MA-TESL Comprehensive Exam for January 12, 2016

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. Numerous concepts are important in understanding English as a second/foreign language learning and teaching, including:

    (1) Learning Strategies
    (2) Motivation
    (3) Learning Styles
    (4) Communicative Competence
    (5) Critical Period Hypothesis
    (6) Zone of Proximal Development
    (7) Noticing

Select THREE 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. Nowadays, teachers have access to new instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, Web sites, CDs) and new technologies (e.g., video, software, podcasts, email) that can be used to enhance their teaching of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). Assume that you have been hired to develop a state-of-the-art course that focuses on two skills. In a short introductory paragraph, briefly identify the two skills of your choice and describe the instructional setting (i.e., ESL/EFL, age of learners, learner's proficiency levels, and major goals and objectives).

Then identify the range of materials and/or technologies that you will use to promote student improvement in the two target skills. Provide a rationale for your selections and the ways in which each type of material and/or technology will be used to accomplish your goals and objectives for each skill area. In your discussion of each skill, make clear the complex nature of the skill and how a pre-, during-, and post-instructional format can assist students in mastering the skill. Identify the limitations of the materials and/or technologies and provide concrete examples of teacher-generated activities that you are likely to create to make up for the identified shortcomings. Cite relevant literature, where appropriate, to strengthen your claims.

Section II: Grammar (2 questions, answer both)

1. 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.

a) Another good movie to see is that one that Bob told us about.
b) I don't know if you remember why he did a whole class period on pattern variables.
c) And what I'm trying to do is to outline a model of language use by identifying the basic constructs.
d) But I don't think we would want to make it sound scientific.

2. Read through the following texts from conversation and an academic article, and answer (a) and (b) below:

a) Give an example of each of the following from these texts:

that-clause as the direct object
that-clause with the complementizer *that* omitted
that-clause as an adjective complement
to-clause as the subject
to-clause as the direct object
to-clause as the subject predicative
bare infinitive clause
WH-clause as the direct object
extraposed *to*-clause
object-to-subject raising

b) These two texts use several grammatical constructions that could have been expressed with an alternative structure and an alternative word order. Identify five different grammatical constructions of this type. For each one, provide specific examples from the text excerpts, and discuss why this grammatical variant was chosen in the text rather than other alternative grammatical structures.

Conversation:
A: Tell Kevin that we want him to play with us on the softball team.
B: You know what they did? They said they took the truly recreational teams and put them together.
A: Is that us?
B: Yeah.
A: Well tomorrow I'm gonna pick up the schedule and we'll know then. Maybe it will be Monday. B: Yeah Monday would be better all around.
A: I can try to call this guy back and say we would really like to be scheduled Monday.
B: Well should I do that?
A: Yeah.
[Later in the conversation -- discussing work-related tasks]
A: I'm gonna give you two other jobs.
B: Okay.
A: I want you to be aware that we have grad study booklets back here, and there's some other things I can help you excavate.
B: Okay so how many do you want to have?
A: I think a hundred would be plenty.

Academic prose:
The effect of economic growth in an area is to expand the gross generation of wastes. This is a reasonable simplistic assumption. To assume that a 50% increase in the economic status of a particular industrial area will result in a 5% increase in production is a reasonable estimate.

As was pointed out in a recent study by the Office of Technology Assessment, it is impossible to estimate the precise levels of reduction that will take place in all basic industries. If it is at all reasonable to make quantitative estimates for future waste reductions, it must be done in a very rough way.

If it is difficult to estimate the net waste production for a particular waste within an industrial group, it is even more difficult to estimate the future available capacity for waste management. Few facility owners really want to close their facilities, but rather will try to expand, enlarge, or renew them as long as they can. The opening of new facilities is difficult to estimate, since it involves the capabilities and interests of the waste management industry.

In the United States, Federal law sets certain standards for hazardous waste management facilities. A Federal permit is relatively easy to obtain. Regulatory changes are matters of policy, which can be predicted in at least a qualitative manner. Indeed, one of the reasons one carries out an analysis of a system is to gauge the effect of different regulatory scenarios.

Section III: Sociolinguistics (2 questions, answer both)

1. Discuss the difference between the concepts of register (e.g., Sports Announcer Talk) and communicative style (e.g. New York Jewish conversational style). Identify two registers and two communicative styles studied to date; list three linguistic features typical of each of these, and specify the functional motivation for their occurrence.

2. Examine the two excerpts below. Identify four linguistic characteristics on which they differ, and explain the reasons for the differences.

Sample A: Biology textbook

Migration, thus, is not an easy out; but for many bird species there is no alternative. Physical or behavior adaptations to particular feeding strategies alone may dictate fall flight. The herons, for example, with their stilt-legged manner of fishing for a living in shallow water, have no way of coping with even a thin, temporary cover of ice. They have, in effect, become too specialized. The fly-catchers, as well, once their insect prey have metamorphosed and become sedentary for the winter, must move southward to find food on the wing.

Sample B: Opinion column from a newspaper

Finally, someone in government gets it. Understands that the cozy quotient in government is growing old to us mere mortals who pay these supposed public servants. Understands that public trust matters.

And so Phoenix City Manager Ed Johnson has canceled the sale of a prime piece of city-owned land near ASU's downtown campus. Never mind that an investigation—such as it was—cleared Councilman Michael Novak of wrongdoing despite the fact that his private employer won the right to buy the land.

Johnson knows that investigation did nothing to clear suspicions that cozy connections were at play in this multi-million dollar deal.

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

1. Consider the interface between language program administration and curriculum planning in a language teaching institution.

    a. How and why do language program administration and curriculum planning fit together in language programs?
    b. Identify THREE different roles that a language program administrator can play in overseeing a vibrant, current, and meaningful curriculum. Describe those roles in detail, explaining how an administrator's decisions can affect curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and faculty morale.

Refer to relevant literature when appropriate.

2. One of the major emphases in English language teaching today is English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In response to such emphases, language programs with ESP student populations oftentimes work diligently to convert some segments of their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula into curricula with more of a focus on ESP.

Explain how language programs might facilitate such a curricular conversion. What steps might be taken? What purposes might those steps serve, taking into consideration the different needs of EAP and ESP students? Give specific examples to illustrate your points.

Refer to relevant literature when appropriate.

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

1. The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) has led to a long-standing yet contentious line of research in SLA. Define the CPH. Then, cite two opposing positions related to the CPH; describe both theoretical rationales and empirical research used to justify each position. Finally, again for each position, discuss implications of the CPH to educational policy and practice. Refer to relevant studies as necessary.

2. Much like other areas of SLA (e.g., L2 morphosyntax), lexical development involves the interplay of different factors. Describe different types of lexical knowledge learners might have. Then, explain how vocabulary knowledge develops, considering the effects of 3 different types of variables—internal (i.e., individual differences), external (i.e., environmental), and linguistic (e.g., phonological, morphosyntactic, pragmatic). Finally, discuss implications from this line of research for pedagogy and assessment. Refer to relevant studies as necessary.