Study Guide for the Praxis™ Education of Young Children and Prekindergarten Education Tests

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Chapter 1
Introduction to the Tests and Suggestions for Using this Study Guide
Introduction to the Early Childhood Tests

This study guide covers two Praxis tests that assess understanding of key concepts that teachers of young children need to know to do their jobs: Education of Young Children (0021/5021), and Prekindergarten Education (0531/5531). These tests are based on a teaching approach that emphasizes the active involvement of young children in a variety of play and child-centered activities that provide opportunities for choices, decision making, and discovery.

In developing assessment material for these tests, ETS has worked in collaboration with educators, higher-education content specialists, and accomplished practicing teachers to keep the tests updated and representative of current standards. Both of these tests were designed to align with the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation (2009).

The Education of Young Children Test (0021/5021)

The Praxis Education of Young Children test has two parts. Part A consists of 90 multiple-choice questions; Part B consists of three short constructed-response questions. You answer constructed-response questions by writing out your response. It is not accurate to call a constructed-response question an essay question, since your response will not be graded on the basis of how it succeeds as an essay. Instead, your constructed response will be graded on the basis of how well it demonstrates an understanding of the principles of education and their appropriate application.

The multiple-choice and short constructed-response questions are related to children ages birth through age 8. Each of the three constructed-response questions focuses on one of the following areas:

- teaching and supporting diverse children or creating a developmentally appropriate learning environment
- relationships with families or professionalism
- assessment, curriculum or instruction

The test covers five major categories of content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Categories</th>
<th>Approximate Number of Questions</th>
<th>Approximate Percentage of Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part A: Multiple-choice questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Teaching and Supporting Diverse Children</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Creating a Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You have two hours to complete the test. It is expected that you will spend roughly 90 minutes on Part A and about 30 minutes on Part B, but the parts are not timed independently, so you can determine your own pacing based on this recommendation.

**The Prekindergarten Education Test (0531/5531)**

The Prekindergarten Education test consists of 100 multiple-choice questions. The test assesses both your knowledge of relevant information and your ability to analyze problems and apply principles to specific situations. The multiple-choice questions are related to young children, ages 2 to 5. Some questions may require knowledge of development at earlier or later ages to assess the examinee’s understanding of the full developmental range that may be found among children in this age group.

The test covers five major categories of content:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Categories</th>
<th>approximate Number of Questions</th>
<th>approximate Percentage of Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Teaching and Supporting Diverse Children</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Creating a Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Instructional Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Professionalism, Family, and Community</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You have two hours to complete the test.
Suggestions for Using this Guide

Why should you use this study guide?

These tests are different from final exams or other tests you may have taken for other courses because they are comprehensive — that is, they cover material you may have learned in several courses during your entire undergraduate program. The tests require you to synthesize information you have learned from many sources and to understand the subject as a whole.

Therefore, you should review and prepare for the test you plan to take, not merely practice with the question formats. A thorough review of the material covered on the test will significantly increase your likelihood of success. Moreover, studying for your licensing exam is a great opportunity to reflect on and develop a deeper understanding of pedagogical and administrative knowledge and methods before you begin your educational career. As you prepare to take the test, it may be particularly helpful for you to think about how you would apply the study topics and sample exercises to your own clinical experience obtained during your teacher preparation program. Your student teaching experience will be especially relevant to your thinking about the materials in the study guide.

How can you best use the Study Topics chapter to prepare for the Education of Young Children or Prekindergarten Education tests?

As you use this book, set the following tasks for yourself:

- **Become familiar with the test’s content.** Learn what will be tested, as covered in chapter 4.

- **Assess how well you know the content in each area.** After you learn what topics the test contains, you should assess your knowledge in each area. How well do you know the material? In which areas do you need to learn more before you take the test? It is quite likely that you will need to brush up on most or all of the areas. If you encounter material that feels unfamiliar or difficult, fold down page corners or insert sticky notes to remind yourself to spend extra time reviewing these topics.

- **Read chapter 5 to sharpen your skills in reading and answering multiple-choice questions.** To succeed on questions of this kind, you must focus carefully on the question, avoid reading things into the question, pay attention to details, and sift patiently through the answer choices. Chapter 5 shows you the most common formats that are used for multiple-choice questions.

- **If you are taking the Education of Young Children test, read chapter 6 to learn how to respond to constructed-response questions.** To succeed on questions of this kind, you must understand what specifically is being asked in the question and give a thorough and detailed response. Chapter 6 shows you examples of constructed-response questions and explains what the test scorers look for when they read and score responses.

- **Develop a study plan.** Assess what you need to study and create a realistic plan for studying. You can develop your study plan in any way that works best for you. A Study Plan form is included in appendix A at the end of the book as a possible way to structure your planning. Remember that you will need to allow time to find books and other materials, time to read the materials and take notes, and time to apply your learning to the practice questions.
CHAPTER 1

- **Identify study materials.** Most of the material covered by the test is contained in standard textbooks in the field. If you no longer own the texts you used in your undergraduate course work, you may want to borrow some from friends or from a library. Use standard textbooks and other reliable, professionally prepared materials. Don’t rely heavily on information provided by friends or from searching the Internet. Neither of these sources is as uniformly reliable as textbooks. Also review other relevant course materials provided by your instructors.

- **Work through your study plan.** You may want to work alone, or you may find it more helpful to work with a group or with a mentor. Work through the topics and questions provided in chapter 4. Rather than memorizing definitions from books, be able to define and discuss the topics in your own words and understand the relationships between diverse topics and concepts. If you are working with a group or mentor, you can also try informal quizzes and questioning techniques.

- **Proceed to the practice questions.** Once you have completed your review, you are ready to benefit from the practice test in chapter 7 of this guide. Then use the following chapter (“Right Answers and Explanations”) to mark the questions you answered correctly and the ones you missed. In this chapter, also look over the explanations of the questions you missed and see whether you understand them.

- **Decide whether you need more review.** After you have looked at your results, decide whether there are areas that you need to brush up on before taking the actual test. Go back to your textbooks and reference materials to see whether the topics are covered there. You might also want to go over your questions with a friend or teacher who is familiar with the subjects.

- **Assess your readiness.** Do you feel confident about your level of understanding in each of the subject areas? If not, where do you need more work? If you feel ready, complete the checklist in chapter 10 to double-check that you’ve thought through the details. If you need more information about registration or the testing situation itself, use the resources in appendix B, “For More Information.”

**How might you use this book as part of a study group?**

People who have a lot of studying to do sometimes find it helpful to form a study group with others who are preparing toward the same goal. Study groups give members opportunities to ask questions and get detailed answers. In a group, some members usually have a better understanding of certain topics, while others in the group may be better at other topics. As members take turns explaining concepts to each other, everyone builds self-confidence. If the group encounters a question that none of the members can answer well, the members can go as a group to a teacher or other expert and get answers efficiently. Because study groups schedule regular meetings, group members study in a more disciplined fashion. They also gain emotional support. The group should be large enough so that various people can contribute various kinds of knowledge, but small enough so that it stays focused. Often, three to six people make a good-sized group.

Here are some ways to use this book as part of a study group:

- **Plan the group’s study program.** Parts of the Study Plan Sheet in appendix A can help to structure your group’s study program. By filling out the first five columns and sharing the worksheets, everyone will learn more about your group’s mix of abilities and about the resources (such as textbooks) that members can share with the group. In the sixth column (“Dates planned for study of content”), you can create an overall schedule for your group’s study program.
Plan individual group sessions. At the end of each session, the group should decide what specific topics will be covered at the next meeting and who will present each topic. Use the topic headings and subheadings in chapter 4.

Prepare your presentation for the group. When it’s your turn to be presenter, prepare something that’s more than a lecture. Write five to ten original questions to pose to the group. Practicing writing actual questions can help you better understand the topics covered on the test as well as the types of questions you will encounter on the test. It will also give other members of the group extra practice at answering questions.

Take the practice test together. The idea of the practice test in chapter 7 is to simulate an actual administration of the test, so scheduling a test session with the group will add to the realism and will also help boost everyone’s confidence.

Learn from the results of the practice test. Use chapter 8 to score each other’s answer sheets. Then plan one or more study sessions based on the questions that group members got wrong. For example, each group member might be responsible for a question that he or she got wrong and could use it as a model to create an original question to pose to the group, together with an explanation of the correct answer modeled after the explanations in chapter 8.

Whether you decide to study alone or with a group, remember that the best way to prepare is to have an organized plan. The plan should set goals based on specific topics and skills that you need to learn, and it should commit you to a realistic set of deadlines for meeting these goals. Then you need to discipline yourself to stick with your plan and accomplish your goals on schedule.
Chapter 2
Background Information on *The Praxis Series*™ Assessments
What Are The Praxis Series™ Subject Assessments?

The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are designed by ETS to assess your knowledge of the area of education in which you plan to work, and they are a part of the licensing procedure in many states. This study guide covers assessments that test your knowledge of the actual content related to your intended specialization. Your state has adopted The Praxis Series tests because it wants to be certain that you have achieved a specified level of mastery of your subject area before it grants you a license to work in a school.

The Praxis Series tests are part of a national testing program, meaning that the tests covered in this study guide are used in more than one state. The advantage of taking Praxis tests is that if you want to practice in another state that uses The Praxis Series tests, that state will recognize your scores. Passing scores are set by states, however, so if you are planning to apply for licensure in another state, you may find that passing scores are different. You can find passing scores for all states that use The Praxis Series tests either online at www.ets.org/praxis/prxstate.html or in the Understanding Your Praxis Scores pamphlet, available either in your college’s School of Education or by calling 609-771-7395.

What Is Licensure?

Licensure in any area — medicine, law, architecture, accounting, cosmetology — is an assurance to the public that the person holding the license has demonstrated a certain level of competence. The phrase used in licensure is that the person holding the license will do no harm. In the case of licensing for educators, a license tells the public that the person holding the license can be trusted to educate children competently and professionally.

Because a license makes such a serious claim about its holder, licensure tests are usually quite demanding. In some fields, licensure tests have more than one part and last for more than one day. Candidates for licensure in all fields plan intensive study as part of their professional preparation: some join study groups, while others study alone. But preparing to take a licensure test is, in all cases, a professional activity. Because it assesses your entire body of knowledge or skill for the field you want to enter, preparing for a licensure exam takes planning, discipline, and sustained effort. Studying thoroughly is highly recommended.

Why Does My State Require The Praxis Series Subject Assessments?

Your state chose The Praxis Series Subject Assessments because the tests assess the breadth and depth of content — called the “domain” of the test — that your state wants its education professionals to have before they begin to work. The level of content knowledge, reflected in the passing score, is based on recommendations of panels of professionals and postsecondary educators in each subject area in each state. The state licensing agency and, in some states, the state legislature ratify the passing scores that have been recommended by panels of professionals. (See “What are The Praxis Series Subject Assessments?” above for where to find your state’s passing score.) Not all states use the same test modules, and even when they do, the passing scores can differ from state to state.
What Kinds of Tests Are The Praxis Series Subject Assessments?

Two kinds of tests comprise The Praxis Series Subject Assessments: multiple-choice (for which you select your answer from a list of choices) and constructed-response (for which you write a response of your own). Multiple-choice tests can survey a wider domain because they can ask more questions in a limited period of time. Constructed-response tests have far fewer questions, but the questions require you to demonstrate the depth of your knowledge in the area covered.

What Do the Tests Measure?

The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are tests of content knowledge. They measure your understanding of the subject area that will be your specialization. The multiple-choice tests measure a broad range of knowledge across your content area. The constructed-response tests measure your ability to explain in depth a few essential topics in your subject area. The content-specific pedagogy tests, most of which are constructed-response, measure your understanding of how to teach certain fundamental concepts in your field. The tests do not measure actual teaching ability, however. They measure your knowledge of your subject and (for classroom specializations) your knowledge of how to teach it. The professionals in your field who help us design and write these tests, and the states that require these tests, do so in the belief that knowledge of subject area is the first requirement for licensing. Your ability to perform in an actual school is a skill that is measured in other ways: observation, videotaped teaching, or portfolios are typically used by states to measure this ability. Education combines many complex skills, only some of which can be measured by a single test. The Praxis Series Subject Assessments are designed to measure how thoroughly you understand the material in the subject areas for which you want to be licensed.

How Were These Tests Developed?

ETS began the development of The Praxis Series Subject Assessments with a survey. For each subject, professionals around the country in various educational situations were asked to judge which knowledge and skills a beginning practitioner in that subject needs to possess. Professors in schools of education who prepare professionals were asked the same questions. These responses were ranked in order of importance and sent out to hundreds of professionals for review. All of the responses to these surveys (called “job analysis surveys”) were analyzed to summarize the judgments of these professionals. From their consensus, we developed the specifications for the multiple-choice and constructed-response tests. Each subject area had a committee of practitioners and postsecondary educators who wrote these specifications (guidelines). The specifications were reviewed and eventually approved by professionals. From the test specifications, groups of practitioners and professional test developers created test questions.

When your state adopted The Praxis Series Subject Assessments, local panels of practicing professionals and postsecondary educators in each subject area met to examine the tests question by question and evaluate each question for its relevance to beginning professionals in your state. This is called a "validity study." A test is considered “valid” for a job if it measures what people must know and be able to do on that job. For the test to be adopted in your state, professionals in your state must judge that it is valid.
These professionals also performed a “standard-setting study”; that is, they went through the tests question by question and decided, through a rigorous process, how many questions a beginning professional should be able to answer correctly. From this study emerged a recommended passing score. The final passing score was approved by your state’s Department of Education.

In other words, throughout the development process, practitioners in the field of education — professionals and postsecondary educators — have determined what the tests would contain. The practitioners in your state determined which tests would be used for licensure in your subject area and helped decide what score would be needed to achieve licensure. This is how professional licensure works in most fields: those who are already licensed oversee the licensing of new practitioners. When you pass The Praxis Series Subject Assessments, you and the practitioners in your state can be assured that you have the knowledge required to begin practicing your profession.