

STUDY GUIDE FOR GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION MASTER OF EDUCATION: PROFESSIONAL READING SPECIALIST

The final comprehensive examination constitutes a synthesis and application of knowledge, skills, and dispositions acquired during the course of study leading to the master's degree (see Graduate Bulletin, 2006-2008, p. 32). The exam will cover questions from the reading specialist major field. The exam will require the candidate to analyze, evaluate, and apply principles, theories, and understandings about teaching and learning.

General Information

1. What is the general format of the examination?
The Master of Education: Professional Reading Specialist comprehensive examination in contains both multiple choice and essay questions. There are 70 multiple choice questions and two (2) essay questions. Three (3) hours are allotted for the entire examination. The examination responses will be computer generated.
2. When do I take the examination? When is it offered?
The examination is taken during the last semester in which you are enrolled as a candidate. The examination is administered after mid-term in the fall, spring, and SSII.
3. How do I register for the examination?
Complete an application which is available on the Elementary Education web pages at www.sfasu.edu. Applications MUST be submitted to your advisor at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the examination.
4. What do I need to bring with me to the exam?
Please bring a CD on which to copy your final test responses. The CD will not be returned to you. It must be submitted with a hard copy of your test answers which you will print in the computer lab before turning in your test. You may bring a dictionary and three (3) blank sheets of paper on which to organize your thoughts. The sheets of paper must be submitted with your test answers.

Reviewing for Exam

Graduate candidates are expected to use appropriate authorities and relevant theories when responding to exam questions; therefore, candidates should review pertinent literature in reading. Appropriate study strategies would include the following:

1. Review the table of contents of texts used in your graduate work. Look at chapter titles and major headings, which should bring to mind information, concepts, and understandings. If you do not remember general understandings, reread the section.
2. Review class notes from graduate courses. Think about how theories translate into best practice.
3. Be familiar with major scholars in reading education and research. What do these authorities espouse? Be able to cite scholars as your respond to exam questions.
4. Be acquainted with scholarly journals in reading education. Know some significant works, (books, articles, etc.) in reading education and research.
5. Be able to explain major ideas that are shaping current thinking and practice in reading.

Because your essay questions will be evaluated on the thoroughness of your answers, all relevant material should be reviewed. Keep in mind that the exam **IS NOT** an opinion paper; your discussion should reflect scholarly analysis and evaluation. You should cite authorities, theories, and major works, without which your exam will be judged inadequate. The faculty reading the exam will be looking for authoritative information; any personal opinions should be substantiated with appropriate references. Your exam will be evaluated according to several criteria: clarity of thought, organization of ideas, fluency, good use of writing standards, accurate use of references and appropriate literature, overall communicative effectiveness, and scholarly presentation.

To help study for the examination, a list of questions has been formulated to include major topics, concepts, and ideas which appear to be important concerns of reading teachers today.

1. What do you believe constitutes an appropriate and effective learning context to support children's emerging literacy? What would you expect to see?
2. What are the core components of literacy that must be included in working with children?
3. What is the definition of literate environment? What are the basic structures involved in fostering a setting in where the elements of reading and writing are both valued and encouraged?
4. What are specific strategies and activities you can use to increase the development of literacy concepts and skills in the children with whom you work?
5. What is Shared Reading? Guided Oral Reading? Interactive Writing? How would you implement these in your classroom?
6. What is fluency? What role does the teacher play in helping build fluency? What can and should we do about children who are lagging behind? How does the Reading Specialist apply knowledge of reading fluency to promote students' reading competence at EC-grade 12?
7. Identify several word identification skills and strategies and discuss how the Reading Specialist will apply the knowledge of these to promote students' reading competence at the levels of EC-grade 12?
8. There are several strategies for developing an understanding expository texts and images. Identify and discuss 3 of these strategies.
9. What are metacognitive skills and how can the teacher help children develop these skills to think about what is being read and make connections between personal experiences and text read?
10. What are the foundations of the reading and writing process?
11. Who are the major scholars (authorities) who made significant contributions to your specialization? What are major journals and significant literature that contribute to your specialization?
12. What is a comprehensive reading and writing program and how does it meet the needs of all students?

13. What are some of the significant assessments that guide reading and writing instruction? How does a Reading Specialist apply the knowledge of assessment instruments (used to monitor and evaluate student progress in reading) to guide instructional decision making at the levels of EC- grade 12)?
14. What is the role of a Reading Specialist? How does the Reading Specialist address the varying needs of all students at the levels of EC- grade 12?
15. What is corrective reading? In your role of Reading Specialist, how will you collaborate with the classroom teacher in the assessment and instruction of the struggling reader?
16. How does a Reading Specialist apply knowledge of reading comprehension and instructional methods to promote students' reading comprehension at the levels of EC-grade 12?
17. How does a Reading Specialist apply knowledge of vocabulary development and instructional methods to promote students' oral and written vocabulary knowledge at the levels of EC- grade 12?
18. How do Reading Specialists work with other professionals in selecting and using appropriate formal and informal assessments of English Language Learners and in planning effective literacy instruction, including selecting instructional materials & strategies that reflect cultural diversity?
19. How would a Reading Specialist develop a systematic, sequential, age-appropriate reading instruction for English Language Learners that is based on a convergence of research evidence and is responsive to individual students' strengths, needs, and interests?
20. What are the characteristics and instructional implications of reading difficulties, dyslexia, and reading disabilities in relation to the development of reading competence?
21. Describe the formal and informal procedures a reading teacher might use to diagnose reading difficulties in the following areas: a. word recognition, b. comprehension. Be specific in naming assessments and devices and explain the potential value of each technique in identifying weaknesses as targets for remedial instruction.
22. The issue concerning the role of phonics in learning to read has received a great deal of attention in the past years. What does teaching phonics in context mean? Explain the concept. Develop a list of activities which demonstrate how phonics can be taught in context.
23. Students often have difficulty reading and comprehending their content area texts. Identify a grade level and content area, and discuss three strategies you could use to help students improve their comprehension of the material.
24. Becoming knowledgeable in the use of technology to teach reading and enhance reading instruction is mandated by standard documents developed by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English. Identify three forms of technology that may be used within a literacy education program. How would the technology integrate into the classroom instruction?
25. What is phonological awareness? What is phonemic awareness? What is the alphabetic principle? Describe best practices that reading teachers use to teach phonemic awareness and the

alphabetic principle. How is oral language developed? What are the implications of oral language development?

Resources

The following is a list of resources that you may find helpful in preparing for the examination. **Please do not interpret this list as exhaustive as course texts may vary and additional pertinent readings from other texts and articles may emerge from courses based on the course instructor.** The list below provides resources that are typically used to inform course instruction and is recommended to be included in your personal library of education literature.

Burns, M., Griffin, P. & Snow, C. (1999). *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children*.

Retrieved March 18, 2008, from The National Academies Press Web site:
<http://www.nap.edu/books>

Calkins, L., Montgomery, K., Faulk, B., & Santman, D. (1998). *A teacher's guide to standardized reading tests: Knowledge is power*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. (2002). *An observational survey: Of early literacy achievement*. Heinemann.

Cunningham, P. M. (2000). *Phonics they use*. Longman.

First Grade Reading Academy Professional Development Guide and Video. (1999). Retrieved

March 18, 2008, from Texas Education Agency Web site:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/pro_dev.html

Johnston, P. H. (2000). *Running records: A self-tutoring guide*. Stenhouse Publishers

Kindergarten Teacher Reading Academy Professional Development Guide and Video. (1999) Retrieved March 18, 2008, from Texas Education Agency Web site:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/pro_dev.html

Mills, G. (1999). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Lebanon, Indiana: Prentice Hall.

Moore, J.W., Cunningham, D.W. (2006). *Developing readers & writers in the content areas*. Allyn/Bacon.

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1998). Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children. *Young Children*. 53 (4), 30-46.

Pinnell, G., & Fountas, I. (1992). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Heinemann.

Practice Quiz on Phonics. Retrieved March 18, 2008, from Glendale Community College Web site:

<http://english.glendale.cc.ca.us/phonics.html>

Report of National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read . Retrieved March 18, 2008, Web site:

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/findings.htm>

Savage, J. (2000). *For the love of literature*. McGraw Hill.

Snow, C., Burns, M. & Griffin, P. (1998). Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children.

Retrieved March 18, 2008, from The National Academies Press Web site:

<http://www.nap.edu/books/030906418X/html/index.html>

Soderman, G.O., (2006). *Scaffolding Emergent Literacy*. Allyn/Bacon.

Teaching Reading is Rocket Science. Retrieved March 18, 2008, from <http://www.aft.org//edissues/downloads/rocketsci.pdf> , 9-22.

Vogt, Shearer (2006). *Reading Specialist in the Real World*. Allyn/Bacon.

Wilde, S. (2000). *Miscue analysis made easy*. Heinemann.

Also, textbooks used in RDG 502 and RDG 503