

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM STUDY GUIDE

Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education

Elementary Education Master's and Educational Specialist Degrees

As you prepare for the Comprehensive Examination, please be aware of the following:

1. You must have completed all required courses on your program of study in order to qualify to take the Comprehensive Examination.
2. You will be allowed 2 hours to complete each of four questions from the areas of curriculum & instruction, assessment, research and diversity. Within each of those areas, one content area out of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies must be addressed. You may or may not have a choice in this.
3. You are expected to cite professional literature within each question's response, which should be predominantly empirical research that supports each of your responses (Master's – at least 3 citations; Specialist Degree – at least 4 citations)). In addition to this, you should also be able to cite relevant legislation, standards of professional organizations, and other texts that support your claims. Each response is expected to include multiple types of citations. You should be able to refer to the names of multiple researchers and authors whose ideas you are citing within each response.
4. Do not plagiarize any information within your four responses. Plagiarism results in an automatic fail.
5. You should monitor your time for each responses so that you allow yourself time to edit your response before submitting it as your "final response". Correct grammar and sentence construction are expected and assessed.
6. Do not use the same content and citations to answer more than one questions. Demonstrate the breadth of your understanding of each content area and each question area by using different concepts, sources and examples for each question.
7. In preparing for the comprehensive examination, you should study empirical research in each of the four main content areas as well as other literature in the four broad question areas. All of this should come from the required courses that you completed as part of your program of study. You should seek to be able to synthesize what you've learned across all course work within the four broad question areas for each content area. It is not necessary to obtain resources beyond that which were presented during your coursework unless there is an area for which you feel you need additional resources.

8. In terms of the 4 broad question areas, consider the following subtopics within the context of each of the 4 content areas:
- a. Curriculum & Instruction
 - i. Content specific standards; Current legislation and its impact on the content areas; current state policies concerning instruction (e.g. Response to Intervention, minimum instructional time)
 - ii. Typical U.S. public school curricular patterns
 - iii. Content specific professional organizations
 - iv. Influences on curricula
 - v. Planning for instruction in each of the content areas
 - vi. Effective instructional practices for each of the content areas
 - vii. Reflection as a tool for professional growth
 - b. Diversity
 - i. Issues of gender, socialization and culture, race, socioeconomic status, and schooling specific to each of the content areas
 - 1. Within curriculum and program planning
 - 2. In terms of family involvement in school
 - 3. With respect to adapting and differentiating instruction for diverse learners
 - ii. Issues of differences in achievement in each of the content areas
 - c. Assessment
 - i. Components of effective assessment programs for each of the content areas
 - ii. Assessment measures and tools in each of the content areas
 - iii. Types of assessments used in each of the content areas; purposes of each type and the audiences of each type
 - d. Research
 - i. Types of research and the purposes of each with appropriate examples from each of the content areas
 - ii. Major steps in conducting a study
 - iii. Research methods and the purposes of each with appropriate examples from each of the content areas
 - iv. Critically reviewing published research with examples from each of the content areas
 - v. Types of data collection instruments and the limitations of each with appropriate examples from each of the content areas
 - vi. Validity and Reliability
 - vii. Data Analysis with appropriate examples from each of the content areas