MA-TESL Comprehensive Exam for August 19, 2014

Instructions for test-takers: This is a "closed book" exam. Thus, you may not use any reference materials while responding; you may not consult notes, books, and/or articles during the examination. If you are writing the examination on the computer, you may not access any additional files or documents that may reside on the computer hard drive or be available through a network, the Internet or any other external website or device, or in your own email.

There are five (5) sections on the test. You must complete **three (3)** of them.
- All MA-TESL students <u>must</u> take the ESL Foundations and Methods section. MA-TESL students will then **choose two (2)** of the remaining four sections (ESL Curriculum and Program Administration; Second Language Acquisition; Grammar; and Sociolinguistics).
- PhD students taking the test for screening purposes can answer questions in **any three (3)** sections, but you <u>cannot</u> choose both (a) ESL Foundations and Methods and (b) ESL Curriculum and Program Administration.

You will have **four hours and fifteen minutes** to complete this test. This period <u>includes</u> printing time and any breaks you need to take. You should plan to spend approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes on each section you answer. Each section has two questions, and you must answer <u>both</u> questions. Thus, you should spend approximately 40 minutes per question. Budget your time so that you can quickly review your responses.

Your answers to the questions should be well written, and synthesize relevant knowledge in a coherent and insightful manner. You should include references to specific sources and studies, including current scholarship. We recognize that this test requires rapid written responses, yet you should strive to write as clearly and effectively as possible.

- Begin your answer to <u>each question</u> on a <u>new sheet of paper.</u>
- Write the <u>last four (4) digits</u> of your university ID number in the upper right hand corner of each page. (DO NOT write your name on the exam responses.)
- <u>Number your pages.</u>
- <u>Print</u> your responses as you <u>finish each section</u>. Do not wait until you have completed the entire test to begin to print your responses.

Section I: Foundations and Methods (2 questions, answer both)

1. The following concepts are important in understanding English as a second/foreign language learning and teaching:
(1)   Corrective Feedback
(2)   Motivation
(3)   Learning Styles
(4)   Communicative Competence
(5)   Critical Period Hypothesis
(6)   Zone of Proximal Development
(7)   Aptitude

Select three (3) of these terms. For each one, (a) define it to show its breath and complexity; (b) explain its significance for language learning in general; and (c) discuss how such concepts can be incorporated into teaching of English as a second/foreign language. Include concrete examples to illustrate your points. Refer to relevant literature as appropriate. Be sure to include (i) a brief introduction that tells your reader which three terms you plan to discuss and (ii) a brief conclusion to provide some closure to your response.

2. Choose a setting for second/foreign language instruction and very briefly describe the location, institution, students, and their proficiency levels. Assume that you have been called in to develop a language-teaching curriculum oriented around the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). In this context of your choice, focus on any two (2) skills and provide the following for EACH of the two skills you chose:

•   a discussion of the complex nature of the targeted skill, and
•   detailed explanations and examples of how instruction would be carried out effectively.

Refer to relevant literature as appropriate. Be sure to include an introduction and conclusion to structure your response.

Section II: Grammar (2 questions, answer both)

1. List the grammatical devices used to modify noun phrases in English, and describe the structural characteristics of each different type of noun modifiers. Provide examples from the following *Time* magazine article.

       At week's end the Mardoqueo Cruz urban-guerrilla commandos took responsibility for the shooting. The little-known group is a wing of the Central American Revolutionary Workers' Party. The party in turn is the smallest of five rebel factions in the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (F.M.L.N.), the 10,000-member guerrilla group that is fighting the U.S.-backed government of Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte.
       In a message delivered to a French news agency, the Mardoqueo Cruz claimed that the raid was part of an operation that it called "Yankee Aggressor in El Salvador: Another Viet Nam Awaits You." The message hinted at further strikes against U.S. military personnel, CIA agents and their allies. The rebels said that they had aimed their "revolutionary rifles" in the Zona Rosa only at U.S. military personnel and their companions. They claimed that the other casualties in the restaurants were the result of patrons returning the gunfire. The night before the Mardoqueo Cruz stepped forward, the F.M.L.N.'s clandestine radio station broadcast the claim that U.S. military involvement in El Salvador had caused the killings.

2. Analyze the following sentences, using the diagramming system that you are most familiar with. In your diagrams, label the forms, grammatical functions, and word classes of all words and constituents in each sentence.

1. I really wish I would have said more because it was so awful watching that.
2. A future advisor may recommend that a user diversify into an international fund, or give advice on how to open a Roth IRA fund.
3. I think that the organizing principle here is to take out the brainiacs and super suits and just kind of tell human stories.
4. Evaluative comments tell about what is going on in the minds of the characters.

Section III: Sociolinguistics (2 questions, answer both)

1. Read the transcript below from four friends in a restaurant. Then (a) identify at least four (4) linguistic and interactional features associated with the register represented, face to face conversation; (b) Explain the functional motivation for use of each of these four (4) features; and (c) comment briefly on how and why these four (4) features differ from, for example, features found in academic writing.

Ayesha:	This bread is awesome. You know what the honey thing is?
Nadia:	What were you just saying—the bread's good.
Ayesha:	Oh I was saying you know Tuscan bread would never go down here. No one would ever like it. Probably cause it's got no salt in it.
Nadia:	Yeah and cause it's warm.
Ayesha:	But I am—I'm totally stuck on it. Hi Lise.
Nadia:	There's different kinds of bread.
Lise:	Oh god, the bread is awesome.
Ayesha:	<laugh>
Lise:	So are you going to go home today, or –
Ayesha:	Yeah I have to.
Lise:	Why?
Nadia:	Go tomorrow Ayesha.
Lise:	God I hate you for that.
Ayesha:	Well I guess you keep – oh we're ordering it now?
Marcus:	I don't know, but do you want anything to drink?
Ayesha:	No, that's good enough.

2. A colleague in the institution where you have just been hired asks you what 'sociolinguistics' means and why you had to take a related course as part of a master's degree. Explain what sociolinguistics is to your colleague. Refer to three specific subareas of sociolinguistics and summarize related empirical investigations to show how sociolinguistic research is related to the teaching of oral language and/or literacy development in a first or second language.

Section IV: Curriculum and Program Administration (2 questions, answer both)

1. The course- and curriculum-development process has been described by many in the field. It is common to see descriptions of the following stages in the process:

*   Analyses of the environment/situation and learner needs
*   Determination of principles that guide course/curriculum planning
*   Specification of goals, objectives, content, and sequencing
*   Plans for monitoring and assessment
*   Plans for course/curriculum evaluation

Choose THREE of these stages and explain **each** in detail, identifying (a) its purpose, (b) the steps that need to be taken by course/curriculum developers, (c) decisions that developers might need to make, (d) the challenges that might be faced by developers, and (e) its relationship with the larger course/curriculum development process. Be sure to elaborate with details and refer to relevant literature, when appropriate, to strengthen your response. Frame your response with a brief introduction and conclusion.

2. ESL/EFL teachers sometimes are hired for positions that have both teaching and administrative responsibilities. Imagine that you have such a position. As part of your administrative duties, you'll be chairing two important committees: the textbook-selection committee and faculty professional-development committee. As part of your administrative responsibilities, with both committees, you anticipate engaging in some of these typical administrative activities:

*   Planning and running committee meetings
*   Delegating responsibilities
*   Inspiring innovation among committee members
*   Empowering committee members
*   Making decisions and negotiating
*   Managing your time (and the time of the committees)

Choose FOUR administrative activities, from the bulleted list above. For **each** activity, explain (a) its importance from an administrative and program-wide perspective, (b) the challenges that you anticipate, and (c) possible actions that you can take to turn the administrative challenges into positive opportunities for program and faculty growth. Make reference to the literature to support your ideas. Frame your response with a brief introduction and conclusion.

Section V: Second Language Acquisition (2 questions, answer both)

1. A great deal of SLA research has sought to describe interlanguage and development of grammatical features such as question formation, relative clauses, negation, and tense/aspect. In your response, answer the following four (4) questions: (a) What is interlanguage? (b) Why are researchers interested in development of particular linguistic features? (c) How has knowledge of TWO morphosyntactic features been operationalized and measured? And (d) What challenges do researchers face when attempting to measure and interpret results? Cite relevant studies to support your answers.

2. A number of individual differences (IDs) have been studied in SLA. Choose and identify two (2), and then address the three (3) points below for each:

(a) describe the theoretical rationale(s) that justify its connection to second language learning along with the predictions of theory;
(b) explain what empirical research has shown with respect to the predictions of theory; and
(c) discuss its pedagogical implications based on theory and empirical research.