

Qualified Teachers Make a Difference.



The PRAXIS Series™ e-Newsletter



December 2007

Welcome!

We hope you enjoy the latest issue of *The Praxis Series*™ e-Newsletter. Please remember to keep others informed of *Praxis Series* updates and changes by sharing this newsletter with colleagues in your state's college and university teacher education preparation programs.

[Download the PDF version of *The Praxis Series* Update](#)

Praxis™ Program Update

A summary of recent *Praxis* program changes and enhancements, including news on low-volume test administrations and modifications to the Annual Summary Reports, is included here. [Complete story.](#)

2008 Praxis Client Conference

ETS is pleased to host the 2008 *Praxis* Client Conference at the Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, N.J., from April 29-May 2. Invitations will be sent out in early 2008, so save these dates! [Complete story.](#)

School Leaders Licensure Assessment Update

The School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) National Advisory Committee met for the second time in June. A summary of the meeting and news on updates being made to the SLLA are included here. [Complete story.](#)

Diagnostic Preparation Program (DPP) Discontinuation

Based on extensive research involving test takers and DPP purchasers, ETS has determined that the current product is not meeting test taker needs. [Complete story.](#)

Test Regeneration: A Primer

How does a test go from old to new? What role do states play in the process? These and other questions are answered in this primer on test regeneration. [Complete story.](#)

The 2007 ETS Invitational Conference in Review

This year, more than 200 measurement, research and policy experts attended the 2007 ETS Invitational Conference in San Francisco to discuss some of the most critical issues surrounding the assessment of teacher quality. [Complete story.](#)

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Praxis™ Program Update

Low-volume Administrations

As discussed in previous program updates, ETS has moved to reduce the number of administrations for our low-volume *Praxis*™ tests in order to meet the challenge of maintaining, updating and performing statistical analyses. *Praxis* titles with an annual testing volume of less than 200 will be offered on a limited basis in the next testing year. By doing this, we will increase volume per administration, which allows for certain analyses to be performed sooner and more frequently for these tests.

The following test titles are only being offered on the 4 test dates currently offered for the paper-based PPST® administration.

- 0780 Agriculture
- 0211 School Social Worker: Content Knowledge
- 0950 Sociology
- 0867 Driver Education
- 0951 Social Sciences: Content Knowledge
- 0810 Cooperative Education
- 0390 Psychology
- 0860 Safety/Driver Education
- 0830 Environmental Education
- 0890 Vocational General Knowledge
- 0600 Latin
- 0940 World and U.S. History
- 0280 Teaching Students with Visual Impairments
- 0800 Communication
- 0262 Physics: Content Essays
- 0530 Pre-Kindergarten Education
- 0351 Special Education — Knowledge-based Core Principles

We anticipate this change will still give candidates the access they need to take these exams, while allowing ETS to conduct the proper analyses critical for our program.

Annual Summary Reports Change

Clients have indicated that the Passing Rate Summary Report (included as part of the Annual Summary Report) is one of the most frequently used reports we provide. In response to requests to more easily identify the report, ETS will begin printing it on blue paper starting with this year's Annual Summary Report.

PPST/CPPST Revisions

Please note that as of November 1, 2007, the PPST/CPPST series will reflect slight revisions made to the Reading

(0710, 5710), Mathematics (0730, 5730) and Writing (0720, 5720) tests. These changes do not affect the content of the test, the score scale or require a new standard-setting study.

PPST/CPPST Reading: The categories remain the same, though there is a slight change to the percentage of items in each category.

PPST/CPPST Writing: The score report category currently titled "Idiom/Word Choice, Mechanics and No Error" is being changed to "Word Choice and Mechanics" only. There is also a slight change to the percentage of items in each category.

PPST/CPPST Math: There are currently three score report categories:

1. Conceptual Knowledge and Procedural Knowledge
2. Representations of Quantitative Information
3. Measurement and Informal Geometry, Formal Mathematical Reasoning

The Math specifications have been reorganized into the following 4 categories, drawing from National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' (NCTM) Principles & Standards for School Mathematics:

1. Number and Operations
2. Algebra
3. Geometry and Measurement
4. Data Analysis and Probability

Items on the test remain the same as before, but belong to different content categories.

Please see the [Free Test Prep](#) page on the *Praxis* website to download the most recent version of the PPST Reading, Mathematics and Writing Test at a Glance (TAAGs) which contain the details for each of the tests.

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The 2008 *Praxis*™ Client Conference

Save the Date!

ETS appreciates the role you play in building quality teachers, and is pleased to host the 2008 *Praxis*™ Client Conference. At the conference, we will explore the issues you and your colleagues face in promoting teaching excellence, and will share ideas, research, stories and strategies for addressing teacher quality.

This year, we have added an extra day!

As a result of the positive response received by clients who participated in last year's operations tour, the conference will begin a day earlier to give more attendees the opportunity to tour the Ewing Operations Facility on Wednesday, April 30. A formal invitation with travel details will be coming in early 2008. Please be sure to reserve **April 29-May 2, 2008**, on your calendar for this important event at the Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, N.J.

We want to make ETS's 2008 *Praxis* Client Conference the most informative and exciting one yet — and hope to see you there!

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School Leaders Licensure Assessment Update

The School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) National Advisory Committee (NAC) met for the second time in June. We are pleased to report that the validity of the NAC's draft specifications developed in their first meeting was supported by the Job Analysis Survey results. Currently, the NAC is reviewing the draft test design (which includes both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions) assembled at their second meeting. Next steps in this process include the development of test questions as required by the test blueprint.

ETS invites state nominations for people who can work with us on item development for this test. If you wish to be considered for nomination, please send your contact information, the subject area and/or test title(s) for which you have relevant experience, and a brief description of your qualifications, including educational background and current position, to: PRAXISTDCommittee@ets.org.

While we move forward on updating the SLLA in order to meet our clients' needs for a revised assessment, we will continue to monitor and review the work being done by major stakeholder groups, such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration and the CCSSO-Interstate Consortium for School Leadership, to ensure that the new assessment is in alignment with any changes made to the ISSLC standards. The footprint of the 6 original standards has been kept in the drafts we have reviewed, and the new test is aligned to those same 6 standards. We expect to have a new form of the test for review by states in the spring of 2008.

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The Diagnostic Preparation Program (DPP) Has Been Discontinued

ETS has a strong commitment to providing teacher candidates with the most effective test preparation materials available. As part of that commitment, we developed the Diagnostic Preparation Program (DPP) to provide candidates planning to retake a *Praxis*™ test with customized feedback about their performance, enabling them to better understand their strengths and weaknesses focus their test preparation efforts to address these areas.

After conducting research with test takers and DPP purchasers, ETS has determined that the current product is not meeting test taker needs. For that reason, we have decided to discontinue offering the program after the August 4, 2007 *Praxis* test administration.

Teacher candidates who took the August 4, 2007 administration will be able to order the DPP through December 7, 2007. Test takers who want to order the DPP for the August 2007 test administration should download the [order form](#) or call **1-800-772-9476** to order directly.

We are conducting additional research to develop new ways to provide the most effective performance feedback for test takers. We will keep you informed of our progress as we develop new test preparation materials that meet the high quality you have come to expect from ETS.

Test takers are urged to use the following existing test preparation resources:

- Candidate Score Report
- [Test at a Glance](#)
- [Free Test Preparation from ETS](#)
- [Study Guides and eBooks](#)

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Test Regeneration: A Primer

How does a test go from old to new?

Test regeneration — the process of updated existing *Praxis*™ exams — starts with a 5-year plan to review almost every *Praxis* exam. It includes convening National Advisory Committees (NAC), conducting job analyses, writing items and creating new forms of the tests, conducting standard setting studies and ultimately adopting tests and setting scores at the state level.

National Advisory Committees comprised of practicing professionals are convened to review the current test specifications, national standards and changes in the field that necessitate modifying existing tests. The NACs provide the opportunity to gather input from clients on issues such as test length, use of multiple-choice versus constructed-response items, content and subject categories, scoring and other constructs that make up a *Praxis* exam.

States can play a large role in test regeneration by sending representatives to the NAC. NAC candidates are asked to submit their demographic information, affiliation, years of experience and type of certification to ensure a broad and diverse panel of participants.

If any test changes to such a degree that equating with the previous test cannot be done using statistical processes, ETS assists states by conducting standard-setting studies at no charge. Following these studies, our Client Relations staff work with each state to review the results, performance data and pass rates so that the state may set a new passing score for the test. Tests are usually ready for state adoption approximately 18 months from the start of the review.

The *Praxis* regeneration plan will address areas of client concern. Specifically, in an effort to reduce the testing requirements for licensure and provide a more cost effective program for candidates, ETS will examine the use of the *Praxis* test series to determine whether states can use single rather than multiple tests in each subject area. ETS will also begin to move older NTE-scaled tests to the current *Praxis* scale of 100-200.

We recognize that in some cases these improvements may require states to conduct new standard setting studies and are now examining how we can streamline these studies so that transitions to new tests are accomplished efficiently and quickly. Older tests will not be dropped until all states are ready to move to the new improved testing offerings.

As more information becomes available, Client Relations Directors will reach out to individual state licensure and certification representatives to get their input regarding specific tests or tests series that could undergo significant changes.

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The 2007 ETS Invitational Conference

This year, more than 200 researchers, policymakers and leaders of professional organizations attended the 2007 ETS Invitational Conference in San Francisco to examine some of the most critical issues surrounding the assessment of teacher quality.

Highlights of the conference included:

- An opening session, moderated by Ida Lawrence, Senior Vice President of Research and Development at ETS, that focused on measurement issues associated with entry into the teaching profession.
 - Suzanne Wilson, Director of the Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Professor of Teacher Education, Michigan State University, noted that existing measures are an "incoherent patchwork" that have no clear beginning or end. She called for a consensus framework that integrates a coherent picture of teacher candidates.
 - Tim Daly, President of The New Teacher Project, discussed his organization's successful experience in placing alternate-route teachers in high-needs schools and districts across the country and highlighted the importance of adequate assessment of performance throughout the first years of employment, prior to the awarding of tenure.
 - Alan Bersin, former Secretary of Education in California, discussed the integrated assessment and support structure developed for teacher education in his state, including measures of content and performance assessments conducted during mentored induction periods.
- A second session, moderated by Steve Lazer, ETS Vice President, Assessment Development, focused on measuring teacher quality in practice.
 - Deborah Ball, Dean, School of Education and William H. Payne, Collegiate Professor, University of Michigan, reviewed the landscape of assessing teaching, and highlighting the work that she and colleagues have done in examining the nature of content knowledge that is needed for effective teaching of mathematics.
 - Doug Harris, Assistant Professor of Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, discussed value-added methods for evaluating teacher quality, as well as some of the methodological and conceptual challenges to their successful implementation.
 - Susan Zelman, Commissioner of Education in Ohio, described the comprehensive teacher assessment system developed for the state, including the *Praxis I*®, *II*® and *III*® assessments.
 - Panelists Pamela Grossman, Professor of Education at Stanford University and Susanna Loeb, Stanford University Professor highlighted their work with tracking teachers in New York City who are being recruited and prepared through different pathways.
- The final session, moderated by Drew Gitomer, ETS Distinguished Researcher, Policy Evaluation Research Center, focused on an often neglected issue — that teacher quality is not simply something that can be defined as an individual trait, but is the result of complex interactions between teachers, students and school contexts.
 - Arturo Pacheco, Professor and Director of the Center for Research on Educational Reform, University of Texas at El Paso, spoke about how knowledge, skills and dispositions all contribute to the relative success of instructional interactions.
 - Mary Kay Stein and Lindsay Clare Matsumura, University of Pittsburgh researchers, raised concerns about the current conceptualizations of student growth based on standardized test scores and called for more sustained measures of student growth directly connected to classroom practice.

- Gloria Ladson-Billings, Kellner Family Chair in Urban Education and Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, closed the session by raising the challenging idea of "opportunity to teach." She argued that the ability to demonstrate the quality of teaching is highly dependent on the kinds of conditions that exist in a school that differentially support good teaching and urged an expansive view of educational equity from both student and teacher perspectives.
- Panelists joining the speakers were Lloyd Bond, Senior Scholar at the Carnegie Foundation; Carol Dwyer, ETS Distinguished Presidential Appointee; Kenji Hakuta, Professor of Education at Stanford University; and Joan Baratz-Snowden, President of the Education Study Center. This discussion centered on the vast amount of knowledge and experience in assessing teaching that the field can build on, especially from the contributions in creating assessments for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).
- Closing remarks were given by Lee Shulman, President of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Shulman criticized some widespread current practices as being impoverished measures of teacher quality and urged that any model be guided by fundamental understandings of the nature of good teaching practice. He praised the longstanding contributions of many of the conference speakers, as well as ETS as an organization, for having developed the robust, contextually rich assessments of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. He noted that the NBPTS assessments are "the closest we've ever come to effective assessment of teacher quality."

Over the past day and a half," Shulman said, "we have learned from the insights of our speakers a multi-faceted, rich sense of what it takes to assess teacher quality. The message is clear — we need not just develop a good assessment 'of' teacher quality, but rather, create an assessment 'for' teacher quality."

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