

From: Bridget Atkins
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2018 1:08 PM
To: Tinney, Donald
Cc: Coultas, Patti
Subject: Fwd: Praxis Concern

Hello Mr. Tinney,

I am a teacher who is enrolled at Vermont Technical College and Castleton University in the process to receive my teaching certification and credit hours towards my master's degree. My employment is as a teacher at Lyndon Institute where I instruct students in graphic design. I am writing to you to share some concerns I have in hopes you will share them with the Vermont Standards Board in which you serve on for the State of Vermont

As a 2nd year student in the Teaching Certification program, I am now in the process of having taken (and will need to test again) my Praxis examinations. Last summer, I took the initiative to enroll at Lyndon State College where I had one to one instruction in math to improve upon my math skill set from my youth over 35 years ago. In the fall of this past year I took the Praxis exam in Reading, Writing, and Math, and unfortunately, did not pass math nor the writing. I failed math due to my unfortunate lack of understanding of the concepts, to be able to logically apply this in my career today, to learn how to test to the test and not being adequately prepared in my childhood. My failure with the writing (missing it by a narrow margin) was a direct result of my performance on the math which preceded the writing, I did pass the reading.

I am writing to you in regards to a considerable concern I have with those diagnosed with a disorder such as Anxiety etc. and therefore receive a waiver on having to take the Praxis indefinitely. This exemption for some students feels like discrimination to those of us who do not have this or other disorders. As a state institution it is advocated equality for all; however, this does, in fact, seem to not be in the case. Furthermore, as more and more individuals struggle with taking the Praxis due to anxiety or other issues a question arises is this in effect an accurate diagnosis or a scapegoat to take a back door into receiving your teaching certification.

Another significant concern I have with the Praxis, especially the math component of this requirement, is this math does not apply to my field of work, it is primarily irrelevant. So, in essence, I am working months to study for an exam, a drill and kill mentality, causing myself and my family significant stress, anguish and anxiety only to take an exam to pass hopefully, and ultimately not use this skill set in my career. It is frustrating, as you can imagine, to have to learn content that you will not use. It is equivalent to asking me to pass an exam in history, or science, when in fact, I won't use those subjects directly or even indirectly in my day to day activities.

I do hope you will share my concerns with the state board; I believe if we share our thoughts change can, in fact, happen to remove this Praxis requirement for teaching certification. In the meantime, I will continue to work diligently in my teaching preparation for my teaching certification, and ultimately my Master's Degree in Art. I will also continue to serve my students to the best of my ability all the while preparing for a math test that eventually I hope to pass but will not use moving forward.

Thank you for listening and your advance thoughts.

Regards,
Bridget Atkins

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