

Praxis II: PLT Review

Ann B. Nero, Ed.D.

Teacher Induction Staff Development Coordinator

The PLT is a two-hour test. During that time you will be given 4 case studies, each followed by 3 constructed responses (essays), and 24 multiple choice questions covering a variety of topics.

When taking the test, a maximum of 25 minutes should be spent on each of the case studies and questions (100 minutes total). About 50 seconds should be devoted to each of the 24 multiple choice items (20 minutes...for an entire test time of 120 minutes).

Topics covered:

Knowing How Students Learn and Develop

Teaching and Assessing Students

Communication with Others

Becoming a Professional

About 70% of the questions come from sections I and II.

Suggested time for study: 6 weeks

Additional Help

Case Studies

Practice writing responses as often as you can. Almost every aspect of the classroom could be used...leading a discussion, setting up learning centers, the role of technology in the classroom, your opinion on ability grouping, how reading skills can be taught with the use of texts, your philosophy of homework, etc. Write a good topic sentence; back up your ideas with examples, referring to theories whenever possible, and summarize. Length is not a factor. You will be graded based on your ideas, whether you answered the question completely, and writing skills. (See sample topics at the end of this review.)

Good resources for further study:

- www.cheyney.edu/pages/?p=158 (terms)
- www.cheyney.edu/pages/?p=163 (terms)
- www.sciteched.org/plt/intro_plt.html (terms)
- www.ets.org/praxis/index.html (Test at a Glance)
- chiron.Valdosta.edu/whuitt/lrnasm/lrnasmess.html (theories)

The Praxis Test Guides are good resources also. This is not meant to be an exclusive study guide, but will help you review what you have learned in your classes. It is a good idea, also, to study your class notes for additional information.

Theories of Learning and Development

Albert Banduras

Social Learning Theory- learning through observation of others.

This may be done through modeling or learning vicariously through others. It often leads to self-regulation. He describes two kinds of learning: enactive (doing) and vicarious (observing).

Four stages of Bandura's Observational Learning:

1. The teacher gains the students' attention.
2. The teacher models a behavior or skill to the students.
3. The students reproduce or imitate the behavior or skill.
Assessment occurs at this stage.
4. The students are motivated to continue the behavior or skill through external or internal motivators.

Elements: attention- retention- production- motivation and reinforcement

Application: Students learn through the modeling of others.

- Be knowledgeable of your content.
- Develop interesting lessons that relate to students' lives.
- Set high expectations...challenge students without frustrating them (zone of proximal development)
- Encourage students to set realistic goals.

- Focus on developing students' intrinsic motivation to learn; learning for the sake of learning.

Jerome Bruner – Discovery Learning

Learning is an active process. They can construct new ideas from past knowledge.

Elements: creating a predisposition towards learning – structuring knowledge so that the learner can grasp it—determining the sequence for presenting material – presenting stimuli, reinforcing stimuli, rewards, and punishments.

Bruner suggested that the scientific method be used to solve problems.

John Dewey- The Father of American Education

Dewey focused on the theory of inquiry. His philosophy is pragmatism. He de-emphasized rote memory and dogmatic instruction; he emphasized learning by doing.

Jean Piaget- Cognitive Development

According to Piaget, cognitive abilities are develop as children develop and mature and have interactions with their environment. These interactions or adaptations were described as *equilibration of accommodation* (adjusting prior knowledge through former experiences and interactions), and *assimilation* (fitting new information with what has been known. When they encounter a new stimulus, they are brought into a state of *disequilibrium*).

Stages:

Sensorimotor – 0-2 years Children explore their world through their senses and motor skills.

Preoperational – ages 2-7 years Children believe others view the world as they do (egocentric). They also are able to use symbols to represent objects.

Concrete Operational – 7 –11 years Children are able to reason logically with familiar situations. They can conserve and reverse operations.

Formal Operations – 11 and above Individuals can deal with hypothetical situations and use abstract thought. (It is now thought that many adults never reach this stage.)

Application: Children interact with their environment, constructing their own knowledge of the world. This is the basis for *constructivism*. Provide developmentally appropriate lessons that include hands-on activities whenever possible and activate their prior knowledge. Remember that children move through all stages, but develop at different rates.

L. S. Vygotsky – Sociocultural Theory

Social interaction plays a fundamental role in cognition development. Children learn signs (language, thinking) through interaction with others in their culture. It is when children are helped by others that they develop cognitively. Children eventually learn to self-regulate without help. Private or self-speech is a part of this development. His zone of proximal development is where adult guidance or peer

collaboration can advance the range of skill. *Scaffolding* is the term he uses for adult support.

Application: Teachers must teach within a child's zone of proximal development (that level just beyond the child's current level of understanding) using scaffolding (modeling, think-alouds, questions, etc.) to provide needed support to assist the child in development. Encourage oral communication within the classroom and provide opportunities for children to learn from one another.

Howard Gardner- Multiple Intelligences

An individual has up to 8 separate intelligences including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Gardner does not support traditional intelligence tests as they do not assess these separate abilities.

Application: Know your students well enough to know their strengths in the above areas. Use a variety of assignments, activities, and assessments so that students can develop their competence in any or all of the intelligences.

Abraham Maslow- Hierarchy of Needs

According to Maslow, his lower order needs must be met before individuals can progress to higher levels of achievement. The lowest level of need is the Physiological...food, shelter, warmth. These must be met before students can perform school tasks. Today, breakfast

and lunch programs, heating, and air conditioning help meet these needs.

The second level of need concerns Safety. Students must feel free from harm before they are ready to learn. Schools today use metal detectors, security guards to help meet these needs.

The third level of need is the need for affiliation and belonging (Social Needs). Students need the opportunity to develop social relationships and establish friendships among their peers.

The fourth level of need is in the area of Esteem. Students want to feel competent and independent in their endeavors.

The highest level of need is in the area of Self-Actualization. Though many people never reach this level, the self-actualized person needs to know and understand and is in a state of “becoming” what he/she wants to be.

The three lowest needs are called deficiency needs; the two highest are called growth needs. Teachers must examine students' deficiency needs when children appear unmotivated to learn while in the classroom.

Motivation

Behavioral Approach- Students receive incentives such as grades, recognition, and rewards. Those students with extrinsic motivation may react more favorably to these motivators.

Humanistic Approach- Students' deficiency needs must be met before their growth needs can be addressed. Instructional practices that influence student motivation include: interesting lessons that relate to students' lives, high expectations, setting realistic goals, focus on intrinsic motivation.

Motivation can be influenced by family, peers, ethnicity, SES, and gender.

B. F. Skinner- Operant Conditioning

Childrens' learning is influenced by consequences that follow a given behavior. Strengthen behaviors through positive and negative reinforcements. Reduce behaviors using punishments.

Behavior---desirable consequence—increased frequency

Behavior---undesirable consequence—decreased frequency

Erik Erikson- Psychological Development

Although Erikson's theory has 8 stages only those affecting school age children are mentioned here:

Initiative vs. Guilt- 3-6 years (Caregivers/Family) Explores social and physical environment. When children are not able to move away from total parental attachment they experience a sense of guilt.

Industry vs. Inferiority- 6-12 years (Neighborhood/School) Acquires and extends skills to wider culture. One's "work" is school.

If the child acquires skills such as reading, writing, and computing, as well as social skills, the child achieves a sense of industry; failure to achieve these skills leads to a sense of inferiority.

Identity vs. Identity Confusion- 12 – 18 years (Peers/School)

Questions who he/she is as school and career goals develop. The adolescent starts to ask “Who am I?”. Once they find what they believe and value they can attain identity achievement; failure to discover these things leads to identity diffusion.

Application: Teachers would do well to focus on teaching academic and social skills, helping students gain proficiency in skills that will enable learners to be productive members of society. Teachers should provide students with developmentally appropriate instruction. Instruction should meet physical, emotional, and social, as well as cognitive.

Lawrence Kohlberg- Moral Development

Children pass through 3 levels (6 stages) as they develop their moral reasoning. Stage I focuses on children following their self-interests. Stage II emphasizes the role of family and community, and Stage III is based on ethical principles. While ages are not established, most children are in the early part of Level II by age 9-10. Fewer than 25% of all people reach Level III.

Stages:

Stage I: Preconventional Moral Reasoning...Punishment and obedience. Children follow rules to escape punishment.

Stage II: Conventional Moral Reasoning... Individualism and change. Children follow rules, not only to escape punishment, but also when they think there is some reward in following the rules. They sometimes seek to receive a reward or benefit for their good behavior.

Stage III: Mutual interpersonal expectation and interpersonal conformity. Children want to please those who are important to them. They may behave in a manner that gains the approval of their peers or idols.

Stage IV: Conscience comes into play. Students realize that rules are necessary and will obey them if based on social values such as honesty, respect, courtesy, etc.

Stages V and VI: Post Conventional Moral Reasoning. In Stage V, students recognize rights, but believe people should generally abide by the rules. About 1/5 of adolescents reach stage V. Few individuals ever reach Stage VI. This is characterized by universal principles of justice. Rules should be obeyed; however, if rules violate ethical principles, then they will follow their conscience even if it means breaking the rules.

Carol Gilligan- Moral Reasoning in Women

Ethic of Care- Women, unlike men at Stages V and VI (Kohlberg) tend to value caring and compassion for others above abstract, rational principles. When women make decisions, they base their conclusions on how others will be affected by their actions.

Three levels of moral reasoning (women):

Level 1- concern about self

Level II- individual sacrifices own interests for the sake of others.

Level III- individual synthesizes responsibilities to both herself and to others...care for all people.

Benjamin Bloom-Taxonomy

Six levels of thought...knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Knowledge- lowest level of thought...rote learning...one right answer.

Who developed the first microscope? Answers who, what, when questions.

Comprehension- students show understanding. Define latitude. If the student regurgitates a memorized answer it is on the knowledge level; if he/she defines the term in his/her own words, it is on the comprehension level.

Application- Students use information in a different way. Using mathematical operations---add, subtract, etc.—to solve problems.

Analysis- Higher level- Involves taking something apart and making a response. How are these two characters alike and how are they different?

Synthesis- Higher level- creating something new and creative. What will happen if we combine these two chemicals?

Evaluation- Highest level- making value judgments and often involves the question “why?”

All levels build on previous levels.

Robert Slavin

Intelligence is the general aptitude for learning and the ability to acquire and use new knowledge. The average IQ is 100 with a standard deviation of 15 points. Slavin includes experience, culture, and language skills as influencing outcomes. The IQ of the general population---16% below 85 or above 115; 34% between 85-100 and 100 – 115. Slavin is also the Father of Accelerated Schools, operated under the belief that all children are gifted and talented.

Additional Terms to Know

Constructivism- Learners construct knowledge from experiences

Metacognition- what, how, and why people know what they know when they know it. It is thinking about thinking and is used to maximize learning and memory.

Schemata- an organized body of knowledge.

Transfer- something one has learned affects how one learns in a later situation.

Intrinsic motivation- internal desire...activity is its own reward.

Extrinsic motivation- depends on factors outside the individual...reward or punishment.

Areas of Exceptionality

Visual/perceptual

Physical/sensory challenges

Learning disabilities

Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Disorder Hyperactivity Disorder

Functional mental retardation

ADA- Americans with Disabilities Act- accessibility issues

IDEA- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act including all students

Inclusion- the practice of teaching exceptional children in the regular classroom instead of a separate one.

Mainstreaming- educating exceptional students in regular classrooms.

IEP- Individual Education Plan- contains child's current level, goals, educational services, extent to which child participates in normal classroom activities, evaluation criteria, beginning and ending dates, parents' roles, etc. Can include differentiated instruction, alternative assessment, modifications, etc.

Teaching Students with Exceptionalities: Adapt content and instruction as needed, give appropriate on-going assessment, give frequent feedback, actively engage the student, use appropriate management techniques.

For gifted students: integrate assignments that include abstract thought, provide creative activities, encourage a variety of learning

opportunities where students work independently, with peers, and with others of similar abilities.

Influences on Learning-

Past experiences

Talents

Prior Learning

Language

Culture

Family

Community values

Multicultural Students:

Pay special attention to age-appropriate activities, include the students' cultures at school, note linguistic patterns and differences, pay attention to social and emotional issues.

Correlational relationship- extent to which two variables are related

Causal relationship- explains why behavior occurs

Learned helplessness- general belief that one is incapable of succeeding and has little or no control of one's environment.

Self-efficacy- belief that one is capable of executing certain behaviors or reaching certain goals.

Reinforcement- Act following a response with a reinforcer and thereby increasing frequency of the response.

Positive- causes increase in behavior through the presentation of a pleasing stimulus

Negative- causes increase in behavior through the removal of a pleasing stimulus

Shaping- reinforcing successively closer and closer approximations of a desired terminal behavior.

Extinction- eventual disappearance of a conditional response due to stimulus being repeatedly present alone...the behavior is no longer being reinforced.

Punishment- consequence decreases the frequency of the response it follows.

Continuous reinforcement- reinforcing a response every time it occurs

Intermittant reinforcement- reinforcing occasionally

Instruction

Categories of Strategies

Cooperative Learning- Each student takes on a role and the emphasis is on collaboration. Each student is held accountable for his/her own work.

Direct Instruction- Teacher directs, monitors, and evaluates students using lecture, demonstrations, questions, and discussion. This is a highly structured approach that makes the most of academic learning time.

Mastery learning- students learn one concept before moving on to the next.

Madeline Hunter did extensive work in direct instruction. She used set, presentation of information, checking for understanding, practice, and closure.

David Ausubel- used advance organizers with lectures.

Direct instruction relies heavily on demonstrations, note-taking, outlining, visual aids, and mnemonics to enhance memory

Mnemonics- memory aids such as EGBDF for the lines on the treble clef in music or MVEMJSUNP (My very educated mother just served us nine pizzas)...order of planets from the sun.

Student-Centered Instruction

Student-centered instruction involves more student input, self-guidance, and responsibility. Student-centered instruction uses many of these strategies: inquiry, discovery, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, discussion, labs, projects, simulations.

Terms to Know

Critical thinking- evaluating accuracy

Creative thinking- new and original result

Problem-solving- creating new solutions

Inductive- from specific to general

Deductive- from general to specific

Inquiry- teacher presents a situation and the students gather data

Discovery- students work on their own to discover basic principles

Planning for Instruction

See www.mcsk12.net. Go to Teaching & Learning Academy page. Click on Lesson Design and look at the instructional model, terms, etc. This site includes Curriculum Connections (national and state standards, curriculum guide information); Motivation- (Guiding Question, relating to students interests and experiences, and active participation in the first five minutes of the lesson); Instructional Strategies and Assessment Strategies; Extending and Refining Strategies, and Closure.

Techniques for creating “bridges”:

Modeling

Guided practice

Independent practice

Prior knowledge

Transitions

Assessments and Evaluation

Assessment includes all forms of information gathering and may be formal or informal. Terms related to assessment include:

Validity- the test measures what it is meant to measure

Reliability- test performance remains consistent across testing times and settings.

Evaluation- making decisions based on the multiple and varied assessments given to students.

Formative- given during instruction. It tells the teacher how the student is doing and how the teacher is doing, as well. It is tied to curriculum and is timely and administered often.

Summative- given at the conclusion of instruction. How much did the student learn? This information is often used as part of a grade.

Diagnostic-test to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses.

Norm-referenced- compares the student against other students and often covers a broad range of content...standardized.

Criterion-references- identifies skills or knowledge the student has learned. Is closely related to the curriculum and often a formative type of assessment.

Authentic- uses real-life tasks...write an editorial for a newspaper.

Performance- authentic assessment where students' performances are evaluated against realistic criteria.

Raw score- score earned by the student.

Percentile rank- % of those who scored at or below an individual's score.

Stanine- whole number score ranging from 1-9 with a mean of 5. Each stanine represents a wide range of scores. Used for ranking.

Grade equivalent- average score of students who took the test at a given grade level and time frame; identified as grade and month.

6.3 = 6th grade 3rd month. This is not recommended as it is easily misinterpreted.

Percentile bands- a range of scores around a mean score expressed in percentiles; 75th to 85th percentile.

Mean- average score of a group of tests.

Median- Middle score of a group of tests.

Mode- Most frequent score in a group of tests.

Norm- a group whose scores served as a standard for evaluating any student's test.

Other types of assessments: anecdotal records, portfolios, essays written to prompts, journals.

Analytical scoring- evaluates various aspects of performance

Holistic scoring- summarizing with a single score

Rubric- a scoring guide

Learning Environment

- Create an environment that encourages all students to participate.
- Establish and maintain a positive rapport with students.
- Communicate challenging learning expectations.
- Establish and maintain consistent classroom behavior.
- Make sure students understand the content you are teaching and monitor their learning.
- Motivate students to learn by using various teaching approaches and adjusting lessons to meet students' needs.
- Use instructional time effectively.

Approaches to Classroom Management

Kounin- Teachers must have an awareness of what is happening in their classrooms. They need to keep lessons moving at an appropriate pace and have smooth transitions between lessons.

Canter- Using assertive discipline, teachers clearly communicate their expectations and follow through with expectations; students have a choice---follow the rules or face the consequences.

Glasser- Teachers use class meetings to change behavior within the classroom; meetings focus on the behavior rather than the students.

Classroom management is NOT discipline. Management involves the development of an environment in which behavior problems are minimized. This includes activities, instruction, organization, and use of time. Discipline refers to the methods used to prevent behavior problems from occurring.

Problems can be deterred by having worthwhile lessons that are student-focused, incorporate humor, and are well organized (Parsons, Hinson, and Sardo-Brown, 2001).

Implement nonverbal approaches by making eye contact or moving closer to the student before using verbal reminders. Praise desired behavior, apply consequences as stated in rules, and use peers and other reinforcers as appropriate.

Communicating With Parents

Be prepared...be positive...be objective...use good communication skills...don't talk about other students.

Becoming a Professional Educator

Involve caregivers and community in children's education...know the professional literature in your field...critique and reflect on your teaching...attend professional development sessions to improve your performance and skills.

Sample Topics for Case Studies

This is a short list of possible topics related to case studies for you to use to practice writing your responses.

- How to lead a successful discussion
- How to plan an effective lecture
- How to set up learning centers
- The role of technology in the classroom
- How to deal with disruptive students
- Characteristics of an effective teacher
- Positives and negatives of ability grouping
- How textbooks differ from fiction books
- Your philosophy of homework
- Steps in planning a project involving a field trip
- How to reinforce reading skills through textbooks
- Your philosophy of using rewards in the classroom
- How to use graphic organizers effectively
- How to modify instruction for exceptional children in your classroom
- How to create a positive classroom climate
- How to create an interdisciplinary unit