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 Rita Beckman in the C&I office (ribeckma@nmsu.edu or 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 Rita Beckman)
  – 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
– Dr. Haynes Writer will provide 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 Dr. Haynes Writer 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 \textit{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
For Further Information

• Contact or visit Dr. Jeanette Haynes Writer, C&I Associate Department Head for Graduate Studies
  – at OH 122E, or voice 575.646.5411 or email: jeanette@nmsu.edu

• Contact or visit Ms. Rita Beckman
  – at OH122B, or voice: 575.646.5821 or email: ribeckma@nmsu.edu
GOOD LUCK TO YOU!!