

Assessment 1: PRAXIS II Content Knowledge Scores

1. Assessment Description:

PRAXIS II is a 120 multiple choice test administered in two hours. This test must be passed for New Hampshire certification.

2. Standards Alignment: see ETS information below.

3. Data Findings:

The English Department is more concerned about what it would identify as authentic assessment than it is about multiple choice tests. However, we understand that PRAXIS II Content Knowledge is required for certification in New Hampshire, and so, while we would not base curricular decisions on this test, we have put our energies behind trying to prepare students for this exam. Dr. Jan Youga, the English Education faculty member, brought sample test questions to a department retreat so all faculty would know what test questions were like and the level of difficulty of the questions. Since that time, most faculty make a point of drawing students' attention to the type of information they will need to know for the test and eagerly await yearly results. Dr. Youga also gives her Methods students a 5-minute, 5-question practice test nearly every day so students are familiar with the types of questions on the test and become more comfortable with retrieving the information they know from their coursework when it comes to them in this particular format. This cooperative department effort is what seems to account for our students receiving 100% in 4 out of 6 years for which we have data.

For the last three years, we have achieved the 80% (89%) pass rate for the Content Knowledge portion of the test. ETS outlines the NCTE standards that the test covers (see citations below). What this test has accomplished for our students is that it has made them study 1) the historical development of literary periods, 2) the major authors associated with each period, and 3) how to look for key words in a passage that will identify that passage with a period or author. This is the information we review in our practice sessions in Methods.

4. Evidence for Meeting Standards:

The following information is from the ETS website. The Standards met by each of their topics has been added. If students pass the test, these standards should be met.

Reading and Understanding Text (Focus on Standard 3.5)

- Paraphrasing, comparing, and interpreting (literally and inferentially) various types of texts, including fiction, poetry, essays, and other nonfiction (**Standard 3.3.3**)
- Identifying and interpreting figurative language and other literary elements, e.g., metaphor, simile, voice, point of view, tone, style, setting, diction, mood, allusions, irony, clichés, analogy, hyperbole, personification, alliteration, and foreshadowing (**Standard 3.5.4**)
- Identifying patterns, structures, and characteristics of literary forms and genres, e.g., elements of fiction and features of different poetic and prose forms and understanding

how these patterns, structures, and characteristics may influence the meaning and effect of a work (**Standard 3.5.2**)

- Identifying major works and authors of American, British, and World literature from various cultures, genres, and periods (**Standard 3.5.1**), including literature for young adults (**Standard 3.5.3**)

- Situating and interpreting texts within historical/cultural contexts (**Standard 3.5.2**)

- Recognizing and identifying various instructional approaches to and elements of teaching reading and textual interpretation, e.g., cueing systems, activating prior knowledge, constructing meaning through context, and metacognitive strategies (**Standard 3.3**)

II. Language and Linguistics (Focus on Standard 3.1)

- Understanding the principles of language acquisition and development, including social, cultural, and historical influences and the role and nature of dialects (**Standards 3.1.1, 3, 4, 5**)

- Understanding elements of the history and development of the English language and American English, including linguistic change, etymology, and processes of word formation (**Standards 3.1.5, 7**)

- Understanding and applying the elements of traditional grammar, e.g., syntax, sentence types, sentence structure, parts of speech, modifiers, sentence combining, phrases and clauses, capitalization, and punctuation (**Standards 3.1.6, 7**)

- Understanding the elements of semantics, including ambiguity, euphemism, doublespeak, connotation, and jargon and how these elements affect meaning (**Standard 3.1.6**)

III. Composition and Rhetoric (Focus on Standards 3.2 and 3.4)

- Understanding and applying elements of teaching writing, including

1. Individual and collaborative approaches to teaching writing, e.g., stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, evaluating) and how those stages work recursively (**Standards 3.2.3 and 3.4.1-2**)

2. Tools and response strategies for assessing student writing, e.g., peer review, portfolios, holistic scoring, scoring rubrics, self-assessment, and conferencing (**Standard 3.2.5**)

3. Common research and documentation techniques, e.g., gathering and evaluating data, using electronic and print media, and MLA and APA citations

- Understanding and evaluating rhetorical features in writing, including

1. Purposes for writing and speaking and the role of the audience within varying contexts (**Standards 3.2.4 and 3.4.2**)

2. Organization in a piece of writing and the creation and preservation of coherence (**Standard 3.4.1**)

3. Strategies for the organization, development, and presentation of print, electronic, and visual media (**Standard 3.2.1-5**)

4. Discourse aims, e.g., creative, expository, persuasive (**Standard 3.4.2**)

5. Methods of argument and types of appeals, e.g., argumentative strategies, analogy, extended metaphor, allusion (**Standard 3.4.2**)

6. Style, tone, voice, and point of view as part of rhetorical strategy (**Standard 3.4**)

7. Recognition of bias, distinguishing between fact and opinion, and identifying stereotypes, inferences, and assumption (**Standard 3.2.5**)

5. Assessment Tool: ETS Description of Test from Website (www.ets.org/praxis):

English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge (0041)

The English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge test is designed to assess whether an examinee has the broad base of knowledge and competencies necessary to be licensed as a beginning teacher of English in a secondary school. The 120 multiple-choice questions are based on the material typically covered in a bachelor's degree program in English and English education. The test covers literature and reading, the English language, and composition and rhetoric.

Test at a Glance

Test Name: English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge

Time: 2 hours

Number of Questions: 120

Forma: Multiple-choice questions

Percentage of Questions Examination

I. Reading and Understanding Text	55%
II. Language and Linguistics	15%
III. Composition and Rhetoric	30%

PRAXIS II Data 1999-2005

Year	Content Area	Test	Completers	Passing	Pass Rate
1999-2000	English	Content Knowledge			100%
2000-01	English	Content Knowledge			100%
2001-02	English	Content Knowledge	12	9	75%
Last Three Years:					
2002-03	English	Content Knowledge			100%
2003-04	English	Content Knowledge			67%
2004-05	English	Content Knowledge			100%
3-Year		Content			89%