MA-TESL Comprehensive Exam

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 (answer both questions)

1. Teaching methods and approaches often reflect the dominant paradigms of how people learn and how to teach languages. Select two of the following teaching approaches/methods listed below:

Audio Lingual Method
Total Physical Response
Silent way
Task-based language teaching
Form focused instruction
Communicative language teaching
Content-based instruction

In your response about the two teaching approaches you have chosen, provide the following:

1) describe the selected approaches including the principles and/or goals of the approaches and any teaching and learning theories that are linked to that approach;
2) name one or more proponents of the approach; and
3) discuss any limitations of the approach in terms of language skill development.

Refer to relevant literature when appropriate to support your response.

2. In our real practice, four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are rarely separated from one another. Nevertheless, many language programs offer a separate class for each skill. Identify and briefly describe an ESL/EFL setting of your choice (e.g., university IEP, adult literacy program) to discuss the following issues.

1) Provide a detailed rationale for integrating TWO of the four aforementioned skills instruction in the setting of your choice that shows your full understanding of the complexity of each skill;
2) Describe what you perceive to be the most desirable approach to teaching TWO of the four aforementioned language skills in the setting of your choice; and
3) Explain how you will select a textbook that could lead to meaningful skill integration in a way that demonstrates your full understanding of the needs of targeted L2 learners. Be sure to specify several criteria for the textbook selection.

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

Section II: Curriculum Development and Program Administration (answer both questions)

1. You have applied for a post-MA position to a language program that involves curriculum-development responsibilities. In the job ad, it was made very clear that a self-study determined that the program was not meeting students' needs and was looking for someone to lead a curriculum renewal project for the language program.

As part of your job application, you are asked to submit a statement that details the steps that you think the program should take to revise its curriculum. Write that statement, providing as much detail as possible. For each step in the curriculum-renewal process, provide a rationale, pose questions that should be asked, introduce options that might be considered, and propose decisions that will need to be made. Refer to relevant literature, when appropriate.

2. You have been asked to serve as chair of a program accreditation subcommittee, in your first year as an intensive English language program teacher. What principles of leadership can you draw from the language program administration literature that will guide you in serving effectively? Identify at least FIVE principles. For each principle, explain how you will translate it into practice and why it is important for a person in a leadership position.

Be sure to include a brief introduction and conclusion in your response. Cite relevant sources to strengthen your response.

Section III: Grammar (answer both questions)

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

     1) That is exactly what they're doing by questioning the pope's position here.

     2) Reporters are digging into his past, in the belief that many women who may have feared speaking out in the past may now feel happy to do so.

     3) I told him we were in trouble after I saw the blinds move inside the store window.

2. Make a list of the verb phrases that occur in the news report below. For each verb phrase, identify the tense, aspect, and voice. Then write an essay describing the discourse factors that influence the choice of verb tense, aspect, and voice. In your response, explain why the news report uses the verb forms that it does.

News Report:

  Early Friday, a 50-year-old man was fatally shot by police officers while riding a bicycle about 1.5 miles from the intersection of Wolcott and Norfolk avenues. That fatal shooting occurred after a 16-year-old boy was shot and killed just around the corner Thursday night. Police have reported that those two shootings, though in the same area, were not related.

  Police have not released any information about a suspect or motive in Trayvon Chesley's death. Brandon Grimes, now 31, was charged in the killing of Chesley's father. Grimes had been arrested 17 times, including twice for handgun possession before Troy Chesley's killing, but was convicted only six times, for nonviolent offenses.

Section IV: Sociolinguistics (answer both questions)

1. Discuss the nature of linguistic variation in World Englishes. In your response, identify at least three World English varieties, and discuss some of the distinctive linguistic characteristics of each one (phonological, grammatical, syntactic, or lexical). Address the implications of such differences for English language instruction and teacher training.

2. Examine the two excerpts below, both taken from online sources. Describe the situational characteristics of the two text varieties, identify four linguistic characteristics on which they differ, and explain the functional reasons for the differences.

Sample A: Wikipedia article

Next to humans, orcas are the most widely distributed mammal. Orcas inhabit all oceans of the world but are most numerous in the Arctic, the Antarctic and areas in nutrient-rich cold water upwellings. They have been sighted along the shores of Washington, Oregon, California, Baja California, and along the eastern coast of the United States.

In addition to cold water areas, orcas have also been seen in warm water areas such as Hawaii, Australia, the Gal pagos Islands, the Bahamas, and the Gulf of Mexico. Such sightings are infrequent, but they do demonstrate the orca's ability to venture into tropical waters. Even more surprising, orcas have been seen in fresh water rivers around the world such as the Rhine, the Thames, and the Elbe. One orca was even reported to have even traveled some 177 km up the Columbia River in search of fish.

Although orca can be found in both the open ocean and coastal waters, they primarily inhabit the continental shelf in waters less than 200 m deep. In cold water areas, their distribution is limited by seasonal pack ice.

Sample B: Interactive discussion forum

<Writer 1> Every time I go to start my commodore at about 5:30 in the morning it won't start. It keeps cranking but won't fire. It starts first go at any other time of the day except for mornings. Is there anything I can do, to try and fix this problem?

<Writer 2> usually battery, takes less voltage to crank than run ECU correctly although the last time i had this the car had blue max leads and bosch copper plugs the two dis-similar metals had reacted and created a black oxidization on the plug nipple which was an insulator when cold took three days to get to the bottom of that one inside garage was warm enough that no fault

<Writer 3> you may have a fuel bleed down problem, if the one way valve in the fuel pump is playing up you will lose fuel rail pressure over time, same as fuel pressure regulators and injectors can also bleed down, but the most common is the fuel pump. hook up a fuel pressure gauge, start the car to get the pressure up, leave the car sitting over night and see if the pressure has dropped.

Section V: Second Language Acquisition (answer both questions)

1. What is processing instruction? Describe the major (and persistent) problem in second language learners' behaviour that processing instruction is meant to address. Give a specific example from any L1 : L2 pairing to illustrate this problem and outline several plausible potential causes of the problem. Be sure to refer to empirical studies in this area and to explain both how a typical processing instruction intervention is structured and how such a design seeks to address L2 learners' processing problems. Finally, provide a short summary the main findings of processing instruction research.

2. What is communicative competence? What are the historical roots of this concept and what did it arise in response to? Why is the concept of communicative competence important for both SLA theory and for practice? Based on everything you know about second language acquisition and about how language works, what components do you believe a comprehensive model of communicative competence should include? Justify your choices and provide examples as appropriate.