Teaching Foundations Examination (TFE) Information
May 2010

Overview of this Report

At the April 2010 COA meeting staff presented information on the Early Completion Internship Option (ECO). The written assessment that allows an intern to qualify for the ECO option is the Educational Testing Services (ETS) Teaching Foundations Examination (TFE). Information on the TFE is presented in this agenda item.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item only

Background

In the April 2010 COA agenda item, information on the numbers of individuals who have taken and passed the TFE was provided. In addition, information on the number of individuals who have both passed the TFE examination and applied for a preliminary teaching credential was presented. But no information on the design or the types of questions on the TFE were presented in the April agenda item. Information on the number and type of questions and the content assessed by the TFE is presented in the two "Test at a Glance" tables below.

Multiple Subjects
Test at a Glance

Time	4 hours		
Number of Questions	50 multiple-choice and 4 constructed response		
Weighting	The multiple-choice count toward 1/3 of the score while the constructed response count toward 2/3 of the score		
Content Categories		**Approximate Number of Questions**	**Approximate Percentage of Total Score**
I.	Human Development	10 multiple-choice	6-7 %
II.	Learning Differences and Special Needs; Helping English Learners	20 multiple-choice	13-14 %
III.	Assessment of Student Progress	10 multiple-choice	6-7 %
IV.	Classroom Management Techniques	10 multiple-choice	6-7 %
V.	Teaching Methods in English	1 constructed-response	16-17 %
VI.	Teaching Methods in Social Science	1 constructed-response	16-17 %
VII.	Teaching Methods in Mathematics	1 constructed-response	16-17 %
VIII.	Teaching Methods in Science	1 constructed-response	16-17 %

The examination bulletin for the Multiple Subjects TFE describes the test content as follows:

I. Human Development

- Understand developmental characteristics of children in lower elementary grades in the physical, social emotional language, moral and cognitive domains.
- Understand strategies and methods for designing activities for children in lower grades, including
  - Creating a structured day with opportunities for movement
  - Designing academic activities that suit the attention span of young learners
  - Designing instructional activities that connect with the children's immediate world, draw on key content from more than one subject area, and include hands-on experiences
- Understand developmental characteristics of children in upper elementary grades in the physical, social, emotional, language, moral and cognitive domains.
- Understand strategies and methods for designing activities for children in upper grades, including designing instructional activities that extend students' concrete thinking and foster abstract reasoning and problem-solving skills.

II. Learning Differences and Special Needs; Helping English Learners

- Identify students needing specialized instruction
- Understand differences in the ways students learn and perform, including
  - Learning styles (e.g., concrete-operational thinkers and visual and aural learners)
  - Gender differences
  - Cultural expectations and styles
- Understand areas of exceptionality in students' learning including
  - Visual and perceptual difficulties
  - Special Physical, health, or sensory challenges
  - Learning disabilities, e.g., attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD)
  - Emotional /behavioral disabilities
  - Mental retardation
  - Gifted and talented
- Demonstrate familiarity with teaching strategies and methods
  - For students who require extra help in exercising self-control among their peers
  - For children who have exceptional learning needs or abilities
  - That support students who lack basic academic skills
- Demonstrate familiarity with theories, principles, and instructional practices for English-language development leading to comprehensive literacy in English
- Understand the cognitive, pedagogical, cultural, and individual factors affecting students' language acquisition
- Demonstrate familiarity with the philosophy, design, goals and characteristics of programs for English-language development, including structured English immersion
- Demonstrate familiarity with pedagogical theories, principles, and practices for developing academic language comprehension and acquiring knowledge to provide access to the curriculum

- Analyze students' written language in order to plan a differentiated instruction

III. Assessment of Student Progress

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the major types of assessments and basic assessment-related terms
- Understand the purposes of different types of diagnostic instruments, including entry-level, progress-monitoring, and summative assessments
- Understand the purposes of and methods for informal classroom assessments and analysis of student work
- Be able to interpret assessment results for each student and for groups of students in order to develop or modify instruction
- Demonstrate familiarity with techniques for explaining to students, and to their families student academic and behavioral strengths and areas for academic growth

IV. Classroom Management Techniques

- Understand strategies for eliciting active and equitable participation of all students
- Understand characteristics of a social environment that can maximize academic achievement for all students
- Demonstrate familiarity with methods for establishing rapport with all students and their families for supporting academic and personal success
- Demonstrate familiarity with methods for developing clear expectations for all students and academic and social behavior
- Understand how to write a student discipline plan
- Understand methods for establishing procedures for routine tasks and understand methods for managing transitions to maximize instructional time

V. Teaching Methods in English
VI. Teaching Methods in Social Science
VII. Teaching Methods in Mathematics
VIII. Teaching Methods in Science

The four categories above test the following knowledge and skills:

- Prioritize and sequence essential content
- Select, group, and use various instructional strategies, activities, and resources to facilitate student learning
- Propose strategies for building reading skills within the context of teaching in a subject field
- Propose and explain strategies for adapting instruction in a subject field to address special needs
- Propose and explain strategies for working with English learners in a subject field

Single Subject-English, Mathematics, and Science

Test at a Glance

Time	**4 Hours**
Number of Questions	**50 multiple-choice and 2 constructed response**
Weighting	**The multiple-choice count toward 1/3 of the score while the constructed response count toward 2/3 of the score**

Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Total Score
I. Human Development	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
II. Addressing Learning Differences and Special Needs	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
III. Working with English Learners	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
IV. Reading Instruction	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
V. Assessment of Student Progress	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
VI. Classroom Management	8-9 Questions	5-6 %
VII. Teaching Methods in Middle/Junior High in the specific content area	1 constructed response	32-33 %
VIII. Teaching Methods in High School in the specific content area	1 constructed response	32-33 %

The examination bulletin for the Single Subjects TFE in English, mathematics, science describes the test content as follows:

I. Human Development

- Understand developmental characteristics of students at the secondary level in the physical, social, emotional, language, moral, and cognitive domains, especially characteristics of adolescence
- Understand strategies and methods for designing activities for secondary students, including
  - Designing intellectually challenging academic expectations
  - Designing ample opportunities for all students to develop advanced and abstract problem-solving and higher-level thinking skills
  - Designing instructional activities that connect life beyond high school

II. Addressing Learning Differences and Special Needs

- Identify students needing specialized instruction
- Understand differences in the ways students learn and perform, including
  - Learning styles (e.g., concrete-operational thinkers and visual and aural learners)
  - Gender differences
  - Cultural expectation and styles
- Understand areas of exceptionality in students' learning, including
  - Visual and perceptual differences
  - Special physical, health, or sensory challenges
  - Learning disabilities. E.g., attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD)
  - Emotional/behavioral disabilities

- Mental retardation
- Gifted and talented

- Understand how multiple factors, including students' health, can influence students' behavior and learning
- Demonstrate familiarity with teaching strategies and methods for addressing the wide range of academic differences among students in a typical secondary classroom

III. Working with English Learners

- Demonstrate familiarity with theories, principles, and instructional practices for English-language development leading to comprehensive literacy in English
- Understand the cognitive, pedagogical, cultural, and individual factors affecting students' language acquisition
- Demonstrate familiarity with the philosophy, design, goals, and characteristics of programs for English-language development, including structured English immersion
- Demonstrate familiarity with pedagogical theories, principles, and practices for developing academic language and comprehension for acquiring knowledge to provide access to the curriculum
- Analyze students' written language in order to plan differentiated instruction

IV. Reading Instruction

- Understand systematic instruction in word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development, including understanding how to make language (e.g., vocabulary, forms, uses) comprehensible to students and the need for students to master foundational skills as a gateway to using all forms of language as tools for thinking, learning, and communicating
- Understand instructional strategies to help students develop reading appreciation; comprehend complex text; comprehend the complexity of writing forms, purposes, and organizational patterns; and have a command of written and oral English–language conventions
- Understand the methods of teaching literary response and analysis, including both a variety of media and written text

V. Assessment of Student Progress

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of the major types of assessments and basic assessment-related terms
- Understand the purposes of different types of diagnostic instruments, including entry level, progress-monitoring, and summative assessments
- Understand the purposes of and methods for informal classroom assessments and analysis of student work
- Be able to interpret assessment results for each student and for groups of students in order to develop or modify instruction

- Demonstrate familiarity with techniques for explaining to students and to their families student academic and behavioral strengths and areas for academic growth

VI. Classroom Management Techniques

- Understand strategies for eliciting active and equitable participation of all students
- Understand characteristics of a social environment that can maximize academic achievement for all students
- Demonstrate familiarity with methods for establishing rapport with all students and their families for supporting academic and personal success
- Demonstrate familiarity with methods for developing clear expectations for all students for academic and social behavior\
- Understand how to write a student discipline plan
- Understand methods for establishing procedures for routine tasks and methods for managing transitions to maximize instructional time

VII. Teaching Methods in Mathematics, Middle/Junior High Level
VIII. Teaching Methods in Mathematics, High School Level

The two categories above test the following knowledge and skills:

- Prioritize and sequence essential content and skills
- Select, group, and use various instructional strategies, activities, and resources to facilitate student learning
- Propose and explain strategies for adapting instruction in a subject field to address special needs
- Propose and explain strategies for working with English learners in a subject field.
- Propose and explain strategies for building reading skills within the context of teaching mathematics/science/English
- Propose and explain strategies for monitoring student progress before, during and after instruction

After reviewing the design of the examination, staff will take the COA members to the ETS website to review the sample questions (both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions) and the scoring criteria provided by ETS.

COA Discussion

After reviewing the structure of the TFE, the types of questions on the TFE, and the scoring criteria, staff asks that the COA discuss the use of the TFE as the written examination that allows a candidate to qualify for the Intern ECO.