Praxis Topics: Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT)

Test at a Glance

**Test Name:** Principles of Learning and Teaching: Grades K-6

**Test Code:** 0522

**Time:** 2 hours

**Number of Questions:** 12 short-answer questions and 24 multiple-choice question

**Format:** 4 case histories will be presented, each followed by 3 short-answer questions; 24 multiple-choice questions are included in two sections of 12 questions each

About This Test

The Principles of Learning and Teaching test is designed to assess a beginning teacher's knowledge of a variety of job-related criteria. Such knowledge is typically obtained in undergraduate preparation in areas such as educational psychology, human growth and development, classroom management, instructional design and delivery techniques, evaluation and assessment, and other professional preparation.

The test includes four case histories, each presenting a particular teaching situation. For each case history, the examinee will respond to three short-answer questions related to the teaching situation described in the case history. The twelve short-answer questions will cover all of the content areas listed under Topics Covered. Each short-answer question will be scored on a scale of 0-2. Questions may require the examinee to do any of the following: demonstrate understanding of the importance of an aspect of teaching, demonstrate understanding of the principles of learning and teaching underlying an aspect of teaching, or recognize when and how to apply the principles of learning and teaching underlying an aspect of teaching. Each case history with short-answer questions will require approximately 25 minutes.

In addition, the test contains two sections of twelve multiple-choice questions covering an array of topics listed under Topics Covered. Each multiple-choice question section will require approximately 10 minutes.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.
1. Students as Learners (MC = 11%; SA = 22%) = 33%

A. Student Development and the Learning Process

1. Theoretical foundations about how learning occurs: how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, and develop habits of mind
   1. Examples of important theorists
   2. Important terms and concepts relate to learning theory

2. Human development in the physical, social, emotional, moral, and cognitive domains
   1. Contributions of Important Theorists
   2. Major progressions in each developmental domain and the ranges of individual variation within each domain
   3. Impact of students’ physical, social, emotional, moral, and cognitive development on their learning and how to address these factors when making instructional decisions
   4. How development in one domain, such as physical, may affect performance in another domain such as social

B. Students as Diverse Learners

1. Differences in the ways students learn and perform
   1. Learning styles
   2. Multiple intelligences
   3. Performance modes
      a. Concrete operational thinkers
      b. Visual and aural learners
   4. Gender differences
   5. Cultural expectations and styles

2. Areas of exceptionality in students’ learning and how to accommodate the needs of students with exceptionalities
   1. Visual and perceptual difficulties
   2. Special physical or sensory challenges (visual, speech, and physical difficulties)
   3. Learning disabilities
   4. Attention-deficit (ADD); attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
   5. Functional mental retardation
   6. Behavioral disorders
   7. Developmental delays

3. Legislation and institutional responsibilities relating to exceptional students
   1. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
   2. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
   3. Inclusion, mainstreaming, and “least restrictive environment”
   4. Individualized Education Plans (IEP), including what, by law, must be included in each IEP
   5. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Services Act
   6. Due process
   7. Family involvement
4. Approaches for accommodating various learning styles, intelligences, or exceptionalities
   1. Differentiated instruction
   2. Alternative assessment
   3. Testing modifications

5. Process of second language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students for whom language is not a first language.
   1. Teachers support English acquisition in non-English speaking students

6. Understanding of influences of individual experiences, talents, and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values on students’ learning
   1. Multicultural background
   2. Age-appropriate knowledge and behaviors
   3. The student culture at the school
   4. Family backgrounds
   5. Linguistic patterns and differences
   6. Cognitive patterns and differences
   7. Social and emotional issues

C. Student Motivation and the Learning Environment

1. Theoretical foundations about human motivation and behavior
   1. Important terms that relate to motivation and behavior

2. How knowledge of human emotion and behavior should influence strategies for organizing and supporting individual and group work in the classroom

3. Factors and situations that are likely to promote or diminish students’ motivation to learn, and how to help students to become self-motivated

4. Principles of effective management and strategies to promote positive relationships, cooperation, and purposeful learning

   1. Establishing daily procedures and routines
   2. Establishing classroom rules
   3. Using natural and logical consequences
   4. Providing positive guidance
   5. Modeling conflict resolution, problem solving, and anger management.
   6. Giving timely feedback
   7. Maintaining accurate records
   8. Communicating with parents and caregivers
   9. Using objective behavior descriptions
   10. Responding to student misbehavior
   11. Arranging classroom space
   12. Pacing and the structure of the lesson
2. Instruction and Assessment (MC = 11%; SA = 22%) = 33%

A. Instructional Strategies

1. Major cognitive processes associated with student learning
   
   1. Critical thinking
   2. Creative thinking
   3. Higher-order thinking
   4. Inductive and deductive thinking
   5. Problem structuring and problem solving
   6. Invention
   7. Memorization and recall
   8. Social reasoning
   9. Representation of ideas

2. Major categories, advantages, and appropriate uses of instructional strategies
   
   1. Cooperative learning
   2. Direct instruction
   3. Discovery learning
   4. Whole-group discussion
   5. Independent study
   6. Recitation
   7. Interdisciplinary instruction
   8. Concept mapping
   9. Inquiry method
   10. Questioning
   11. Play
   12. Learning centers
   13. Small-group work
   14. Revisiting
   15. Reflection
   16. Project approach

3. Principles, techniques, and methods associated with major instructional strategies
   
   1. Direct instruction
   2. Student-centered models

4. Methods for enhancing student learning through the use of a variety of resources and materials
   
   1. Computers, Internet resources, Web pages, email
   2. Audiovisual technologies such as videotapes and compact discs
   3. Local experts
   4. Primary documents and artifacts
   5. Field trips
   6. Libraries
   7. Service Learning
B. Planning Instruction

1. Techniques for planning instruction including addressing curriculum goals, selecting content topics, incorporation learning theory, subject matter, curriculum development, and student development and interests
   
   1. National and state learning standards
   2. State and local curriculum frameworks
   3. State and local curriculum guides
   4. Scope and sequence in specific disciplines
   5. Units and lessons
      a. Rationale for selecting content topics
   6. Behavioral objectives: affective, cognitive, and psychomotor, speech/language
   7. Learning objectives and outcomes
   8. Emergent curriculum
   9. Antibias curriculum
   10. Themes/projects
   11. Curriculum webbing

2. Techniques for creating effective bridges between curriculum goals and students’ experiences
   
   1. Modeling
   2. Guided practice
   3. Independent practice, including homework
   4. Transitions
   5. Activating students’ prior knowledge
   6. Anticipating preconceptions
   7. Encouraging exploration and problem solving
   8. Building new skills on those previously acquired
   9. Predicting

C. Assessment Strategies

1. Types of assessments
2. Characteristics of assessments
3. Scoring assessments
4. Uses of assessments
5. Understanding of measurement theory and assessment-related issues
6. Interpreting and communicating results of assessments

3. Communication Techniques (SA = 11%)

A. Basic, effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques

B. Effect of cultural and gender differences on communications in the classroom

C. Types of communications and interactions that can stimulate discussion in different ways for particular purposes
   
   1. Probing for learner understanding
   2. Helping students articulate their ideas and thinking processes
   3. Promoting risk-taking and problem solving
   4. Facilitating factual recall
   5. Encouraging convergent and divergent thinking
   6. Stimulating curiosity
   7. Helping students to question
   8. Promoting a caring community
4. **Profession and Community** (MC = 11%; SA = 11%) = 22%

**A. The Reflective Practitioner**

1. Types of resources available for professional development and learning
   1. Professional literature
   2. Colleagues
   3. Professional associations
   4. Professional development activities

2. Ability to read, understand, and apply articles and books about current views, ideas, and debates regarding best teaching practices

3. Ongoing personal reflection on teaching and learning practices as a basis for making professional decisions
   1. Code of Ethics
   2. Advocacy for learners

**B. The Larger Community**

1. Role of the school as a resource to the larger community
   1. Teachers as a resource

2. Factors in the students’ environment outside of school (family circumstances, community environments, health, and economic conditions) that may influence students’ life and learning

3. Develop and utilize active partnerships among teachers, parents/guardians, and leaders in the community to support the educational process
   1. Shared ownership
   2. Shared decision making
   3. Respectful/reciprocal communication

4. Major laws related to students’ rights and teacher responsibilities
   1. Equal education
   2. Appropriate education for students with special needs
   3. Confidentiality and privacy
   4. Appropriate treatment of students
   5. Reporting in situations related to possible child abuse