

Appendix A: Profile of Thirteen Tests for Elementary and Sometimes Other Teachers

1. PRAXIS 0201: *Reading across the Curriculum: Elementary Test (ETS)*

This test is for persons “completing teacher training programs with at least two or three courses in reading who are planning to teach at the elementary level or persons who are currently teaching and have the option of taking this test in lieu of state-mandated course work.” The content is based on “categories and competencies developed by the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association.” The test consists of 60 multiple-choice questions and three constructed-response questions involving the application of ideas and practices to reading instruction. The test is organized in six categories, with 64 sections in all. The website offers ten sample questions. The six categories and their weights are as follows:

- I. Theory of Reading as a Process; Language Acquisition and Early Literacy (10%)
- II. Reading Materials and Instruction; Reading Environment (15%)
- III. Reading Comprehension (10%)
- IV. Assessment of Reading (6.5%)
- V. Vocabulary, Spelling, and Word Study (8.5%)
- VI. Problem Solving Exercises (50%), a category containing three constructed-response questions addressing “analysis of student work and behavior; reading materials, instruction, and environment; and reading comprehension” (17% each)

Based on the website description, about 11% may address phonemic awareness and phonics skills—in Category V, Category IV, and an exercise. About 5% may address vocabulary development. Another 17% may address these three components if they are part of the focus of the constructed-response question on reading materials and instruction, for a total of 33%. However, according to ETS staff, the test was recently revised and now contains 13% on phonics, 7% on vocabulary, and 2% on phonemic awareness, for a total of 22% of the multiple-choice items, plus the percentage from a constructed-response question, for a total of 39%.⁵

2. PRAXIS 0011: *Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Test (ETS)*

This test is designed for prospective teachers of elementary students who have completed a bachelor’s degree program in elementary or middle school education or have prepared themselves through an alternative certification program. The test consists of 110 multiple-choice questions and is organized in six categories, with dozens of items under the first category alone. The website provides three sample questions for the first category. All six categories and their weights are as follows:

- I. Reading and Language Arts Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (35%)
 1. Curriculum components
 2. Instruction (divided into reading and writing)
 3. Assessment
- II. Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (20%)
- III. Science Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment ((10%)
- IV. Social Studies Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (10%);
- V. Arts and Physical Education Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (10%)
- VI. General Information about Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (15%)

⁵ Telephone conversation with Ingrid Hamilton, Shu-Kang Chen, and Florence Cucchi on December 7, 2005. They told me that what is on the Web site inaccurately describes the content of this test (and of PRAXIS 0202, a test of secondary reading). They also said that the newly revised test form for PRAXIS 0201 would be disclosed to the public in 2006, with a new description of test content and new sample questions. As of February 7, 2008, there was no new description on the ETS Web site.

About 2% may address phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Decoding is mentioned in one category. About 1% addresses vocabulary development. However, ETS staff informed me that 8 of the 110 items address these three components, for a total of 7%.

3. PRAXIS 0012: *Elementary Education: Content Area Exercises* (ETS)

This test is designed to measure how well prospective teachers of elementary school students can respond to extended exercises that “require thoughtful written responses.” For example, “an exercise might cover instructional approaches using trade books to teach reading/language arts in a first-grade classroom.” The test consists of four essay questions and is organized in four content categories:

- I. Reading/language arts (25%)
- II. Mathematics (25%)
- III. Science or Social Studies (25%)
- IV. Interdisciplinary Instruction (25%)

To judge by the examples given, this test may not address phonemic awareness and phonics skills at all. The one example given for the language arts is on the writing process. Attention to vocabulary development appears only in a sample response.

4. PRAXIS 0014: *Elementary Education: Content Knowledge Test* (ETS)

This test is designed for prospective teachers of elementary school children. It consists of 120 multiple-choice questions and is organized in four categories. The first category addresses five topics: understanding literature (7.5%); text structure (1%); reading instruction (7.5%); writing instruction (6%); and communication skills (2.5%), with each topic containing multiple items. (The weight following each topic refers to its percentage on the whole test.) The website provides six sample questions to address the first category. The four categories and their weights are as follows:

- I. Language Arts (25%)
- II. Mathematics (25%)
- III. Social Studies (25%)
- IV. Science (25%)

About 2% may address phonemic awareness and phonics skills. They may be part of “reading instructional strategies.” About 1% may address vocabulary development.

5. *Multiple Subject Exam for Elementary Education Certification* (ABCTE)

This test is for prospective teachers of grades K to 6. It consists of 125 multiple-choice questions and is organized in four categories. The first category is divided into four major sections, most containing several items. No sample questions are on the website yet. The four categories and their weights are as follows:

- I. Reading and English Language Arts (32%)
 - 1. Alphabetics (6%)
 - 2. Fluency (3%)
 - 3. Comprehension of Texts (11%)
 - 4. Oral and Written Language Development (12%)
- II. Mathematics (27%)
- III. Science (18%)
- IV. Social Studies (20%)

About 6.4% of this test addresses phonemic awareness and phonics instruction—in the first section of the first category. About 3% may address vocabulary development.

6. Reading Endorsement for K-6 (ABCTE)

This test is for an elementary or special education teacher in grades K to 6 who works regularly in a classroom setting. It addresses more advanced knowledge of reading instruction than does the Multiple Subject Exam. The test consists of 125 multiple-choice questions and is organized in eight categories, each containing many items.

- I. Evaluation of reading programs and recommended pedagogy (7%)
- II. Phonemic awareness (12%)
- III. Phonics (12%)
- IV. Fluency (12%)
- V. Vocabulary and concept development (14%)
- VI. Understanding of informational texts (15%)
- VII. Understanding of literary texts (15%)
- VIII. Differentiated instruction (12%)

About 24% of this test addresses phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. About 14% addresses vocabulary development.

7. California RICA: Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (NES)

This test is required of all prospective elementary and special education teachers in California. The test consists of 70 multiple-choice questions and five constructed-response questions. The test is organized in four categories, and the constructed-response questions are keyed to each of these categories. Four focus on educational problems and instructional tasks, and the fifth is a case study. The four categories are divided into sections, each containing multiple items. There are 14 questions for the first category, 21 for the second, 21 for the third, and 14 for the fourth. These 70 questions are worth 60 points in all, or 50% of the test. The five essay questions are worth 60 points, or 50% of the test. Many sample questions are offered on the website.

- I. Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment
- II. Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading
- III. Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading
- IV. Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language Development
- V. Focused Educational Problems and Instructional Tasks
- VI. Case Study

Almost all of Category II focuses on phonemic awareness and phonics skills, and about one-third of Category IV addresses vocabulary development. Since there is also a constructed-response question keyed to each of these two categories, it is possible that 45-50% of the test addresses the three components.

8. Illinois 110: Elementary/Middle Grades Test (NES)

This test is required for prospective teachers of elementary school and the middle grades in Illinois. The test consists of 125 multiple-choice questions and is organized in five categories, with 22 sections in all, each containing multiple items. The first category, Language Arts and Literacy, contains five sections. No weights are provided on the website. The Study Guide provides 20 sample questions. The five categories are as follows:

- I. Language Arts and Literacy
- II. Mathematics
- III. Science
- IV. Social Sciences
- V. The Arts, Health, and Physical Education

About 5-6% of the test addresses these three components, in the first of its 22 sections. I have assumed that each section receives equal weighting.

9. Michigan 83: *Elementary Education Test (NES)*

This test is required for prospective teachers of elementary children in Michigan. It consists of 100 multiple-choice questions and is organized in six categories. The first category is divided into 12 sections, with multiple items in each section. The Study Guide provides 10 sample questions. The six categories and their weights are as follows:

- I. Language Arts (24%)
- II. Mathematics (20%)
- III. Social Studies (15%)
- IV. Science (15%)
- V. The Arts (13%)
- VI. Health and Physical Education (13%)

About 2% of the test (one section in Category I) addresses phonics instruction and vocabulary development. There is no mention of developing phonemic awareness.

10. Massachusetts 90: *Foundations of Reading Test (NES)*

This test is required for prospective teachers of early childhood (preK-2), grades 1-6, and children with moderate disabilities from preK-8, in addition to a second subject test covering other major subjects taught in the elementary school (mathematics, science, history, geography, writing, grammar, and children's literature). The test consists of 100 multiple-choice questions and two constructed-response questions, one of which addresses reading skills. It is organized in four categories, with ten sections in all, each containing multiple items. The Study Guide provides 10 sample questions.

- I. Foundations of Reading Development (35%)
 - 1. Phonological and phonemic awareness (8.75%)
 - 2. Concepts of print and the alphabetic principle (8.75%)
 - 3. Role of phonics (8.75%)
 - 4. Word analysis skills and strategies (8.75%)
- II. Development of Reading Comprehension (27%)
 - 1. Vocabulary development (9)
 - 2. Comprehension of imaginative/literary texts (9)
 - 3. Comprehension of informational/expository texts (9)
- III. Reading Assessment and Instruction (18%)
 - 1. Formal and informal assessment methods (9)
 - 2. Multiple approaches to reading instruction (9)
- IV. Integration of Knowledge and Understanding (20%), a category consisting of two broad essay questions, each worth 10%

All four sections in the first category (35% of the test) focus in some way on phonemic awareness and phonics skills. Another 9% addresses vocabulary, in the second section of the test. At least one constructed-response question addresses the first category. Thus, a total of 54% of the test addresses these three components.

11. New York 02: *Multi-Subject Test: Grades PreK-9 (NES)*

This test is required for all prospective teachers from PreK-9 in the state of New York. It consists of 90 multiple-choice questions and one constructed-response question. It is organized in eight categories, with many sections overall. The category on the English Language Arts contains eight sections, each containing multiple items. Category VIII, on the Foundations of Reading, contains one constructed-response question. The Study Guide provides 9 sample questions to address these two categories. The eight categories are as follows:

- I. English Language Arts (21%)

- II. Mathematics (18%)
- III. Science and Technology (13%)
- IV. Social Studies (15%)
- V. The Fine Arts (8%)
- VI. Health and Fitness (8%)
- VII. Family and Consumer Science and Career Development (7%)
- VIII. Foundations of Reading: Constructed-Response Assignment (10%)

About 12% addresses these three components, in the first of the eight sections in Category I and in all of Category VIII.

12. Oklahoma 50: Elementary Education Subtest I (NES)

This test is required for all prospective elementary teachers in Oklahoma. The multiple-choice questions are worth 85% of the test, and the one constructed-response question, which addresses reading, is worth 15%. The test is organized in three categories, with 17 sections in all, each containing multiple items. The first two categories, Reading and Language Arts, contain 11 of the 17 sections. The Study Guide provides 5 sample questions for these 11 sections. The three categories, with my estimate of their weights, are as follows:

- I. Reading (44%)
- II. Language Arts (27%)
- III. Social Studies (28%)

Two of the 17 sections address the three components for 10% of the test. The constructed-response question addresses reading and is worth 15%. Although it may address more or other than these components, about 25% of the test could address these three components.

13: Virginia VRA: Virginia Reading Assessment (NES)

The Virginia Reading Assessment is required for all prospective early childhood, elementary, and special education teachers and reading specialists. It consists of 90 multiple-choice items and four constructed-response items. Both multiple-choice and constructed-response items are organized in four domains. There is a constructed-response item required for each domain.

- Domain I – Assessment and Diagnostic Teaching: 17-19 items – 20%
- Domain II – Oral Language and Oral Communication: 17-19 items – 20%
- Domain III – Reading Development: 35-37 items – 40%
- Domain IV – Writing and Research: 17-19 items – 20%

Four of the test's 13 sections address the three components: 0004 to 0007. These four sections are part of Domain III (Reading Development), which consists of seven sections. Domain III is worth 40% of the test. Thus, about 25% of the test could address these three components.