



MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM
COMPREHENSIVE EXAM STUDY GUIDE
(CLASSROOM EXAMINATION COMPONENT)
REV. MAY, 2023

Introduction:

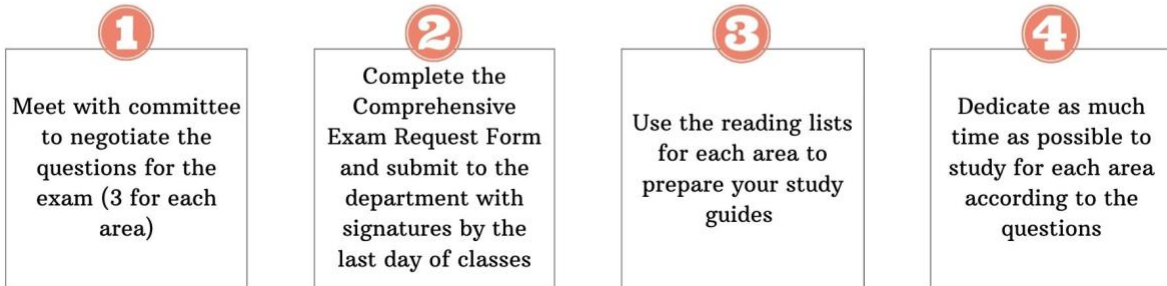
This guide has been created by the MAEE Graduate Committee of the Department of English to help students, along with their committee members, to prepare for the Comprehensive Exam (CE), one of the two options for completing the MAEE program. Please refer to the latest Graduate Student Handbook for a full description of the examination policy and process. This document is meant to provide guidance to students and committee members to develop and administer the classroom examination component of the CE, which consists of two three-hour exams taken over two consecutive days in the areas of Applied Linguistics and Pedagogy¹.

Each examinee negotiates the particular focus of the classroom examinations on Applied Linguistics and Pedagogy (as well as the subsequent take-home specialization paper with their committee. Committees work with students to create a list of three (3) study questions for both Applied Linguistics and Pedagogy (six questions in total are crafted) from which one (1) exam question is randomly selected by the committee prior to each of the two exams (two questions in total to which students must respond - one per day).

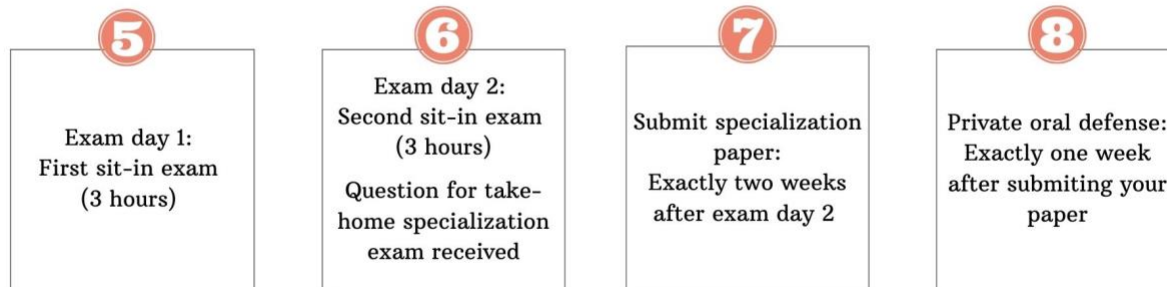
¹ This study guide does not include guidelines or sample questions for the take-home specialization paper, but the number of questions and reading list requirement is the same as with the Applied Linguistics and Pedagogy exams. Please consult the MAEE handbook for details on this part of the exam.

TIMELINE FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS

Semester prior to taking the comprehensive exams



Semester of comprehensive exams



Below, sample questions are included for the Applied Linguistics and Pedagogy sections of the exam. They are meant to help the examinee and their committee to understand the scope of exam questions and to develop their own questions based on their particular focus within each area.

Examinees are expected to use the scholarly and professional terminology within their field. With the support of committee members, all candidates should develop a list of key concepts in the exam areas (which examinees are expected to appropriately use in answering the exam questions) and a reading list of at least 20 recent scholarly sources for each exam question. All questions require that examinees cite pertinent sources in their chosen areas of study (a minimum of 10 recent academic sources per question cited in author/year format).

The Classroom Examinations will be evaluated as specified in the Graduate Student Handbook:

1. Written Examination: To pass the classroom examination, students must obtain a passing grade in both exam areas. The student's committee members evaluate the exam. General

evaluation criteria for the exams are based on the student's ability to perform the following tasks:

- a. Synthesize the key theoretical and methodological debates defined by the exam questions
- b. Articulate an original argument in response to those debates
- c. Integrate information from a variety of sources into an organized, cogent, and scholarly response
- d. Apply theoretical frameworks to the analysis of concrete pedagogical practices or resources
- e. Contextualize the argument appropriately
- f. Include a minimum of 10 appropriate citations (recent academic journal articles, academic book chapters and/or books) in author/year format
- g. Compose a scholarly essay of 6-8 pages (double-spaced) for each sit-in exam and a scholarly essay of 15–20-pages(double-spaced) for the specialization exam

Sample Examination Questions in Applied Linguistics:

1. A theory is sound when it is able to account for the phenomenon within the scope of its study. There are a number of theories that explain how languages are learned. Which do you believe to be the most plausible and explanatory theory? Use other theories to compare and contrast your views. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
2. Compare learning a second language as a child with learning one as an adult. What aspects are different? Discuss linguistic, social, and cognitive mechanisms that work for both. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
3. The role of the first language in learning a second language has been explained by various theoretical perspectives, which periodically are contested and reconceptualized by scholars in the field. Discuss the theories that have supported language transfer such as the contrastive analysis hypothesis and cross-linguistic influence. Use examples to support why these theoretical views have changed. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
4. Pick one theory on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and explain: (1) how it has informed the study of SLA; and (2) how the theory might guide classroom practice or teaching. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.

5. Language variation is central to Sociolinguistics and SLA. Define language variation. Compare/contrast the role that language variation has played in the two areas; in other words, address how language variation is approached in theory and in practice. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
6. Compare /contrast the roles of the individual and the speech community with respect to methodology, data collection and data elicitation in Sociolinguistics and SLA. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
7. The meaning of “bilingual” has been contested in light of the spread of English as an international language. List the competing definitions of “bilingualism” and explain how you think the Puerto Rican context fits into these definitions or demands a new definition of “bilingual.” Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
8. Speech production is an active area of research in Psycholinguistics. Choose one issue in speech production (for example, lexical access) and compare and contrast how it is viewed in monolingual and bilingual speech production. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
9. What are the factors that motivate language shift and language maintenance? Apply these factors to the case of Puerto Rico. Take a stand and argue that Puerto Rico, in the future, is facing either language shift or language maintenance. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
10. Second language learning theories have been criticized for ignoring the role of context in their explanations of language learning. Sociocultural theory seeks to address this by claiming that language learning can never be extracted from its social, cultural, and political context. Explain the role of identity, power, and agency in language learning from a sociocultural perspective. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.

Sample Examination Questions in Pedagogy:

1. Provide a detailed overview of the various types of bilingual education programs that developed historically in the U.S. since the establishment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Consider the various theoretical perspectives and characteristics that define each program and explore how they overlap or differ in

theory, practice, and their target populations in relation to mandated language programming in contemporary Puerto Rico. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.

2. You receive the following paragraph as a writing sample (12th grade). Explain what feedback would provide for this student and discuss how you would organize the rest of the school year's writing and grammar instruction to help this student develop writing proficiency. Include the theoretical basis for your pedagogical decisions by citing appropriate sources.

I put to think to search was are my worst day of my life, but really I don't had. I think that I had bad experiences. Because every day you thanks God for your life, family and others things. I think that the persons learned about the mistakes. One of my bad experiences was when I enter in this university, I always want to study here. One morning I prepare to went at the university to know if they are accepted. I went to a university at faculty of admissions and the secretary tell my tha I don't enter in this university. In that moments I felt super bad, because, I thing that my dreams was dertebed.

3. Testing in ESL and EFL environments is complicated. Select a specific application of a test or an evaluative measure and explain what parameters are important in that context. For example, you might explain which methods you believe would work best for exit testing from a multi-sectional basic integrated skills course at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
4. Gender studies, post-structuralist feminist theories, queer theories, critical race theories, cultural studies, and critical/liberating pedagogies share many features. Explain these shared characteristics and the concerns that they address in contemporary global classrooms. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
5. Trace the history of literary pedagogy through a discussion of the four sets of terms given below. Your essay should: (1) clearly explain the meaning of each of the ten terms; (2) explain why the terms are grouped into those sets; and (3) show some interconnections among the four sets of terms. Whenever possible, connect particular terms (or sets) with the theorist(s) associated with them, and explore the impact of these concepts on the teaching of literature past and present. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.

Ten Terms in Four Sets:

Set 1: growth /heritage / skiDs

Set 2: new criticism / reader-response / subjective criticism

Set 3: aesthetic /efferent

Set 4: teacher-centered /student-centered

6. While leading figures in the *Departamento de Educación's* English Program have recently argued for the use of English only in classrooms, such a practice is refuted by much of the literature in the field, as well as by professional organizations composed of language and literacy teachers such as NCTE, IRA, and NCBE. Challenge this position drawing on the multiple theories that contest it and provide an alternative argument for specific uses of Spanish in the English classroom that would, in fact, support English language learning. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
7. Discuss how the teaching and practice of creative writing can benefit the field of English Education and in turn lead to a better understanding and appreciation of literature written in English or any other language. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
8. Discuss memoir (or life) writing and its pedagogical application in the teaching of English writing courses as well as its potential contribution to academic training, which tends to devalue the student's voice and privilege to a canonical *Other*. Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
9. According to Gunter Kress, in *Literacy in the New Media Age*, after a long period of the dominance of the book, the screen has now taken over its place, and literacy has taken on new meanings. If technology has changed traditional forms of reading and writing texts, what must teachers of writing know, and what should they be able to provide their students to develop new media literacy? What theoretical frameworks underpin this new conception of writing? Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.
10. The "process" movement has been the most influential movement in the field of composition and is responsible for questions in writing research such as those that ask what writers do as they write. Although process has dominated scholarship in the field, it has been under critique by "post process" views. Describe the "writing as process" movement and then explain why the "social turn" has led to post-process views on writing. What does this imply for the teaching of composition? Cite pertinent sources to support your claim.