

RICA

Test Taking Strategies Seminar

especially designed for students at
Charter College of Education
California State University Los Angeles
(who have completed EDEL 415/415S or 400)

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Revised Fall 2004

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RICA TEST TAKING SEMINAR STUDENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- RICA stuff you need to know before taking the test (yellow)
- Sample Multiple Choice Questions (blue)
- Sample Short Answer Questions (white)
- Sample Case Study (pink)
- Complete RICA Multiple Choice Test (white)
- Answer Sheet (golden rod)
- Glossary of Terms (green)
- Student Evaluation (tan)

**** RICA Student Self Reflection Survey****

Please read and respond to the questions describing your current thoughts and ideas about taking the RICA.

1. What is your current level of confidence or feeling towards taking the RICA?
2. How well prepared do you feel right now for taking the RICA?
3. What are you most concerned about in taking the RICA?
4. What are you least concerned about in taking the RICA?
5. How familiar are you with RICA? Have you studied or read any RICA information before attending this seminar?
6. What do you hope to learn from this RICA Seminar?
7. Besides taking this seminar, what other plans/ideas do you have to help you pass the RICA?
8. What questions do you have about RICA?

CASE STUDY ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES FOR EACH DOMAIN

To Determine Reading Level

- IRI
- Running Record
- Miscue Analysis

Phonemic Awareness

- Elkonin Box – Segmentation
- Blending—Model & Review
- Rhyme—Songs/Books
 - Down by the Bay* Song
 - The Hungry Thing* Book
- Manipulating—Onset manipulation, i.e.
- Sequence—Sort objects according to sounds

Phonics

How to's

- Implicit
- Explicit
- Whole to Part

Concepts About Print

- During Shared Reading – Point out the concepts and review constantly

Reading Comprehension

Lower elementary activities:

- Sequencing
- Story retelling

Lower and upper elementary activities:

- Graphic organizers
- Chunking

Upper elementary activity

- Reciprocal Teaching

Sight Words

- Shared Reading
- LEA – All elementary levels

Content Area Instruction

- K-W-L – Lower elementary activity
- SQ3R -- Upper elementary activity

Literacy Response

Lower elementary activities:

- Read Alouds
- Grand Conversations

Upper and lower elementary activities:

- Investigative Questioning (Inquest)
- Literature Circles

Upper elementary activity:

- Simulated Journals

Fluency

- Chunking
- Pre-Teach Vocabulary
- Repeated Readings

Vocabulary

Lower elementary activity:

- Word Sorts

Both lower and upper elementary activity:

- Semantic Map

Upper elementary activities:

- Teaching Vocabulary in Context (TVC)
- Vocabulary Self-Selection (VSS)

RICA Multiple –Choice Questions Strategies

- How fast or slow do you read? Take that into consideration when reading and answering the questions.
- The test is timed but you can complete the test in any order that works best for you.
- Some questions will have short or long reading passages and there will be a mixture of classroom situations and scenarios. Responses to questions will vary in length and complexity.
- There will be questions asking you about information for grades kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8).
- There is no penalty for incorrect answers.
- Each question is worth 1 point. There are 70 questions but only 60 questions will be counted, for a total of 60 points.
- Answer each question as if you are “the teacher” who has the authority and responsibility of knowing the best answer given from all the responses.
- Look for key words, terms, or phrases in the question or statement:
A specific grade/group identified such as 1st grade or third graders
or terms like “primary, lower or upper elementary”
most or least important factor
best approach, response, activity, or strategy
most helpful, beneficial, or effective
almost, always, and never
greatest need or strength
- Read all answers to the question first, usually there are 2 similarly worded answers, don’t assume or guess, consider all answers before determining the best answer.
- Skip a question if you don’t know it, mark it, & go back to it after you have finished & guess if you have time.
- There may be some questions that no matter how much you studied, you won’t know the answer. Don’t panic, do your best!
- Usually your first answer to a question is your best one, do not get into the habit of second guessing yourself.
- Develop a positive attitude ... go in mentally and physically prepared
“...you are taking the test, the test isn’t taking you.”
- If you study and practice, you will be at your best. You can do it!

TIPS ON WRITING RESPONSES FOR THE RICA CASE STUDY

1. Do not worry about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure. Simply get your answer written. If you have time, go back and proofread.
2. Do outline your answer first so that it is in three parts – evaluation of need, activity or strategy to meet the need, and the rationale for using the activity. Make sure that the three parts are there.
3. Do not list more activities and/or strategies than are required unless you develop the activity/strategy thoroughly. Too many activities/strategies listed without a thorough explanation can leave the impression that you are uncertain of what to do. Also, you won't have time to do more than what is required.
4. Do include yourself as teacher in the answer. Do not say the child needs to ... Rather state that I will teach, model, show, work with, etc.
5. Do not worry if you have forgotten the term or name for the activity or strategy. Continue responding to the case study or short answer and be thorough in describing what you would do. You may even receive full credit. They want to know that you can rise to the occasion and assist any child to become a lifelong reader.
6. Do write whatever activity/strategy will help a student even if it may not be age appropriate. For example, if you are experienced in teaching lower elementary children and the case study addresses a problem for upper elementary students, use a strategy that would work with lower elementary. Do not leave the page blank. (You'll get some credit.) Go back and make it grade appropriate if you have time.
7. Do not assess the child unless they ask you to do so. The prompt gives all the information you need to write a response. Don't say that you will look at their cums. Any reference to cums usually suggests you may be unsure of what to do.
8. Cite support for weakness/strength from prompt. Also, cite support for rationale from prompt.

Prepare well and relax the night before.

Before you take the RICA, you should know:

- The pass rate of the RICA written examination is much higher than the pass rate of the RICA video performance. Therefore, this seminar prepares you for the written form of the RICA, not the video form.
- The RICA written examination has 2 parts:
 - Multiple choice questions. (Total possible points = 60)
 - Constructed response (essay) questions. (Total possible points = 60)
- There are 70 multiple choice questions on the exam:
 - 60 questions which will count toward your total score. 1 point for each question. No penalty for incorrect answers.
 - 10 questions which are being field tested for the next exam. These questions will be indistinguishable from the questions that will count toward your total score.
- There are 5 constructed response (essay) questions:
 - 4 focused questions, 1 on each domain. (See page iii in this section and the RICA content specifications in the *RICA Registration Bulletin*.)
 - 1 case study that requires knowledge in multiple domains.

| question | maximum pages | scoring scale | possible points | % of total test score |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Domain I | 1 | 1 – 3 | 6 | 5 % |
| Domain IV | 1 | 1 – 3 | 6 | 5 % |
| <i>Domain II</i> | 2 | 1 – 3 | 12 | 10 % |
| <i>Domain III</i> | 2 | 1 – 3 | 12 | 10 % |
| Case Study | 4 | 1 – 4 | 24 | 20 % |

- In Domains II and III you will be provided with data on a child and asked to:
 - Identify a need based on the data.
 - Describe an instructional strategy or activity to help address this need.
 - Explain why the strategy or activity you describe would be effective.
- In the case study you will be provided data on a child and asked to:
 - Identify three strengths and/or needs, citing evidence from the documents.
 - Describe two specific instructional strategies and/or activities that address the child's needs and/or build on the child's strengths.
 - Explain how each strategy/activity you describe would be effective.
- The questions may be about primary *or* intermediate grade children so you must be prepared to answer questions about both levels.
- The constructed responses are read question by question, not candidate by candidate.

- The scorers are experienced educators.
- You have up to 4 hours (240 minutes) to complete the RICA written examination. You may spend as much or as little time as you choose on each section. One strategy would be to begin with those sections that earn you the most points. Here is a *suggested* sequence and time allotment:

| | <u>Potential Points</u> | <u>Approximate Time</u> |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 st : Multiple Choice | 60 (50%) | 90 minutes |
| 2 nd : Case Study (4 page response) | 24 (20%) | 90 minutes |
| 3 rd : Domain II (2 page response): | 12 (10%) | 20 minutes |
| Domain III (2 page response): | 12 (10%) | 20 minutes |
| 4 th : Domain I (1 page response): | 6 (5%) | 10 minutes |
| Domain IV (1 page response): | <u>6 (5%)</u> | <u>10 minutes</u> |
| | 120 (100%) | 240 minutes (4 hours) |

- You need a total of 81 points to pass the RICA written examination.
- Sample RICA questions are available on the web at <http://www.rica.nesinc.com> They are copied in this booklet for your convenience.
- Additionally, in this booklet are some sample responses to the constructed response questions generated by fellow CSULA students. In this seminar we will read these responses and discuss what scores they might receive and why.

| Domain I (Planning/Organizing Reading Instr.) | Domain II (Developing Phonological and Linguistic Process) | Domain III (Dev. Reading Comprehension and Promoting Indep. Reading) | Domain IV (Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language) |
|--|---|---|---|
| miscue analysis | segmentation | story retelling | Author's chair |
| Informal Reading Inventory | sound matching | cloze procedure | collaborative books |
| Anecdotal notes | blending | think aloud | cubing |
| Running Records | sound isolation | story mapping | writing process |
| Kid watching | sound additon/substitution | clustering/webbing | grammar |
| story retelling | elkonin box | scaffolding | writer's workshop |
| conferencing | word families | SQ3R | poetry |
| rubrics | onset/rimes | KWL | reader's theatre |
| attitude survey | flashcards (alphabet) | Choral reading | daily news |
| portfolio | word sort | context clues | vocabulary strategy |
| quickwrite | 8 rules of phonics | anticipation guide | double entry journal |
| frustration reading level | guided reading | chunking | dialogue journal |
| instructional reading level | Language Experience Approach | DRTA (Direct Reading- Thinking Activity) | simulated journal |
| independent reading level | concepts about print | Readers' Theatre | reading journal |
| interview | environmental print | DLTA (Direct Listening- Thinking Activity) | learning logs |
| Cloze Procedure | literacy play centers | predicting | quick writing |
| Differentiated Reading Instruction | shared reading | graphic organizers | word maps |
| | phonemic awareness | summarizing | semantic feature analysis |
| | explicit phonics | reciprocal teaching | homophones |
| | implicit phonics | intertextuality | structure |
| | analytic phonics | Inferences | types of sentences |
| | spelling stages | | |
| | Affixes | | |

Developed by Sue Kawell

**Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA)
Domain and Content Specifications Headings**

| Domain I | Domain II | Domain III | Domain IV |
|--|--|--|--|
| I: Planning and Organizing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment | II: Developing Phonological and Other Linguistic Processes Related to Reading | III: Developing Reading Comprehension and Promoting Independent Reading | IV: Supporting Reading Through Oral and Written Language Development |
| Conducting Ongoing Assessment of Reading Development 1.1. Principles of assessment 1.2. Assessing reading levels 1.3. Using and communicating assessment results | Phonemic Awareness 3.1 Assessing phonemic awareness 3.2 The role of phonemic awareness 3.3 Developing phonemic awareness Concepts About Print 4.1 Assessing concepts about print 4.2 Concepts about print 4.3 Letter recognition Systematic, Explicit Phonics and other Word Identification Strategies 5.1 Assessing phonics and other word identification strategies 5.2 Explicit phonics instruction 5.3 Developing fluency 5.4 Word identification strategies 5.5 Sight Words 5.6 Terminology Spelling Instruction 6.1 Assessing spelling 6.2 Systematic spelling instruction 6.3 Spelling Instruction in context | Reading Comprehension 7.1 Assessing reading comprehension 7.2 Fluency and other factors affecting comprehension 7.3 Facilitating comprehension 7.4 Different levels of comprehension 7.5 Comprehension strategies Literary Response and Analysis 8.1 Assessing literacy response and analysis 8.2 Responding to literature 8.3 Literary Analysis Content-Area Literacy 9.1 Assessing content-area literacy 9.2 Different types of texts and purposes for reading 9.3 Study skills Student Independent Reading 10.1 Encouraging independent reading 10.2 Supporting at-home reading | Relationships Among Reading, Writing, and Oral Language 11.1 Assessing oral and written language 11.2 Oral language development 11.3 Written language development 11.4 Supporting English language learners Vocabulary Development 12.1 Assessing vocabulary knowledge 12.2 Increasing vocabulary knowledge 12.3 Strategies for gaining and extending meanings of words Structure of the English Language 13.1 Assessing English language structures 13.2 Differences between written and oral English 13.3 Applying knowledge of the English language to improve reading |
| Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction 2.1 Factors involved in planning reading instruction 2.2 Organizing and managing reading instruction | | | |

Follow-Up Tasks For This Seminar:

- Read the RICA Content Specifications in the RICA Registration Bulletin you received in this Seminar. Be sure you understand each of the terms.
- Study the terms in the last white section of this booklet.
- Review your class notes and reading materials from EDEL 415 (or the equivalent, older course, EDEL 400).
- Practice for the multiple choice section of the RICA:
 - Answer the 17 official sample multiple choice questions in the first blue section of this booklet. Check your answers and read the official explanation for the answers.
 - Answer the 70 official sample multiple choice questions in the first part of the second blue section of this booklet. Time yourself. (Can you do it in less than 90 minutes?) Check your answers.
- Prepare for the constructed response section of the RICA:
 - Familiarize yourself with the format of the constructed response section of the RICA exam in the second part of the second blue section in this booklet.
 - Read the sample case study answers in the pink section of this booklet.

Additional (Optional) Resources:

- Unofficial RICA Test Preparation books, available in the CSULA bookstore, The Student BOOK Mart, and the Charter College of Ed Literacy Resource Lab¹.
 - *Case Studies in Preparation for the California Reading Competency Test* by Rossi & Schipper (Allyn & Bacon)
 - *Ready for RICA* by Zarrillo (Merrill Prentice Hall)
 - *Preparation Guide for the California RICA* by Dye and Giles (Houghton Mifflin)
- Free RICA Study Groups, available through the Literacy Resource Lab¹. This is especially helpful for those of you who would like to work more on instructional strategies.
- Free RICA Rescue, available through the Literacy Resource Lab¹. If you do not pass the RICA, AS SOON AS YOU GET THE RESULTS, get in contact with the RICA Rescue through the Literacy Resource Lab¹. Take your test report with you.

¹ The Charter College of Education Literacy Resource Lab is located in King Hall C 2092A. It is open Monday through Thursday 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Check for additional times by calling (323) 343-4347.