

**University of South Alabama**  
**College of Education and Professional Studies**  
Department of Leadership and Teacher Education

Secondary Education and P-12 ESOL & Art Education  
**Comprehensive Examination Information**

**General Information**

- Graduate students enrolled in the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education at the University of South Alabama are required to take a comprehensive examination prior to graduation. The examination is offered once each semester, usually near mid-term. Students who plan to "sit" for the exam must apply in the Office of Student Services OR the Department of Leadership and Teacher Education two weeks before the conclusion of the semester preceding the one in which they want to take the test or during the first week of the semester in which the test is administered.
- Students taking either the Master's or Alternative Master's Comprehensive Examination have three hours for completion. With the exception of Educational Leadership, students need to arrive by 8:45 am. The exam begins at 9:00 am and ends promptly at 12:00 p.m. (Educational Leadership times to be assigned). Students should bring a picture ID to the exam. The examination takes place in a computer lab so that responses to questions are typed and printed in the lab. The room number will be posted on exam day. *In case an exam time and/or location need to be rescheduled, you will receive the time and location in the reminder email that will be sent to you by LTE before the exam date.*
- Students may receive an identification number the morning of the exam. This identification number should be included on all pages of the exam and reference list. If unforeseen events arise during the examination, the student should notify the exam proctor immediately.
- Students are allowed to bring a list of references for the exam. The reference list must be turned in with the exam. **Nothing else is permitted in the exam room.**
- Three questions must be answered on the exam (Special Education and Gifted/ Talented answer two questions). Foreign Language Students have two questions in the College of Education and one in the College of Arts and Sciences. Each question should be retyped at the top of the page(s). Begin each new question on a separate page. Print each question as it is completed and double- space all work.
- Student responses to their examination questions must be satisfactory to their evaluation committees. The Director of Graduate Studies will notify the student of results through written correspondence before the end of the semester. **Do not call for results.**
- The exam may be taken only once during a term. Students who fail in their first

attempt may take the exam one additional time. Anyone who fails two times will be dismissed from the program.

## **Program Specifics for Secondary & P-12 ESOL & P-12 Art Education**

### **Alternative Master's: Social Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science**

Four (4) essay questions will be included on the examination, one from each of the core Leadership and Teacher Education courses (SED 555, SED 559, SED 55X, and RED 541). Students must respond to the questions from SED 55X and RED 541 (the content methods course). Students may choose between the questions from SED 555 and SED 559.

### **Masters: Social Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science**

There will be three (3) essay questions included on the examination, one from each of the core Leadership and Teacher Education courses (SED 552, SED 56X, and SED 560). All three questions must be answered.

**Foreign Language** students must contact the Department of Foreign Language to schedule oral exams in lieu of answering the SED 563 question. Students must respond to the question RED 541. Students may choose between the questions from SED 555 and SED 559.

**ESOL:** Alternative Masters Students will choose between a question for SED 555 and SED 559 and will select 2 questions to answer of the 4 ELT 530 questions on the exam. Traditional Masters Students will have a question for SED 552 or EEC 522 (depending on which course they took) and will select 2 questions to answer of the 4 ELT 530 questions on the exam.

**Art Education:** Alternative Masters Students will choose between a question for SED 555 and SED 559, will answer a question for RED 541, and will select 1 question to answer of the 4 AED 540 questions on the exam. Traditional Masters Students will have a question for SED 552 and SED and will select 1 question to answer of the 3 AED 501 questions on the exam.

## Comprehensive Exam Question Bank

See Comprehensive Exam General Information for your content field to determine which of the following pertain to your exam.

### **RED 541: Literacy in the Content Area (taken by all Alternative Masters Students)**

As a teacher, you will often be asked by parents, "How do I get my teen to read more?" Discuss at least three, concrete strategies parents and teachers can implement to encourage reluctant readers.

As are most things in life, media and technology are double-edged swords. They have the dual capacity to positively and negatively influence children and adults. What are ways media/technology fails to positively educate children? What are ways media/technology offers positive outcomes for children? What should a teacher remember when using videos or other technology for instructional purposes?

Please explain the following quote and discuss its implications for literacy-based instruction in the content area classroom in terms of how and what we teach: "What we teach children to love and desire will always outweigh what we teach them to do," (Trelease, 2001).

### **SED 555: Curriculum and Teaching in Secondary School (taken by all Alternative Masters Students)**

A large contributor to classroom management is well planned and taught lessons. Discuss three reasons why a beginning teacher needs to prepare detailed lesson plans.

Explain why it is important to prevent behavior problems before they occur. Describe at least three preventative steps you will take to minimize classroom management issues.

We know that motivation is a critical factor in student learning and that many students come to our classes who have been unsuccessful in previous classes or have little interest in what we are teaching. Discuss three things you will do in your classroom to increase student motivation.

### **SED 559: Advanced Instructional Techniques (taken by all Alternative Masters Students)**

Explain two changes taking place in young adolescents in each of the following areas: Physical Changes, Emotional Changes, Social Changes, and Intellectual Changes. For each of the changes, describe what middle school educators can do to meet the needs of the young adolescents in these four areas.

Young adolescents need experiences in the related curriculum domains of: Art, Music, physical Education, Career Education, and Information Literacy, Describe two (2) rationales for each of the related domains to be part of the middle school curriculum.

During the middle grades young adolescents are influenced by their peer groups, cliques, and media/celebrity personalities. These groups can have powerful effects, some positive and some negative, on our youth. What societal influences seem to have the greatest impact, and what are the implications, both positive and negative?

### **EEC 522: The Elementary Curriculum (taken by Traditional Masters ESOL/Art Education)**

Throughout your graduate program, you have been exposed to various approaches, ideas and theories related to teaching and learning. It is hoped that participation in this program of study has increased your awareness of the vast diversity regarding pedagogy, practice and policy related to educating today's children and that this knowledge will positively impact the quality of learning experiences you provide your students. In a well-developed narrative essay, describe how participation in your graduate program has influenced your philosophy of education and/or the instructional methods you employ/will employ in your classroom. Your description must include at least three (3) specific examples.

### **SED 552: The High School Curriculum (taken by most Traditional Masters Students)**

Imagine that one of the following curriculum theorists was alive today, teaching in the subject area and at the level with which you are most familiar. Select one of the curriculum theorists, describe the curricular experiences students would have in his classes and specifically relate the experiences to their theories.

Select one of the  
following: John Dewey  
Robert  
Hutchins  
William Bagley  
William  
Kilpatrick

Some people have suggested that emphasizing our nation's multicultural heritage exalts racial and ethnic pride at the expense of social cohesion. How might a curriculum that emphasizes multicultural diversity also contribute to social cohesion?

How reasonable is it to judge the quality of individual schools based on how well their students do on standardized tests? What are some arguments used to support and oppose this practice?

Discuss at least three essential elements of effective curricula for either middle school or high

school students?

**SED 560: Graduate Research Seminar (taken by most Traditional Masters Students)**

How would you describe the purpose(s) of action research? How does action research differ from other, more traditional methods of research in both method and purpose? Why do some researchers assert that they feel more ownership of action research rather than other methods of research?

Describe the different steps involved in developing and carrying out action research. Why is the process cyclical in nature?

**SED 561: Trends and Practices in Teaching Language Subjects in Secondary Schools (Traditional Masters Students)**

Discuss the role of technology in the language arts classroom. Include technology use by both teachers and students. Also discuss conveyance to students of responsible use of technology/digital citizenship.

In terms of classroom composition and instruction, we have students from diverse language, cultural, and racial backgrounds, as well as students who have special learning needs such as giftedness and mental, physical, and emotional challenges. How do you address the diverse needs of your students so that student achievement is maximized? How can you create an environment conducive to learning and community building where all students feel safe and welcome?

**SED 562: Trends and Practices in Teaching Social Studies (Traditional Masters Students)**

Social studies is a subject that students often dislike. Part of this may stem from the fact that students do not see its relevance. Discuss three specific ways that you will bring relevance to your teaching.

In your opinion, what are at least two major reasons that skill development has been largely overlooked by many social studies teachers in planning and content and emphasis of their courses? What are three necessary skills that need to be incorporated into social

studies classrooms? Give an example of how you would incorporate each of these into the content you must teach?

Effective citizenship is the major goal of the social studies. Identify at least three components of citizenship that should be integrated into the social studies curriculum and give an example of how each might be incorporated into your social studies classroom.

### **SED 563: Trends and Practices in Teaching Mathematics (Traditional Masters Students)**

The debate in mathematics education includes two basic perspectives: the traditional viewpoint, which supports procedural approaches including memorization, drill, and practice of rules and definitions, and the non-traditional approaches, such as the constructivist point of view, supporting the belief that students should utilize their innate abilities to formulate their own algorithms. As a secondary mathematics teacher, describe your teaching approaches and include justification.

Manipulatives have moved from the elementary school to the middle school and are now frequently employed at the high school level. Discuss the main issues teachers should consider in using manipulatives to foster discovery learning in the mathematics classroom. Include in your discussion specific manipulatives that are appropriate in the secondary classroom and the concepts they illuminate.

Describe three critical issues facing mathematics teachers today.

### **SED 564: Trends and Practices in Teaching Science (Traditional Masters Students)**

Students need to be well prepared to live in a complex technological society today. What are you doing in your teaching that will help your students to become adults that can make informed decisions about their lives and environment? Cite specific examples of topics/activities you teach in your classroom. Give examples of how students apply these skills.

Inquiry is considered to be one of the most important skills students can learn in science. What is inquiry teaching and learning and why is this method of teaching not used more often? Design a lesson that uses the inquiry methods to teach students a science topic.

Often the motivation of students is overlooked or considered only after content has been developed to teach students. If your students are not motivated from the beginning it will be difficult to interest them in science. What part does motivation play in science teaching? How can you be sure you systematically integrate motivation into your teaching? Give at least five specific examples of how you make sure you design your teaching to be motivating to students.

### **SED 553: Language Arts Methods (Alternative Masters Students)**

Discuss the writing process and how you plan to incorporate writing into the curriculum. Discuss three different writing strategies that you would use before a lesson, during a lesson, and following a lesson.

Discuss the role of technology in the language arts classroom. Include technology use by both teachers and students. Also discuss conveyance to students of responsible use of technology/digital citizenship.

In terms of classroom composition and instruction, we will have students from diverse language, cultural, and racial backgrounds, as well as students who have special learning needs such as giftedness and mental, physical, and emotional challenges. How will you address the diverse needs of your students so that student achievement is maximized? How will you create an environment conducive to learning and community building where all students feel safe and welcome? Who will you rely on for more information and guidance when you have a student with special needs that you may not be familiar with?

### **SED 554: Math Methods (Alternative Masters Students)**

What does it mean to know and understand mathematics? What strategies might you use to teach mathematics for understanding?

Describe both “conveyance technology” and “mathematical action technology.” What is the role of each type of technology in the mathematics classroom?

What are the differences in tasks that require “high-levels of cognitive demand” and tasks that require “low-levels of cognitive demand?” Describe the role of each within the mathematics classroom.

### **SED 556: Science Methods (Alternative Masters)**

What is the purpose of using different teaching strategies in a science classroom? Identify a topic or concept of interest and identify three different teaching strategies you could use during a ninety-minute block period. Explain each strategy and why you selected it?

Often the motivation of students is overlooked or considered only after the science content has been developed to teach students. If your students are not motivated from the beginning it will be difficult to interest them in science (or any subject). What part does motivation play in science teaching? How can you be sure you systematically integrate motivation into your teaching?

Explain and describe what instruction and assessment would be like in a science class taught by a teacher who believes and implements this idea of systematically integrating

motivation. Give at least three specific examples of how you will make sure you design your teaching to be motivating to students.

### **SED 557: Social Studies Methods (Alternative Masters)**

In class, we talked a great deal about “putting the social” back into social studies. Describe three ways you would do this in your classroom.

Students frequently complain that social studies is irrelevant to their world and their lives, giving them license to ignore it and you. Pick one of the social studies content areas and discuss three ways you will bring relevancy to the content that you teach in that area.

Why is developing perspective and point of view so important to the social studies? Describe three resources you might use to develop these skills.

### **ELT 530: ESOL Methods (Traditional & Alternative Masters)**

Discuss why ESL/EFL and mainstream teachers should collaborate. In what ways can both of them contribute to the success of mainstreamed ESL students?

Discuss the impact of some factors such as learners’ social and economic background, learning environment, and first language, in the process of first and second language acquisition. Discuss what you can do to facilitate the acquisition process in your ESL classroom.

Why must students' cultural backgrounds be taken into consideration when shaping the educational system? Discuss the impact this consideration should have on curriculum, school environment, and teaching style for an ESL program in a school setting.

Discuss the process of first and second language acquisition. What are the similarities and differences? Evaluate the relating factors that directly impact successful language development for both L1 and L2 learners. Discuss what you can do to facilitate the acquisition process in your ESL classroom.

### **AED 540: Art Methods (Alternative Masters)**

Often the motivation of students is overlooked or considered only after the art content has been developed to teach students. If your students are not motivated from the beginning it will be difficult to interest them in art (or any subject). What part does motivation play in art teaching? How can you be sure you systematically integrate motivation into your teaching? Explain and describe what instruction and assessment would be like in an art class taught by a teacher who believes and implements this idea of systematically integrating motivation. Give at least three specific examples of how you will make sure you design your teaching to be motivating to students.

**Artistic Development.** Discuss Viktor Lowenfeld's stages of artistic development from scribbling to pseudo naturalistic. Describe the artistic stages learners go through and how these stages influence the artistic behaviors of the student, his/her responses to art lessons, and appropriate feedback from the art teacher.

**Visual Art Integration.** Discuss art integration across the curriculum. Why should teachers integrate art? What are the effects of integrating art on learning and motivation? What do teachers need to know and teach to integrate art? Provide an example of an activity integrating visual arts with another content area.

**Visual Arts Advocacy.** Discuss the importance of visual arts education for the development of students. How does engagement in a quality visual arts program facilitate higher order thinking? Select one of the following educators/theorists and discuss his contributions to the ideas of art education: Elliot Eisner, Howard Gardner, Viktor Lowenfeld, and John Dewey

### **AED 501: Art Methods (Traditional Masters)**

*Artistic Development.* Discuss Viktor Lowenfeld's stages of artistic development from scribbling to pseudo naturalistic. Describe the artistic stages learners go through and how these stages influence the artistic behaviors of the student, his/her responses to art lessons, and appropriate feedback from the art teacher.

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