

MA-TESL Comprehensive Exam for August 20, 2013

Instructions for test-takers: This is a “closed book” exam. Thus, you may not use any reference materials while responding; you may not consult notes, books, and/or articles during the examination. If

additional files or documents that may reside on the computer hard drive or be available through a network, the Internet or any other external website or device, or in your e-mail.

I. Foundations and Methods (two questions; answer both)

1. English language teaching professionals recognize the importance of various learner characteristics in language teaching and learning. Some of the learner characteristics commonly mentioned are listed below:

- Age
- Aptitude
- Beliefs and attitudes
- Identity and ethnic group affiliation
- Intelligence
- Learning strategies
- Learning styles
- Motivation
- Personality

Select FOUR of the nine terms listed. For EACH one selected, (2) _____

II. Curriculum and Program Administration (two questions; answer both)

1. Imagine that you are a language program administrator. You have just returned from a

TESOL convention where you attended numerous sessions.

administration. During those sessions, you gained insights into some of the challenges that you are currently facing. You've returned to your home institution determined to do the following: (a) inspire innovation among faculty, (b) reinvigorate burnt out faculty, (c) initiate strategic planning, (d) become a better advocate of language program students and faculty, (e) run more effective meetings, and (f) do a better job of decision making and negotiating.

Select FOUR of these areas for immediate attention. In your opening paragraph, identify the challenges that you are going to focus on. Provide a rationale for your decision to pursue each area, and then describe the steps that you might take to bring about each of these programmatic changes. Refer to relevant literature when appropriate.

1. Many aspects of sociolinguistic research depend on the notion of linguistic variation. Explain why the study of linguistic variation is central to the field of sociolinguistics, citing at least three empirical studies of linguistic variation and describing how their findings help to understand the relationship between language variation and non-linguistic factors.

IV Grammar (two questions answer both)

1. The first part of the sentence is a complete sentence.

V. SLA (two questions; answer both)

1. Age and SLA

The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) has led to a long-standing yet contentious line of research in SLA. Define the CPH and the controversy surrounding it. Cite two different positions and for each one describe what research on age from both empirical and theoretical/position papers has shown. For each position, discuss implications of the CPH to L2 policy and practice.

2. Research Methods in SLA

As a field of empirical inquiry, understanding L2 research methods is essential to SLA.