READING PRAXIS TEST TOPICS:

**Semantic mapping:** A semantic map is a visual tool used to help the reader activate their prior knowledge and identify important components of a concept and see the relationships between these components.

Write the subject in the middle of the board
Brainstorm as many words as possible that relate to that subject.
Group the brainstormed list into categories
Add each category to the map by placing it within a box coming off the center topic
List the associated words under each category heading
Discuss the finished map to help students become aware of new words and their meanings and to see the relationships between the target word and the associated categories.

**TIE responsibilities and laws:** Title One is a federal law that makes funds available to schools on the basis of their socio-economic breakdown. In other words, a given percentage (40%) must qualify for free and reduced lunch. Once the school has qualified, children can be placed in the program if they perform in the lowest quartile in math, reading or writing on standardized tests and if they are not receiving special education services. The title services are generally performed by someone with a reading endorsement for that academic area and they are given either individually or in small groups using a pull-out model or, more rarely, an inclusion or extended day model. The goal is to provide focused tutoring in areas of weakness to move the child to the middle 50% for performance in the academic area of need.

**Role of state tests:** When you see this on the exam, it is referring to tests like the WASL or ITBS. The point is that these tests are not good indicators of individual need, meaning they are not diagnostic. Their purpose is to measure the extent to which a child, classroom, teacher, school and district is meeting academic standards as determined by the state. They allow the user to say a standard is met or not and they allow for comparison across children, classrooms, teachers, schools and districts. But, they are not useful if you are trying to determine why someone is struggling with reading or what to do about it.

**Planning an in-service:** Typically, there are two ways that in-service topics are chosen. The first is by a needs survey. In other words, the reading specialist or principal would send out a survey to faculty asking what topics they want to know more about and that determines topics. The other way is administrative. So, if a principal knows of a change that is happening at the state or district level, then he/she might come to the reading specialist and ask for an in-service on that topic. Or, if it comes to his/her attention that teachers, in general, are not doing something well in their rooms (this could be the result of large failure on a standard on the state tests or through reporting from parents or specialists) then he/she might ask for an in-service. Finally, if a new program or approach is being adopted by the school, then an in-service might be requested to train the faculty
on the new approach or program. The reading specialists role is to implement those in-
services that s/he is asked to by the principal.

Once a topic is chosen, the specialist would determine what the main ideas were that
teachers should know and then how best to communicate those ideas. The in-service
would normally end with some kind of application exercise so teachers could
demonstrate they have learned the information. Most in-services take place during staff
meeting time or during staff development days so they range from an hour to a day in
length. It is unusual to use a staff in-service model for anything that takes longer to train.

**Limits of readability formulas:** Readability formulas are used to level texts and they
generally use one or both of the following: decodability based on sentence length and
average syllable count for words and concept load or the probable familiarity of the
content to the target audience. The limits fall here in that there is no set formula for
determining concept load; it is a largely subjective judgment call but if you don’t
consider it, the level you give is not always completely useful as children are able to read
things that are very difficult for them in terms of decodability if they are familiar with the
content and, conversely, they are often unable to read “easy” material in terms of
decoding if they are unfamiliar with the content.

**Criterion referenced:** This refers to a test that measures mastery of a specific body of
knowledge or skills such as a driver’s test. For teachers, these are tests that are usually
given to measure learning in a particular grade or class. On the state level, they are the
standards based assessment we give, like the WASL.

**Validity:** This refers to the extent to which a test measures what you want it to. In other
words, if you want to measure a child’s ability to sound out words and you give them a
comprehension test, that’s not valid because the two things don’t match. To get validity,
the test you use must measure what you want it to measure.

**Reliability:** This refers to the extent to which you can get the same or similar scores on
test if you give it multiple times on different days. A test is reliable if it produces similar
results each time you give it.

**Critical scores:** This is the value that is used to sort people into categories. It is
sometimes a passing or failing score. An example would be using an IQ of 75 as a cut-off
for mild mental retardation.

**Synthetic v. analytic v. inductive phonics:** Synthetic phonics refers to a part-to-whole
model of instruction in which blending of separate phonemes is emphasized, followed by
articulation of a phoneme in the initial, medial and final position. Analytic is a whole-to-
part model in which the focus is more reading by onset and rime, or chunking. The child
is taught to read the beginning and end of the word and then the middle. The focus is on
segmentation. Inductive phonics emphasizes practice with blending of phonemes until the
child is able to recognize the phonic generalization at work and apply it independently. In
other words, the child figures out the sounding-out rule.
Dipthongs: A dipthong is a glide in which the first vowel sound is elongated into the second = /ou/, /aw/, /ow/.

Digraphs: Occurs when two letters, read together, make a single, unique sound. Examples include: /th/, /sh/, /wh/.

Schwa: A vowel sound in an unaccented syllable in a multisyllabic word. The vowel says /uh/.

NAEP: This is the National Assessment of Educational Progress and is a test that randomly selects participants from across the nation on a four year cycle to test for long-term trends and short-term performance in all academic areas for children grades 4, 8 and 12.

Schema Theory: We tend to associate schema theory with the work of Jean Piaget, although there are many perspectives on schemata and their nature and function. Regardless, schema theory is a way of understanding how we categorize information or impose a mental framework on information to assist in understanding, retention and retrieval of that data. In a simple sense, the theory says that we have mental frameworks (file cabinets) where we store information as we attain it. The files are organized in some way that is meaningful for each of us and allows us to not only store, but to comprehend and retrieve the data more easily. Each time we are confronted with a new piece of data, we compare it to our existing files and, if it fits somewhere, in it goes (accommodation). If it does not, we have to alter our framework (files) to make it fit and this is learning (adaptation).

Story Grammar: This refers to the internal structure of a story meaning the setting (time and place), the introduction of the characters (main, secondary, protagonist, antagonist, round or flat), narrator (first person, second person, third person, third person omniscient), the conflict (man v. man, man v. self, man v. nature), the plot sequence to the climax, the resolution, the theme and the moral. The more a child has strong story grammar, the better their comprehension of narratives will tend to be because they can use their knowledge to predict what’s coming and they can use it to restructure the story during a retell.

Miscue Analysis: see below and we cover this, a lot, in diagnosis. Essentially, you take any deviations from printed text and you look at the deviation to determine if it was caused by graphic similarity (word looks like the word in the text); semantic similarity (it means something similar) or syntactic similarity (it functions the same way in the sentence as the actual word). So, you are looking to see which clues (cues) the reader attended to when the deviation occurred so that you can reinforce the use of that system while also clarifying how to use so the deviations cease to occur.

The Goodmans: Kenneth and Yetta are reading researchers. In the late 1960s, Ken developed the idea of miscue analysis in which a child’s deviations from printed text are
not viewed as errors, but as miscues that, when analyzed, can tell us what clues a child is using to decode and make sense of text. The emphasis is on what the child was trying to do right and how those efforts can guide the teacher’s instructional decisions. Yetta is a strong advocate for whole language and has written numerous books on that topic also beginning in the late 60s/early 70s.

Middle and High School Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies

Reading Teacher as Special Education Consultant

Typical performance of reading disabled kids on state tests: For the purposes of this test, the assumption is that a truly reading disabled child will struggle in all areas on a state test because, 1) they are timed and you have to read the items and, 2) if you have a disability in reading, the likelihood is that you will either struggle with the timed component or you will misread the directions or prompts on the items due to comprehension and/or decoding problems. The exception is if you are looking at straight math application where the problem is given and you just have to solve it. In that case, the test appears to assume the child with a reading disability will score higher here than in other areas of the test.

IRI: This is an informal reading inventory. This means that the test is not standardized in terms of either administration or scoring. You can alter the directions, the order of administration, how much of the test you give, etc. for your individual students. In our classes, we learn the QRI, Running Records and all the phonemic awareness, phonics and concepts of print tests we use are informal.

QRI: The qualitative reading inventory is a test we learn about in class. It is an example of an IRI and it can test for oral reading accuracy (decoding); explicit and implicit comprehension in oral, silent and listening modes, reading rate (words per minute) and retell ability. However, it is the teachers’ choice how much of this is done. The test includes both expository and narrative passages for primer through high school levels.

How do various tests inform teachers about the skills of entering students:

Achievement: Achievement test reports typically include a grade level equivalency and an age equivalency which means the test-takers performance is interpreted according to the age at which a child would “normally” give that level or performance and the grade level at which a child would “normally” give that level of performance. It can tell a teacher if the child is has acquired the skills or knowledge tested at, above or below grade level and how far, but it can not tell the teacher why the child performed in a certain way or specific areas of need.

Diagnostic: A diagnostic test is intended to look at they WHY. It examines specific behaviors to determine exact areas of strength and need. It is used for instructional decision making and intervention planning because it looks at the individual rather than comparing the individual to other children.
Standards-Based/Criterion-Referenced: This kind of test can simply tell you whether a child has achieved to a standard (critical score) set by either the test writer or the test administrator. In other words, it derives what is most commonly viewed as a passing or failing score and it is used by states for accountability of content coverage and by teachers to determine learning on instructional units.

Norm-Referenced: Norm-referenced tests tell us how the child is performing in relation to “normal” children of the same age. Again, it is used a lot to determine placement in special programs or to determine if a child is at, above or below grade level.

IRIs: These are informal diagnostic instruments that look only at individual performance with the intention of identifying specific strengths and needs. The data is used for instructional decision making by the classroom teacher.

**Caldecott and Newbery:** The Caldecott is an award given for outstanding illustration in children’s literature and was first awarded in 1938; the Newbery is given for an outstanding contribution to American literature for kids beginning in 1922.

**Use of literature circles:** This gets covered in children’s literature but, for the test, the purpose is to motivate students through social sharing of literature and to encourage more critical and evaluative reading through discussion. In a literature circle, the students may or may not be assigned specific roles or tasks, but they are grouped by a common book and they read and discuss it together at regular intervals to promote deeper comprehension and appreciation of the text.

**Use of rubrics to generate a letter grade:** In general, rubrics are criterion-referenced; meaning, they are built around some set of criteria and individuals are rated on a scale based on how well they met each criterion. To convert that to a letter grade, you would have to convert the performance descriptors into mastery, above average, average and so on and then assign a letter grade to each descriptor. Usually, rubrics are used in lieu of a letter grade for more holistically assessed projects and then other, more objective tasks are used to derive a letter grade.

**Critical/Inferential/Literal/Analytic/Evaluative Reading:**

Literal: At the literal level, comprehension is seen as focusing only on information as it is explicitly stated in the text. In other words, a person reading at this level will retrieve only exact details or ideas as they are expressed by the author.

Inferential: At this level, the reader uses personal experience to interpret text by making personal connections or using prior knowledge.

Critical: At this level, the reader is willing to engage in questioning the validity/style/purpose of the author or content through self-generated questioning, using additional research to find out more about the topic, reading rebuttals and so on.
Analytic: An analytic reader is one who takes apart a piece to examine its structure and the relationship between the parts. So, if you’re talking about a story, this person would look at the quality of the piece in terms of story grammar and how well each element of story grammar is explored by the author. If you are talking expository, it would mean knowing the 11 organization patterns and identifying which is being used and examining each element for completeness.

Evaluative: At this level, the reader forms a value judgment about the piece in terms of how well it’s written, if it was enjoyed, and why or why not.

Metacognition and think aloud strategy: Metacognition is the act of thinking about, or becoming aware of, one’s own thinking. The purpose to is develop self-monitoring skills. There are strands of metacognitive awareness or skills that teachers can promote in their students. These include: self-generated questions, prediction, summarizing, visualization, compare-contrast, and evaluation. The think aloud strategy, when a teacher reads to the class and then thinks out loud about what is happening, what might happen next, what the author’s purpose is, whether the writing is clear or could be improved, helps students to understand how to apply metacognitive thinking and helps them see how doing so assists in deeper comprehension of text. This strategy is a form of modeling in which the teacher allows the child “into his/her head” so that it is possible to “see and hear” what a master reader does.

Average ability range in reading in a classroom: For the purposes of the test, the typical range is four years. This means that if you are a second grade teacher, you will potentially have non-readers all the way to kids who can read (decode) up to the sixth grade level. That doesn’t mean they should read books that high if they’re not understanding them or they’re not appropriate. It just means they could.

Purpose of graded book lists: These serve multiple purposes. They give the teacher an easy way to direct children to appropriate books for literature circles or free reading and they provide direction to parents on how to select appropriate books for their children. The lists are simply titles of books leveled by grade. Depending on whether the teacher or a publisher did the leveling, the results may look only at decodability or may consider concept load.

SQ3R: This is a study method for expository material. The steps are: Survey, Question, Read, Respond, Review. Essentially, you look at the title, subtitles, pictures and graphics first to get an idea of what you are going to read. Then, you generate for yourself a list of questions you have about the topic(s). Then you read to answer your questions; you respond to them and you review where you still have a question or are confused.

Reading by Configuration: This means that you “read” a word based on its shape and length. For example, “the” is not a phonetically decodable word so we teach kids to memorize it based on the cues that it’s a small word made of two talls and a short.
**Onset and Rime:** This is the word family or reading by analogy approach that you learn in your methods class. An onset is a consonant and the rime is the vowel-consonant combination that makes the family. For example, in “cat”, the /c/ is the onset and the /at/ is the rime. If I know all my consonants and I learn my rimes by memory (so I can read them in five seconds or less on sight), then for each rime, I have seven to tens words I automatically know. Ex: If I know “cat”, then I can read “bat”, “fat”, “sat”, “mat” and so on using this approach.

**Configuration v. syllabication v. sounding out:**

**Configuration:** This is one of the ways that we can promote sight reading or memorizing words on sight. Essentially, you teach kids to recognize the word by its shape and length and to identify clues they can use for future recognition. So, for the word /the/, the clues might be a little word formed with two talls and a short. The limitations of this approach are there are only so many clues one can use and then the words just get confused.

**Syllabication:** Essentially, a new syllable is formed for each vowel sound in a word. If kids can syllabicate, it allows them to read by chunking so a longer word becomes more manageable.

**Sounding Out:** This would be more phoneme-by-phoneme. This is a slower process then syllabication or chunking, but is usually more reliable than configuration. However, some words are not phonetically decodable and then a different approach might be more effective. Plus, there are letters that have multiple sounds associated with them like /a/ and that causes confusion for children who rely on sounding out to decode.

**ITA phonics:** This refers to an initial teaching alphabet. The system is based on the idea that other languages do not include phonetically irregular words, meaning that all sounds are accounted for by a corresponding grapheme or letter/letter combination. In English, because we pull from so many languages, that is not the case and this makes reading difficult for kids. The idea was to create an alphabet, or code, that would account for all the sounds in English words. The ITA is based on 40 phonograms, 17 vowels, 5 digraphs including /ch/, /sh/, /zh/, /th/, /ee/ and offers the child a consistent spelling and sound system to facilitate reading and writing acquisition.

**Context reading:** Context readers use clues in the sentence or passage to decode unfamiliar words by “guessing” a word that would make sense in that piece of text. Often, synonyms are used for unfamiliar words. The goal for the reader is to maintain meaning. Typically, the reader uses a “key words” approach in which the main focus of attention is on specific nouns and their associated verbs. Typically, common nouns, adjectives and adverbs, articles and conjunctions, etc. are not necessary to get the “big picture” so they can be skipped without losing meaning.

**Cloze:** This is a test that can be used to check syntax knowledge and provide a basic vocabulary check. You take a passage of at least 100 words, depending on the age of the students and you leave the first and last sentence and all punctuation intact. You delete
every fifth word, or you can try to delete a variety of word types (parts of speech). You make the blanks equal length to avoid having that be a clue and then ask the child to read the entire piece and then fill-in the blanks with the missing word. For a diagnostic test, you may only consider the exact word that was deleted as correct.

**Expressive v. receptive language which are speaking and writing focused and which are listening/reading focused:** Expressive language is the word bank you have for communicating your ideas verbally. It is speaking and writing focused. Receptive vocabulary is the word bank you have for understanding others’ messages. It is reading and listening focused.

**Diagnostic v. criterion v. other test types:**
* See the section above on different types of tests and what they tell teachers.

**Experimental research design:** There is a true experimental and a quasi-experimental approach to design. A true experimental design means you must have a control group and an experimental group. The groups are selected randomly from among all people who could qualify and the experimental group receives a treatment while the control group does not. The effects on both groups are measured before and after the experiment to determine if the treatment made a difference and to what extent. An example would be if someone wanted to know how effective a synthetic phonics program would be for third grade struggling readers in Eastern Washington. They would first have to generate a list of all struggling third grade readers in the area based on whatever criteria they set, maybe WASL scores. Then, they would have to randomly select participants from that overall group of qualifiers. They would have to divide the chosen participants randomly into two groups and then test both on their phonics skills. Then, the experimental group would get instruction in synthetic phonics while the other group would not. At the end, both groups would be tested again to see what impact the treatment had.

In a quasi-experimental study, the steps are mostly the same except the participants do not have to be chosen completely at random. In other words, you can use convenience as a factor and choose only children from a certain school or district. The limitations of this approach is that your results can’t be assumed to hold true for the overall population of struggling third graders if you haven’t randomized your participant selection.

**Oral language and its relationship to emergent reading:** Oral language is a good determiner for early reading ability. Oral language is a combination of expressive and receptive vocabulary. The larger your word banks, the easier it will be to read because you can understand more. The other point is that you can’t truly “read” a word you can use in speech because, if it’s not a word you’ve heard and can use, you can’t ask yourself if it “sounds right or makes sense” when you read it. You have no way to check yourself.
Alphabetic principle: The alphabet is a man-made system for communicating messages in writing. Because it is man-made, the symbols we use are also arbitrary, meaning anything could have been used for the sound of /a/. As a result, the ability to learn the alphabetic code (otherwise known as the ability to associate sounds with their correct symbols) is not natural to children, it must be learned. For some kids that happens through repetitive exposure to print. For others, it must be directly and repeatedly taught. The principle is that for each letter, there is one or more sounds associated that, if we learn the relationship, will help us “read” words. Most kids learn the principle, or “crack the code”, by the end of first grade if not sooner.

Orthography: This is a fancy word for writing system.

Phonology: Refers to the “language” system and includes the ability to analyze speech for sounds, sentences for words, words for syllables, syllables for type and then to manipulate individual phonemes.

Organizational Patterns of Text: There are twelve ways to organize text. These patterns can assist kids with their reading and writing because, if they know the pattern, it helps them to predict what is coming, what the author’s purpose is and where to locate key pieces of information. The patterns are: narrative, problem-solution, recount or first-hand autobiographical incident, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, compare-contrast, description or report of information, procedure, speculation about cause and effect, autobiographical incident, persuasion. The outlines for these forms were provided for you during your language arts methods class. If you need another copy, you will need to let me know.

Language (Structural) analysis

Strategy for decoding between graphically similar words

Reading Recovery: This is the work of Marie Clay and was developed in the mid-70s and came to the States in 1984. It is based on providing individual tutoring for struggling first grade readers. Children receive a half-hour of private instruction daily for 12-20 weeks by a specially trained tutor who performs ongoing assessment and returns the child to their classroom when s/he is at grade level.