

Introduction

Welcome! You are in the final chapter of an exciting career adventure. Entering the field of education as a professional, who works with students with special needs, is both satisfying and gratifying. It takes a tremendous amount of energy and a great amount of knowledge about special education to be the very best teacher for your students.

Every child you meet will truly be an individual with unique needs and personal desires. Remember to address each child with respect, integrity, and kindness, as no child with a disability chooses this particular life path. When a child enters school for the very first time or even attends on the first school day of each successive year, she may appear with both apprehension and excitement. It will be because of you that the child becomes comfortable in her environment, absorbs the concepts of the curriculum, and is eager to continue learning.

If you are a lifelong learner, your joy of gained knowledge will be reflected on your students. You should continue to learn all you can about the on-going changes in education, particularly special education and your specialty area. You may be an agent of change for your students as you apply knowledge of these areas to classroom management, behavior interventions, curriculum design, and learning strategies. Join professional organizations, read the research studies, take additional courses, attend professional workshops, and subscribe to professional journals. Find a trusted mentor who may help guide you and remain a constant contact in your professional life. All of these strategies will give you the motivation and desire to continue to be an effective educator for your students.

Good luck on the Praxis II exam(s) and best wishes for a fabulous journey in education!

Getting Started

The time has arrived to show what you know! The work you have done in your teacher preparation program culminates in taking an exam in your specialty area and perhaps a core knowledge exam. It may be that you have been teaching and are now moving to another state, so the background and experience you have gained will be most useful in studying for the exam. Whether you are a recent college graduate or an experienced teacher, you are now faced with taking the Praxis II exam and passing it.

This guide will help you. Use the study information and the practice exams provided to help check your knowledge level of the subject areas. You should also count on using your college texts, Internet research and websites, the library, and your school resources. You should become well prepared to pass the exam(s) you need and be on your way to finalizing the certification or licensure for your state.

The practice exams should give you an idea of what to expect when you take one of the Praxis II exams. Notice the format and the types of questions, as well as the speed with which you answer each question. This will help you plan pacing for the actual exam. (However, remember that the content and the questions of the practice exam and the actual exam may differ in complexity.) After you complete the practice exam, check your score and use the explanations of the answers for further study on the specific topics.

A second Praxis II exam, titled Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge (0353), is also available and required for certification in some states. The study guide information for that exam may be found in another book developed by the same author and published by Wiley called *CliffsTestPrep Praxis II: Exceptional Students (0353, 0382, 0542, 0544)*.

Note: There is limited information included in this study guide about students who are identified as deaf or blind since those types of disabilities are generally serviced by specialized professionals, and these are not topics included on the exam. Some information is included as background information since all special education professionals are in contact with students who have these conditions and may need to serve students with multiple disabilities.

Format of the Exam

Each Praxis II exam identified in this guide is constructed to assess your general knowledge base regarding special education and some specialty area in the special education field. You may be required to take more than one Special Education Praxis II exam, depending on the requirements for certification or licensure in your state. Your ability to pass these exams is based on the wisdom you have gained in your coursework and from the experience obtained from teaching, student teaching, or internships.

Each of the special education exams selected for study in this guide differs slightly in composition. Each exam is comprised of a set of multiple-choice questions; however, the number of questions varies. Some of the exams include multiple-choice questions that refer to a case study. All of the questions in the exams are based on a teaching situation, a definition, or a concept that relates to special education or a specialty area.

There are six special education topics included in this study guide, each with an accompanying practice exam. The specific code and title for each exam are listed here.

- #0351 Special Education: Knowledge-Based Core Principles
- #0352 Special Education: Application of Core Principles across Categories of Disability
- #0690 Special Education: Preschool/Early Childhood
- #0371 Special Education: Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders/Emotional Disturbance
- #0381 Special Education: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities
- #0321 Special Education: Teaching Students with Mental Retardation

Multiple-Choice Questions

These questions include a statement (*stem*) and four answer choices. The stem may be in a *question*, a *fill-in the blank*, or a *complete the statement* format. The four answer choices are identified by using the “A,” “B,” “C,” “D” selections with only one choice being the correct answer (*key*). The other three possibilities (*distractors*) may be closely related to the correct answer, but you must be prepared to select the best possible answer. The questions are not designed to trick you, but instead to test your true knowledge of the subject. The questions are factually written with all four choices most likely connected in some way to the stem. So, think carefully when you make your final answer selections.

There are also five sample multiple choice questions at the beginning of each special education topic section in this guide. These sample questions are provided as an introduction to the topic area and as a preview of your knowledge of each topic. Choose the most reasonable, but not necessarily the most obvious, answer. Remember that some answers may fit in certain situations but only one reveals the right answer.

Although many philosophical views exist in the field of special education, the facts remain the same, as based on federal laws, developmental stages, and best practices. Remember that the exam questions will be focused on both fact and the most appropriate practices. Understand that the exam questions may not reflect your personal philosophy so contemplate the best selection that reflects national standards.

When in doubt, ask yourself:

- How would the educators I know answer these questions having been in the field?
- What have I gained from my studies to help me logically come to a conclusion?
- Is this answer what I think it should be or what is required and recommended?

Multiple-Choice Strategy

The discrete multiple choice questions that are included on these exams require that you have strong reading skills and that you are knowledgeable about the content areas being tested. These questions reflect the *best practices* and *best answers* to educational situations.

When you are ready to take an exam, read each of the multiple-choice questions more than once to better examine the primary idea. Read the four choices and think about each of those possible answers. You know that only one of the choices is correct based on the information given, but each of the other possibilities may have relevance. After reading the question and considering the four possible answers, choose the most appropriate answer.

The several types of multiple-choice formats are explained more fully here.

- **Complete the Statement:** This type will offer information and a partial sentence that must be finished using one of the presented options. Select the one that best completes the sentence using the facts and data you know about special education.
- **Which of the Following:** This type asks a short question that must be answered by selecting one of the four options. It is a frequently used question type on multiple-choice exams. Read the question carefully and think about all of the options, choosing the one that BEST suits the question posed.
- **Least/Not/Except:** This type of question often requires that you select an answer that is not correct, or less likely to be correct. These questions place a negative slant on the outcome of your answer, so beware of selecting the appropriate response. You may need to rephrase the question in a positive way in order to correctly select the answer. An example may read: “Which of the following is NOT included on a transition plan for older students?” This type of question is included in the Praxis exams, but is not included here on the practice exams, for fear that you may study incorrect information in preparing for the actual exam.
- **Case Histories:** In the practice test and on the actual exam, some of the multiple-choice questions are based on a 500 word (or more) case history that presents an actual teaching situation. Think about how you would answer these questions based on the case and what you would do in that circumstance. Read each case carefully and consider all of the information when you answer the related questions.

Time Frame

The amount of time allowed for each Praxis II exam is based on the specific format of the test. In the six exams listed in this book, you are allotted 1 hour to answer between 50 and 60 multiple-choice questions and 2 hours to answer 110 multiple-choice questions.

You will need to pace yourself on the actual exam, so remember to think about your time as you work on the sample questions and take the practice exams. When you finally take the actual Praxis II exams, you will need time to read each question, to consider each answer, and then to review all of the final answers before submitting the test for a score.

Even if you are unsure of the correct response for a multiple choice question, answer every one on the exam. No penalty is assessed for guessing an answer on the exam. Think about all the possibilities and do your best to select the most appropriate response.

The specific exams, the number of questions, and the time limits are listed here.

Knowledge-Based Core Principles	60 Questions	1 hour
Application of Core Principles across Categories of Disabilities	50 Questions	1 hour
Preschool/Early Childhood	110 Questions	2 hours
Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders/Emotional Disturbance	50 Questions	1 hour
Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities	50 Questions	1 hour
Teaching Students with Mental Retardation	50 Questions	1 hour

Content of the Exam

Each of the specific subject area tests in this guide is comprised of *content categories*. The actual Praxis II exams assess your understanding of the concepts related to these content areas.

Review the general list here for each test that includes each of the broad topics, the number of questions, and the percentage of your score for the exam(s) you will be taking.

■ Special Education: Knowledge-Based Core Principles		
■ Understanding Exceptionalities	15	25%
■ Legal and Societal Issues	8	13%
■ Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities	37	62%
■ Special Education: Application of Core Principles across Categories of Disability		
■ Curriculum	10	20%
■ Instruction	10	20%
■ Assessment	10	20%
■ Managing the Learning Environment	10	20%
■ Professional Roles/Issues/Literature	10	20%

Note: This exam may include questions related to case studies.

■ Special Education: Preschool/Early Childhood		
■ Human Growth and Development	16	15%
■ Knowledge of Disabling Conditions	12	11%
■ Evaluation, Assessment, Eligibility Criteria	16	15%
■ Planning and Service Delivery	17	15%
■ Family and Community Aspects	21	19%
■ Professional Practice	28	25%
■ Special Education: Teaching Students with Behavioral Disorders/Emotional Disturbance		
■ Factors Other than Direct Instruction that Influence the Education of Students with BD/ED	10	20%
■ Delivery of Services to Students with BD/ED	40	80%

Note: This exam may include questions related to case studies.

■ Special Education: Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities		
■ Factors Other than Direct Instruction that Influence the Education of Students with LD	10	20%
■ Delivery of Services	15	30%
■ Curriculum and Instruction	25	50%

Note: This exam may include questions related to case studies.

■ Special Education: Teaching Students with Mental Retardation		
■ Factors Other than Direct Instruction that Influence the Education of Students with MR	11	23%
■ Delivery of Services to Students with MR	39	77%

Note: This exam may include questions related to case studies.

Frequently Asked Questions

There are usually questions that examinees wish to ask prior to taking a Praxis II exam. Hopefully, the most pressing questions are answered here. If assistance is needed, contact the Educational Testing Services at www.ets.org/praxis or call 800-772-9476.

Q: What is a Praxis II exam for Special Education?

A: The Praxis II exam(s) has been developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to measure an individual's knowledge in specific special education subjects and in general teaching practices that relate specifically to children with disabilities. Many states require these examinations as part of the certification or licensure process. Some professional organizations also require the completion of a Praxis exam for membership.

Q: How should I register for the exam(s)?

A: Most people find that registering online is quick and easy. Contact the Educational Testing Services on the website or at the telephone number listed previously. Registration may be completed at any time prior to taking the test. It is recommended that registration be completed 1–3 months ahead of the testing date.

Q: What if I miss the registration for the test date I want?

A: Late registration is allowed, but hurry to get the correct information and a place at the test location. A fee may be assessed for late registrations. Find out the specifics about late registrations on the ETS website.

Q: Can the registration date be changed if needed?

A: It has been allowed in the past through ETS, but be sure to contact them as soon as you think you have a conflict or problem. They should be able to help you with scheduling issues or changes to your registration. A fee may be charged for any changes.

Q: Which states require the various special education Praxis II exams for certification?

A: Some states use their own certification tests created in the state or by a test development company and do not require the use of the Praxis II exams. You will need to contact your specific state department of education to find out which exams are required in your state or the state to which you are moving. You should also ask about the passing score, as the acceptable scores differ in each state. If you have already taken the exam in one state and you are moving to another, ask whether your score will be accepted. Most states will allow the transfer of a score as long as you meet the passing score in each state and did not take the exam too many years ago.

On the ETS website, (www.ets.org/praxis/states) you can access each state's requirements by clicking on the name of the state. However, it is highly recommended that you speak with someone at your state department of education, since regulations change sometimes before websites do.

Q: Which exam(s) should I plan to take?

A: Each state that mandates the completion and passing score on Praxis II exams for special education certification or licensure differs in the particular test that is required. You should research the test requirements for teacher certification/licensure by contacting the department of education in your state. The teacher certification office should have the information you need to select the correct exam or a combination of exams.

Q: What is considered a passing score for teacher certification?

A: The teacher certification office at the department of education in your state should provide you with the score(s) considered as acceptable for teacher certification. Contact this office in your state to find out which score you should aim for.

Q: When can I expect to receive my score?

A: The ETS attempts a quick return of your score(s), so you may expect your score to be delivered in four to six weeks, pending no major holidays. A list of dates is available on the ETS website, as well as an informational guide to interpret your score.

Q: Are accommodations permissible for an individual with a disability?

A: Yes. Individuals may apply for accommodations if they have a disability or if the primary language is not English. Information on accommodations is available in the Praxis II test registration booklet or on the website.

Q: What should I plan to bring to the exam site on the date of the test?

A: You will need to consider the following items:

- Identification that includes your name, a photo, and signature
- An alternative identification that includes the same (optional but recommended)
- Admission ticket (proof of registration)
- Several pencils (#2) and an eraser
- Watch (optional but recommended)
- Extra clothing (optional but recommended, as the temperature in the rooms varies)

Q: How can I best prepare to take the Praxis II exam(s)?

A: The use of this study guide is a great way to improve your chances of passing the Praxis II exam(s). Understanding the test format, taking the practice exams, and reviewing the contents of the study guide should reinforce your knowledge base. Use the websites in the Resource sections to seek additional study information in those areas where you need to gain further guidance.

Suggestions for Using This Study Guide

Cliffs TestPrep Praxis II: Special Education includes several test preparation supports to guide you through your study period.

1. Specific Special Education Topic Sections

- A. **Introduction Sections:** Included for each special education topic exam are general broadly stated questions about the subject and samples of test questions. Some may include a case history and associated *multiple-choice questions* or *constructed-response questions*.
 - B. **Content Area Information:** This is a comprehensive section to be used for study purposes according to the content categories described on the exam. The headings should guide you in selecting topics needing review or additional study.
2. **Final Thoughts and Tips:** Test-taking strategies and techniques are provided on how to answer the various types of questions that may include multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Tips for test preparation to achieve exam success are also available.
 3. **Practice Exams:** A sample full-length test is provided for each of the six separate special education topics. These tests are a sample of the content and format of the actual Praxis II exam questions.
 4. **Sample Test Answers:** Not only are answers clearly stated, but an explanation is provided to each of the questions to help you in your further studies.
 5. **Resources:** A list of specific websites, categorized by subject areas, is found in an appendix at the end of this book and includes information pertinent to all six exams.