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PhD in Education

**Study Guide for Comprehensive
Examination**

2010-2011

Comprehensive Study Guide Questions

Disclaimer

Please be advised that this PhD study guide is meant exclusively to facilitate your revision for the comprehensive examination. The questions therein may not necessarily appear in the examination, however similar questions may appear. You are therefore advised to study widely across the questions in your area of specialization, the core subjects, and the research questions.

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Guidelines for Sitting Comprehensive Examination

The examination will be for a duration of three days and you will be required to answer a total of 15 questions.

1. Day 1 will cover the core material. To prepare for this day, study materials from your core classes. However, GSED 603-Quantitative Research and GSED 605-Qualitative Research will be a part of Day 3. You will be expected to answer a total of three questions in the morning session and two questions in the afternoon session. Please use the questions from the sheet marked “Core Study Questions” to prepare for Day 1.
2. Day 2 will cover your area of specialization. Please see the section for either *Educational Administration or Curriculum and Instruction*. Study the material from your area to prepare for Day 2. You will answer three questions during the morning session and two in the afternoon.
3. Day 3 will cover information from your research classes, including your proposal class. Study the material marked “Research Study Questions” to prepare for Day 3.
4. You will have 5-6 hours each day to answer your questions. Our preference is that you use the computer to type your answers but if you choose to use a pen and paper, please write legibly. The rubric attached to this document will be used to score your paper.
5. The morning session begins promptly at 9:00 am and will end at 12:30 pm or earlier. You will need to provide your own lunch.
6. The afternoon session begins promptly at 2:00 pm. You may leave anytime after 3:30 pm but not later than 4:30 pm.

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7. This is not an open book examination. No resources should be consulted during the examination. You are required to bring only your writing instruments. We will provide the writing paper or computer as requested.

We pray that your minds will be clear, that you will be able to cogently write your answers, and that what you intend for the reader to understand will be explicitly understood.

Core Questions

1. You have been asked to participate in the development of the core values, mission, and vision of the organization in which you work. What are these values, the vision, and mission, and what was the process used to develop them? How would you differentiate values, vision, and mission? Do you believe this will make a difference in the organization? In what ways? What evidence can you present?
2. What is the nature of philosophy and education and what are their relationships to each other?
3. How does your belief system influence: (a) your view of your role as teacher, (b) the goals of education, (c) educational curriculum, and (d) teaching methods?
4. What are the basic elements of a worldview? How important is a Christian worldview for Christian education practice?
5. Examine the historical perspective of the development of the philosophy of Christian education and justify or question its rationale.
6. Discuss the relationship between Christian and secular philosophies of education.
7. How would you define teaching? Define it in terms of philosophy, psychology, and curriculum.
8. Identify at least four historical names important in the development of theories of learning. What contributions did they make?
9. What are the implications of learning theories for educational practices?
10. What are some of the universalities of families that transcend culture? How do families vary across cultures? What is your comfort level with these differences? Why?

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11. Suppose that an editorial appearing in your local newspaper called for a return to the traditional family values of the 1950s as a way to save the family. Write a letter to the editor explaining why this plea is either desirable or not desirable.
12. Describe the three major approaches to social problems as outlined by Widdison and Delaney (1995). Give an example of each approach.
13. Select one theory of learning presented in class and evaluate it in terms of its
 - i. Capacity
 - ii. Motivation factor
 - iii. Transfer of learning
 - iv. Retention factor
14. What is the role of fathers in rearing children? How are fathers influenced by their involvement in raising children? Support your answers from research.
15. How has the changing economy contributed to increased or decreased rates of poverty in your country? Support your answer.
16. Discuss lecture as a teaching/learning method. How does it compare to other methods/strategies?
17. Discuss lectures in terms of attention span, retention/forgetting curve, motivation, student satisfaction, and general use patterns. What might this indicate to you? Why?
18. List at least three research based teaching strategies for increasing student achievement. Rank them and give a rationale for your choices. Include the names of the researchers associated with each strategy.
19. Develop a process for selecting a new instructional programme in your school. Discuss a research rationale for your choice.

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20. Explain, “If teaching were the same as telling, we’d all be so smart we couldn’t stand ourselves,” from an instructional, research, and evaluative point of view.
21. “We learn by doing if we reflect on what we have done.” What implications does this have for student learning, teacher development, and curriculum planning?
22. Explain the training model and the impact it has on practice.
23. What are the implications of cooperative learning in addressing social problems in your country?
24. According to Ellis and Fouts, Marzano, and Joyce, what have we learnt from the meta-analysis of research on the teaching process in the last 15 years?
25. What is the rationale for using study groups? What is the impact of teacher study groups on professional development, curriculum implementation, and student achievement?
26. What is the model for Instructional Supervision that Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon (2010) advocate? What are the elements of the model? What is involved in each element of the model as each relates to Instructional Supervision.
27. Examining your school context, and according to Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon (2010), what type of school is your school? From the classification of your school describe it giving the characteristics that led to your classification. Also include the type of supervision that is practiced in your school. What could you and the administration of your school do to have it become the desired type of school that Glickman et al. suggest that all school should desire to be?
28. McLymont (2007) provides details about the principles and practices of Dominion High School. How would you classify Dominion High Schools through the “lenses” of Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2010)? From your classification, substantiate your

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decision by providing the evidence from McLymont's book (draft).

Specialization Questions: Curriculum and Instruction

1. What are some considerations for implementing mastery learning in schools?
2. What advice would you give to new teachers based on research that would influence their instruction practices in the classroom? Do you think this advice would make a substantive difference to a new teacher? Explain your rationale.
3. It has been popular to assert that all concerned stakeholders should be involved in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. Give a rationale for the involvement of personnel in the curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation process.
4. What factors should be considered when implementing instructional technology in the curriculum to prevent the technology façade? Does having the appropriate infrastructure make a difference? How and in what ways?
5. Discuss instructional technology as “means” for student learning as opposed to “ends”. Frame your answer in metaphoric language. Be sure the meaning of your metaphor is explained or clearly evidenced.
6. How would the use of appropriate computer software affect the development of learning objectives for a given subject area? How might this influence learning? Can you cite any evidence for your point of view?
7. You were asked to develop a manual for effective school discipline. What are the major components you would include and why? Present your evidence in support of this structure.
8. You have participated in developing the core values, mission, and vision of a new organization. Define the values, vision, and mission. Write actual core values, vision, and

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mission statements and outline the process used to develop them. Do you believe these will make a difference in the organization? In what ways? What evidence can you present?

9. What are the most powerful research verified practices that have come out of the study of psychology in the last 50 years? Relate to the administration of schools, the teaching process, group learning, and individual learning.
10. Compare and contrast constructivism and theism as philosophical and research bases for building curriculum and the practice of teaching.
11. What are the most important variables in the teaching process that are related to learning? What evidence can you present to support your view? Compare and contrast to your own practices. Discuss a plan for improvement.
12. What impact does music have on humans, administration, leadership, teaching, learning, and you?
13. What does the idea of interaction have to do with learning? Discuss primarily from a research perspective. Compare and contrast to your own practices. What can you conclude?
14. Define scholarship. Discuss a process rooted in philosophy, research, and practice that you can support to build a scholarly community. What would you do? Why?
15. Compare and contrast two curriculum development models. Discuss their importance to your local educational context.
16. Compare the assumptions of a “modern” era of curriculum development with those of a “postmodern” era. What has really changed? How has this change influenced curriculum development?

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17. Develop a time line of major events, theories, and people who have influenced the development of curriculum. Which ones have most influenced your practices? How? Why?
18. Develop a curriculum that would enable the teachers in your school to use computers effectively. Be specific and give the rationale for your choice. Use the training model, motivation theories, supervision principles, and learning theories to answer this question.
19. Defend the inclusion of art and music in the curriculum.
20. Discuss the various types of assessment. Rank three and give your rationale.
21. What is the research base supporting curriculum development?
22. Is there a connection between curriculum development and student achievement? Defend your position.
23. Explain the connection between instruction and student achievement and behaviour.
24. What are the most influential names in curriculum development and what are their contributions?
25. What are the most influential names in instruction development and what are their contributions?
26. Which of the teaching processes have the strongest research base? Explain.
27. Explain the rationale behind mastery teaching.
28. What are the implications of cooperative learning in addressing social problems in your country?
29. Why is there an impact of teacher study groups on professional development, curriculum implementation, and student achievement?

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30. List the major innovations in education over the last 15 years and discuss the research base of each.
31. What major curriculum innovations have occurred in your country over the last 10 years? What is the rationale for each?
32. What do letter grades (percentiles) have to do with assessment and achievement?
33. Explain the process of change in education.
34. Define knowledge. What ways can it be classified?
35. Framework for viewing assessment.
36. What implications do multiple intelligences and learning style have on curriculum development, implementation, administration, and leadership?
37. What is an advanced curriculum process? What is included in this process? How should the process be critiqued?
38. Describe a curriculum framework you believe is efficacious. Why do you believe this to be so? What research, logical, philosophical, or other reasons can you give to buttress your point of view?
39. Describe a curriculum development research process. How does or should research influence the curriculum development process?
40. What kinds of research are typically conducted by curriculum developers? Why do you think this is so? What is your analysis?
41. How would you define advanced teaching processes? Why are advanced teaching processes important? Describe one such process. Why would you choose to teach using the process that you described?

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42. Discuss the idea of teaching repertoire paying particular attention to advanced teaching processes. Why is it that even though many advanced teaching processes are available, so few are being used?

Specialization Questions: Educational Administration

General Administration and Leadership

1. Distinguish among autocratic, democratic, transactional, transformational, followership, situational, laissez-faire, and servant leadership styles. Support your observations by offering examples of behaviors, assumptions, and or traits which are common to each style.
2. Every nation's educational system reflects values and norms which are part of the social fabric in that country. What characteristics mark the approach that is typical of the system of education in your country? How are widely held social values in your country manifested in the conception and operation of its schools?
3. Work motivation has always been central to the establishment of a healthy culture and climate in an organization setting. What would be your approach to motivating the workers in your organization? What long term goals would you hope to achieve? In your response you should make reference to at least two leading motivation theorists.
4. What is the relationship between theory and practice in educational administration? Select a theory of organization or leadership and discuss its principles, strengths, and weaknesses. In your response indicate how the theory may be applied in an organizational setting of your choice.
5. Effective communication skills are essential components of leadership. Briefly describe the communication process. Choose one particular organizational setting (e.g., high school principal, department head, college president) and outline steps that should be taken to ensure that the communication network is effective.

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6. Decision making lies at the core of effective administration. What is the role and importance of research in the decision making process? What is your approach to decision making? Is your style situational? Why or why not?
6. For some theorists, leadership is about creating the culture and climate where people would like to be. How do you relate to this notion of leadership? What can you add to make your definition of leadership more complete?
7. Why are many of the characteristics of Weber's ideal bureaucracy still used in schools today?

Human Resource Administration

1. As a president of a large university, you are attempting to improve the morale of workers on your campus. Outline the actions that should be taken to achieve and maintain a high level of morale throughout the school year.
2. In order for teachers to become well adjusted and perform adequately on the job, they must be oriented to the new environment. As a vice president for a college, how should the induction and orientation processes be structured?
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external recruiting. What techniques can administrators use to improve their recruiting and selection practices?
4. Consider the following statement: "The quality of the appraiser–appraisee relationship considerably influences the effectiveness of the performance appraisal process." How can the manager or administrator improve the quality of the appraiser–appraisee relationship?
5. Respond to the following statement: "A well-designed, carefully implemented recruitment and selection programme eliminates the need for an induction plan."

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Educational Finance and Marketing

1. Traditionally, the school budget has been represented by an equilateral triangle: the base is the educational programme, with one side the cost necessary to produce that programme and the other side the revenue plan. As head of the department explain the interrelationships among these three components as you work through a yearly budgeting process.
2. Describe the steps in the budgeting process. Preface your remarks by delimiting the setting. Consider such factors as personnel, time frames, and format. No dollar figures necessary.
3. The accounting process should conform to acceptable standards and practices. Discuss the whole process of accounting including definition, objectives, principles, basic concepts, auditing, and any problems or issues that may be of concern.
4. A school budget is an expression of the educational plans with an estimate of receipts and expenditures necessary to finance the service and facilities required to provide the desired educational programme. How is this information factored into short, medium, and long-range planning?

Principles of Educational Supervision

1. How are the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation phases of a supervisory evaluation interrelated?
2. It has been proposed that in every school a plan for supervision should be developed. Among the options are: (a) clinical supervision, (b) collegial supervision, (c) developmental, and (d) informal supervision. Describe how this plan might be operationalized.

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3. There are a number of significant ethical concepts and considerations embedded in the discipline of supervision. What are they and why are they so important to the process of supervision?
4. What are the key components in an effective teacher supervision and evaluation programme? Consider such aspects as why, who, when, where, what, and how.

Research Questions

1. What are some of the similarities and differences involved in collecting qualitative and quantitative data?
2. What are some of the effects of Action Research on instruction practice, curriculum design, and implementation? What can you conclude? Why would you make those generalizations?
3. You are interested in student learning at your institution. How would you utilize action research to help you understand the process? Give the steps. Why are these steps important? Will the process improve learning? How do you know?
4. Discuss content analysis in research from a qualitative point of view.
5. What is triangulation in research? What does triangulation add to a research study? Should triangulation in some form exist in every study? Why do you think so?
6. Describe the relationship between educational research and educational evaluation. Reduce this relationship to a model or outline.
7. As a classroom teacher, you have observed the increasing high level of school violence. Design a research to study this problem. Describe your research method, data collection sources, and data analyses strategies. What theoretical framework will inform your study? Why?
8. Identify the similarities and differences in the research process/steps for quantitative and qualitative research approaches in education. Discuss process/steps in terms of philosophical assumption.

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9. Identify a research interest in your organization or school and describe an appropriate research problem/issue, three research questions, and a general outline of a research design to study this problem/issue.
10. Some of the key terms used in educational research are: variables, validity, generalizability, hypothesis, and reliability. Describe the difference in meaning of these terms for quantitative and qualitative studies. What differences might this mean to what is done to the results obtained?
11. Describe correlation coefficient. Describe each of the following: R^2 , Standard error of estimate, and scatter plot in relation to the accuracy of the prediction equation/line/model. How are constant, slope, and the predication equation identified?
12. Define and describe an independent t-test. Explain what is a null and alternative hypothesis for the independent t-test. What are they used for?
13. Explain/describe how homogeneity (equality) of variance assumption is met.
14. What are the elements of descriptive statistics and describe their use?
15. Know how to conduct the following statistical procedures using SPSS:
 - a. Measures of central tendency
 - b. Measures of dispersion
 - c. Stem and Leaf display
 - d. Box and whisker plot

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Appendix A

General Instructions (for Educational Administration, as an example)

There will be four areas covered in this examination. There will be four questions in General Administration and Leadership Theory and two each in the other three areas.

Candidates are expected to answer two questions from the General Administration and Leadership area and one each from the other three areas for a total of five questions.

Day 1

Morning Session: 9:00 am–12:30 pm

1. General Administration and Leadership: four questions (Choose any two)
2. Human Resources Administration: two questions (Choose any one)

Afternoon Session: 2:00 pm–4:00 pm

1. Principles of Educational Supervision: two questions (Choose any one)
2. Educational Finance and Marketing: two questions (Choose any one)

Appendix B

Ph D Comprehensive Rubric

Specialization: _____

1. Language Usage (mechanics)—spelling, syntax, punctuation, paragraphing
2. Cohesion—flow, transitions, easy to read, follows professional format
3. Cogency—persuasiveness of argument, presentation of case, comprehension of question
4. Scholarship—citation of authorities, references
5. Content—completeness of response, depth of response, correctness of response

Scoring

- | | |
|------|---|
| 0 | - did not answer |
| 1 | - answer is not appropriate to question |
| 2-4 | - poor |
| 5-6 | - average |
| 7-8 | - good |
| 9-10 | - excellent |

Results: Pass—overall average a minimum of 6.5; Fail—overall average less than 6.5.

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