



**STUDY GUIDE  
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION  
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION**

**CORE and CONCENTRATION AREAS**  
Educational Leadership and Administration.  
Curriculum and Instruction

**PHILOSOPHY OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

The comprehensive examination in Education is a summative evaluation. Unlike regular coursework and formative assessments taken during completion of the degree, it is designed to be an integrative, independent endpoint assessment of the students' cumulative knowledge of graduate coursework in the field of education. It is not intended to test all areas of graduate education, but is intended to test the student's knowledge of important core theory and the appropriate application of that theory to practice.

The comprehensive examination is intended to demonstrate the independent ability of the student to synthesize and present adequate and appropriate knowledge without the focus of a course content outline or instructor's prompting. Therefore, we do not "tutor" students regarding specific questions on the examination either prior to or following the exam. We also administer the comprehensive examination in a controlled setting providing equity for all students. If you have a demonstrated and documented disability which inhibits your performance on this controlled exam, you must make arrangements for the appropriate accommodation when registering for the examination. (*See #7 below under Exceptions*)

**General Information:**

1. The candidate must answer **three** questions from the **CORE** courses. The questions are specifically designed to integrate knowledge from two or more courses. In other words, the questions are designed to allow the candidate to draw from all of the courses taken during their course of study. All of the questions are chosen from the Master of Arts in Education seminar courses:

**EDUU 600 - Research and Evaluation Methods**  
**EDUU 605 - Democracy, Education and Social Change**  
**EDUU 606 – Seminar in Learning Theory**  
**EDUU 607 - Seminar in Comparative Education**  
**EDUU 608 - Seminar in the Social Foundations of Education**  
**EDUU 609 - Seminar in Curriculum Studies and Assessment**

2. The candidate must also answer **two** out of the three questions from the **CONCENTRATION** area chosen by the candidate. These questions reflect current issues in the candidate's chosen area of specialization, and responses should demonstrate a grasp of the significance of the issues affecting schooling and be able to support a position with knowledge gained during the degree program. **It is the candidate's responsibility to read curriculum –related materials, as indicated by each of the course syllabi.**
3. In all, the candidate will answer a **total of five** out of nine questions; **three** questions from the CORE and **two** questions for the CONCENTRATION.

### **Instructions for the Comprehensive Examination**

*Chapman University College requires students to take the comprehensive exam on computer.*

1. Four hours will be allotted for the entire exam. Candidates may divide their time allotment as they choose for each question, but no deviation in the exam time can be granted unless one of the following exceptions applies:

#### **Exceptions:**

- A. Students enrolled in an additional concentration will be allowed an additional ninety minutes for the exam.
  - B. Students retaking only a specified section of the exam will have their time allotment adjusted (i.e., repeating core area – 2 hours 30 minutes; repeating concentration area – 90 minutes).
2. The candidate's success on the examination will require strict attention to the directions. It must be stressed that the majority of the poor responses on previous examinations were due to failure to **read and follow directions**. The majority of questions require citing of sources to support the hypothesis of each essay. If a question calls for "Four reasons why...", do not list only three reasons. If a question calls for a "Compare and Contrast...", do not answer only by comparisons. Most questions include material from more than one course, providing an opportunity for the Candidates to employ the knowledge they gained from the entire MAE program.
  3. Answers must be:
    - A. **Factual** - when making a statement, the student must support the statement by known facts and appropriate citing of sources.
    - B. **Well – stated** - Answers must be well organized, containing all of the elements of a **properly written graduate essay**.
    - C. **Logical** - Essays must be logical in presentation.
    - D. **Apt-** essay must clearly, appropriately and suitably respond to the essay prompt.

4. Since there is latitude in the selection of questions, candidates should review the entire group of questions available and select those which can be answered successfully. Be sure to answer the required number of questions. Do not spend an excessive amount of time answering one question at the detriment of others. Passing essays will generally range from two (2) to three (3) pages in length.
5. Candidates **may not** use any reference materials during the examination - e.g., notes, books. Candidates **may not** use any timing devices which make sounds.
6. Candidates need only bring ink pens (either blue or black) to the examination. The proctor will provide all other materials for the examination. All question outlines or extraneous notes may be written on the scratch sheets provided by the proctor. Only the essays will be scored by the readers.
7. Candidates needing to make special arrangements for the examination for medical or other reasons, must submit a petition with appropriate documentation for such arrangements to Chapman University College prior to the application deadline. Only upon approval of the petition will the candidate be allowed to make special arrangements.

### **Evaluation and Notification of the Comprehensive Examination Results**

The comprehensive examinations are graded by faculty in the Chapman University College, Department of Education on a “Pass”, and “No Pass” basis. If a faculty reader marks the examination as a “No Pass,” a second faculty reader is given the exam to grade. Additional reading may be needed to determine the final results. Faculty readers that score an examination with a “No Pass” are requested to provide written comments to help facilitate the student with preparation for retaking the exam.

Examination result letters are sent to students approximately five weeks after the examination date. If an exam is a ‘No Pass’ examinations comments are included in the results letter.

## EDUU 600 - Research and Evaluation Methods

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*By the end of the course the student should be able to...*

1. evaluate a quantitative and qualitative journal article and determine if that research possesses the validity necessary to make it worth adding to the student's expertise on the topic.
2. given a set of data, compute the Mean, Mode, Median, Range, Number, Variance, and Standard Deviation with only the assistance of a basic function (including square root) calculator.
3. name the threats to internal validity of a given research study and determine proper "controls" for each threat.
4. name threats to external validity of a given research study.
5. locate journal articles, books, and documents on a specific topic using manual and computer based searches.
6. use the internet as demonstrated through locating information, primarily journal articles and books, on the web.
7. cite references using current edition APA format, and explore the use of bibliographic add-in programs (e.g., EndNote)
8. develop sample research proposals given research questions in qualitative situations. The proposal will attend to researcher subjectivity/objectivity, site selection, sampling, validity, multiple perspective data collection, analysis, pattern-seeking, interpretation, etc.
9. develop sample research proposals given research questions in quantitative situations. The proposal will attend to issues of objectivity, hypothesis development, sampling and generalization, internal and external validity, statistical analysis, interpretation, etc.
10. develop research proposal supporting requirements of relevant masters program when appropriate.
11. evaluate research proposals of fellow students. Evaluations will clearly show differences between qualitative and quantitative paradigms.
12. discuss appropriate situations for the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods.
13. articulate the appropriate procedure for conducting ethnographic research in an educational setting.
14. describe codes of conduct in research and the necessity of seeking or obtaining approval and consent for all research.
15. discuss hallmarks of ethical research, whether conducting or evaluating it.

**Required Text:** *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS*

## EDUU 605 - Democracy, Education and Social Change

### COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*By the end of the course the student should be able to...*

1. Craft personal definitions of democracy, social change, and their relationships.
2. Articulate a position on the relationship of education, democracy and social change.
3. Describe the democratic ramifications of current school issues such as, but not limited to, bilingual education, privatization, standards, sex education, vouchers, testing, tracking, grading practices, and core curriculum.
4. Cite historical and current school reform efforts and the degree of their democratic commitment.
5. Understand the democratic tensions and ethical dilemmas in daily school/ educational practice.
6. Analyze the culture of their home schools or other work environments in terms of the democratic orientations and dilemmas with particular attention paid to race, class, gender and multi ethnic issues. (This objective can met through the “mid-term” Cultural Analysis Paper or through several written reflections throughout the term.)
7. Understand current movement toward democratic schools and design a democratic action plan for implementation in their schools. (This objective is met through the “final paper” the Democratic Action Plan)
8. Assess the status of his or her own democratic personhood.
9. Understand and conduct research (quantitative, qualitative, participatory as appropriate and feasible), related to democratic education.
10. Meet two self-chosen objectives.

**Required Texts:** *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS*

## EDUU 606 – Seminar in Learning Theory

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*By the end of the course the student should be able to:*

1. understand the cognitive, affective and biological basis of human brain function and be able to apply cognitive development and basic causal scientific findings of the brain to education.
2. demonstrate salient principles of learning including the effects of positive and negative prior knowledge.
3. demonstrate knowledge of the major learning and instructional theories.
4. apply learning theories and instructional theories to a variety of educational situations;
5. describe the basic principles of human learning and development including areas germane to pupils with regular as well as special needs;
6. understand theories of motivation and intelligence and their application in the classroom.

**Required Texts: *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS***

## **EDUU 607 - Seminar in Comparative Education**

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*By the end of the course the student should be able to .*

1. Understand the relationship between an educational system and the economic, political and social system it serves;
2. Be able to apply a set of analytical skills appropriate for comparative study;
3. Become aware of a number of other cultures in the world through knowledge gained about their countries and their educational systems;
4. Better understand his/her own nation and educational system through making comparisons with other nations and their educational systems;

**Required Text: *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS***

## **EDUU 608 - Seminar in the Social Foundations of Education**

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*By the end of this course, students should be able to...*

1. Explain, using specific examples, the changing role of public education in American society.
2. Describe at least two major social/cultural problems of 20<sup>th</sup> century America and how these affected the schools.
3. Demonstrate an understanding that the school environment itself constitutes a subculture within the larger society.
4. Describe the subcultures with the school culture.
5. Correctly use simple quantitative and qualitative data-gathering techniques for the exploration of sociological/cultural research questions within an ethnographic methodological approach.
6. Correctly use primary sources for historical research.
7. Correctly apply two or more analytical frameworks to the study of schools.
8. Articulate personal viewpoints on social issues and relate them to individual teaching/learning contexts.

**Required Texts: *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS***

## **EDUU 609 - Seminar in Curriculum Studies and Assessment**

### **COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

*By the end of the course the student should be able to...*

1. Discuss, debate and articulate the purposes of schooling in a democratic society.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of significant past and present curriculum issues and make and communicate contemporary curriculum decisions based upon relevant data and research.
3. Understand the forces impinging upon curriculum decision making, using the influence of diversity to improve teaching and learning.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the standards based curriculum and be able to examine / evaluate different approaches to curriculum planning before teaching, while teaching, and after teaching has occurred.
5. Become aware of recent critiques in curriculum theory in monitoring and evaluating programs and staff.
6. Facilitate constructive conversations about how to improve student learning and achievement with diverse family and community groups.
7. Become aware of the role of assessment in curriculum design, including the use of multiple assessments to evaluate student learning in an ongoing process to improve learning.
8. Supervise the application of effective teaching and learning strategies.
9. Explain the curriculum revision cycle in a standards based, as opposed to framework based, approach, recognizing students as active learners valuing reflection and appropriate technology use.
10. Extend understanding of the purpose and value of the standards.
11. Access high speed internet services and utilize various software programs, including Powerpoint.
12. Utilize technology as a means for establishing and maintaining communication.
13. Confront personal attitudes and beliefs regarding a wide range of biases and to assume a leadership role to insure educational equity.
14. Recognize how their personal attitudes, particularly in regards to gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and socio-economic status may influence the school environment and learn ways to ensure that all students have access to appropriate curriculum and opportunities for success.

**Required Text: *REFER TO COURSE SYLLABUS***

**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**  
**COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**  
**MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION**

**Note:** When preparing for the comprehensive examination please keep in mind that questions asked cover the entire breadth of the six (6) core courses. Some questions will require specific information, while other questions appear to be very broad and general. Both types of questions are to enable the candidate to draw from all of the material read and studied during the MAE experience. **Read** each question carefully before framing a response. **Support** your response with appropriate citations. Make sure you run spell-check, which is available on the computer program. Good responses are well organized, logically presented, supported by evidence (data), and answer the question with depth and insight.

The following questions are representative of the questions that have previously appeared on the comprehensive examination.

**CORE AREA**  
**Sample Questions**

1. Develop an experiment in a school setting which appropriately utilizes each of the following statistics: standard deviation, t-test, and multiple regression. Explain the circumstances under which each statistic would be used within the context of the experiment.
2. Plan solid, well-designed ethnographic study to examine one of the *adult* subcultures that can be found at your school. Describe, in detail, the steps that you would take at each stage of research, from initial conceptualization through implementation to the organization and analysis of data and the presentation of your findings. *Be careful to use only methods that are appropriate for ethnographic study.*
3. Discuss how qualitative/naturalistic research designs and methods differ from traditional experimental/quantitative designs and methods. Clearly distinguish between the two, and include in your response both theoretical and practical differences.
4. You have decided to do a study of the effects on children of the SAT-9/API testing process, and now you have to decide what methodology to use and what data to collect. In part A of your answer describe, step by step, a study using a quasi-experimental design and quantitative data. In part B describe, step by step, a study using a naturalistic methodology and qualitative data. (In order to help you in deciding which method to use, you must explain the differences as clearly as possible).

5. Developing (sometimes referred to as “Third World”) nations face many challenges in providing schooling for their children. Select **one** developing nation that you know about and (a) describe how it is dealing with **one** specific problem or challenge; (b) predict what you feel is the likelihood of success; and (c) give reasons for predicting as you did. Be sure to cite the source(s) of your information.
6. Over the past months much has been written about the many problems involved in rebuilding the educational system in Afghanistan. Assume that you are in a policymaking position there, and that you must identify and prioritize recommendations for the successful restructuring of education in Afghanistan. Respond to the following:
  - a) What are the *most significant* current educational issues there, and why?
  - b) Develop recommendations to address each of these problems, making use of both formal and non-formal delivery systems.
7. Compare and contrast the educational systems of two of the countries listed below.\* Discuss the relationship between the history and social, economic and political traditions of each country as they relate to education.
8. Compare and contrast the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky in some detail, discussing at least three similarities and three clear differences between the two. Then, briefly present the *implications for learning* of each theory.
9. Students today live with an incredible amount of stress and violence on a daily basis. Identify four of the theories you learned about in EDUU 606 and, for each, discuss how applying it in your classroom may accomplish two or more of the following:
  - a) contribute to the reduction of stress both academically and affectively;
  - b) help to build a sense of community;
  - c) help create self-regulating students; and/or
  - d) facilitate self-efficacy in students.
10. You want your classroom/school organization, culture and curriculum to be as progressive and democratic as possible. What obstacles stand in the way of such a goal? Design a specific strategy to overcome these barriers. Be as specific as possible and document your response with appropriate citations.
11. Contrast your view of what the American system of public schooling *should be* with a descriptive view of how it *really is*. Identify two reasons for the gap between the ideal and the real, and propose one possible way in which this gap might be reduced. How feasible is your proposal? Cite material and concepts encountered in your MAE studies as appropriate.

12. Describe one major *social* (not educational) problem in the United States today. Explain how the schools are affected by this problem and, perhaps, how they contribute to the problem. Your answer must go beyond conventional wisdom and clichés, to *critically examine the relationship*. Make wise use of references to material learned in your MAE studies.
13. Define the concept of *hidden curriculum* and describe how it works. Give three (3) clear examples. Briefly explain the societal process.
14. If John Dewey could come back to spend one week visiting typical American public schools today, what *two* things would he be pleased to see? Why? What *two* would disappoint him? Why? In both cases, your answer must reflect in-depth understanding of Dewey's positions.
15. Who were Paulo Friere and John Dewey? Discuss the approach to education (schooling) that each held. What impact did Friere have? What impact did Dewey have? What were their views of culture, reason and dialogue?

## **CONCENTTATION AREAS**

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

#### **Sample Questions**

1. In one or two succinct paragraphs, present your definition of a “back-to-basics” curriculum—what would such a curriculum include? Then, in the remainder of your essay, show how such a curriculum could be taught using *constructivist methods*.
2. Select *any three* of the many conceptual frameworks you learned about in your MAE program, and describe their relevance/applicability for the work you do as a classroom teacher. Be sure to mention the educators who developed the ideas, or whose names are associated with them today. (You may draw from any/all of the six core courses in answering this question.)
3. In our educational system many forces outside the classroom affect the curricular decisions teachers make. *Describe* an outside force that you feel affects your decision-making autonomy as a teacher. *Discuss* the overt and/or covert ways this force affects your curriculum decisions within your classroom. *Indicate* how you might deal with this/these force(s).
4. Choose any *two* of the following terms, and (1) define each, then, (2) explain its significance in terms of curriculum issues:
  - a) differentiation
  - b) proliferation
  - c) fragmentation
  - d) knowledge capital
  - e) unequal access to knowledge
5. “Schools reflect the society in which they are embedded.” Give *two* examples, either historical or contemporary, which show that this statement is true insofar as curriculum and instruction are concerned.
6. Whose knowledge is taught in schools? Support your answer with pertinent examples and appropriate references to materials read and discussed in your MAE program.
7. What children and youth *do* and *do not* have a chance to learn in their formal schooling helps to shape them into the kinds of adults they become. This role of the curriculum deserves more thought. Exactly how does the conventional curriculum of the American school today shape adult Americans? Present and discuss, in some detail, at least three concrete examples.

**CONCENTRATION AREAS**  
Educational Leadership and Administration.  
**Sample Questions**

1. You are a new Assistant Superintendent of Business Services in a medium size district that is facing severe budget cuts due to state and federal funding problems. Also, there are some changes in the allocation of categorical funds. What steps must you take to deal with this serious situation? How will your actions affect curriculum, instruction, personnel? What part will the district vision and mission play in your decisions?
2. In the past decade, State and Federal legislation has had a marked impact upon education. Select one piece of legislation from that period (State or Federal) and:
  - a) Tell what it is;
  - b) Explain the rationale for it; and
  - c) Describe its practical impact upon schooling.
3. Describe what you believe to be one of the best methods of supervision of instruction. Tell why you selected this over other methods; cite specific reasons. Name at least one theorist who would agree with you. Describe the process as you would use it with one of your strongest teachers and with one your weakest.
4. You have just been hired in a district that is new to you. As a first-time principal, you realize that you will be facing some difficult challenges. The demographics have changed drastically during the past five years with a large ethnic minority population moving into the district. You are replacing a principal who has retired after many years at this school and who chose not to deal with the demographic changes. Explain what this means to you in terms of priorities and in dealing with the various constituencies. What steps will you take now and in the future? What authors have affected your thinking?
5. What is your philosophy of educational leadership? Name two main ideas or beliefs within that philosophy and connect each of the following.
  - a) Authors, theorists or readings that have had an impact on you.
  - b) How those beliefs fit into today's political climate, including legislation about performance and assessment.
  - c) The importance of technology as demonstrated by yourself and others.
6. Frequently, organizations such as schools function ineffectively because there is a poor match between individual goals and the goals of the organization. Describe a real example of this in a school or school district and tell how a principal or superintendent could use knowledge of organizational development to deal with such a problem. Be sure to include a discussion of the concept of personal and organizational effectiveness.