STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Congratulations! You've made it this far, completed the course work and are preparing for the "comps." We hope this guide will aid you in that preparation.

The comprehensive examination allows the doctoral student the opportunity to synthesize knowledge at an advanced academic level; each category represented in the Program of Studies is included in the comprehensive examination. It is not simply another final exam on courses completed, but rather reflects your ability to demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of your field of study.

The Educational Foundations comps are take-home exams. You will receive the comps via e-mail and have approximately two weeks to complete the exam. The dates are listed on the Educational Leadership home page. The take-home format of the exam suggests you will have ample time to provide well-organized, well-developed, comprehensive, and well-cited responses drawing on both materials you have used in relevant classes as well as outside resources.

PURPOSE: The COE/EDL doctoral handbook includes the following statements of purpose for the doctoral comprehensive exam (p. 13): "Their primary purpose is to give students an opportunity to (1) Demonstrate their understanding of basic concepts beyond the final examinations taken in specific courses; (2) Form and articulate opinions and concepts in areas of study; (3) use methods of argument, presentations, conclusions, implications, applications, and organization as they synthesize knowledge from their studies; (4) Integrate knowledge with their own professional experiences."

PREPARATION: You should prepare for the take-home exam well before you receive the exam. Begin by reviewing the materials (e.g. readings, notes, discussions, essays, or other materials) from related courses and identifying major concepts or ideas. Use course syllabi and class readings to review major arguments presented in readings. If possible, identify a group of students with whom you can study and exchange ideas. If not familiar with APA 6th edition guidelines, borrow a manual or look for websites that will help you because you will need to use APA standards for formatting, citing, and references.

EXPECTATIONS: As doctoral students, you are expected to add to the body of knowledge by formulating your own arguments while using an extensive body of literature. While some questions will have several subsets of questions, you should be able to frame these questions within a larger argument, which you identify in the introduction and thesis statement. The reader should be able to easily identify your argument within the first or second paragraph.

You are expected to answer all parts of the question, use an appropriate number of sources (at least 5-7 sources per question), be able to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the question, and be able to bring these various sources into conversation with each other to show the nuances within different understandings. The writing should be clear, coherent, and well-organized.

FORM: You will be given one question from each of the Foundations disciplines covered in the EDL department (anthropology, sociology, history, and philosophy). You will answer two questions out of the four provided. In some cases, you will be asked to draw on your professional and/or personal experiences.
LENGTH: While there is not a required number of pages, a well-developed response to each question should probably range from about 8 to 15 pages. It would be fair to say that any response less than five (5) pages would not allow you to develop a comprehensive response. In addition, any response over 25 pages indicates you have not adequately developed a concise and coherent argument.

CITATIONS: All responses should use APA 6th edition with regards to citations and should include a bibliography at the end of each question.

EVALUATION: Questions are prepared and read by faculty members in each area of expertise. Student responses are blinded so faculty do not know who wrote them. Two faculty members read and evaluate each question for accuracy, thoroughness, comprehensiveness, clarity, and appropriateness. The exam is graded as "high pass," "pass," "conditional pass," or "failure." Successful completion of all sections of the comprehensive exams is a requirement for Advancement to Candidacy.

Below you will find specific study information for each of the four Educational Foundations disciplines.

**SOCIOLOGY:**

Some of the major concepts with which you should have familiarity are:

- social transmission theories, interpretive theories, and theories of transformation: their assumptions, their defining characteristics, their proponents, their critics, their inter-relationships, their theoretical and applied aspects. Understanding of key terms, touchstone references, key people, key focus questions, and key educational issues from more than a single theoretical perspective is expected.
- relationships between education systems and society, including a historical and contemporary understanding of economic and political influences.
- the influence of societal organization on aspects of schooling (e.g. power, control).
- the nature of sociological inquiry: its characteristics, what it enables, what it constrains.
- the contributions of various theoretical perspectives (e.g. functionalism, labeling theory, conflict theory, reproduction theory, phenomenology, critical theory) to discussions of educational reform in historical and contemporary settings.

**Sample Questions:**

The following questions are from previous comprehensive exams. They are presented here to give you an idea of the kinds of questions that appear in the sociology foundations exam.

1. Sociologists have long been interested in the relationship of social class and education. Identify three social theorists who address this relationship and describe their arguments. Delineate the similarities and differences in their positions and explain how their work links participation in school to educational achievement and occupational attainment.

2. Sociologists and educators have developed a range of arguments to explain the low academic achievement of members of particular minority groups. Identify and describe two contrasting theoretical interpretations of school failure and delineate the differences between the two positions. In your response, refer to the empirical work of at least two theorists within each paradigm and their contributions to the theoretical arguments. Discuss the implications of each theoretical argument on school-based interventions and the recommendations each theorist would make to improve academic achievement.
3. School districts throughout the country are experimenting with strategies to increase parental choice in schooling (e.g., charter schools, vouchers, etc.). Select four individuals from the following list of educational sociologists and social theorists and discuss how their work relates to issues around school choice. How do the central themes of each theorist’s work justify or critique the advantages and disadvantages of this school reform movement?

Theorists & texts:

The following theorists and texts are listed to help you identify sources from which to draw:

- Thomas Adorno
- Paula Gunn Allen
- Michael Apple
- Jean Baudrillard
- Walter Benjamin
- Peter Berger
- Basil Bernstein
- Allan Bloom
- Barry Bluestone
- Pierre Bourdieu
- Samuel Bowles
- Nancy Chodorow
- John Chubb
- James Coleman
- R.W. Connell
- Linda Darling Hammond
- Lisa Delpit
- Jacques Derrida
- John Dewey
- Emile Durkheim
- Frederick Erickson
- Michelle Fine
- Michel Foucault
- Paulo Freire
- Harold Garfinkel
- Carol Gilligan
- Henry Giroux
- Erving Goffman
- Jurgen Habermas
- Donna Haraway
- Nancy Hartsock
- Max Horkheimer
- William James
- Jonathan Kozol
- Annette Lareau
- Jean-Francois Lyotard
- Karl Mannheim
- Karl Marx
- Ray McDermott
- Peggy McIntosh
- Peter McLaren
- George Herbert Mead
- Robert Merton
- C. Wright Mills
- Jeannie Oakes
- John Ogbu
- Talcott Parsons
- Susan Urmston Philips
- Theodore Schultz
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
- Joel Spring
- Lester Thurow
- Herve Varenne
- Max Weber
- Amy Stuart Wells
- Cornel West
- Paul Willis

Good overall texts:


Related primary source texts related to sociological foundations of education:


History can be studied from many different perspectives. Indeed the perception of the historian can become a study in itself (historiography). However, one key element is to understand that there are some essential/timeless themes that you can discover in your study of history. The following list is illustrative of those themes and, by no means, exhaustive. It does reflect the type of themes that can be studied in the History of American Education.
Theme #1: Presentism in American Education: What values should we use to judge historical figures?

Theme #2: Schools and Illness: The history and interaction of disease and man

Theme #3: Morality in Politics. (AKA: The Sally Hemmings affair) Should this affect our view of contemporary politicians?

Theme #4: Heroes in American Education History

Theme #5: The Role of the common school in America

Theme #6: Great Women in American Education History

Theme #7: Racism in American Education History

Theme #8: Early Arizona Education and Educators

Theme #9: Philosophies of Education and their impact on teaching and learning

Theme #10: Assessment and Accountability in Education

Theme #11: Psychological Analysis of History: “Invisible Scars” in Education

Theme #12: The role of the Federal Government in Education

Theme #13: The role of the courts in Education

Theme #14: School Safety and Security

Theme #15: Childhood in America

Please be prepared to address these themes, and other major themes in the History of American Education, by grounding yourself in the authors, books and major talking points of the themes. How will the themes be structured? The following features offer some suggestions of its essential components. The themes in education that were listed above may be embedded in general questions of knowledge such as the following:

1. Individuals whose ideas of education have influenced the development of education in the U.S.A.
2. Social Issues and the interaction with Education
3. Problems of interpreting historical development of education

These overarching structures are only meant to be illustrative and not comprehensive.

Preparation:

First and foremost be prepared to address the themes, eras, and overarching structures by preparing in advance. My advice is to form a study group to prepare background material and sources for many of these themes so that whichever questions, themes or perspectives are used, you will be prepared to
answer the questions with a minimum of time spent in doing the original research and hunting down sources to cite.

Second, spend time organizing the material to be prepared. The History of American Education is a broad topic and anything that you can do to organize yourself, so that you do not have to scramble at the last minute to prepare, will pay dividends in the quality of your work.

Finally, clear your calendar for significant portions of time during the writing phase of the comprehensive exams. The one failure that has created problems for students above all others is a failure to allocate enough time to write on these exams. Give yourself blocks of time where you can just sit down with your resources, and think and write.

Any doubt in the opinion of the reader as to the quality of answers to the questions often leads to a negative evaluation of the examination. As a general practice, readers of comprehensive examinations place high expectations on the candidate. This means that the quality of answers must be high to receive a positive evaluation. However, taking comprehensive examinations can be, and always is, a rewarding and enriching experience provided the candidate is well prepared. This suggests that a candidate must take comprehensive examinations only when he/she is absolutely certain that he/she is well prepared. Usually the candidate's advisor helps to make a determination as to whether he/she is ready to take the examinations. It is often in the best interest of the candidate to consult his/her advisor on the various aspects of the comprehension examination, including the areas. However, the decision often rests with the candidate himself/herself.

What, then does preparation to take comprehensive examinations entail? It means, among other things:
1. Having confidence in oneself as a candidate for a doctoral degree.
2. Having a broad and comprehensive understanding of the essential components of the area of study.
3. Demonstrating originality in understanding historical concepts and interpreting them in a logical manner.
4. Demonstrating ability in the understanding of groups of historians, their common theses, bias and understandings of history and comparing and contrasting them (Historiography)
5. Demonstrating the ability to draw logical conclusions and to discuss implications from a properly structured argument or reasoned analysis of historical issues.

References/Literature:

The following publications are suggested as source materials which discuss the history of education in the U.S. Although they must not be regarded as absolute, they should be considered quite adequate and complete to enable candidates to prepare for the comprehensive examinations.

K-12 Emphasis:


CC/HE Emphasis:

For all students:


ANTHROPOLOGY:

As a subfield of anthropology, educational anthropology is centrally focused on cultural aspects of education, including how culture is transmitted, shared, acquired, and modified through and by schooling.

Some of the major themes with which you should have some familiarity include:

- Anthropological approaches to the study of schooling, both methodologically and theoretically
- The role of education in cultural acquisition and transmission
- Culture, modernization, and formal education
- School practices and community life: congruence, conflict and discontinuity
- Cultural production and reproduction in contemporary schools
- Cultural studies in school leadership and policy

You should be familiar with work by some of these major scholars in the field of educational anthropology:

- George and Louise Spindler
- Margaret Mead
- Dell Hymes
- Fred Erickson
Sample questions might include:

- How does educational anthropology inform a key issue in schooling? Chose an issue that is relevant to your work. Issues might include high stakes testing, school reform efforts, meeting the needs of English language learners, providing services to students with disabilities, etc. In your response, consider the range of ways that educational anthropologists have conceptualized or contributed to the issue.

- Anthropologists of education assert that various aspects of cultural identity shape schooling. Race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, language, are all critical areas of inquiry for educational anthropologists. Discuss in detail the multiple relationships among these categories around a particular topic in education. Draw on the work of educational anthropologists to illustrate the way cultural constructs and their intersections shape our understanding of the issue you’ve chosen to discuss.

In addition to the readings for your EDF 704 course, you should also consult recent editions of the journal Anthropology and Education Quarterly, as well as some of the texts listed below.

**Child Rearing and Enculturation**


Cross-Cultural and Everyday Cognition

Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy

Language at Home and at School

Socialization and Schooling

School as Socio-Cultural Structure

**Schooling and Reproduction**


**Accommodation, Assimilation and Resistance**


**Cultural Conflict and Social Inequality**


**Ethnographic Research and Successful Interventions**


**Schooling and public policy**


Race, Social Class, Gender (and their intersections) in and out of school


PHILOSOPHY:

A central theme for the philosophic study of education and leadership is the question of Justice. The most influential single work in philosophy and in philosophy of education, Plato’s THE REPUBLIC, is a disquisition on the question of justice, and then education, in human societies. The extent to which educators, and educational leadership understands public justice in democracy, will be a measure of whether those professional can safeguard or may squander the opportunity to serve children in a truly public education. Philosophy of education takes many forms but is based on study and discussion of education as a function of the kind of society we want, need and have. The distance between the kinds of persons our children and we would be with education, and the kind we would be without one, is measured in many directions. What do we mean by education? When is it –good? When not? What is the educated person? When are we doing justice in the act of educating a person, a child? When are we not? Your comprehensive understanding should be tested based on a solid foundation of individual thinkers and schools of thought that have had an impact on education and schooling, theory and practice. Students will explore questions about the purposes, ends, and means of education, and begin a lifelong process of assess own philosophy, defined as a set of commitments. Content knowledge about philosophical debates about controversies in education and improvement in understanding philosophical ideas, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of different philosophical arguments is essential. Seeing the relevance of philosophical discourse to their own experience, and formulating and defending their own views on controversial issues. After taking this course, students should have enhanced abilities to identify and explain the ultimate goals of education and its role in society; they should be better able to rationally form and justify opinions about controversies in education; and they should be able to assess the available options in ethical dilemmas facing teachers and come to morally acceptable decisions.

The question: that is the heart of philosophy, and philosophy of education. These are but a few, of thousands: Should children receive a free education? What are the responsibilities of society concerning the education of children with exceptional talent or special needs? What subjects should children be taught? Should ethics and religious studies be taught in public schools? Is it possible and right to teach children to be virtuous or to become good citizens? Should education in the USA be multicultural and multilingual? Should mathematics and science be taught neutrally or as culturally specific approaches to understanding the world? Is it fair to stream or track classes with respect to children’s talent, or should classes consist of children of mixed ability? Should parents or the state have the most control in deciding what kind of education children receive? To be professionals do teachers, education leaders and policy-makers need to have some understanding of philosophy?

Foundational grasp of American philosophy of education rests on a basic comprehension of the wide historical influence of Plato, Aristotle, and Rousseau. Nearly every Western discourse on the subject refers to these thinkers. In addition, American philosopher John Dewey is a continuing stimulant to discussion of justice, education and democracy. The following primary source works will be very relevant to your comprehensive preparation.
Plato’s *The Republic* And The *Meno*
Aristotle: *The Nichomachean Ethics* And The *Politics*
J.J. Rousseau: Discourse on Inequality and *Emile*
John Dewey:
  My Pedagogic Creed*
  School and Society
  Democracy and Education*
  Experience and Education*
  Reconstruction in Philosophy
*especially
One of the best general commentaries on Democracy in Education: Amy Gutmann. *Democratic Education*

Also historically influential, the work of:

Following these important philosophic/historic touchstones, philosophy of education has multiple sites of influence, and schools of thought. The following schools and ideas in Philosophy of Education- Analytic, Continental, Critical Theory, Epistemology and Logic, Ethics and Political Philosophy are well worth your attention and most clearly described in:

Important sources of influences on American education and growing from the discourses begun by Plato, Aristotle, and Rousseau particularly are German Romanticism, and Enlightenment Liberalism, also more recently the dialogues on Feminism and Postmodernism. For high quality discussion of these areas see:
Within Curren you will also find good articles on topics germane to Philosophy of Education: Theories of Teaching and Learning, Learning Capacity, Moral Education, Art and Education, Education and Living Standards, Equality and Equity, Multicultural education, Inclusion and Special Education, Academic Freedom.

More recently regarding the distribution of public goods, including public education:


International/multicultural perspectives on philosophy of education are innumerable.

For important primary source perspective on the general philosophic influence of Indian Philosophy see:


Chinese Education Philosophy


See also the excellent commentary on the popular “Philosophy for Children” program. Rainville, Paul. “Philosophy for Children in Native America: a Post-Colonial Critique” *Analytic Teaching*. Vol. 21, No 1

Also, Richardson, Troy. “Between Native American and Continental Philosophy: A comparative approach to narrative and the emergence of responsible selves.” in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 16 AUG 2011

Sample questions:

1. Justice, described in the opening of Plato’s Republic: where persons are not denied what they are due, is a central theme in education throughout history. Describe how a range of philosophers of education, from different perspectives, would define and defend what is due to children and to society through education. Use examples from five different thinkers-three of them classic/historic and three of them from roughly the last 100 years.

2. Discuss ways in which thinkers address education questions/issues through each of five different lenses of philosophic inquiry: e.g. Ethics and Moral Education, Epistemology, Critical Theory, Existentialism, Postmodernism, Analytic Philosophy, Feminism, Social and Political Philosophy etc. Describe how these insights could affect your approach to problems that are confronted by you in your specific level of schooling impact or interest as an educational leader, e.g. K-12, CC-H.Ed., Early Childhood.

3. The following areas with Philosophic import have been significant topics of interest in education: Humanism, The Socratic Movement, Romanticism, Democracy, Academic Freedom, Research Ethics, Social Class and Living Standards, Learning Measurement and Learning Capacity, Educational Equality, Affirmative Action, Special Education and Inclusion, School Choice and Common Schooling, Authority and Responsibility to Educate, Religious Education, Multicultural/Bilingual education, Race and Education. Describe the most important dimensions of five of these and how each separately is applicable to Educational Leadership.

Selected Bibliography in Philosophy of Education.


Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*, Scribners, 1958


Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice*. Harvard University Press, 1982
Greene, Maxine. *Teacher as Stranger*. Wadsworth, 1973

Useful resources from: SOCIETY FOR THE PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION (SPSE)
- Philosophy Books selected by the English Server http://eserver.org/philosophy/

Encyclopedias
- Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy http://www.iep.utm.edu/
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy http://plato.stanford.edu/

Journals, Proceedings, and Yearbooks
- Analysis http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/N-Q/phil/analysis/homepage.html
- Analysis http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk/scripts/webjrn1.idc?issn=00032638
- Asian Philosophy http://www.carfax.co.uk/asp-ad.htm
- Cultural Studies http://www.heinle.com/aspad/journal/cs.html
- Cultural Studies and Critical Theory (including post-structuralism, postmodernism; maintained by English Server) theory.eserver.org/
- Environmental Ethics http://www.cep.unt.edu/enethics.html
- Ethics http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/Ethics/home.html
- Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education http://www.carfax.co.uk/ijc-ad.htm
- Journal of Buddhist Ethics http://jbe.la.psu.edu/
- Journal of Moral Education http://www.carfax.co.uk/jme-ad.htm
- Journal of Political Philosophy
- Philosophical Studies in Education http://www.ovpes.org/journal.htm
- Philosophy (=rich phil. database, incl. downloadable philos. classics) http://eng.hss.cmu.edu/philosophy/
• Philosophy (=rich database with many phil. links) http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Philosophy/VL/
• Philosophy of Education Society Yearbook http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/PES/
• Signs http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/Signs/home.html
• Studies in Philosophy and Education An International Journal http://www.wkap.nl/journalhome.htm/0039-3746
• Teaching Philosophy http://www.muohio.edu/~phlcwis/teachphil/teachphil.html
• Thinking: The Journal of Philosophy for Children http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/phildoc/thinking.html