

Advice to EYTs Preparing for the Praxis III Observation

Scheduling of the Praxis Assessment:

The date and time are to be mutually agreed upon by the EYT and the Praxis assessor. Do not settle for a date or time that is not good for you, but on the other hand, work with the assessor's schedule too. If the assessor does not work with you to establish an agreeable time for both of you, please contact Cathy Bever at the Catholic School Office. The Praxis assessor has the whole day to be available for the observation.

Consult the principal regarding the date and schedule for the assessment. The principal will help by arranging a substitute to cover your classes during the Pre-Observation and Post-Observation Interview. If the substitute is not familiar with your class, you may ask your mentor to cover your class and have the substitute cover the mentor's class. The principal will also help you find a quiet, private place for the Pre- and Post-Observation Interview.

In scheduling the day of the assessment, provide:

30-45 minutes for the Pre-Observation Interview

45-50 minutes for the lesson

30-45 minutes for the Post-Observation Interview

Consider scheduling some time, 10-15 minutes, between the Pre-Observation Interview and the lesson, and after the lesson before the Post-Observation Interview. Use this time to relax, reflect, have something to drink, and get ready for the next session.

The Praxis Paperwork

The Praxis paperwork can be found in the Praxis III: Teacher Performance Assessments Orientation Guide. This is a blue and white booklet published by the Educational Testing Service, 2008 edition, which you received at the Praxis Orientation presented by the Regional Praxis Coordinator. The exact questions used for the Pre-Observation and Post-Observation Interview are listed here. These forms can also be found on the website:

www.CatholicCincinnati.org/schools/ Forms for Professional Development; Entry Year column; Praxis section.

You must complete the **Class Profile** and the **Instructional Profile**. You must use these forms and can write, print, or type on them. You may attach an additional sheet if needed. On the day of the assessment, have this paperwork in the office when the Praxis assessor arrives. The assessor will arrive 30 minutes prior to the observation to review the paperwork. In some cases, the assessor may ask you to mail these forms to him/her a few days prior to the observation. Include a seating chart and copies of handouts for students with the paperwork for the assessor.

The mentor can help the EYT with the completion of the Class Profile and Instructional Profile. The EYT may also ask another colleague to give input. Role-play the Pre-Observation Interview and the Post-Observation Interview with your mentor. Switch roles and have your mentor play the role of the EYT. Provide specific examples, especially in the Post-Observation Interview. **No notes may be used during the Pre- or Post-Observation Interviews. The assessor will provide you with a blank copy of the interview questions. You may bring a copy of the Class Profile and the Instruction Profile.** The assessor may ask questions to clarify your answers. This is to help gather more data, and to help you pass.

Domain A:

Information comes from the Class and Instructional Profile and the Pre-Observation Interview.

Role-play the Pre-Observation Interview with the mentor.

1. Be able to state 3 ways that you learn about your students (cumulative files, pretests, previous teachers, community activities, talking with students, assigning them reflective journal entries, etc.) You may talk about the class as a whole (this group is motivated, likes to challenge each other), but also talk about individuals with special needs (Mary has a hearing problem.)
2. Be able to discuss at least 2 aspects of your students' backgrounds and cultural differences, including ability and diverse experiences (race, gender, language, socio-economic status, etc.) You may cite specifics: John's native language is Spanish.
3. Goals: Choose 1 or 2 goals. Do not have 3 goals. You must be able to tell how you know all students accomplished the goal or goals you have stated. Know why you are teaching what you are teaching. Know why this goal is important. Know why this goal is appropriate for your particular students.
4. Connecting content: Be able to articulate what was taught before this lesson and what future lessons will build from today's lesson. Know where this lesson fits in with the district curriculum or graded course of study. Show with a simple diagram, how this lesson fits in with the subject matter to be learned, and the discipline as a whole.
5. Methods: If you use one method for all students, you must be able to tell why this is appropriate for all students in the class. Otherwise you may want to differentiate for various individuals. Try to use at least two modalities in your teaching: visual, auditory, tactile, and/or kinesthetic. Know and state that you use these to teach to different learning styles.
6. Assessment: Make sure the evaluation directly addresses your goal and that you can tell at the end of the lesson exactly which students did and did not achieve the learning goal. To do this, plan to include a short worksheet, quiz or reflective writing prompt at the end of the lesson. Know how you will use this information for future planning. If you have an assessment worksheet, give the assessor a copy of it.

Domain B:

The evidence for domain B and domain C come from the classroom observation.

1. Greet students as they enter the classroom if possible. Make it a point to individualize your comments, saying things such as "Tom, how did the game go last night?"
2. Call equally on boys and girls. You may want to use a random system such as names on cards. Make sure everyone is required to participate. Walk around the room.
3. Use proximity and quiet comments to address minor misbehavior. If students misbehave, address it. Do not allow students to be "off task" for more than 5 minutes. For example if a student puts his head down, check on it.
4. Make sure there are no safety hazards in your classroom. Check especially for electrical cords and things blocking exits (including bookbags in the aisles). Make sure class rules and fire/tornado procedures are posted.
5. Use at least one of the instructional tools in the classroom: overhead projector, computer, white or blackboard, chart etc.
6. Make sure any student with special needs is accommodated in your classroom. (This may be as simple as having a child with AD/HD or visual disabilities in the front of the room.)

Domain C

1. Tell the students what they are going to learn today. Use the same words that you used in the goal statement of your Instructional Profile. You may also have the goal written on the board.
2. Have your mentor and/or a knowledgeable colleague review the content of your lesson for accuracy and developmental appropriateness. Think about how you will make the content comprehensible – what are 2-3 ways that you did this?
3. If the students are divided into groups, be sure to “visit” each one to give substantive feedback. If you are teaching to the whole class, make sure that you move around the room.
4. Ask students. “What are you thinking?” and “How did you get that answer?”
5. Give time cues to the students, such as “we have 10 more minutes.” Teach to the end of the lesson. Make sure students have something to do when finished.
6. Restate the goals at the end of the lesson. You may ask, “How many students feel they have accomplished the goal?” or “How many students might need some more practice?” You might extend their thinking by asking what topic might come next in their learning.

Domain D

The evidence that the assessor will use to score this section comes from the Post- Observation Interview.

1. Describe a strength and weakness of the lesson. Be sure to mention at least one thing you would do differently next time and base your suggestion on something specific that happened in the lesson. For example, “I would have a more complex, open ended task so that students like Emily would be challenged more or would have work to do the whole period.”
2. The assessor will ask you to comment on students that he or she thought did well or were having problems with the lesson. Suggest specific strategies that you have not yet tried that might help these students be both challenged and successful.
3. Tell the assessor the names and positions of at least 2 persons you talk with about instruction. Provide 2 pieces of physical evidence of collaboration – notes from a meeting or a lesson plan with joint ownership.
4. Bring 2-3 different forms of communication with parents – phone log, newsletter, letter to parents, copies of notes, etc. Do not bring a portfolio or big binder of artifacts. Tell the assessor of one instance in which you called the parent or guardian of a child, describing the situation and the action taken.

The Praxis assessor will leave after the Post-Observation Interview. He/she will give absolutely no feedback to the EYT. This is the required protocol. Do not take the lack of feedback from the assessor as a sign that you did not pass the assessment. This is normal. The assessor is trained to give no feedback and to reserve judgment until all the data is gathered and scored. The results will be returned to the EYT. For those assessed prior to March 15, the results will be returned after April 15th. For those assessed after March 15, allow 8-10 weeks. The Archdiocese, the principal or mentor will not get the results. EYTs are encouraged to share this information with the mentor and the principal.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Do not call ODE or the regional Praxis coordinators. I will work with ODE and the Praxis coordinators for you.

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