths, weaknesses, and needs, the staff decides to organize itself as a professional learning community that will focus on ways to improve student literacy learning. The school's literacy specialist is assigned the leadership role in guiding the staff toward meeting their goal.

Tasks:

1. Identify and describe **THREE** principles characterizing an effective professional learning community.
2. Identify and explain the benefit of **TWO** strategies the literacy specialist can use in collaborating with teachers to enhance the quality of literacy instruction.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 3

Task 1:

A school's implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) is intended to establish a schoolwide culture and environment of high trust in which a focus is built on planning and sustaining school improvement goals. One fundamental principle inherent in creating successful PLCs is that leaders in the process need to encourage all participants to work together collaboratively, rather than in isolation, to achieve a common goal—analyzing and improving classroom practices. The basic belief underlying this principle is that participants need to share responsibility for furthering students' literacy development. Second, effective PLCs ask participants to respond to a continual review of student test data to judge the effectiveness of what is happening in the classroom and change instructional practices when needed. Also, a major focus of PLCs is related to providing teachers multiple opportunities to share their teaching practices and observe each other in the classroom. This practice helps teachers to make connections with each other, discuss ideas, and build on each other's teaching expertise.

Task 2:

There are a number of strategies the literacy specialist can use to collaborate with a teacher or a group of teachers. One technique is to provide scheduled times for the literacy specialist to model literacy lessons so that teachers can directly observe effective instructional strategies. Modeling "how to teach" helps teachers to learn first-hand what good practice looks like and then include the techniques in their own daily instruction. The literacy specialist can also plan scheduled times on the school calendar to conduct teacher workshops. During these workshops the specialist facilitates interactive professional learning activities related to various aspects of literacy instruction. This strategy allows teachers to learn new information, dialogue with each other about literacy instruction, and reflect upon their current teaching practices and how to improve.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 3

This sample received a score of 3 because every part of both tasks is clearly and specifically addressed. In Task 1, the test-taker identified three basic principles inherent in a model of professional learning communities: encouraging teachers to work collaboratively rather than alone in furthering students' literacy growth, engaging in continual review of student test data and using the information to modify instructional practices when appropriate, and providing opportunities for teachers to make connections with peers and build on their own professional expertise by sharing ideas and observing other teachers. In Task 2, the test-taker thoroughly identified and explained the benefit of two literacy strategies the literacy specialist can use in collaborating with teachers: modeling literacy lessons for teachers and planning scheduled times for facilitating teacher workshops on a variety of literacy topics. This response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 2

There are a number of principles that define professional learning communities as a way for a school to improve its instructional program in helping students learn literacy skills. Three of these underlying big ideas are the following:

Professional learning communities are a way for a leadership team to encourage teachers to gain greater expertise in the "how and why" of teaching literacy skills.

The communities represent an ongoing process involving a team of administrators, content specialists, and teachers who work collaboratively with a focus on improving instruction for students with differing needs.

A professional learning community is composed of a group of people in a school who have a shared vision of learning and strive to learn new and better ways to enhance students' literacy development.

Mr. Watson was assigned the role of planning and facilitating professional development activities. Some activities he can use are:

Setting up times for classroom teachers to observe each other teaching literacy lessons

Reviewing current scientifically based research findings on literacy instruction and posting the materials online for teachers to study.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 2

This sample received a score of 2 because most parts of the question are addressed but at a general level. In Task 1, the test-taker adequately identifies three principles that characterize professional learning communities: 1) PLCs are a mechanism allowing teachers to gain expertise in literacy instruction, 2) PLCs involve a group of school-based stakeholders in a variety of positions who work collaboratively to improve instruction for all students, and 3) Members involved with PLCs share a common vision of learning and work to learn new and more effective ways to help students improve their literacy skills. In Task 2, the test-taker provides two strategies the literacy specialist can use when working with teachers—teacher observation of peers and access to online resources related to latest research findings in literacy instruction. However, the response is partial because an explanation of the benefit of having teachers engage in the activities is not provided. This response gives a general understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

Sample Response that Received a Score of 1

A professional learning community is a way for teachers to get together in groups to discuss how they are teaching students in their classrooms. They use the time the administration gives them to share ideas and then include new ideas in their lessons. A literacy specialist should meet with teachers and give them information about new techniques.

Commentary on a Response with a Score of 1

This response received a score of 1 because some parts of the question were answered at a weak or limited level. In Task 1, the test-taker provides an incomplete description of one principle (teachers working together in groups to discuss and share teaching ideas) that characterizes professional learning communities. In Task 2, the test-taker describes at a very limited level one strategy the literacy specialist can use (meeting with teachers and giving them information about new techniques) in working collaboratively with teachers to improve student achievement. An explanation of the strategy is not provided. This response demonstrates a weak or limited understanding of the elements of reading and reading instruction relevant to the question.

Understanding Question Types

The *Praxis*® assessments include a variety of question types: constructed response (for which you write a response of your own); selected response, for which you select one or more answers from a list of choices or make another kind of selection (e.g., by selecting a sentence in a text or by selecting part of a graphic); and numeric entry, for which you enter a numeric value in an answer field. You may be familiar with these question formats from taking other standardized tests. If not, familiarize yourself with them so you don't spend time during the test figuring out how to answer them.

Understanding Selected-Response and Numeric-Entry Questions

For most questions, you respond by selecting an oval to select a single answer from a list of answer choices.

However, interactive question types may also ask you to respond by:

- Selecting more than one choice from a list of choices.

- Typing in a numeric-entry box. When the answer is a number, you may be asked to enter a numerical answer. Some questions may have more than one entry box to enter a response. Numeric-entry questions typically appear on mathematics-related tests.

- Selecting parts of a graphic. In some questions, you will select your answers by selecting a location (or locations) on a graphic such as a map or chart, as opposed to choosing your answer from a list.

- Selecting sentences. In questions with reading passages, you may be asked to choose your answers by selecting a sentence (or sentences) within the reading passage.

- Dragging and dropping answer choices into targets on the screen. You may be asked to select answers from a list of choices and to drag your answers to the appropriate location in a table, paragraph of text or graphic.

- Selecting answer choices from a drop-down menu. You may be asked to choose answers by selecting choices from a drop-down menu (e.g., to complete a sentence).

Remember that with every question you will get clear instructions.

Understanding Constructed-Response Questions

Some tests include constructed-response questions, which require you to demonstrate your knowledge in a subject area by writing your own response to topics. Essays and short-answer questions are types of constructed-response questions.

For example, an essay question might present you with a topic and ask you to discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with the opinion stated. You must support your position with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Review a few sample essay topics:

- *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*

  "We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does."

    A. What legal doctrine or principle, established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), did the Supreme Court reverse when it issued the 1954 ruling quoted above?
    B. What was the rationale given by the justices for their 1954 ruling?

- *In his self-analysis, Mr. Payton says that the better-performing students say small-group work is boring and that they learn more working alone or only with students like themselves. Assume that Mr. Payton wants to continue using cooperative learning groups because he believes they have value for all students.*

    o Describe **TWO** strategies he could use to address the concerns of the students who have complained.
    o Explain how each strategy suggested could provide an opportunity to improve the functioning of cooperative learning groups. Base your response on principles of effective instructional strategies.

- *"Minimum-wage jobs are a ticket to nowhere. They are boring and repetitive and teach employees little or nothing of value. Minimum-wage employers take advantage of people because they need a job."*

    o Discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with this opinion. Support your views with specific reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.

Keep these things in mind when you respond to a constructed-response question:

1. **Answer the question accurately.** Analyze what each part of the question is asking you to do. If the question asks you to describe or discuss, you should provide more than just a list.

2. **Answer the question completely.** If a question asks you to do three distinct things in your response, you should cover all three things for the best score. Otherwise, no matter how well you write, you will not be awarded full credit.

3. **Answer the question that is asked.** Do not change the question or challenge the basis of the question. You will receive no credit or a low score if you answer another question or if you state, for example, that there is no possible answer.

4. **Give a thorough and detailed response.** You must demonstrate that you have a thorough understanding of the subject matter. However, your response should be straightforward and not filled with unnecessary information.

5. **Take notes on scratch paper** so that you don't miss any details. Then you'll be sure to have all the information you need to answer the question.

6. **Reread your response.** Check that you have written what you thought you wrote. Be sure not to leave sentences unfinished or omit clarifying information.

General Assistance For The Test

Praxis® Interactive Practice Test

This full-length *Praxis*® practice test lets you practice answering one set of authentic test questions in an environment that simulates the computer-delivered test.

- Timed just like the real test
- Correct answers with detailed explanations
- Practice test results for each content category

ETS provides a free interactive practice test with each test registration. You can learn more here.

Doing Your Best

Strategy and Success Tips

Effective *Praxis* test preparation doesn't just happen. You'll want to set clear goals and deadlines for yourself along the way. Learn from the experts. Get practical tips to help you navigate your Praxis test and make the best use of your time. Learn more at Strategy and Tips for Taking a *Praxis* Test.

Develop Your Study Plan

Planning your study time is important to help ensure that you review all content areas covered on the test. View a sample plan and learn how to create your own. Learn more at Develop a Study Plan.

Helpful Links

Ready to Register – How to register and the information you need to know to do so.

Disability Accommodations – Testing accommodations are available for test takers who meet ETS requirements.

PLNE Accommodations (ESL) – If English is not your primary language, you may be eligible for extended testing time.

What To Expect on Test Day – Knowing what to expect on test day can make you feel more at ease.

Getting Your Scores – Find out where and when you will receive your test scores.

State Requirements – Learn which tests your state requires you to take.

Other Praxis Tests – Learn about other *Praxis* tests and how to prepare for them.

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