College of Education
Department of Curriculum & Instruction

MA EXAM STUDY SESSION

New Mexico State University

Polices regarding the MA Comprehensive Written Examination

- When can I take the exam?
  - You may take the exam during your last semester of MA classes. If you are an MA and licensure student, you may take the exam prior to student teaching.
- Do I need to sign-up for the exam before I take it?
  - Yes!
- Do I have to have a "Program of Study" completed and approved before I can take the exam?
  - Yes, this document will be given to the Administrative Assistant in the C&I office or call 575. 646-5821)

About the MA Exam Questions
What questions will I get?...

- The C&I *generalist* will answer 3 questions of 4 or more
- If you have a *concentration* you will answer 2 C&I questions from 4 or more plus select a question from a group of 1-3 program area questions
- *Outside minor* – your question is solicited from that department and the outside faculty member or members will evaluate it

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam

Starting now…

- Revisit course syllabus objectives, required readings, learning tasks, and assignments turned in
  - Attention to core courses: EDUC 515, EDUC 516, EDUC 517/520, EDUC 518 & EDUC 519
- Reflect on applications of these key ideas in real world educational contexts
- Identify the relationships among key theorists, philosophers, concepts, and terms in various courses
- Find other MA candidates in your area of specialty to compare notes and study for the exam

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
The day of the exam…

- Get to campus or your test site early so you can find parking
- It is okay to bring a bottle of water or simple snacks
- Bring tissues if you think you might need them
  - *You may not bring any paper, notes, etc. with you*
  - Bring registration receipt (provided to you from C&I office)
  - You will be given the examination packet

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
The day of the exam…

- You may sit where you would like
- You will be provided an overview of the process
  - Review of Lab procedures (e.g. printing)
- The end time will be posted

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Starting the exam…

- Open your envelope only after the exam proctor says to –when everyone is ready to begin
- Use your Banner ID– not your name
- Blue books will be provided
- Set up header and page numbers on your document (instructions provided)

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Map our your essay…

- There will be blank paper for you to use

- deconstruct the question—
  - what are you being asked?
  - how many parts are there to the question?
  - what language or terms do you need to reflect?

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Develop an outline…

- Write down the theorists, philosophers, researchers, terms, concepts, etc., you intend to cite
- Draw from your own experiences as an educator
  - We want to hear your voice in the essays
- Plan your time carefully
- You have four hours to answer the three questions.

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Plan your time…

- You have four hours to answer the three questions
- Plan your time carefully:
  - for creating an outline
  - for writing each question
  - for review and revision
  - for polishing your essay
  - *make sure you answered the questions fully & clearly!*

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Citation information…

- Expectation: *at least* 4 citations per answer
  - remember, this is a “masters” degree—you are a scholar
- APA-style: author & year
  - direct quotes need page number
  - If you cannot remember the year, provide the article or book title

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Citation information…

- Who should I cite?
- Cite who you read in your courses/who are the key scholars in the following areas:

  curriculum; pedagogy; critical pedagogy; educational learning technologies;

  social justice and multicultural education; educational research/methods

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
Citation information…

- Make sure you cite relevant scholars in the philosophical/theoretical/program areas you have studied—make sure they *fit*
  - i.e., Howard Gardner is known for Multiple Intelligences, not critical pedagogy
  - E. D. Hirsch (cultural literacy) is not a critical pedagogist or multicultural educator, etc.
  - English-only is not a form of liberatory education
  - Behaviorism is not a progressive philosophy, etc.

Tips to being successful on the MA Exam
As you are finishing…

- A “15 minutes left” announcement will be made before the end of the exam period
- Try to fully answer each question (all parts)
- Leave time to revise
- Use the spell checker and grammar checker
- *We are more interested in substance than style*
- Hand in your notes/outline from the blank paper
  - place into the envelope with your answers

How is the MA Exam graded and who grades the exam?

- MA Rubric review (pdf MA Rubric)
- Each exam question is graded twice by C&I faculty
- Minor questions solicited from another department are read by that department's faculty at least once
- If there is a 10 point or greater difference in the scores of the two reviewers, the question is read a third time by a different reviewer. The two closest scores are counted; the "outlying score" is discarded.

How is the MA Exam graded and who grades the exam?

- A 0 is given if you do not attempt to answer a question
- The total possible point value is 36 points per question – a 22.5 score or better is what you must have to “pass” on a question
- An average of 22.5 is needed over the 3 questions
- It is possible that a person may not pass on one question but may still pass the MA Exam

Contact Information:

Associate Department Head: 575.646-5411

Graduate Program Administrative Assistant: 575.646-5821

GOOD LUCK TO YOU!!