

Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications (0354/5354)

Test at a Glance

Test Name	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications		
Test Code	0354	5354	
Time	2 hours	2 hours	
Number of Questions	120	120	
Format	Multiple choice	Multiple choice	
Test Delivery	Paper delivered	Computer delivered	
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Development and Characteristics of Learners	20	16%
	II. Planning and the Learning Environment	27	23%
	III. Instruction	27	23%
	IV. Assessment	22	18%
	V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities	24	20%

About This Test

The Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications test is designed for examinees who plan to teach in a special education program at any grade level from preschool through grade 12. The questions on the test assess an examinee's knowledge of the basic principles of special education and the application of these principles to realistic situations. Its focus is on five major content areas: Development and Characteristics of Learners, Planning and the Learning Environment, Instruction, Assessment, Foundations and Professional Responsibilities. Questions may address disabilities of any degree varying from mild to profound.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Descriptions of each of the content areas covered by the test are provided below. For each content area, the approximate percentage of examination questions pertaining to that area is shown. Not every subtopic in a given content area appears on any one form of the test, but every form of the test contains questions on a broad range of subtopics.

I. Development and Characteristics of Learners (Approximately 16%)

- Human development and behavior
- Theoretical approaches to student learning and motivation
- Basic characteristics and defining factors for each of the major disability categories
- Impact of disabilities on individuals, families, and society across the life span
- Impact of language, cultural, and gender differences on the identification process
- Co-occurring conditions
- How family systems contribute to the development of individuals with disabilities
- Environmental and societal influences on student development and achievement

II. Planning and the Learning Environment (Approximately 23%)

- Characteristics of good lesson plans
- Basic elements of effective lesson plans
- Learning objectives that are measurable and appropriately challenging
- Means of providing access to the curriculum
- Organizing the learning environment
- Understands how to manage student behavior
- Theory and practice of effective classroom management
- Design and maintenance of a safe and supportive classroom environment that promotes student achievement

III. Instruction (Approximately 23%)

- Instructional strategies/techniques that are appropriate, considering students' ages and abilities
- Instructional strategies for ensuring individual academic success in one-to-one, small group, and large group settings

- Instructional strategies that facilitate maintenance and generalization of concepts
- Selection and implementation of research-based interventions for individual students
- Selection and implementation of supplementary and/or functional curriculum
- Options for assistive technology
- Instructional strategies/techniques that support transition goals
- Preventive strategies and intervention strategies for at-risk learners

IV. Assessment (Approximately 18%)

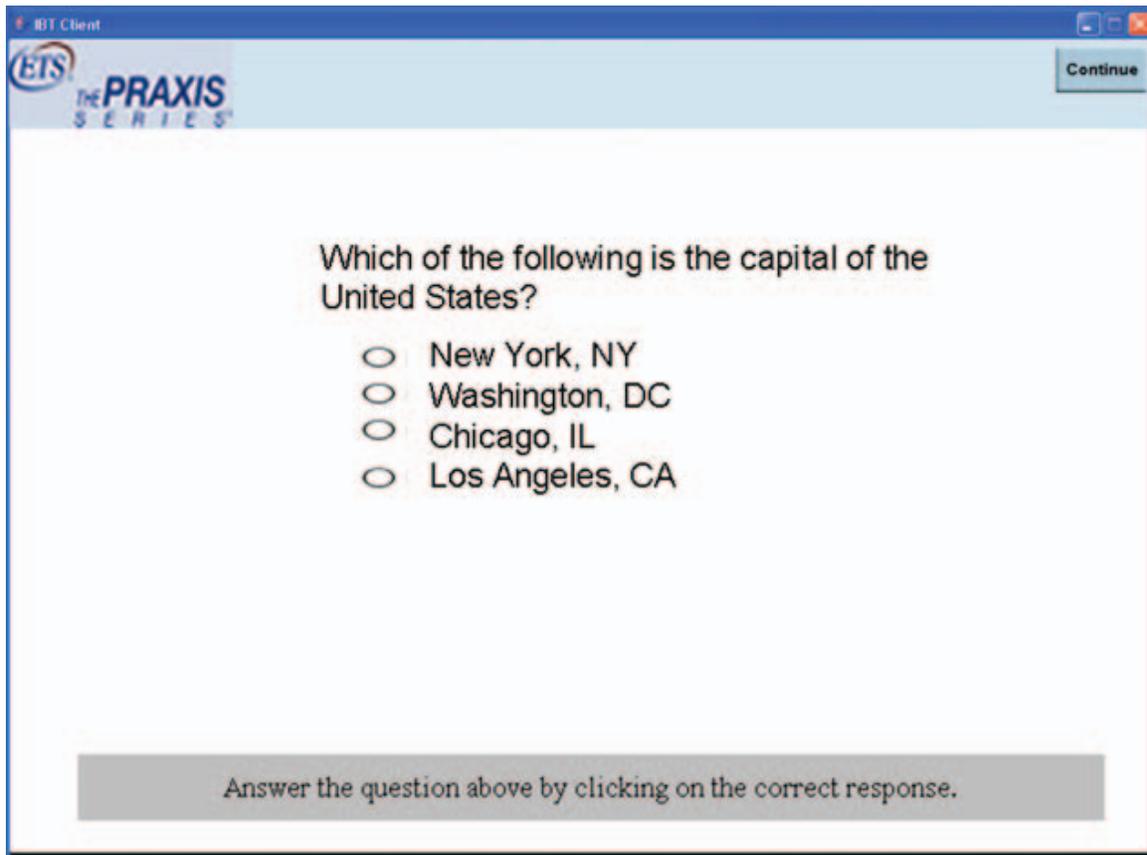
- Evidence-based assessments that are effective and appropriate
- Defines and uses various assessments
- Interprets assessment results
- Understands and uses the results of assessments

V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities (Approximately 20%)

- Federal definitions
- Federal requirements for the pre-referral, referral, and identification
- Federal safeguards of the rights of stakeholders
- Components of a legally defensible individualized education program
- Major legislation
- Roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher
- Roles and responsibilities of other professionals who deliver special education services
- Strengths and limitations of various collaborative approaches
- Communication with stakeholders
- Potential bias issues that may impact teaching and interactions with students and their families

This test is available via paper delivery or computer delivery; other than the delivery method, there is no difference between the tests. The test content is the same for both test codes.

To illustrate what the computer-delivered test looks like, the following sample question shows an actual screen used in a computer-delivered test.



Here is the same sample question as it would appear on a paper-delivered test:

- Which of the following is the capital of the United States?
- (A) New York, NY
 - (B) Washington, DC
 - (C) Chicago, IL
 - (D) Los Angeles, CA

For the purposes of this guide, sample questions are provided as they would appear in a paper-delivered test.

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions on the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by four suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

Note: In this test, the following special education terminology will appear:

- Individualized Education Program may be referred to as an IEP;
 - Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder may be referred to as ADHD;
 - The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act may be referred to as IDEA;
 - A multidisciplinary team or Child Study Team may be referred to as an IEP team;
 - A teacher assistant, teacher aide, or paraeducator may be referred to as a paraprofessional;
 - The No Child Left Behind Act may be referred to as NCLB;
 - A biological parent, legal guardian, surrogate, natural, adoptive, or foster parent may be referred to as a parent.
1. Which of the following is an accurate statement about what IDEA requires for any IEP?
 - (A) The IEP must include a multiyear outline of instructional objectives.
 - (B) The IEP must include a section on assistive devices, regardless of the nature or degree of the student's disability.
 - (C) The IEP must be in effect before special education services or related services are provided.
 - (D) The IEP must not be made available to any school personnel except special education teachers.
 2. Trish is a sixth-grade student who is diagnosed with autism. She has difficulty maintaining eye contact and makes impulsive comments during lessons. Which of the following behavioral strategies would best help Trish?
 - (A) Assigning Trish a peer buddy to help her keep on task
 - (B) Providing Trish a visual menu of appropriate behaviors
 - (C) Seating Trish next to the window so she can look outside
 - (D) Giving Trish high-interest, low-reading-level assignments
 3. As an intervention, response cost is best suited for which of the following purposes?
 - (A) Improving students' understanding of directions
 - (B) Increasing the speed of performance in mathematics
 - (C) Decreasing the incidence of angry outbursts
 - (D) Decreasing excessive competitiveness among students
 4. Which of the following is a nondegenerative disorder that affects motor function as a result of brain injury that occurred before, during, or shortly after birth?
 - (A) Multiple sclerosis
 - (B) Cerebral palsy
 - (C) Muscular dystrophy
 - (D) Cystic fibrosis
 5. To promote the transfer of word attack skills to newspaper reading, a middle school teacher of students with mild mental retardation (intellectual disabilities) is most likely to
 - (A) prepare teacher-made newspaper articles for the students to read
 - (B) select articles from the local newspaper for students to read
 - (C) develop writing exercises using words from the curriculum
 - (D) prepare worksheet exercises based on single sentences from newspaper articles

6. Under the provisions of IDEA, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) for a 2-year-old child is most likely to include
- (A) a budget for early-intervention services
 - (B) plans for making the transition into preschool
 - (C) techniques for the family to use in introducing academic subjects
 - (D) a recommendation of counseling for the child's siblings
7. Which of the following is an example of functional language training for a child who is nonverbal?
- (A) Rewarding the child for making a vocalization approximating a sound made by the teacher
 - (B) Rewarding the child for any vocalization made while looking at the teacher
 - (C) Drilling on bilabial sounds so the child can say "mama"
 - (D) Teaching the child to point to the sink when he or she wants a drink of water
8. A well-made teacher-developed test is generally preferred to a standardized achievement test when measuring learning mastery because it
- (A) is more likely to yield a true score
 - (B) has higher interrater reliability
 - (C) allows comparison of students to each other
 - (D) has better content validity
9. In full inclusion settings, the most appropriate role for the special education teacher is to
- (A) plan instruction with the general education teacher and co-teach all students in the class
 - (B) serve as an instructional assistant to the general education teacher
 - (C) observe the general education teacher at least once a week in order to discuss teaching strategies that seem to work well
 - (D) manage the behavior of the students receiving special education while the general education teacher presents academic content
10. Which of the following statements best defines the ecological perspective on emotional and behavioral disorders?
- (A) Poisons in the physical environment cause emotional and behavioral disorders.
 - (B) Emotional and behavioral disorders involve interactions between the child and the child's social environment.
 - (C) Children with emotional and behavioral disorders need exposure to an ever-broadening social environment.
 - (D) Inclusion settings are less beneficial for students with emotional and behavioral disorders than for students with other types of disabilities.
11. Using a student's classwork as a means to evaluate progress and adapt instruction is known as
- (A) curriculum-based assessment
 - (B) standardized achievement testing
 - (C) summative assessment
 - (D) guided practice
12. Which of the following is the best rationale for using task analysis in instructing students with disabilities?
- (A) Instruction is delivered in steps that are easily achievable and that promote student success.
 - (B) Students can eventually learn to analyze assigned tasks themselves.
 - (C) Students learn classification skills by identifying similar aspects of different kinds of tasks.
 - (D) Instruction can be delivered effectively to many students at once without need for individualization.
13. Mary is a seventh-grade student who has a specific learning disability. Her mathematics achievement score indicates that she has a stanine of 9. Which of the following mathematics classes is most appropriate for Mary?
- (A) Remedial mathematics
 - (B) Functional mathematics
 - (C) Standard mathematics
 - (D) Advanced mathematics

14. Jodeen is a 7 year old who has been evaluated and found to have a mild expressive language delay. Her hearing is normal, and her functioning in all areas other than expressive language is age appropriate. Which of the following placements would be most appropriate for Jodeen?
- (A) A self-contained special education class with speech and language services
 - (B) A part-time placement in a resource room for developmental and oral reading
 - (C) A full-time general education placement with speech and language services
 - (D) A full-time general education placement with an emphasis on reading support
15. Which of the following techniques is likely to be most successful in helping learners with mental retardation (intellectual disabilities) to retain previously acquired skills?
- (A) Scheduling frequent peer tutoring sessions
 - (B) Acknowledging appropriate behavior regularly
 - (C) Providing periodic review of lessons
 - (D) Allowing longer independent practice periods
16. Which of the following is most clearly an example of a student using inappropriate syntax?
- (A) Saying, "I see football game"
 - (B) Saying, "Wa wa" as a substitute for water
 - (C) Saying, "Me sister shoes new happy"
 - (D) Saying, "He dranked his milk"
17. Which of the following conditions is frequently attributable to Trisomy 21?
- (A) Down syndrome
 - (B) Phenylketonuria (PKU)
 - (C) Klinefelter syndrome
 - (D) Turner syndrome
18. Shania is a tenth-grade student classified with a specific learning disability (SLD). She receives direct reading instruction in decoding skills to facilitate word recognition of vocabulary words. Shania's instruction represents
- (A) a remedial approach
 - (B) a compensatory approach
 - (C) a metacognitive strategy
 - (D) scripted reading instruction
19. An IEP must include which of the following components?
- (A) The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
 - (B) A record of past student performance
 - (C) A description of the student's intellectual functioning
 - (D) Suggestions for parental involvement
20. On the basis of such cases as *Hudson v. Rowley* (1982), the courts have determined that "appropriate education" means that
- (A) students will have all the resources and related services needed to fulfill their potential
 - (B) services that maximize achievement will be provided as long as the cost is not prohibitive
 - (C) learners with disabilities will have the same achievement opportunities as peers
 - (D) interpreters will be provided for all deaf children
21. Which of the following supports is most likely to help Beth, a middle-school student with autism, be successful in her new placement?
- (A) Allowing Beth to attend school for a half day for the first month
 - (B) Providing Beth with a visual schedule of daily activities
 - (C) Taking Beth on a tour of the school so that she can become familiar with the layout of the classrooms
 - (D) Providing Beth with time away from her classmates when she has an outburst

Answers

1. The correct answer is (C). According to IDEA, an IEP must be in effect before special education and related services are provided to an eligible student. None of the other choices is required. The objectives in an IEP are ordinarily for a single year, so (A) is not correct. (B) is not the correct answer because what IDEA requires is that an IEP include a statement of the services and aids to be provided to the child. For some students with disabilities, this will include assistive devices, but many students with disabilities do not require such devices. Although special education teachers certainly have access to their students' IEPs, IDEA requires that regular education teachers and other service providers who are responsible for implementing a student's IEP have access to it as well, so (D) is not the correct answer.

2. (B) is correct because using a visual reminder can increase appropriate behavior. (A) is not correct because a peer buddy should not be given the task of keeping another student on task. (C) is not correct because that is not an appropriate strategy for Trish. (D) is not correct because that strategy is not related to the behavior.

3. The correct answer is (C). Response cost needs to be tied to the occurrence of a specific, observable behavior. The behaviors that are identified in (A), (B), and (D) would not benefit from the use of response cost.

4. The correct answer is (B). (A), (C), and (D) are not characteristics of the nondegenerative disorder that is defined in the question.

5. The correct answer is (B), since one component of successful transfer of learning is the similarity between the situation on which a skill is learned and the situation to which it is to be applied.

6. (B) is the correct answer because according to IDEA, the IFSP must include plans for making the transition from early intervention services into preschool. (A) is not correct because IFSPs do not include budgets. (C) and (D) are not correct because they are optional and are not likely to be documented in an IFSP.

7. The correct answer is (D) since functional language training involves giving children a means of influencing and interacting with the environment. Teaching children to make sounds or imitate words in isolation does not fulfill the goal of functional language training.

8. The correct answer is (D). "Learning mastery" generally refers to those lessons taught in the classroom. A teacher-developed test is more likely than a standardized achievement test to assess students' mastery of those lessons, and therefore, to have better content validity.

9. The correct answer is (A). In inclusion settings, an appropriate role for the special education teacher is as a co-teacher with the general education teacher. The special education teacher should not be the assistant to the general education teacher, so (B) is not correct. While the special education teacher may observe the general education teacher and offer recommendations on working with classified students, this is done in the role of collaborating professional, not in the role of evaluator, so (C) is not correct. (D) is not correct because, although the special education teacher may have primary responsibility for behavior management with certain special education students, the teachers should share responsibility for both behavior management and academic content.

10. (B) is the correct answer. The ecological perspective emphasizes the importance of interactions between the child and the child's environment in emotional and behavioral disorders. (A) is not correct; the ecological perspective on emotional and behavioral disorders does not refer to the influence of toxins in the physical environment. Neither (C) nor (D) defines this perspective.

11. (A) is the correct answer because all student work reflects the curriculum; thus, the assessment is curriculum based. (B) is incorrect because standardized tests compare students' data with those of other students in the same age-group. (C) is incorrect because summative assessments are used to determine whether the student is meeting the curriculum requirements; it is not used to guide instruction. (D) is incorrect because guided practice is a teaching strategy used to provide instruction, not evaluate progress.

12. (A) is the correct answer. It provides two key justifications for the use of task analysis. (B) is incorrect because, although the skill it describes is a possible benefit of using task analysis, it is not the basic rationale for the use of task analysis. (C) is not correct because the learning of classification skills is not a primary objective of task analysis. (D) is not correct because individualization of instruction is always important in instructing students with disabilities.

13. The correct answer is (D) because Mary's achievement score indicates high mathematical ability; 9 is the highest possible stanine score. On the basis of the information presented, the most appropriate placement is the advanced class. None of the other choices is appropriate to her high mathematical ability. Despite her learning disabilities, it is entirely possible that she could, perhaps with support, undertake an advanced class in an area of strength.

14. The correct answer is (C). Since Jodeen's functioning is age appropriate in most respects, it is probable that she could work at the level of the class in a general education setting as long as she is provided with appropriate support services to address her expressive language deficit. There is no clear justification for a full-time special education setting, as in choice (A), as the initial placement for a young child with a very specific expressive language delay and no other disability. There is no evidence that Jodeen needs support for reading, so (B) and (D) are not correct.

15. The correct answer is (C). Once a skill has been mastered, the teacher can best assure its retention by providing additional meaningful learning situations in which the student can recall and use the skill.

16. The correct answer is (C), since using inappropriate syntax involves not following rules for the correct arrangement of word sequence.

17. The correct answer is (A). There are several possible causes of Down syndrome, with the most common being Trisomy 21, the failure of one pair of parental chromosomes to separate at conception.

18. The correct answer is (A) because remedial instruction is one-on-one or small-group instruction that focuses on the needs of the individual student.

19. The correct answer is (A), as mandated in IDEA.

20. The correct answer is (C). IDEA states that each student must be placed in the least restrictive environment in which the unique needs of that student can be met.

21. (B) is correct because research has indicated that children with autism prefer routines and structure in daily academic life. Using the visual schedule would help Beth anticipate the routine and become more accustomed to the new environment. (A) is not correct because reducing a child's school attendance to a half day would not help her adjust to the new environment. (C) is not correct because taking Beth on a tour of the school would be useful but it is not a long-term support like a visual schedule. (D) is not correct because providing time away would not help Beth adjust to her school. Instead, this would limit interactions with peers and teachers, which would inhibit the adjustment process.



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