NES

PROFILE

National Evaluation Series™

Assessment of Professional Knowledge–Elementary (051)

PEARSON

# NES Profile: Assessment of Professional Knowledge—Elementary (051)

Overview

This *NES Profile* provides information about the test, including the approximate percentage of the total test score derived from each content domain. The complete set of the content domains, the test framework, is provided here and contains all of the competencies and descriptive statements that define the content of the test.

This *NES Profile* includes the following materials:

» the test competencies associated with each content domain

» a set of descriptive statements that further explain each competency

» sample test questions aligned to the competencies

» any applicable reference materials, as noted below

Test Field	Assessment of Professional Knowledge: Elementary (051)
Test Format	Multiple-choice questions and constructed-response assignment
Number of Questions	100 multiple-choice questions, 1 case study written assignment, 1 work product written assignment
Test Duration	Up to 3 hours
Reference Materials	Written Assignment Directions Written Assignment Scoring Scale
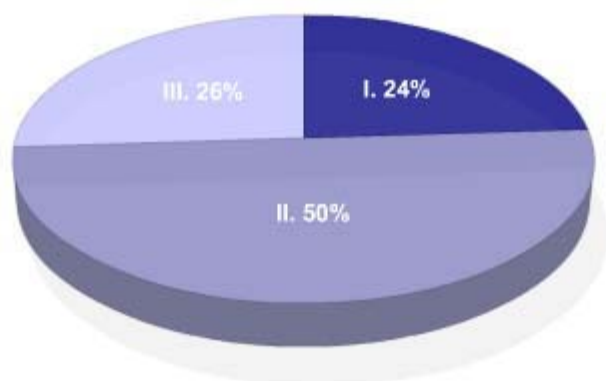
Key	Content Domain	Test Question Format	Approximate Percentage of Test	Range of Competencies
	I. Student Development and Learning	Multiple-Choice Questions	24%	0001–0003
	II. Assessment, Instruction, and the Learning Environment	Multiple-Choice Questions	40%	0004–0008
		Written Assignment: Case Study	10%	
	III. The Professional Environment	Multiple-Choice Questions	16%	0009–0010
		Written Assignment: Work Product	10%	

Directions for the Written Assignments

This test contains two constructed-response written assignments. One is a case study, consisting of two charges. The other is a work product. You are to prepare a written response to each based on the assigned topic. Read both assignments before responding to one. You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your response to the assignments.

Read both assignments carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize your responses.

Your responses will be scored on the extent to which you effectively communicate a whole message to the specified audience for the stated purpose. You will be assessed on your ability to apply professional knowledge in your response. Your response to the assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

Purpose: The extent to which the response fulfills the assignment

Professional Knowledge: The extent to which the response accurately and effectively applies relevant professional knowledge

Rationale and Support: The extent to which the response provides sound reasoning and relevant, specific support

You are to prepare a written response of approximately 200–300 words to each assignment. Be sure to write about the assigned topic. You may not use any reference materials. Your response must be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your written response. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited English as used in the United States.

Scoring Scale

The four points of the scoring scale correspond to varying degrees of performance.

Score Point	Score Point Description
4	**The "4" response reflects a thorough understanding of relevant knowledge and skills.** ● The response thoroughly fulfills the purpose of the assignment. ● The response demonstrates an accurate and effective application of the relevant professional knowledge. ● The response reflects sound, effective reasoning and provides high-quality, relevant support.
3	**The "3" response reflects a general understanding of relevant knowledge and skills.** ● The response largely fulfills the purpose of the assignment. ● The response demonstrates a generally accurate application of the relevant professional knowledge. ● The response reflects adequate reasoning and provides general, relevant support.
2	**The "2" response reflects a partial understanding of relevant knowledge and skills.** ● The response partially fulfills the purpose of the assignment. ● The response demonstrates a partially accurate application of the relevant professional knowledge. ● The response reflects limited reasoning and provides limited and/or partially irrelevant support.
1	**The "1" response reflects little understanding of relevant knowledge and skills.** ● The response fulfills little of the assignment. ● The response demonstrates an inaccurate and/or ineffective application of the relevant professional knowledge. ● The response reflects poor reasoning and provides little or no relevant support.
U	**The response is unrelated to the assignment, is unreadable, is primarily in a language other than English, or does not contain a sufficient amount of original work to score.**
B	**There is no response to the assignment.**

Content Domain I: Student Development and Learning

Competencies:

0001 Understand processes of human development, variations in student development, and how to apply this knowledge to provide instructional environments and experiences that promote all students' development and learning.

Descriptive Statements:

» Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts, principles, theories, and processes of human development as related to students from early childhood through the elementary years.

» Recognize developmental milestones and developmental variation in the physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, affective, and moral domains and their significance for instructional decision making for students from early childhood through the elementary years.

» Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics and behaviors related to physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, affective, and moral development in students from early childhood through the elementary years and ways in which a student's development in one domain may affect development and performance in other domains.

» Apply knowledge of cognitive development in students from early childhood through the elementary years and how to plan learning experiences and environments that support students' cognitive development.

» Demonstrate knowledge of factors that influence the development of students from early childhood through the elementary years, such as home and community environments, values, and cultural differences.

» Apply knowledge of the range of developmental differences in students within any given age group from early childhood through the elementary years and the implications of this variation for instructional decision making.

» Apply knowledge of typical developmental challenges for students from early childhood through the elementary years, such as those related to peer interactions, self-esteem, self-direction, decision making, and goal setting, and effective ways to help students address these challenges.

» Evaluate various instructional strategies, approaches, and learning goals in relation to the developmental characteristics and needs of students from early childhood through the elementary years.

Sample Item:

According to the theoretical framework developed by Lev Vygotsky, a young child's cognitive development is most strongly influenced by which of the following factors?

A. encounters with conflicting ideas that lead to disequilibrium and motivate change

B. positive reinforcement from key individuals in the child's life

C. genetically programmed characteristics that unfold gradually throughout childhood

D. conversations and other interactions with adults or more able peers

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Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the major theories of human development as they relate to students from early childhood through the elementary years. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is based on the idea that social interactions are the most important factor in creating cognitive structures and thinking processes. Higher mental processes, such as problem solving, are first co-constructed during shared activities or discussions between the child and another person. These processes are then internalized by the child and become part of the child's cognitive development.

0002 Understand learning processes, factors that can affect student learning and performance, and how to apply this knowledge to provide instructional environments and experiences that promote all students' learning and achievement.

Descriptive Statements:

» Demonstrate knowledge of major theories and concepts related to the learning process and their application in educational contexts.

» Apply knowledge of processes by which students construct meaning and develop skills, including the use of different types of learning strategies and various types of play, and techniques for making knowledge accessible and meaningful for all students from early childhood through the elementary years, including students who are English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

» Identify strategies and technologies for facilitating learning for students with various characteristics and needs in given instructional contexts.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for promoting students' development of independent thinking and learning, reflection and higher-order thinking skills, organizational and time-management skills, and sense of ownership and responsibility with regard to their own learning.

» Apply knowledge of various teacher and student roles in the learning process and how different roles may affect learning processes and learning outcomes.

» Demonstrate awareness of factors in the home, school, and community that can affect student learning and the implications of these factors for teaching and learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of various classroom practices, such as grouping practices and teacher-student interactions, and their significance for student learning.

Sample Item:

An elementary teacher wishes to use scaffolding to promote student learning. Which of the following is the best example of this strategy?

    A. prompting students to identify personal goals that they hope to achieve whenever they are preparing for an upcoming project

    B. giving students charts labeled with relevant variables on which to record data they gather during classroom science experiments

    C. holding weekly geography bees with students to review important information covered during recent lessons

    D. marking errors in students' descriptive paragraphs and then having the students rewrite the paragraphs correctly

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of processes by which students construct meaning and develop skills. Scaffolding is a method of supporting students' learning by providing them with clues, examples, step-by-step instructions, or partially completed learning tasks. Adapting instructional materials to students' current skill levels is one type of scaffolding. In the example given, labeling a chart with relevant variables helps ensure that students record experiment data accurately and independently.

0003 Understand student diversity and how to provide learning opportunities and environments that are responsive to student differences, promote all students' learning, and foster students' appreciation of and respect for diversity.

Descriptive Statements:

» Demonstrate knowledge of different types of student diversity, such as diversity in cultural or racial background, socioeconomic background, gender, linguistic background, religion, and family structure, and the implications of given types of diversity for teaching and learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of different types of student exceptionalities, their characteristics, and their implications for teaching and learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for enhancing one's own understanding of students' diverse backgrounds and needs, resources in the school and community for meeting individual student needs, and strategies for connecting students and their families to these resources.

» Identify strategies for working and interacting effectively in various classroom contexts with students with diverse characteristics and needs, including students who are English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for planning and adapting instruction that is responsive to the characteristics, skills, strengths, and needs of all students and for ensuring that all students participate fully in classroom life and activities.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for creating a positive, supportive classroom environment for all students and for promoting students' understanding of and appreciation and respect for diversity within the classroom and the community.

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Sample Item:

An elementary student who has a mild cognitive impairment is likely to experience the most difficulty in which of the following areas?

    A.   generalizing learned skills to new contexts

    B.   following classroom routines

    C.   working with a peer on a class activity

    D.   identifying personal interests

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of different types of student exceptionalities, their characteristics, and their implications for teaching and learning. Cognitive impairment is defined, in part, as a disability characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning. While students with average cognitive abilities can be expected to generalize new knowledge or skills from one situation to the next, often with minimal support, students with cognitive impairments need explicit instruction in this process of generalization. To learn most effectively, students with cognitive impairments need frequent opportunities to practice, with guidance, newly acquired knowledge and skills in appropriate and relevant educational or real-world settings.

Content Domain II: Assessment, Instruction, and the Learning Environment

Competencies:

0004 Understand assessment instruments and practices, the relationship between assessment and instruction, and how to use assessment to guide instruction and monitor students' learning progress.

Descriptive Statements:

» Demonstrate knowledge of important assessment concepts, such as reliability, validity, and bias, and the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of various types of formal and informal assessments.

» Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate assessment instruments and practices for given instructional situations or needs and how to select or construct assessment instruments for various purposes.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for integrating assessment and instruction, for aligning assessment with instructional goals, and for using assessment to monitor student understanding and to guide instruction.

» Demonstrate knowledge of the benefits of using multiple assessment methods to support instruction and appropriate strategies for adapting classroom assessments for students with various characteristics and needs, including students who are English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for providing students with timely, accurate, and effective feedback and for helping students use teacher assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment to guide their own learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of how to interpret assessment results and how to communicate assessment results to students and their families.

Sample Item:

A significant challenge for teachers in using essay tests to assess student learning is that such tests:

    A.   tend to be difficult to align with instructional objectives.

    B.   are ineffective in measuring certain types of thinking skills.

    C.   tend to encourage guessing in student responses.

    D.   are difficult to score fairly and objectively.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of various types of formal and informal assessments. Since essay tests require students to create their own answers, subjectivity in judging the quality of the answers becomes a critical consideration. Teachers must develop and apply consistent criteria to evaluate essay tests objectively. In addition to the content of students' answers, variation in their communicative effectiveness and the mechanics of their writing (e.g., neatness, spelling, punctuation) are factors that teachers must consider when evaluating essay tests.

0005 Understand principles and procedures of curricular and instructional planning and how to use effective planning to design instruction that promotes all students' learning and achievement.

Descriptive Statements:

» Identify procedures used in curricular planning and decision making, such as defining scope and sequence, determining prerequisite knowledge and skills, and aligning the curriculum with content standards.

» Demonstrate knowledge of key factors to consider in instructional planning, such as local, state, and national standards; the nature of the content; and students' characteristics, prior experiences, current knowledge and skills, and readiness to learn.

» Demonstrate knowledge of how to define appropriate learning goals and objectives, select effective instructional approaches, and determine the sequence of instruction.

» Apply knowledge of how to use appropriate criteria to evaluate instructional resources, including technological resources, and how to select resources to meet various instructional needs.

» Demonstrate knowledge of the benefits of and strategies for integrating curricula, creating interdisciplinary units of study, and planning learning experiences that provide students with opportunities to explore content from integrated and varied perspectives.

» Apply knowledge of effective lesson and unit plans and their characteristics, such as logical sequence, completeness, and feasibility.

» Apply knowledge of strategies for modifying curriculum and instruction based on student characteristics and needs and for adapting lessons to ensure the success of all students in learning, including students who are English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

Sample Item:

A teacher is planning lessons for a new instructional unit. The teacher can best ensure the effectiveness of these lessons by considering which of the following questions *first*?

A. What is the fairest and most efficient way to evaluate students' achievement of unit objectives?

B. Which unit activities are best completed individually and which activities are best done in a group?

C. What background knowledge and experience do students already have with regard to the unit topic?

D. In what ways does the unit support the goals of the district curriculum in this subject area?

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to identify procedures used in curricular planning and decision making. The extent of students' prior knowledge and experience with a topic helps determine a teacher's approach to a new unit. If most students have a good foundation of information with regard to the unit topic, the teacher may only need to provide a brief review before beginning the unit. Conversely, if students have had limited or no experience with a unit topic, the teacher will need to help students acquire foundational knowledge of the topic before proceeding with planned instruction.

0006 Understand principles and practices associated with various instructional approaches and how to apply these principles and practices to promote all students' achievement of instructional goals.

Descriptive Statements:

» Identify the characteristics, uses, benefits, and limitations of various instructional approaches, such as direct instruction, cooperative learning, inquiry, and class discussion.

» Apply knowledge of how to organize and implement instruction that promotes the ability of all students to achieve learning goals and of how to continuously monitor instructional effectiveness and respond flexibly to student understanding, engagement, and feedback.

» Demonstrate knowledge of various instructional approaches in terms of student and teacher roles and responsibilities and effectiveness in achieving given instructional purposes.

» Demonstrate knowledge of how to provide instruction that promotes higher-order thinking and creativity; encourages independent thinking and learning; enhances students' ability to synthesize knowledge, solve problems, and acquire, analyze, and organize information; and helps students work cooperatively and productively.

» Demonstrate knowledge of the use of technology in instruction and strategies for effectively integrating technology into specific instructional situations to support student learning.

Sample Item:

Which of the following strategies would likely be most effective in improving the quality and effectiveness of cooperative learning experiences for elementary students?

    A.   allowing students to choose their own group members for group activities

    B.   providing students with direct instruction and guided practice in group-process skills

    C.   delaying group work until students have had a chance to get to know each other well

    D.   giving students verbal feedback on their group work instead of assigning them a grade

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of how to provide instruction that helps students work cooperatively and productively. Successful cooperative learning experiences depend on group members' effective use of specific process skills. These skills include communicating appropriately, giving and receiving constructive feedback, coming to consensus, and encouraging participation by all group members. Providing students with explicit instruction in these skills and opportunities to practice them gives students the tools they need to achieve success in cooperative tasks across the curriculum and in the real world.

0007 Understand principles and practices of motivation and communication and how to apply these principles and practices effectively to promote students' active engagement and learning.

Descriptive Statements:

» Demonstrate knowledge of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, strategies for gaining students' attention and promoting motivation to learn, and ways to use encouragement and various types of peer support to sustain student interest and promote learning.

» Apply knowledge of the relationship between direct engagement in learning and students' interest in lessons and of procedures for enhancing relevance and promoting intrinsic motivation to learn.

» Recognize factors and situations that tend to promote or diminish student motivation, appropriate ways to apply various motivational strategies, and the expected outcomes of different strategies in given situations.

» Demonstrate knowledge of factors such as age, gender, and cultural and linguistic background that can affect classroom communication and methods for interacting effectively with all students to achieve specified communication goals such as clarifying content, communicating high expectations for learning, building student self-esteem, and promoting a climate of collaboration and support.

» Apply knowledge of communication strategies for meeting specific instructional needs and for promoting understanding and engagement of all students in learning, including students who are English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

» Demonstrate knowledge of skilled questioning and how to use various questioning techniques to achieve instructional goals, such as facilitating recall, stimulating curiosity, encouraging divergent thinking, and promoting higher-order thinking and creativity.

Sample Item:

Students in an early elementary class are completing a unit about their community. Which of the following teacher questions related to the unit would best promote the students' use of divergent thinking?

A.   What was one important thing you learned about your community during the unit?

B.   What do police officers do to keep people in your community safe?

C.   What are some things you can do on your own to keep your community clean and attractive?

D.   What do people use your community's public library for?

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of how to use various questioning techniques to achieve instructional goals. Divergent thinking is the ability to propose many different ideas or answers. Questions that promote this type of thinking are open-ended, allow for many possible answers, and do not always have right or wrong answers. Discussion questions that promote divergent thinking are generally structured so that individual student responses prompt elaboration or additional responses from other students, providing a wider range of responses and adding depth to the discussion.

0008 Understand how to structure and manage the classroom to establish a safe, inclusive, and positive environment that is organized and productive; fosters excellence; and promotes learning, appropriate student behavior, and effective work habits.

Descriptive Statements:

» Apply knowledge of strategies and procedures for creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive learning environment that encourages students' active engagement, risk taking, and collaboration in learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for promoting positive student interactions, facilitating conflict resolution, and promoting students' understanding and application of ethical principles such as honesty, courtesy and respect, academic and personal integrity, and civic responsibility.

» Demonstrate knowledge of various strategies for managing student behavior and relationships between specific classroom-management approaches and student learning, attitudes, and behaviors.

» Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating an organized and productive classroom environment that fosters excellence, promotes learning, optimizes students' time on task, and encourages self-regulation and a sense of responsibility and accountability.

» Apply knowledge of effective strategies for organizing the physical environment of the classroom to meet instructional needs, managing class schedules and transitions, and handling routine tasks and unanticipated situations.

Sample Item:

An upper elementary teacher holds regular class meetings with students. The teacher always begins these meetings by giving individual students an opportunity to recognize the efforts or achievement of a classmate or to thank a classmate for assistance with a difficult or challenging task. Beginning class meetings in this way is most likely to have which of the following outcomes?

A.   creating a learning environment that fosters excellence

B.   promoting students' self-monitoring of their own behavior

C.   building a supportive and caring classroom community

D.   communicating to students high expectations for their learning

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of strategies and procedures for creating a supportive classroom environment. In a supportive classroom community, students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. An important step in creating such a community is for the teacher to establish classroom rituals and routines that provide a foundation for positive and caring interactions among students. In the example given, the teacher helps provide such a foundation by adopting a routine for beginning class meetings that sets a positive tone.

Sample Written Assignment: Case Study

Use the case study below to complete the assignment that follows.

> **Background**
>
> Sam is a fifth-grade student who is performing at grade level in the core curricular areas. Sam is an eager participant in class discussions and activities, but he has a hard time organizing his assignments and often forgets to complete his work. He has particular difficulty beginning and completing written assignments and is easily frustrated by the writing process. Sam exhibits some impulsive behaviors, such as interrupting conversations and engaging in mild horseplay, which can annoy his classmates and make it difficult for him to work in groups. The teacher provides him with frequent verbal reminders to stay on task. Sam has a daily planner in which the teacher records his assignments. Sometimes during group-work periods, the teacher has Sam work independently and provides him with close supervision.
>
> **Upcoming Social Studies Project on Important Leaders**
>
> » Groups of three students will select an important leader to research.
>
> » Each student will gather information on a specific aspect of the leader's life, including early years and background, adult life and leadership qualities, and contributions to society.
>
> » The group will use the information gathered by each student to create a multimedia presentation for the class about the selected leader. Students will have three weeks to complete their projects.
>
> Although groups were assigned, the teacher let Sam choose which students he would like to work with on the project. Then the teacher met with Sam's group to create a checklist of the tasks Sam would complete for his part of the project. The teacher wrote the due dates for each task in Sam's daily planner and allowed him to work on those tasks an extra half-hour each day in a study carrel.
>
> **Excerpts from the Teacher's Observation Notes during Week One**
>
> *Sam chose to work with Manuel and Julia… So far Sam's interactions with his group have been relatively positive; he seems motivated to use the checklist we developed... He completed his first assigned task, but that was two days ago; I need to check in to see how he is doing… I am hearing Manuel and Julia tell Sam to "get to work" more frequently…*
>
> **Portion of a Discussion in Sam's Group During Week One**
>
> *Manuel: Sam, it's hard to work with you when you act silly and don't help us.*
>
> *Sam: I want to help. Sometimes I don't know what to do next.*
>
> *Julia: Look in your planner. We each agreed to make a list of five facts about our leader. You can tell us lots of information, but you don't have anything written down.*
>
> *Manuel: We need your information and your help to do the computer presentation.*
>
> *Sam: I'll bring it tomorrow.*
>
> *Julia: You're my friend, Sam, and you're really smart, but I don't want our group to have a bad project because you didn't do your part.*

Write a response in two parts based on the elements of the case study presented above.

Part One

» describe one strategy Sam's teacher used to try to help ensure Sam's success in learning, and

» explain why this strategy was a good one to try.

Part Two

» describe one additional strategy Sam's teacher could have used to help ensure Sam's success in learning, and

» explain why this strategy would have been effective in helping ensure Sam's success in learning.

Sample Responses

Sample Strong Response

Part One

One strategy Sam's teacher used to try to help ensure his success in learning was to assist Sam in managing his work by creating a checklist of tasks that Sam would complete for his part of the project. This was a good strategy to try because checklists can be effective tools for helping students learn how to monitor their own progress on an assignment or project. For a student such as Sam, who has trouble staying focused and remembering what he needs to do, a checklist can be particularly helpful. By referring to his checklist, Sam can quickly determine what he needs to work on next, and his teacher as well as the students in his group can tell at a glance if Sam is progressing or falling behind on his assigned tasks.

Part Two

One additional strategy Sam's teacher could have used to help ensure Sam's success in learning is to meet with Sam each day to review his progress and plan strategies for the next day's work. This strategy would have been effective for several reasons. First of all, such meetings would help promote a sense of accountability in Sam for his assigned tasks and maintain his focus on essential elements of the project. Secondly, this strategy would provide an opportunity for Sam's teacher to monitor his progress more closely and help him address potential problems earlier rather than later. By working with Sam to plan the next day's tasks, Sam's teacher can assist him in identifying specific concrete steps he needs to take to fulfill his responsibilities.

Sample Weak Response

Part One

It's often frustrating to work with a student like Sam, but his teacher persevered and kept trying to help Sam succeed. This is the hallmark of a good teacher. One strategy Sam's teacher used to try to help ensure his success in learning was to let Sam choose which students he wanted to work with for the group project. This was a good strategy to try because Sam would be more likely to stay on task with a group of his own choosing. He would most likely choose students with characteristics similar to his own, which would promote a sense of community within his group. This sense of community would lead, in turn, to a greater sense of engagement, commitment, and motivation to do well.

Part Two

Although the teacher used many good strategies, there were other ones he could have used. One additional strategy Sam's teacher could have used to help ensure Sam's success in learning is to use a hands-on approach. This would be an effective strategy to use with Sam because students learn more when they manipulate objects or figure things out on their own than they do when they just read information from a book. Additionally, hands-on learning is more time-effective than other approaches. Students learn faster because they work at their own pace. A hands-on approach would have ensured Sam's success in learning.

Content Domain III: The Professional Environment

Competencies:

0009 Understand how to establish partnerships and collaborate effectively with families, colleagues, and members of the community to enhance and support student learning.

Descriptive Statements:

» Apply knowledge of strategies for developing partnerships with families to support student learning and for encouraging and facilitating the involvement of parents/guardians in their children's education.

» Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of school-home communication, factors that facilitate or impede communication, and methods of initiating and maintaining effective communication with all students' families.

» Identify strategies for conducting effective conferences with parents/guardians, addressing the concerns of parents/guardians in various contexts, and interacting effectively and appropriately with all families, including those with diverse characteristics, backgrounds, and needs.

» Demonstrate knowledge of effective methods for establishing and maintaining supportive, collaborative relationships with professional colleagues in given school contexts.

» Apply knowledge of how to collaborate effectively with specialists and others in the school community to meet student needs and enhance student learning.

» Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop partnerships with individuals, businesses, and institutions in the community and how to use community resources to expand and enrich student learning.

Sample Item:

As a new school year begins, a second-grade teacher is making plans to hold a conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student in his class. During each conference, the teacher will discuss broad goals and expectations for all students in the class. Which of the following additional teacher actions during the conferences would best help promote positive communication and a sense of partnership with parents/guardians?

A. encouraging parents/guardians to share their own goals for their child's learning and development during the upcoming year as well as any concerns they may have

B. providing a thorough review of the second-grade curriculum in each subject and giving parents/guardians time to ask questions about the content to be covered

C. soliciting from parents/guardians information about any problematic situations in the home that they believe may affect their child's learning and achievement in school

D. sharing information with parents/guardians about the teacher's own personal and educational background and his professional credentials

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate an understanding of how to establish partnerships with families to enhance and support student learning. Efforts to create partnerships with parents/guardians should begin with the teacher's recognition that parents/guardians are knowledgeable, influential people who

have contributions to make to students and their education. True partnerships between teachers and parents/guardians are balanced, with both parties being seen as having valuable knowledge and perspectives. When a teacher solicits input from parents/guardians about their goals for their children's learning and development as well as their concerns, it initiates two-way communication and helps set the stage for this balance.

0010 Understand roles and expectations for professional educators, legal and ethical guidelines, and strategies for continuous professional growth and self-reflection.

Descriptive Statements:

» Apply knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers, and parents/guardians in various educational contexts.

» Demonstrate knowledge of the structure and components of the public education system, teacher roles in various educational contexts, and appropriate teacher interactions with and responses to other professionals in the system, parents/guardians, community members, and students.

» Recognize teacher requirements in given situations, such as providing instruction to students with special needs, ensuring educational equity for all students, maintaining the confidentiality of student records, and seeking copyright permission for use of instructional resource materials.

» Demonstrate knowledge of various types of professional organizations and professional development opportunities and resources, including research; action research; interactions with mentors, supervisors, and colleagues; and their use in enhancing professional knowledge, skills, and expertise.

» Demonstrate knowledge of important traits and behaviors associated with effective teaching (e.g., curiosity and love of learning, tolerance and open-mindedness) and strategies for using reflection and self-assessment to identify teaching strengths and challenges and to improve professional practice.

Sample Item:

A new teacher has asked her mentor to observe instruction during several lessons and provide feedback on her teaching. These observations are likely to be most beneficial if the new teacher takes which of the following actions before they occur?

    A.   identifying for the mentor specific aspects of her instruction, such as leading discussions, that she has particular concerns about

    B.   explaining to her students ahead of time the purpose and intended outcomes of the observations

    C.   providing the mentor with an overview of her students' current achievement levels, interests, and behavior patterns

    D.   clarifying for the mentor key aspects of her own current philosophy of teaching and learning

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of types of professional development opportunities and resources, including interactions with mentors, and their use in enhancing professional knowledge, skills, and expertise. New teachers often have difficulty assessing their own teaching practices and an observation by a more experienced mentor can provide helpful insights. New teachers who are

struggling with a particular aspect of teaching (e.g., class discussions) will benefit most from targeted feedback in that area. Providing a specific focus for an observation helps direct the mentor's attention and helps ensure that the post-observation dialogue between the mentor and the teacher addresses an identified need.

Sample Written Assignment: Work Product

Use the information below to complete the assignment that follows.

> Imagine that you are a new elementary teacher. Your principal has asked you to serve on a faculty committee whose goal is to identify ways to increase teachers' use of reflective practice. Members of the school community have been concerned about declining student achievement in recent years, and increased use of reflective practice by teachers has been identified as one way to enhance teaching and learning at the school. Increased use of reflective practice by teachers is a goal for the following year.

> **Write a response to other members of the committee describing your ideas about the issue of teachers' use of reflective practice. Your response should:**
>
> - explain why teachers' use of reflective practice is important;
> - describe two steps school staff can take to increase teachers' use of reflective practice; and
> - explain why each step you describe would be effective in increasing teachers' use of reflective practice.

Sample Responses

Sample Strong Response

Teachers' use of reflective practice is important for several reasons. First, reflective practice helps teachers gain a better understanding of their own teaching styles and strengths and helps them identify areas of their professional practice that are in need of improvement. Second, reflective practice enables teachers to use unsuccessful or disappointing lessons to improve their future performance and to address student learning needs more effectively. Finally, when the use of reflective practice is implemented schoolwide, it helps create a school culture that is focused on continuous improvement.

Two steps that school staff can take to increase teachers' use of reflective practice are for teachers to keep journals about their teaching experiences and to form faculty study teams. In the journals, teachers would make notes about classroom experiences, reflecting on practices that are working and those that are not working. Faculty study teams could consist of one or two teachers working together or all of the teachers in a grade level working together. Teams could target a particular aspect of teaching, such as classroom management or interdisciplinary instruction, and use a shared problem-solving approach to identify strategies that will promote improvement in the targeted area.

Keeping a journal would increase teachers' use of reflective practice by providing teachers with ongoing opportunities to examine their classroom experiences. As teachers develop the habit of regularly recording their thoughts about classroom experiences, reflection would become a routine part of their overall instructional practice. Faculty study teams would increase teachers' use of reflective practice by providing teachers with the

opportunity to enrich their personal reflections through discussion and collaboration with peers who have different levels of knowledge and experience. Both steps help create a school culture in which reflection is an essential component of professional practice.

Sample Weak Response

Student achievement has been declining in our schools in recent years. One way to reverse this trend is through the use of reflective practice. Teachers' use of reflective practice is important because it enhances teaching and learning. Reflective practice enables teachers to meet the social, emotional, and cognitive needs of all their students. It allows teachers to use a variety of instructional approaches, and it promotes a productive classroom environment in which all students can achieve. Reflective practice results in better teacher-student communication, greater confidence and independence in students, and a stronger school-to-home connection.

Two steps that school staff can take to increase teachers' use of reflective practice are discussing reflective practice with colleagues and holding a training workshop on reflective practice.

These steps would be effective for many reasons. When teachers are trained in a specific practice and have the opportunity to discuss it with their colleagues, they become more proficient in that practice. Teachers will be better equipped to accommodate the diverse strengths and needs of their students. As they continue to use reflective practice, they will see improvement in their students' achievement. Students will be able to accomplish more and they will feel better about those accomplishments. Teachers will observe that students are more engaged in learning activities and more motivated to succeed.

It would be unrealistic to expect these changes to occur immediately. We know that they will require time and hard work. But with effort, dedication, and teamwork, the staff will eventually see clear evidence of the effectiveness of reflective practice.