Western Connecticut State University
Department of Education and Educational Psychology

Doctor of Education in Instructional Leadership

Comprehensive Written Examination:
Guidelines, Suggested Bibliography, and Sample Questions

Revised 9/6/07, 12/4/07, 2/16/10, 5/19/12

For Additional Information contact:
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Program Coordinator
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Guidelines for the Comprehensive Written Examination for the Doctor of Education Degree in Instructional Leadership

General Information: The comprehensive examination will be administered in two parts. Each part will consist of a 4-hour block of time for a total of 8 hours. Each section of the comprehensive examination consists of essay or application questions selected by the program faculty to represent the course content of the various strands of the program. Therefore, preparation for the comprehensive written examination is dependent upon the student completing all prior coursework designated in the Program of Study, and maintaining currency by reading the literature, and referring to review topics as well as the recommended bibliography included in each course syllabus.

Comprehensive Written Examination Content:
Part I will include coursework consisting of Inquiry Strategies related to quantitative and qualitative methods applied to educational research. Specifically coursework related to ED860: Quantitative Methods Applied to Educational Research, ED861: Qualitative Methods Applied to Educational Research, ED865: Introduction to Educational Research Designs, and ED805: Research and Evaluation in Education will be addressed through the interpretation of data and published research.

Part II will include essay questions in three parts.

Part II.A will include coursework related to the Theory and Foundation of Instructional Leadership. This section consists of coursework specifically related to ED 800: Foundations of Instructional Leadership, ED 801: Group Leadership, Group Processes, and Team Building in Education, and ED 821: Leadership Assessment and Development.


Part II.C will include coursework related to Areas of Specialization, specifically ED822: Talent Development Across the Curriculum, ED823: Models of Creative Thinking, and ED824: Diversity Issues in Schools.

Students may consult the Program Coordinator for further guidance in preparation of the examination. However, students should be advised that information will not be provided about specific questions included on the exam.

Examination Schedule: The Comprehensive Written Examination will be conducted in two parts. It will be administered the last two Saturdays in July, 2012. Part I will be administered Saturday, July 21, 2012 from 9 AM to 1 PM and Part II will be administered Saturday, July 28, 2012 from 9 AM to 1 PM. Students who have completed all required coursework, with the exception of the dissertation seminars, may sit for the examination. Students are required to EdD in Instructional Leadership: Guidelines for Comprehensive Written Examination
have passed the comprehensive examination prior to their registering for dissertation seminar, ED 881. Students who do not pass a section may retake that section once. A date and time in late August or early September will be scheduled for retaking one or more parts of the exam.

**Examination Scoring:** Each question will be assigned to two readers who evaluate the answers according to the following scoring system: 4 = Excellent (Exceeds Expectations), 3 = Above Average (Target), 2 = Pass (Acceptable), and 1= Poor (Unacceptable). In order to pass the comprehensive exam, students must obtain a score of 2 or higher on each section.

4 = Excellent (Exceeds Expectations): Indicates a superior level of understanding of the concepts and issues related to the question, providing an insightful response as well as a high level of organization and writing skills.

3 = Above Average (Target): Indicates a better than average understanding of the concepts and issues related to the question, providing a comprehensive response as well as an above average organization of the material and writing skills.

2 = Pass (Acceptable): Indicates an adequate understanding of the concepts and issues related to the question, providing a response that addresses the question as well as a satisfactory organization of the material and writing skills.

1 = Poor (Unacceptable): Indicates an inadequate level of understanding of the concepts and issues related to the question, providing an unsatisfactory response to the question as well as a poor presentation of the response to the question.

**Examination Results:** The program coordinator reports the results to the Dean of the School of Professional Studies and the department members. Students will be notified in writing of the results of the comprehensive examination within 3 weeks of the administration of the examination.

NCATE Assessments 1a and 1b- The exam consists of eight sections, which are divided into two parts. Part 1 consists of sections 1-5 and Part 2 includes sections 6-8. While each section has multiple parts and these parts are scored individually, an overall score is assigned to each section using the following rubric.
Scoring Guide
This rubric is designated with the following point values: Target = 3 points, Acceptable = 2 points, and Unacceptable = 1 point.

A passing score for each rubric criterion is indicated by Acceptable or Target.

To determine a Candidate’s overall score on this assessment, the number of points achieved on all criteria will be totaled. The maximum number of points possible for all criteria for this assessment is 24 (8 criteria x 3 points maximum). The following guide shows the range of points for overall performance on the assessment at each level: Target= 17-24; Acceptable= 9-16; Unacceptable = 1-8.

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Program Review Questions

Inquiry Strategies: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods as Applied to Educational Research

Part I will include coursework consisting of Inquiry Strategies related to quantitative and qualitative methods applied to educational research. Specifically coursework related to ED860: Quantitative Methods Applied to Educational Research, ED861: Qualitative Methods Applied to Educational Research, ED865: Introduction to Educational Research Designs, and ED805: Research and Evaluation in Education will be covered with hands-on computer applications as well as statistical analysis and interpretation.

Suggested Bibliography:

ED860: Quantitative Methods Applied to Educational Research

ED826: Quantitative and Qualitative Applications of Educational Research

ED861: Qualitative Methods Applied to Educational Research

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Optional Texts:

ED865: Introduction to Educational Research Designs

Optional Texts:

ED805: Program Administration and Assessment (3 SH)

Note: Also review all course notes and handouts.

Example Items:
1. A researcher wishes to understand whether a particular curricular strategy has an impact on reading scores. He develops an appropriate intervention with multiple components and randomly assigns 12 classrooms from two different school districts to one of three conditions: (a) a treatment condition in which teachers implement all components of the intervention; (b) a comparison condition in which teachers implement some, but not all, components of the intervention; and (c) a control condition in which teachers do not implement the intervention: these teachers carry on with their traditional curriculum. He uses a valid and reliable instrument to measure the pretest and posttest literacy scores of students in all three groups. He runs the appropriate analyses and learns that all three groups are

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equivalent on pretest scores. He then runs the appropriate analyses to determine if the groups are equivalent on posttest scores.

Use the output scores from the SPSS tables below to:
(a) complete the following research template (items 1 – 12 below) for the analyses run on the posttest scores;
(b) answer and interpret the question following the template (item 11 below).

1. State the design of the research question:
2. State the research question(s):
3. State the independent variable(s) and levels (if appropriate):
4. State the dependent variable(s):
5. State the null hypotheses:
6. State the alternative non-directional hypotheses:
7. State the alpha significance level at which the statistic will be tested and why this value was used.
8. Using the output tables and the guide for language, report the results for main effects.
9. Using the output tables below, plot the mean scores for each of the three groups. Remember to label your axes, and provide a title and legend.
10. Using the output tables and the guide for language, report the results for the interaction.
11. Provide an interpretation of the main effects and interaction. What do these results indicate?
12. Please discuss one internal threat to the design of this research:
   a. Name it:
   b. Define it:
   c. State how it applies:
   d. State how you could address it:

OUTPUT:

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<th>Between-Subjects Factors</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
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### Between-Subjects Factors

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### Descriptive Statistics

**Dependent Variable: LiteracyPost**

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### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

**Dependent Variable: LiteracyPost**

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<th>Sig.</th>
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a. R Squared = .798 (Adjusted R Squared = .795)
Post Hoc Tests

Condition

Multiple Comparisons

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<th>(J) Condition</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
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<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>2.8328 5.1519</td>
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</table>

Based on observed means.
The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 4.467.
* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Please note: You will be provided a Guide for Language to assist you with writing up the results, but it will contain the language for all of the statistical analyses. You must be able to select the correct data analysis procedure to apply the language.

2. You develop and implement a survey for students and teachers in the comparison and treatment conditions in the study from question 1 above. Two selective themes emerge from the four open-ended items on the survey:

- Teachers in the comparison and treatment conditions believed that the intervention was difficult to implement; they often were confused as to what to do. They reported wishing that they had a teachers’ guide.

- Students in the comparison and treatment conditions believed that the literacy intervention motivated them to want to read more.

a. Discuss how these themes either support or do not support the quantitative findings above. If you decided to implement the intervention, what might be some next steps to take to ensure success?

b. If the survey data are collected at the same time as quantitative data and used for the purpose of triangulation, what is the type of mixed-methods design that the researcher is using?

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3. You were asked by your Assistant Superintendent to help analyze the outcomes of a needs assessment that will guide your district’s next accreditation visit and the 5-year strategic plan. All faculty, administration, and staff have received a 50-item survey asking them about their needs. The survey has both Likert style items on a 4-point scale and open-ended items. Describe the research design and a list of procedures for collecting and analyzing these data and for reporting the results to the Board of Education.
Theory and Foundation
Part II.A will cover coursework related to the Theory and Foundation of Instructional Leadership. This section will cover coursework specifically related to ED 800: Foundations of Instructional Leadership, ED 801: Group Leadership, Group Processes, and Team Building in Education, and ED 821 Leadership Assessment and Development.

Suggested Bibliography:

ED 800: Foundations of Instructional Leadership

Optional Texts:

ED 801: Group Leadership, Group Processes, and Team Building in Education

ED 821 Leadership Assessment and Development
Review course notes and handouts.

Example Items:

1. Based on a review of the literature on organizational change, list several primary factors associated with instructional leaders as “change agents” and explain how these factors help to promulgate successful change in an organization.

2. Instructional leadership may be viewed through various constructs. List several of these constructs and explain how these qualities contribute to the success of an organization (department, school, school district).

3. Increased student achievement is an important outcome in measuring the success of a school and its leadership. Explain how instructional leaders can have a significant impact on this measure.

4. Based on a review of the literature on instructional leadership, compare and contrast two leadership styles, listing the major constructs of each.
Theory and Foundation and Areas of Specialization

Suggested Bibliography:


ED804: Learning, Cognition, and Teaching

There were other articles, but these are the ones we discussed the most:

ED805: Program Administration and Assessment
ED820: Topics in Curriculum and Instruction

COURSE RESOURCES: Materials, resources, articles, PowerPoint presentations, and sample assignments will be available at http://wcsu820.pbworks.com.

ED802: Emerging Instructional Technologies

Note: Also review all course notes and handouts.

Example Items:
1. Select an instructional model and critique the model based on its underlying theory and related research.

2. Locate a publication that reports improvement in student learning. Provide a critique of this report using both expected standards for the domain and the outcomes documented by the report.

3. Analyze and critique an instructional technology implementation project using NETS-S and NETS-T standards.

4. You are a mentor for a new colleague. One of your responsibilities is to provide assistance for improving your charge’s instructional strategies. He asks you for help with classroom management techniques. Describe how you would help him to implement a personal professional development plan for assisting with this issue.

5. A teacher has implemented an action research project in her classroom. Using an article about a report of an action research project, be a “critical friend” and provide feedback based on her investigation.
Areas of Specialization
Part II.C will cover coursework related to Areas of Specialization, specifically related to ED822: Talent Development Across the Curriculum, ED823: Models of Creative Thinking, and ED824: Diversity Issues in Schools.

Suggested Bibliography:

ED822: Talent Development Across the Curriculum

ED823-71: Models of Creative Thinking

ED824: Diversity Issues in Schools

Required Reading: Students are responsible to read, review, analyze, and reflect upon the literature related to current and noted theory and practice. Through the reading of assigned journal articles students will be prepared to engage in class discussions and interactive group activities.

Note: Also review all course notes and handouts.

Example Items:

1. Describe and support your perspective of talent development. Describe how this view integrates with a specific set of standards in your district’s curriculum.

2. Outline a professional development plan for implementing creative thinking across the curriculum at a particular grade level.

3. Describe ways that creative thinking supports diversity in schools.

4. The school board has asked you to review an educational model for differentiating the curriculum. Select a model and provide a critique.

5. Describe how you will review standards for instructional technology across your school and district curriculum.