Helping Students Pass PRAXIS I

Karen Smith-Gratto, North Carolina A & T State University, US

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and Winston-Salem State University were awarded an eLearning grant from the state of North Carolina to develop computer based resources for helping students prepare for PRAXIS Exams. The resource for the Elementary Education PRAXIS II was developed by a team of content experts and an instructional designer. The PRAXIS I was developed by the instructional designer.

First the general areas of the test were examined and the initial design broken down into the three major sections found on the test. These three major sections became the main menu which also informed students how long each portion of the test is and the type of items on the test. From the main menu students are linked to Reading, Writing, and Mathematics sections. These sections are further divided into submenus.

One submenu contains the basic areas that are addressed in Reading. This section is divided into a section that provides vocabulary-building tips, different ways to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, and steps that can be used to help interpret passages and answer questions about those passages. In addition to the information contained in each of these sections, there are links to websites that address vocabulary development.

Another submenu deals with writing. There are three major areas represented on this menu: sentence correction; writing essays; and links to web sites that can be used to help improve writing skills. The sentence correction menu provides information about parts of speech, mechanics, homonyms, and sentence structure. The section on writing essays gives a basic procedure for writing an essay. The links to web sites include sites that explore and teach about a variety of writing related information such as, grammar and graphic organizers.

The last section of the resource deals with the areas of mathematics that are addressed on the PRAXIS I. The areas covered through information and links are whole numbers, exponents and square roots, order of operations, decimals, fractions, number theory, ratio and proportion, percents, probability, statistics, logic, permutations, scientific notation, equations, geometry, coordinate grids, formulas, graphs, and problem solving.

This study resource is not meant to initially teach or tutor students. The function is to provide an organized resource that students can access and use to review areas where they are experiencing difficulty. Students at North Carolina A & T State University are given practice tests and the areas of the test where they show weakness are identified. It is hoped that the study resource will help students review their weak areas and be better prepared to take the exam.