PreK–4
Sample Selected-Response Questions

Module 1

Objective 0001
Understand the foundations and principles of child development and learning.

1. A student in a kindergarten class is playing at the water table, placing different toys in the water. The student notices that one toy floats and another sinks to the bottom and asks the teacher why some toys float. Which of the following responses from the teacher would be most strongly consistent with a constructivist approach to learning?

1. "Let's go read a book about water and see what it says about floating."
2. "Why don't we ask some of the other students and see if they know the answer?"
3. "Let's try to make some other things float and see if we can figure it out together."
4. "Why don't I tell you the answer when we have our science time later?"

Answer and Rationale
Correct Response: C.
This question requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of major theories of child development and learning. Constructivist approaches to learning view the learner as an active participant in building understanding and knowledge. Hands-on exploration with concrete materials provides particularly effective opportunities for young children to construct knowledge. By extending the realistic and relevant learning situation in which the student is already actively engaged, the teacher can interact with the student in a meaningful way to help scaffold understanding and develop the student's awareness that knowledge is constructed.

Objective 0002
Understand various types of assessment and evaluation and the use of assessment to ensure children's continuous development and achievement of defined standards and goals.

2. The most important reason for using varied assessment methods and formats with young children is that such an approach:

1. allows teachers to make accurate predictions about children's future academic performance.
2. helps motivate children to become actively engaged in learning.
3. promotes teachers' objectivity and fairness in evaluating children's performance.
4. provides children with multiple avenues to demonstrate their learning.

Answer and Rationale
Correct Response: D.
This question requires the candidate to recognize the importance of using multiple
indicators to identify areas of individual need and to support the development of all students. Young children of the same age can vary significantly in their levels of development in the various domains. They also differ in their cognitive styles and learning preferences. For example, some children may have more advanced language skills and be able to explain or write about what they know, while other children may be able to demonstrate their understanding by drawing pictures. Some children may prefer to work on some tasks independently and on other kinds of tasks with a group. Using a variety of assessment methods and formats that accommodate these differences gives all children opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned and understand.

Objective 0003
Understand strategies for meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities in an inclusive PreK–4 setting.

3. A preschool student has been receiving special education services and will continue to receive services in kindergarten. An IEP meeting is being planned for the student's transition to kindergarten. Which of the following roles is most appropriate for the general education kindergarten teacher to play in this IEP meeting?

1. developing appropriate academic interventions and strategies to meet curricular goals
2. writing reports documenting the decisions of the team
3. determining which special education services the student is eligible to receive
4. facilitating the discussion of the participants

Answer and Rationale
Correct Response: A.
This question requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the general educator as a collaborative member of the IEP team and as part of the team for transition planning. In the situation described, the general education kindergarten teacher will have responsibility for providing instruction, accommodations, and supports for the student in the kindergarten classroom. The teacher also brings to the IEP meeting expertise regarding the general education curriculum, the type and pace of instruction that is provided, and the classroom environment the student will be entering. The role that most appropriately acknowledges the general education kindergarten teacher's specific areas of expertise and responsibilities with regard to the student is developing interventions and strategies that can be used with the student.

Objective 0004
Understand family and community relationships and collaboration with families, colleagues, and other professionals.

4. A kindergarten student, who is typically easygoing and friendly, has begun acting out in class and being verbally aggressive toward peers. The teacher is consulting with the school counselor about these recent changes in the student's behavior. This consultation is likely to be most
productive if the teacher begins by providing the counselor with which of the following pieces of information?

1. notes from the parents describing the student's behavior at home
2. results from the student's most recent standardized assessments
3. a description of the student's behavior and strategies the teacher has implemented
4. the complete educational history and attendance records for the student

Answer and Rationale

**Correct Response: C.**

This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of strategies for consulting and collaborating with colleagues and other professionals. When consulting with a colleague, it is important for a teacher to provide specific information that is directly relevant to the issue to be discussed. In the situation described, the kindergarten teacher has noted changes in a student's behavior and has decided to consult with the school counselor. There are several types of information that ultimately may need to be considered with regard to this student. Initially, however, it will be most helpful if the teacher prepares a clear description of the student's behavior, how it has changed, and the steps the teacher has taken to address the behavior. This will allow the counselor to focus quickly on particular points or make suggestions for additional strategies not already tried by the teacher.

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**Objective 0005**
**Understand the legal, ethical, and professional roles and responsibilities of the PreK–4 teacher.**

5. A recently hired prekindergarten teacher who is new to the area can best prepare to be an effective advocate for students by taking which of the following actions?

1. developing a strong, positive relationship with an assigned mentor
2. learning about the characteristics and needs of families within the community
3. researching advocacy activities undertaken in similar districts in recent years
4. engaging in reflection and self-assessment to identify professional strengths and challenges

Answer and Rationale

**Correct Response: B.**

This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of strategies for serving as an effective, informed advocate for individual students and families. An important first step for a teacher who is new to an area is to become familiar with the local community and its population. By taking the initiative to learn about the particular characteristics of local families (e.g., culture, socioeconomic situation, traditions), the teacher can be prepared to advocate for students in ways that are relevant and respectful to students and their families.
Module 2

Objective 0006
Understand foundations of research-based, standards-based literacy instruction, and understand assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in language development.

1. A second-grade teacher uses evidence-based flexible grouping and selects different types of texts (e.g., decodable texts, leveled texts, chapter books) for different reading groups. These practices best demonstrate the teacher's awareness of the importance of which of the following principles of effective beginning reading instruction?

   1. exposing students to a variety of text genres
   2. accommodating students' diverse linguistic backgrounds and approaches to learning
   3. aligning students' reading goals with state standards
   4. transitioning students to more challenging texts as they progress in their reading skills

   **Answer and Rationale**

   **Correct Response: D.**

   This question requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of best practices in early and emergent literacy and reading, including the importance of differentiating literacy instruction to address individual students' needs and their growing knowledge and skills. Providing early readers with guided practice reading connected text corresponding to their individual level of phonics knowledge is essential for promoting their ongoing fluency development. Evidence-based flexible grouping is the practice of varying the size and composition of instructional groups according to the goals of instruction and the demonstrated learning needs of individual students, as evidenced in ongoing informal assessments. Using this approach to plan reading groups allows the teacher to group together students with similar reading levels for instruction using a text at an appropriate level of challenge for those students. Furthermore, the teacher can closely monitor student progress and regularly adjust the composition of groups and assigned texts, thus transitioning individual students to more challenging texts as they progress in their reading skills.

Objective 0007
Understand assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in emergent literacy and beginning reading, including development of phonemic-awareness and phonics skills.

2. A first-grade student who demonstrates mastery of phonemic blending is having difficulty sounding out and blending VC and CVC words in printed word lists and connected text. Based on this information, the student would probably benefit most from an intervention designed to improve the student's:

   1. development of oral reading fluency.
   2. awareness of key concepts of print.
   3. letter-sound correspondence skills.
   4. knowledge of high-frequency sight words.
Correct Response: C.

This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of interventions in phonics. Knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and phonemic blending skills is key for developing the early phonics skill of sounding out and blending simple, phonically regular VC and CVC words. Knowledge of letter-sound correspondences is required to decode the component sounds from the sequence of letters, and skill in phonemic blending is needed to combine the sounds into a single word. The student described has mastered phonemic blending, so the likely source of the student's difficulty with this task is in correctly identifying the sounds represented by the letters in the printed words.

Objective 0008
Understand assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

3. In a fourth-grade class, providing explicit instruction focused on which of the following reading skills would most directly promote students' evaluative reading comprehension skills?

   1. summarizing the main idea of an extended text
   2. retrieving information from a text to answer comprehension questions
   3. applying background knowledge to visualize processes described in a text
   4. distinguishing between fact and opinion in a text

Correct Response: D.

This question requires the candidate to recognize different levels of comprehension. Readers exercise evaluative reading comprehension when they apply criteria external to a text to analyze the text or its content (e.g., evaluating the accuracy of the facts presented, evaluating the effectiveness of stylistic choices). Authors of informational texts may occasionally identify personal opinions in the text explicitly. In general, however, readers must consider what they know about the word meanings (e.g., best, good, disappointing) or what they know about the world (e.g., whether a particular statement could be verified objectively) in order to distinguish statements of fact from statements of opinion in these texts.

Objective 0009
Understand assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in academic language and in listening, speaking, and writing skills.

4. A kindergarten student writes "tdirdmibk" in her journal and tells the teacher she wrote "Today I rode my bike." The student's writing sample most clearly demonstrates which of the following milestones essential to spelling development in English?

   1. awareness of the alphabetic principle
   2. knowledge of print conventions for representing words
3. awareness of morphological structure within words
4. knowledge of syllable juncture

Answer and Rationale

**Correct Response: A.**
This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of assessment in writing skills, including interpreting the results of assessments. The sequence of letters *tdirdmibk* in the student's writing sample corresponds to prominent sounds in the spoken sentence the writing represents. The letters *td* correspond to the first sounds in each syllable of the word *today*; the letter *i* represents the word *I*; the letters *rd* correspond to the consonant sounds in the word *rode*; the letters *mi* correspond to all the sounds in the word *my*; and the letters *bk* represent the consonant sounds in the word *bike*. The student's spelling is typical of emergent writers in an early stage of spelling development, and reflects an awareness of the alphabetic principle—the understanding that the writing system in English is alphabetic, i.e., that the letters used in written English represent the component sounds in spoken words.

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**Objective 0010**
Understand the developmental foundations of social studies learning; fundamental concepts and processes related to social studies; and assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in social studies.

5. After an extended classroom discussion of the pros and cons of adopting a civic initiative, students are divided into two relatively equal groups, one of which supports the initiative while the other has reservations about it. The teacher could best use this situation to demonstrate the value of which of the following practices?

1. assessing the costs and benefits in group decision making
2. using compromise to resolve conflicts
3. dividing problems into more manageable parts in group decision making
4. using majority rule to resolve conflicts

Answer and Rationale

**Correct Response: B.**
This question requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of ways of actively engaging children in developing their civic competence. An important responsibility of citizenship is being able to resolve conflicts in a respectful, nonviolent manner. In the situation described, the class is divided over the civic initiative, with about half having reservations about it. This presents a good opportunity to refocus the discussion to a dialog about what types of changes to the civic initiative might help those students with reservations to be more supportive of it and yet would still be acceptable to those who support it. While neither side may get 100% of what they want, the groups can come to a mutually acceptable compromise.
Objective 0011
Understand the developmental foundations of learning in arts and humanities; fundamental concepts and processes related to arts and humanities; and assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in arts and humanities.

6. Fourth-grade students are working in small groups to create dances to a song they have chosen. As they work, their teacher makes anecdotal notes on the students' discussions, work styles, and use of concepts related to movement and choreography that the class has previously studied. The teacher can best use these notes to accomplish which of the following goals?

1. establishing the connection between the lesson and state arts standards
2. determining students' final grades for the project
3. planning tasks and questions for an upcoming arts exam
4. documenting individual students' understanding and growth

Answer and Rationale
Correct Response: D.
This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of assessment in arts and humanities. Anecdotal teacher notes about students' discussions, work styles, and use of previously learned concepts represent an informal method of assessment. Student performance is not being evaluated against established standards or rubrics. In the situation described, the teacher is only sampling individual students' discussions, work styles, and use of concepts as they work on the production phase of an arts activity. The teacher's observations can help evaluate how well students understand the concepts they previously studied and whether additional instruction may be called for. Additionally, such anecdotal notes taken over time allow the teacher to keep a clear record of individual students' growth in the context of arts education.

Module 3

Objective 0012
Understand the developmental foundations of mathematical learning and problem solving and assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in mathematics.

1. During a learning activity about the oceans, a teacher has students solve problems involving starfish (five legs) and crabs (ten legs). Which of the following problems could the teacher use to demonstrate that some problems have more than one answer?

1. Three crabs and two starfish were on the beach. How many legs were there altogether?
2. I saw 15 legs. How many crabs and starfish did I see?
3. Two crabs have how many more legs than three starfish?
4. One crab was walking in the sand. How many starfish have the same total number of legs?
Correct Response: B.

This question requires the candidate to demonstrate an understanding of mathematical communication and applications of mathematical concepts in real-world context. In the situation described, it is given that a starfish has 5 legs and a crab has 10 legs. Of the problems posed, only the one that provides the total number of legs seen (15) has more than one solution. The students need to consider all of the possibilities that result in 15 legs. For example, 3 starfish and no crabs would have a total of 15 legs, as would 1 crab and 1 starfish.

Objective 0013
Understand the foundations of scientific learning; fundamental concepts and processes related to the sciences; and assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in science.

2. A first-grade class is learning about light using mirrors and flashlights. After showing the class how mirrors and a variety of shiny objects reflect light, the teacher asks students if nonshiny objects can reflect light. The teacher hands out small flashlights to the students and asks them to explore this question. Which of the following strategies would be most effective for the teacher to use to help the students develop the ability to clearly explain what they learn from their exploration of reflected light?

1. discussing with each student what he or she is finding out about the reflection of light as the explorations are being conducted
2. structuring the students' explorations by having them describe supporting evidence for the hypothesis that light is reflected by nonshiny objects
3. asking the class as a whole to vote on whether nonshiny objects can reflect light and then calling on students to defend their positions
4. summarizing the concepts covered earlier in the lesson and then asking the class for explanations of how nonshiny objects can reflect light

Correct Response: A.

This question requires the candidate to apply knowledge of appropriate strategies, activities, teaching materials, tools, and technologies to support children's development and learning in physical science. Individualized discussion with each student during the activity allows each student the opportunity to express his or her observations and understanding without being influenced by other students' opinions. Working with individuals in this way also provides a means for the teacher to evaluate each student's participation in the activity and his or her thought process.

Objective 0014
Understand the developmental foundations of learning in motor development and health; fundamental concepts and processes related to motor development and health; and assessment, instruction, and intervention for PreK–4 students in motor development and health.
3. A first-grade teacher is planning a game that involves tossing beanbags of different colors into targets marked on the floor with masking tape. The targets are in the shape of a square, a triangle, and a rectangle. The students must listen for which shape to aim for and which color beanbag to use. Which of the following strategies would make this activity inclusive of students with varying levels of motor development?

1. giving students the option of either throwing beanbags or watching and recording the results
2. reducing the distance the beanbags must be thrown and increasing the target size
3. providing frequent rest breaks and allowing students to stop at any time they wish
4. asking students to work in pairs and allowing pairs to determine the stronger thrower to participate

Answer and Rationale

Correct Response: B.

This question requires the candidate to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for implementing, modifying, and differentiating developmentally appropriate instruction in motor development and health. In this situation, reducing the distance the beanbags must be thrown and increasing the target size would result in decreased demands related to force, accuracy, and underhand throwing technique. Although the sequence of motor development is generally uniform, the rate at which individual children develop motor skills varies, and some children are more motivated or have more opportunities than others to practice throwing skills. Modifying the activity in the way described promotes the inclusion of all students and allows less experienced or less skilled students to achieve success alongside more experienced or more highly skilled peers.