

Comprehensive Examination Study Packet **MAEd in English as a Second Language**

General Information

MA-ESL candidates take comprehensive exams during their final semester of coursework, often corresponding with internship or practicum. The comprehensive exam process consists of two 3-hour sessions. Both sessions take place on the UAB campus in a computer lab. The exam is on Canvas. In order to participate, candidates are invited to join the Comps Canvas shell.

Testing Schedule

Comprehensive exams are offered each semester; the first session is usually in late September or early October (fall), mid-February (spring), and mid-June (summer). The second session for each semester is 3-4 weeks after the first session. Specific times, dates, and locations are announced 4-5 weeks prior to the initial examination date. The second session is an opportunity to rewrite one or more responses to the comprehensive exam questions.

Session I

Preparation. Exam questions are provided in this study guide. However, candidates are advised to review materials from all courses in the MA-ESL program. Depending on learning preferences, candidates may choose to study alone or with a group.

Exam Format. Candidates are expected to write 3 fully developed scholarly essays during the 3-hour exam session. ESL comprehensive exams consist of 3 categories: 1) Second Language Acquisition, 2) Methods, 3) Linguistics – Grammar, Phonology and Discourse Analysis. This study guide includes potential exam questions for each test category. One of these questions will be the exam question on Canvas.

Test Instructions. Canvas will randomly select one question from each of the three categories. Be sure to answer ALL 3 questions before submitting your quiz. To submit your response, you must either type directly into the text box OR copy and paste your response from a word document. Scoring is on a pass/fail basis. Therefore, “1” equals pass; “0” equals rewrite. Please check the comment section for feedback. The test is password protected. The password will be distributed at the time of the test.

Testing Environment. Located on UAB’s campus, in a SOE computer lab, candidates will respond to exam questions on a UAB desktop computer. The exam is delivered through the Canvas learning system. ESL faculty will proctor the exam. Formatting instructions are provided at the time of the test. Candidates may bring personal items, such as a sweater, water, gum, and a watch or clock. Cell phones, iPads, laptops, and other personal electronic devices must be on silent and stowed securely away after the candidate enters the SOE computer lab. During the exam, one candidate at a time may leave the room to use the restroom.

Academic Expectations. ESL faculty evaluate each response according to the candidate’s ability to demonstrate 1) accurate and relevant information; 2) a solid conceptual understanding of scholarly

work; 3) pedagogically sound applications of these ideas into the classroom context. At least half of all MA/ESL candidates rewrite at least one question.

Session II

Preparation. Candidates who need to rewrite one or more responses will meet one-on-one with an ESL faculty member to discuss the essay from session I in relation to meeting academic expectations.

Exam Format. The format remains the same, except that candidates may use the full 3-hour time period in session II for their response(s).

Testing Environment and Academic Expectations remain the same.

MA-ESL Comprehensive Exam Categories

This study guide provides 3 questions for SLA and for Methods. Linguistics has 4 questions. Methods questions for K12 and International Tracks will vary. The exam will have 1 of these questions from each category. Exam questions are based on the major topics listed below. Enhance test preparation by reviewing these major themes.

Category 1: Second Language Acquisition

- Theories of second language acquisition
- Principles of second language acquisition
- Factors influencing second language acquisition
- Role of culture in second language acquisition
- Misconceptions of learning a new or additional language

Exam questions are designed so that candidates do the following:

- Select a certain number of theories (principles, factors, myths, or cultural traits) from a given list.
- Describe this theory (etc.), provide detailed examples, and explain how it affects SLA.
- Identify researchers and theorists who have proposed theories and/or provided insights.
- Explain how the schooling environment can support language learning in this regard.

Courses related to Category 1: EESL 610 and either EESL 613 or EESL 617 (*and also EEC 674 for K-12*)

Category 2: Methods (K-12 & International Tracks)

- Effective methods, techniques, strategies, scaffolding, accommodations, and best practices for teaching the 4 language domains to ELs through different content areas (language arts, social studies, math and science as well as the arts), with a special emphasis on strategies for teaching English through reading and writing. (K-12 & International)
- The five components of sheltered instruction with specific examples from each component as applied to a sample lesson (K12).
- The appropriateness and effectiveness of traditional and alternative assessments that are used and can be used for determining EL's language proficiency and placement in programs and for

determining progress in new language acquisition and achievement in content areas.
(International)

- The types of programs available for Adult ELs and the rationale and context for each (only for candidates in the International Track, i.e., for Adult ELs)

Candidates will be asked to describe, explain and provide examples related to the given question.

Candidates will usually also be asked to provide a context for their response by identifying a specific teaching situation (e.g., 7th grade Math for K-12 candidates or EAP for Adult EL candidates).

Courses related to Category 2: Traditional/Alternative Tracks (K-12): 620, 630, 640, 688, 689, 690

International Track (Teaching adults): 627, 637, 647, 657, 687, 697

Category 3: Linguistics—Grammar, Phonology, and Discourse Analysis

- Basic nature of language, language variation, language change, and the relations of language to society/culture, and how these aspects lead to differences in language varieties and language usage as determined by and related to age, gender, occupation, socioeconomic status, and region.
- Structure of the English language from a descriptive perspective with respect to its morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, lexicon, and phonology.
- Analysis of grammatical structures within the following three dimensions: (1) as a morphosyntactic form (2) to express meaning (3) for appropriate use within a specific context. [Form = morphology and syntax; Meaning = semantics; Use=pragmatics].
- Analysis of ELs' spoken discourse patterns with respect to phonological features (segmental and suprasegmental), recognition of areas of potential influences from the first language, and techniques for helping ELs to overcome the corresponding pronunciation difficulties.
- Application of linguistics for helping ELs acquire the phonological and morphosyntactic systems of English, and the use of *grammaring* as a means for meeting the language objectives of a sheltered lesson.

Courses related to Category 3: EESL 615 (See syllabus: Final exam) and EESL 625 (Notebook Sec.7: Mid-term)

EXAM QUESTIONS

Category 1: Second Language Acquisition (K -12)

SLA Question 1A K12

When teaching English learners in the K – 12 context, there are many factors to consider in order to promote student achievement. Each of the three topics listed below are essential to an English learner’s success in a U.S. public school.

- Academic language proficiency
- The connection between language learning and culture
- Individual factors that influence language learning, particularly: home language, previous schooling in L1, and age upon entering U.S. schools

Using relevant research and theorists, address these four points for each topic:

- Define the concept and the issues or difficulties that ELs may experience around this concept;
- Explain the significance of the topic to Second Language Acquisition;
- Describe its importance to the teaching and learning environment in formal schooling;
- Offer suggestions or strategies for supporting English learners (and their families) for each topic.

You may choose any order, but address each topic and answer fully before addressing the next topic.

SLA Question 1B K12

Three weeks ago, Ana Magdalena arrived to your school from Guatemala. As an 8 year-old, she has been placed in 3rd grade. Her family marked Spanish as the home language, so she was given the English proficiency test and scored as an ELP 1. Her teacher assigned Ana Magdalena a Spanish-speaking buddy to help her during the day. Ana Magdalena follows her buddy, Isabela, through the day, but doesn’t seem to be settling in very well or making friends. Ana Magdalena mostly looks out the window, and doesn’t talk with Isabela very much in Spanish or English. In order to learn more about what Ana Magdalena already knows, her teacher, Mrs. Lawrence, asked Ana Magdalena to read a book at second grade reading level that is written in Spanish. Ana was able to read most of the book aloud with halting fluency. Mrs. Lawrence has never had a student who speaks no English in her classroom. She is concerned and comes to you, the ESL Specialist, for advice to help Ana Magdalena feel more comfortable in her new classroom and to find ways for Ana Magdalena to gain access to the curriculum in order to meet academic standards set up by Common Core.

Your task is to share with Mrs. Lawrence your knowledge of Second Language Acquisition and culture in order to explain possible reasons for Ana Magdalena’s behavior, as well as to offer learning strategies (based on the principles of SLA) that support Ana Magdalena’s learning process of English and 3rd grade content knowledge. What is missing in the diagnostic process? When explaining to Mrs. Lawrence about SLA, be sure to name the theory and explain how it works in general as well as how it applies specifically to Ana Magdalena.

SLA Question 1C K12

Several key principles of second language acquisition (SLA) are listed below.

- Language learning occurs through meaningful use and interaction.
- Language processes (skills = listening, speaking, reading, writing) develop together.
- Native language proficiency contributes to second language learning.
- Language learning can be supported by language learning strategies.

From this list, **select 3 principles**.

For each of these 3 principles, do the following:

- Explain each principle.
- Identify scholars from the research literature and explain their arguments for this principle.
- Describe how you would honor this specific principle when teaching in your classroom.

After you have finished responding to the above for the first principle, then begin your response for the second principle. Keep repeating this process until you have discussed 3 of these principles.

Category 1: Second Language Acquisition (MATESOL)

SLA Question 1A TESOL

Drawing from research of relevant theorists to support your response, discuss in full the social, cultural, and pragmatic implications of what it means to communicate in an additional language, particularly for adult or older adolescent learners. You may frame your response with the context of EIL (English as an international language), ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), or ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). To guide your response, consider the following questions:

- How has globalization influenced English language learning?
- How do sociocultural factors affect English language learning?
- How does the concept of communicative competence relate to English language learning?
- Could learning styles be affected by culture? If so how?

Within the context you have chosen (EIL, ELF, ESOL), the second part of your response should include practical applications for addressing issues surrounding culture and language learning for adult learners.

SLA Question 1B TESOL

SLA Scholars have established the importance of learner variability in the language learning process. Learner variability includes both individual differences and affective factors, which are divided into the following categories:

Individual differences: 1) Learning Styles; 2) Learning Strategies

Affective Factors: 1) Affective Domain; 2) Personality Type; 3) Motivation

Selecting at least one from Individual differences and affective factors, choose 3 (of the 5) categories and explain fully the importance of learner variability in SLA, by doing the following:

- Describe in detail all components of the category (individual difference or affective factor)
- Explain the significance of this category on SLA.
- Identify researchers, theorists, and scholars who have proposed theories and/or provided insights. Cite their work to support your explanation of the category.

- Based on your explanation of this category, indicate what can be done in the formal educational context to support the English learner’s language learning process.

After you have finished responding to the above for the first category, then begin your response for the second factor. Keep repeating this process until you have discussed 3 categories (learning styles, learning strategies, affective domain, personality type and motivation).

SLA Question 1C TESOL

Several key principles of second language acquisition (SLA) are listed below.

- Language learning occurs through meaningful use and interaction.
- Language processes (skills = listening, speaking, reading, writing) develop together.
- Native language proficiency contributes to second language learning.
- Language learning can be supported by language learning strategies.

From this list, **select 3 principles.**

For each of these 3 principles, do the following:

- Explain the principle.
- Identify scholars from the research literature and explain their arguments for this principle.
- Describe how you would honor this specific principle when teaching in your classroom.

After you have finished responding to the above for the first principle, then begin your response for the second principle. Keep repeating this process until you have discussed 3 of these principles.

Category 2: Methods (K-12)

Methods Question 2A K-12

EBs/ELs of all ages make greater progress when they participate in content classes in which teachers make appropriate accommodations based on Best Practices in ESOL. Listed below are several Best Practices that should be implemented for helping EBs/ELs experience academic and linguistic success:

- Comprehensible Input
- Output Support
- Integration of all 4 Language Domains
- Language and Content Objectives
- Authentic Assessment
- Key vocabulary emphasized/reviewed
- Varied grouping configurations
- Support in home language

From the above list, **select 4 Best Practices.** For each selected practice, do the following:

- Describe the Best Practice.
 - **(K-12)** In your discussion, indicate a grade level and subject area (e.g., 2nd grade mathematics, 5th grade science, 8th grade language arts, 10th grade social studies, etc.).

- Explain and provide examples on how this Best Practice can best be implemented for the targeted group of ELs within this specific context.
- After you have finished responding to the above for the first Best Practice, then begin your response for the second one. Keep repeating this process until you have discussed 4 of these Best Practices.

Methods Question 2B K-12

Using strategies for reading has been shown to assist EBs/ELs in their ability to comprehend what they read, and to resolve and remediate problems they may face in their interactions with texts.

First, discuss how instructional strategies for reading help students learning English to better comprehend what they read.

Then, present one strategy from each phase of reading (before reading/pre-reading, during reading, and after reading/post-reading) and address the following areas:

- Describe the specific strategy
- Explain the purpose of the reading strategy you select
- Give the grade level and subject for using this strategy
- Provide a specific example of how you would use this strategy in the classroom

After you have finished responding to the above for the before reading/pre-reading strategy, then complete your response for the selected during reading strategy, and finally for the selected after reading/post-reading strategy.

Methods Question 2C K-12

Sheltering content instruction has been shown to increase success for EB/ELs.

First, discuss how sheltered instruction helps EB/EL students to be more successful in learning content and language.

Then, present one sheltering technique from each of the five components of sheltered instruction (1) guarded vocabulary (2) hands on materials (3) visuals (4) cooperative learning and (5) scaffolding. For each component select one sheltering technique that represents that component and address the following areas:

- Describe the specific technique
- Explain how this technique aligns with the sheltered instruction component
- Explain the purpose of the technique you select
- Give the grade level and subject for using this technique
- Provide a specific example of how you would use this technique in the classroom

After you have finished responding to the above points for the guarded vocabulary technique, then complete your response for the selected technique for hands-on materials. Continue repeating this process until you have presented a technique for all 5 sheltered lesson components addressing the points above.

Category 2: Methods (MATESOL)

Methods Question 2A TESOL

EBs/ELs of all ages make greater progress when they participate in content classes in which teachers make appropriate accommodations based on Best Practices in ESOL. Listed below are several Best Practices that should be implemented for helping EBs/ELs experience academic and linguistic success:

- Comprehensible Input
- Output Support
- Integration of all 4 Language Domains
- Language and Content Objectives
- Authentic Assessment
- Key vocabulary emphasized/reviewed
- Varied grouping configurations
- Support in home language

From the above list, **select 4 Best Practices**. For each selected practice, do the following:

- Describe the Best Practice.
 - o **For adult ELs**, indicate a specific type of program (EAP, EOP, ELF, ESP, IEP, etc.).
- Explain and provide examples on how this Best Practice can best be implemented for the targeted group of ELs within this specific context.
- After you have finished responding to the above for the first Best Practice, then begin your response for the second one. Keep repeating this process until you have discussed 4 of these Best Practices.

Methods Question 2B TESOL

“The Communicative Approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Explain in full what it means to use the Communicative Approach with older adolescents or adult learners. Consider the following to guide your response:

- Theory of language
- Theory of learning

- Types of teaching and learning activities
- Role of the teacher
- Role of the learner

- Role of instructional materials

In other words, describe a teaching and learning environment (language classroom setting) from the perspective of the Communicative Approach. Frame your answer in one of the following settings: 1) adult/community; 2) workplace; 3) college or university; 4) intensive English; 5) English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

Once you have fully discussed the Communicative Approach, consider how you would integrate historical methods or approaches into your teaching. Name each method and describe how these older methods could be useful to your English learners.

Methods Question 2C TESOL

Choose a teaching and learning context (i.e., adult/community, workplace, college or university, intensive English, or English as Lingua Franca). Drawing from relevant research, describe the expectations and limitations of that context, and discuss in full the impact that lesson planning has on the teaching and learning environment.

Consider the following to guide your discussion on this topic:

- The needs of the learner
- Nesting the lesson within the unit within the course
- Determining learning goals
- Determining student mastery of the learning goal
- Distinguish between formative and summative assessments. What are their relationships to the learning goals?
- The importance of integrating the four language domains into lesson planning
- The importance of relevant materials and/or technology

Category 3: Linguistics—Grammar, Phonology, and Discourse Analysis (K-12 & MATESOL)

Linguistics Question 3A

Many English language learners experience difficulties distinguishing, in both perception and production, between the English phonemes in each of the following pairs:

- 1) Mid Front Vowels /eɪ/ /ɛ/
- 2) Alveolar Fricatives /s/ /z/
- 3) Interdental Fricatives /θ/ /ð/

From this list, **select one pair of phonemes** (either 1 or 2 or 3) and respond to each of the following:

- For each phoneme in the pair that you selected, do the following (NOTE: this is best illustrated in a table):
 - > List its allophone(s), and, for each allophone, provide its . . .
 - phonetic symbol, descriptors (i.e., articulatory features), phonological environments, and examples of words (written in conventional spelling) for each environment.
- Identify the main articulatory difference(s) between these 2 phonemes and explain why this may be a source of difficulty for some ELLs.
- Describe the potential difficulties that ELLs may experience based on negative transfer from L1. This should include possible differences in articulation as well as in phonological structure such as: the preferred syllable structure of many L1s (in a discussion of consonants) OR the common 5-vowel triangle of many L1s (in a discussion of vowels).
- Explain what you can do as a teacher to help your students overcome these difficulties. Be sure to include general instructional recommendations as well as ones that are specific to the selected pair of phonemes.

NOTE: If you wish, you may concentrate on a specific L1, such as Spanish or another L1.

Linguistics Question 3B

Many English language learners experience difficulties distinguishing, in both perception and production, between the English phonemes in each of the following pairs:

- A) /iy/ /I/
- B) /b/ /v/
- C) /r/ /l/

From this list, **select one pair of phonemes** (either A or B or C) and respond to each of the following:

- For each phoneme in the pair that you selected, do the following (NOTE: this is best illustrated in a table):
 - > List its allophone(s), and, for each allophone, provide its . . .
 - phonetic symbol, descriptors (i.e., articulatory features), phonological environments, and examples of words (written in conventional spelling) for each environment.

- Identify the main articulatory difference(s) between these 2 phonemes and explain why this may be a source of difficulty for some ELLs.
- Describe the potential difficulties that ELLs may experience based on negative transfer from L1. This should include possible differences in articulation as well as in phonological structure such as: the preferred syllable structure of many L1s (in a discussion of consonants)
OR the common 5-vowel triangle of many L1s (in a discussion of vowels).
- Explain what you can do as a teacher to help your students overcome these difficulties. Be sure to include general instructional recommendations as well as ones that are specific to the selected pair of phonemes.

NOTE: If you wish, you may concentrate on a specific L1, such as Spanish or another L1.

Linguistics Question 3C

Teachers are always looking for more effective ways to teach grammar to their ELLs and mainstream students. Explain how teachers can be more successful in reaching this goal by basing their teaching on the following concepts:

- Descriptive perspective of language as opposed to prescriptive perspective of language,
- 3 dimensions of grammar (form, meaning, and use), and
- *grammaring* (i.e., using grammar as opposed to learning about grammar).

For each of the above concepts, do the following:

Citing scholarly work, define what the concept means, followed by an example;

Describe how this concept supports teachers in designing their classes; and

Explain how teachers can apply this concept when guiding EBs/ELs to use grammar appropriately.

After completing the above, select a specific grammatical structure (such as had been presented in one of the mini-lessons) and describe class activities (based on these three concepts) that can be used to help ELLs in learning to use this grammatical structure accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately while meeting the language objective for a sheltered lesson. For this specific lesson, you should also identify a specific **grade level and subject area** for K-12 learners (e.g., 2nd grade mathematics, 5th grade science, 8th grade language arts, 10th grade social studies, or any other grade/subject combination) or else a **specific type of program for adult learners** (EAP, EOP, EFL, ESP, intensive, etc.).

Linguistics Question 3D

Citing scholarly work, explain the concepts of standard and nonstandard language varieties, the reasons for their existence, as well as their respective functions, and appropriate use. Illustrate your explanation with descriptions of how language use is influenced by the following factors:

Age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, socio-economic status, and region

Once you have thoroughly explained the concepts of standard and nonstandard language varieties, discuss the importance of speech communities and the ways that language and identity are connected. Discuss the significance of multilingualism.

Finally, to apply these concepts in the (ESL/ EIL) classroom, discuss the significance of the following:

- EBs/ELs who learn (or don't learn) a standard language variety as well as a specific region's peer-appropriate variety.
- The importance of maintaining the home language/L1.
- The responsibility (if any) that the teacher has to recognize and validate non-standard dialects of English or languages other than English in the classroom.

Guidelines for Writing Essay Questions

<u>Format</u>	<u>Content</u>
<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>There is an introductory paragraph to the entire essay (even though the student may be responding to a selection of seemingly separate topics such as laws or court cases).</p> <p>This paragraph usually contains only 3 or 4 sentences but yet refers briefly to all parts of the question.</p> <p>The introduction's final sentence usually lists the choices from the question that the student has selected to cover in this essay.</p>	<p>Respond to each part of question</p> <p>Describe several aspects in response to the question (but do not just list everything you know and expect the reader to select what fits to the question and what doesn't fit.)</p> <p>Explain several applications to classroom for teaching ELs</p> <p>Demonstrate a good understanding of content.</p>
<p>BODY</p> <p>The body contains from 3 to 6 paragraphs.</p> <p>Each paragraph has a main idea and supporting details.</p> <p>The paragraphs and sentences are well-structured and demonstrate a command of academic English.</p>	<p>Know which theorists proposed which theories.</p> <p>Provide correct information</p> <p>Use technical vocabulary appropriately.</p> <p>Present information in an organized manner</p>
<p>CONCLUSION</p> <p>There is a concluding paragraph to the entire essay</p> <p>This paragraph usually contains only 3 or 4 sentences but yet refers briefly to all parts of the question.</p> <p><i>The conclusion is often just an inverted introduction.</i></p>	