National Evaluation Series™

NES

PROFILE

Assessment of Professional Knowledge–Secondary (052)

PEARSON

NES Profile: Assessment of Professional Knowledge: Secondary (052)

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: Secondary (052)
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
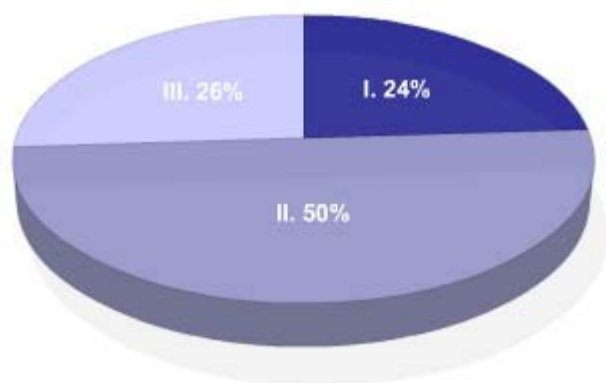
Key	Content Domain	Test Question Format	Approximate Percentage of Test	Range of Competencies
	I. Student Development and Learning	Multiple-Choice Questions	24%	0001–0003
	II. Assessment, Instruction, and the Learning Environment	Multiple-Choice Questions	40%	0004–0008
		Written Assignment: Case Study	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 young adolescents and adolescents.

» Recognize developmental milestones and developmental variation in the physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, affective, and moral domains and their significance for instructional decision making for young adolescents and adolescents.

» Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics and behaviors related to physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, affective, and moral development in young adolescents and adolescents 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 young adolescents and adolescents and how to plan instruction that supports students' cognitive development.

» Demonstrate knowledge of factors that influence the development of young adolescents and adolescents, such as home and community environments, values, and cultural differences.

» Apply knowledge of the range of developmental differences in young adolescents and adolescents and the implications of this variation for instructional decision making.

» Apply knowledge of typical developmental challenges for young adolescents and adolescents, such as those related to peer interactions, identity formation, self-esteem, sexuality, self-direction, risk taking, goal setting, and educational decision making, 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 young adolescents and adolescents.

Sample Item:

A middle school teacher has been planning to have the students in a class carry out individual research projects in which each student would investigate and report on a self-selected topic. The teacher decides instead to have the students conduct and report on their research in groups. The group approach is likely to be particularly effective for middle school students because it:

A. increases the students' overall learning efficiency and sense of contribution during the project.

B. enables students who usually achieve at varied levels to perform at a level similar to that of high-achieving peers in the class.

C. uses the students' interest in social interactions to enhance motivation and increase engagement in the learning process.

D. prompts the students to use a greater variety of methods and approaches to pursue broader, more complex research topics.

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Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to evaluate various instructional strategies, approaches, and learning goals in relation to the developmental characteristics and needs of young adolescents. To plan effective instruction, teachers need to take into consideration the developmental characteristics of the students they teach. Social development in young adolescents is characterized by an increased focus on peers and peer relationships. Cooperative learning engages students in the social construction of knowledge, integrating learning with peer interaction. This approach also enhances student motivation by responding directly to young adolescents' need for relatedness to others.

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 young adolescent and adolescent students construct meaning and develop skills, including the use of different types of learning strategies, and techniques for making knowledge accessible and meaningful for all students, including 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 student learning and 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:

Which of the following is the best example of a teacher applying a constructivist approach to student learning?

    A. A math teacher has students use hands-on materials and real-world problems to acquire new concepts and practice skills.

    B. A language arts teacher provides students with a concrete reward each time they turn in a written assignment that is free of errors.

    C. A social studies teacher uses visual aids and a logical progression of ideas when presenting lectures about new or unfamiliar topics.

    D. A science teacher models the correct procedures for performing complex experiments before having students perform the experiments.

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of major theories and concepts related to the learning process and their application in educational contexts. Constructivism is based on the concept that individuals build their own knowledge by exploring and interacting directly with their physical and social environments. Constructivism emphasizes the active role of the learner in building understanding, making sense of information, and applying knowledge. The use of hands-on materials promotes each student's active engagement in the learning process and the use of real-world problems provides students with authentic and relevant contexts in which to apply new knowledge.

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 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 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.

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

Sample Item:

When planning a lesson, a teacher can best help ensure that instruction will be effective and appropriate for students from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds by asking himself or herself which of the following questions?

    A.   Will the lesson include opportunities for interaction among students from different backgrounds?

    B.   Will students have opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification at various points in the lesson?

    C.   Will the lesson be structured in a way that allows students to spend time working with self-selected peers to help process new learning?

    D.   Will the examples used to illustrate and explore lesson content be familiar and relevant to students with varied life experiences?

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of strategies for planning and adapting instruction that is responsive to the characteristics, skills, strengths, and needs of all students. Effective instruction helps students make connections between their current understandings and new concepts and ideas. Students from different socioeconomic backgrounds vary in their experiences and their access to enrichment activities (e.g., arts classes, science camps) and educational resources (e.g., museums, libraries, technology). To make learning meaningful for all students, teachers must take into consideration this variation in students' experiential backgrounds and circumstances when choosing examples that will serve as the foundation for new learning.

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 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 teacher regularly gives students brief quizzes of three to five questions covering material taught in the current or preceding lesson. Which of the following is likely to be the primary benefit of this practice?

A. helping improve instruction through ongoing feedback on teaching effectiveness

B. minimizing the amount of reteaching required for students to master curricular content

C. ensuring that the teacher has adequate performance data to assign students a fair grade for the class

D. enhancing students' engagement in the learning process and recognition of key learning goals

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to apply strategies for using assessment to monitor student understanding and to guide instruction. A primary purpose of classroom assessment is to determine whether students have mastered targeted concepts and skills. Giving students brief quizzes at frequent intervals allows the teacher to quickly determine whether students have achieved this mastery as well as the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies or approaches in promoting student learning. If students perform well on a daily quiz, the teacher can be relatively sure that the approach used in a lesson was effective in promoting student learning. If students perform poorly on a daily quiz, the teacher must then use an alternate methodology or different examples to facilitate students' understanding. The ongoing use of frequent quizzes helps promote the teacher's ability to tailor instruction to students' specific learning needs.

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.

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

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

Sample Item:

Eighth-grade science, social studies, and language arts teachers are planning an integrated unit on the Industrial Revolution. This instructional approach can be expected to enhance student learning primarily by:

    A.   facilitating students' accelerated achievement of content standards in multiple subject areas.

    B.   presenting students with tasks that are responsive to their individual learning preferences.

    C.   promoting students' ability to apply a wide range of academic problem-solving strategies.

    D.   connecting ideas for students in ways that make content more authentic and meaningful.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the benefits of and strategies for integrating curricula. Isolated subject area instruction often prevents students from identifying important interconnections among the subjects they study. Interdisciplinary instruction integrates topics from multiple content areas, usually focusing on a specific theme. This approach provides students with links to help them connect otherwise discrete bits of knowledge and simulates real-world learning and work environments. Interdisciplinary instruction adds meaning and relevancy to students' learning by helping them discover relationships across content areas and to their own lives. It also prompts them to use their knowledge in one content area to better understand and appreciate content in other curricular areas.

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, expected student outcomes, 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 in group settings.

» 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:

A tenth-grade history teacher is introducing a long-term project with several components. Students will be required to conduct research and interviews on a self-selected topic, write a report, and make an oral presentation. At this point in instruction, the teacher can best promote all students' ability to achieve the goals of the project by using which of the following strategies?

A. assigning students partners to provide support throughout the project and scheduling regular times for the partners to meet

B. reassuring students that they possess all of the skills and abilities needed to complete the project tasks

C. organizing project tasks in a step-by-step sequence and providing students with directions and reminders for completing each step

D. explaining to students how the objectives of the project fit into a larger instructional plan

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of how to organize and implement instruction that promotes the ability of all students to achieve learning goals. To complete a long-term project successfully, students must be able to manage their time and organize their work. Individual students vary in their ability to plan and organize their work effectively as well as in the level of independence they demonstrate with regard to their learning. Structuring long-term projects as a series of smaller steps, each with specific directions, provides scaffolding to help students develop organizational skills and achieve the goals of the project. This strategy keeps students aware of what they have to accomplish each day or week and allows the teacher to monitor their progress and provide assistance and support at the point of need.

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.

» Demonstrate knowledge of methods for interacting effectively with all students to achieve specified communication goals, such as clarifying content, communicating high expectations for learning, 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 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 are most likely to be intrinsically motivated to learn and master subject matter when they:

A. know that they will be tested on their understanding of the content in the near future.

B. believe that the work they are doing is interesting and relates to their own lives.

C. perceive that their performance compares favorably with that of peers engaged in the same tasks.

D. anticipate that they will receive positive reinforcement for achieving instructional objectives.

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An important concept in motivation theory is the idea that the strength of students' internal, or intrinsic, motivation in a particular situation is determined in part by their perception of the value of the assigned task. For students to find an assigned task meaningful and interesting, they must perceive the task to have some connection to the real-life problems and situations they will face outside the classroom, both now and in the future. For example, a physics teacher who knows that many of his or her students are avid skateboarders might use skateboarding as the basis for examples and problems in a physics lesson.

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:

A student breaks a classroom behavior rule, disrupting the class and interrupting the day's lesson. Which of the following is the most important guideline for the teacher to follow when disciplining the student?

A. Involve the class in determining an appropriate consequence for the student's actions.

B. Document in writing the steps taken to address the student's actions and his or her response to those steps.

C. Determine consequences for the student's actions based on his or her previous behavior and achievement.

D. Address the student's actions in a manner that allows the student to preserve his or her sense of dignity.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of various strategies for managing student behavior and relationships between specific classroom management approaches and student learning, attitudes, and behaviors. Good teachers know that every student deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. This is particularly important when a teacher needs to redirect a student's behavior or discipline a student for inappropriate behavior. In taking steps to preserve the student's dignity, the teacher helps prevent the kind of power struggle that can occur when a student feels humiliated before his or her peers and becomes defiant or argumentative to try to save face and avoid further embarrassment.

Sample Written Assignment: Case Study

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

> **Background**
>
> Mr. Wallace is a first-year teacher in a middle school. His fourth-period earth science class has 28 students who achieve at a range of levels, although nearly all of the students earn passing grades in this class. A few of the students read somewhat below grade level and sometimes struggle to comprehend the content in the textbook. Most of the students are eager learners and enjoy socializing with Mr. Wallace and with one another. In an effort to enhance students' achievement, Mr. Wallace has decided to implement cooperative learning as an instructional strategy.
>
> **Planning Steps**
>
> Mr. Wallace prepared several short, nongraded tasks for students' first cooperative learning experiences. He placed students in four groups of seven. The groups are homogeneous based on students' reading levels. Mr. Wallace designated one student in each group as group leader, except for the group of students reading at the lowest levels. He plans to lead this group himself. He explained to students that the purpose of cooperative learning is to work together to achieve a common goal and for every student to have a chance to participate and contribute to the group's final product. Mr. Wallace identified several possible roles within each group, including recorder, reporter, and fact checker.
>
> **The First Cooperative Learning Task**
>
> Mr. Wallace began by having students read a chapter on pollution in their textbooks. He then called out student groups, identified the leader for each group, and assigned the following task.
>
> - Discuss different kinds of pollution and their effects on the environment. Choose a recorder to take notes on the discussion.
> - Choose one type of pollution and brainstorm different ways that people can reduce that particular type of pollution.
> - Review your list and decide together on the best three ideas. Select a reporter to share your group's ideas with the class. You have twenty minutes.
>
> **Excerpts from Mr. Wallace's Reflections on the First Cooperative Learning Task**
>
> Some groups took a long time with tasks like choosing a group member to take notes. There was quite a range in the quality of each group's responses... Some students did not interact well with one another; a few students laughed at their peers' ideas, resulting in some hurt feelings... Only one of the groups completed the entire task… The group leaders did not show the level of leadership I had expected. One of them dominated his group; another had trouble directing the group's discussion… The group I worked with seemed less enthusiastic than other groups.

> **Excerpts from Students' Journals**
>
> *Margot: I really didn't get to talk. When James was through talking, our time was used up.*
>
> *Jorge: I liked this activity! It was way more fun than doing stuff in books.*
>
> *Chandra: I wish I could have been with my friends instead of in the group with the teacher.*
>
> *Paul: I think our group would have finished if we had a timekeeper. We should add that to our list of roles next time.*

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

Part One

- » describe one approach Mr. Wallace took in planning this activity to try to promote students' ability to work productively in groups, and
- » explain why this approach was a good one to take.

Part Two

Write a response based on the elements of the case study above in which you:

- » describe one approach Mr. Wallace could have taken to improve students' ability to work productively in groups, and
- » explain why this approach would have been effective in improving students' ability to work productively in groups.

Sample Responses

Sample Strong Response

Part One

One approach Mr. Wallace took in planning the activity to try to promote students' ability to work productively in small groups was to foster a sense of teamwork among students by identifying possible roles for students to take within their groups. He also identified specific tasks for some of the roles, such as having the recorder take notes on the group's discussion and the reporter present the group's ideas to the class. This was a good approach to take because guiding students to take different roles in their group helps promote the interdependence that is an important element in successful cooperative learning experiences. When each student has a different role in a small-group assignment, it encourages shared responsibility among group members for the outcome of the assignment. This approach also helps ensure that each student participates actively by encouraging students to divide responsibilities somewhat evenly.

Part Two

One additional approach Mr. Wallace could have taken to improve students' ability to work productively in small groups is to form smaller groups of four or five students, ensuring that each group includes students with a

mixture of abilities and interpersonal skills. Smaller groups would help reduce the time each group needs to come to consensus and would also provide more opportunities for individual students to participate in group discussions. By forming groups of students with diverse abilities and interpersonal skills, Mr. Wallace would structure the activity in a way that exposes students to a range of perspectives and that simulates more closely the real world. Heterogeneous groups would also help promote students' understanding of the importance of communication and collaboration when working in small groups.

Sample Weak Response

Part One

One approach Mr. Wallace took in planning the activity to try to promote students' ability to work productively in small groups was to implement cooperative learning. This was an excellent approach for middle school students. Peer influence is strong in adolescents, and working together comes easily and naturally to most students this age. Cooperative learning provides students with opportunities to form friendships with peers outside of their immediate social circle and assume roles of leadership. In cooperative learning groups, students tend to participate more and have greater confidence in their ability to achieve. Mixing high- and low-ability students together in a group assures that all will achieve at a high level. Cooperative learning encourages healthy competition and promotes higher-order thinking skills.

Part Two

One additional approach Mr. Wallace could have taken to improve students' ability to work productively in small groups is to have given students who preferred to do so the option of working independently. Mr. Wallace noted that some students interacted poorly, behaved inappropriately, or lacked enthusiasm. It is clear that not all the students in his class were ready for group work. Adolescents vary in their abilities, interests, and preferred modes of learning. As much as possible, the teacher should try to accommodate these differences. In this scenario, it would have been an easy matter to modify the task so that it could also be done independently by those students who learn better working alone. For example, the second bulleted item in the first cooperative learning task could be changed to "Choose one type of pollution and list different ways that people can reduce that particular type of pollution."

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:

A high school math teacher has a few students in her classes who have learning disabilities that affect various aspects of their math performance. The teacher has planned a new instructional unit on probability and wants to make sure that all of the students with learning disabilities will be able to participate fully in unit activities. The teacher can best help ensure this outcome by:

A. preparing a selection of alternative activities that require less advanced math skills for the students with learning disabilities.

B. asking the special education teacher to review the planned activities and utilizing adaptations suggested for each student who has learning disabilities.

C. having the students with learning disabilities work on unit activities with a peer partner who has strong skills in math.

D. trying a few sample activities with the students who have learning disabilities before beginning the unit and making adjustments as needed.

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of how to collaborate effectively with specialists and others in the school community to meet student needs and enhance student learning. In inclusive learning environments, classroom teachers must address a wide range of student needs. Special education staff have in-depth training in the nature of various exceptionalities that is beyond the training most general education teachers receive. Special education teachers also have a broad knowledge base about alternative or adapted methods, materials, and approaches that are most effective in meeting the needs of students with specific exceptionalities.

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 the requirements of teachers 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:

In which of the following situations is a teacher most clearly using reflection and self-assessment to improve professional practice?

A. A teacher asks another teacher to review his or her lesson plans prior to instruction and provide feedback on planned activities and materials.

B. A teacher engages in co-teaching with a more experienced teacher when introducing particularly challenging content to students.

C. A teacher reviews videotapes of his or her instruction with a more experienced teacher to identify teaching strengths and challenges.

D. A teacher creates a comprehensive description of activities used during each grading period to submit to the department chairperson.

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for using reflection and self-assessment to identify teaching strengths and challenges and to improve professional practice. Self-assessment requires the teacher's active engagement in the process of reviewing and reflecting upon his or her instructional approach. Viewing a video of a lesson allows a new teacher to observe his or her own speaking patterns, body language, pacing, and other elements of instructional delivery as well as student engagement in the lesson. Soliciting the support of an experienced colleague who has a broader understanding of professional practice can enhance the new teacher's personal observations and reflections by promoting objectivity and providing helpful suggestions for adapting instruction to better promote student learning.

Sample Written Assignment: Work Product

Use the information below to complete the assignment that follows.

You are a new high school teacher. Your principal has asked you to serve on a faculty committee whose goal is to identify ways to increase faculty collaboration with the school library media specialist. Although the library media center has expanded its resources significantly in recent years, the library media specialist reports that many faculty members still do not take advantage of the resources that are available. Increased faculty collaboration with the library media specialist is a schoolwide goal for the following year.

Write a proposal to other members of the committee describing your ideas about the issue of faculty collaboration with the school library media specialist. Your response should:

» explain why increased faculty collaboration with the library media specialist is important;
» describe two steps faculty members can take to increase collaboration with the library media specialist; and
» explain why each step you describe would be beneficial.

Sample Responses

Sample Strong Response

Collaboration between school faculty and the library media specialist is important because such collaboration ultimately benefits student learning. Increased collaboration with the library media specialist provides faculty with more opportunities to learn about resources and technologies and how to use the resources and technologies to enhance their instructional effectiveness. This collaboration also facilitates access to resources that faculty can use to address the particular learning needs of individual students or groups of students.

One step faculty members can take to increase collaboration with the library media specialist is to inform the library media specialist about the topics of specific projects that will be included in upcoming units. The library media specialist can then provide relevant information resources and services. Examples of these resources and services include bibliographies of materials on specific unit topics, training in the use of online databases for research, and direct instruction to students on the use of various information resources.

This step is beneficial because it supports classroom instruction and enhances student learning during the unit. It also helps ensure that teachers and students have current and relevant information at a point of need.

Another step faculty members can take is to invite the library media specialist to participate in planning activities on a regular basis. By planning together, teachers and the library media specialist can design learning experiences that integrate content goals and information literacy skills. This step is beneficial because it allows the library media specialist to assist faculty in identifying information resources and skills that students will need to achieve a given learning goal. For example, students who are studying the history of their community may need to learn about primary sources or how to access and evaluate online information sources.

Sample Weak Response

Increased collaboration between faculty and the library media specialist is important because students need access to the best resources available when they do research. The volume of information and the capabilities of information technology can easily overwhelm students. Students who do not know how to access the information they need, how to interpret it when they find it, and how to identify credible sources are no better off than students who don't have access to a library at all. The library media specialist has the expertise to help students overcome all of these problems.

One step faculty members can take to increase collaboration with the library media specialist is to plan frequent class trips to the library media center. When the students arrive in the library, the library media specialist would show students any new books, DVDs, or other resources, and demonstrate new technologies. The specialist would also remind the students of the appropriate behaviors in the library, including the protocols for using the Internet. Students would have time to explore some of the resources, and the specialist would be available to answer any questions.

Another step would be to invite the library media specialist to the classroom. During these visits, the specialist could deliver direct instruction of specific information literacy skills. For example, if the specialist had determined that a certain group of students needed to know how to cite resources, he or she could take the entire class period to teach that skill. The classroom would be a better venue for this kind of instruction than the library because of the physical arrangement of chairs and desks, the availability of presentation technology and interactive whiteboards, and the physical proximity of the classroom teacher in case of any misbehavior.