

## **Examples of Comprehensive Examination Questions**

Questions are initially developed by the student, then forwarded to her/his comprehensive committee chair. The student and chair reciprocally edit the questions until they come to agreement on them. Then the questions are sent to the student's comprehensive committee members for additional feedback/editing until everyone agrees on the final version of the questions.

### ***Examples of Questions from CSIEME Students in the Curriculum and Instruction Degree Programs.***

#### **EXAMPLE 1**

##### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Sociology)**

Explain the "color of wealth" in the United States and its relationship to education. Describe how the racialized economic wealth divide is structured into the fabric of U.S. institutions, including educational ones. Describe the societal practices that flow from U.S. institutions, especially educational ones, that systemically reproduce inequities and inequalities at the intersection of race and class.

##### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Cultural Studies)**

Explain racial tokenism and describe how it manifests in the professional lives of teachers. Describe the specific nature of racial tokenism faced by black teachers in historical/predominantly white private schools.

##### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Teacher Racial Identity)**

Explain black identity development in relationship to black teachers' professional identity development. Describe why and how working in an historically/predominantly white school makes black teachers develop new professional black identities. Discuss how these schools can foster this development and why they should be motivated to do so.

#### **EXAMPLE 2**

##### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Literacy)**

Define critical literacy. Discuss the ideal impacts of critical literacy practices on elementary literacy teachers' praxis, including to inspire "literate" youth in the 21st century. Compare and contrast these ideal impacts with elementary literacy teachers' actual classroom performance especially relative to the influence of national, state, local, and district mandates, like Race to the Top.

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Teacher Education)**

Describe the characterizations of teachers as "technicians" and as "intellectuals." Explain and discuss the relationship between these two characterizations. Analyze the influence of national, state and local education policy on these characterizations. In particular, describe how these characterizations "show up" in both traditional teacher education programs and alternative route to licensure programs like Teach for America.

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Teacher Racial Identity)**

Describe identity development relative to white racial identity, teacher identity, and white teacher identity. Discuss the impacts of white teacher identity on teacher literacy practices, specifically the racial aspect of this identity on literacy pedagogy. Describe how teachers understand this racial aspect, if they understand it, as well as why they should be, and how they can become, motivated to do so.

### **EXAMPLE 3**

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Cultural Studies, International Education, & Multicultural Education)**

In considering multicultural education in a sociopolitical context (one that engages relations of power), describe the key ways in which multicultural education can impact environmental consciousness. Define environmental racism and community stewardship. Discuss the relationships between sociopolitically-located multicultural education, environmental racism, and community stewardship. Examine the implications of these relationships for public education in the United States, specifically how learned environmental behaviors can become adopted into the social norms of educational (and other) communities.

### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Science Education/Environmental Education)**

Discuss the major themes embodied in the Next Generation Science Standards. Explain how science learning can engage students' funds of knowledge and other diversity-related cultural capital, as well as

the implications of these standards for the larger diverse society. Discuss how science standards can impact student learning when the role of community (broadly considered) is made central in that learning (e.g., through parent involvement, through student engagement of science to solve problems in their own classrooms and schools, as well as in their neighborhoods and other local informal educational environments). Provide specific examples of informal educational approaches in science education that engage successful and purposeful learning practices in order to promote student environmental stewardship through service-, project-, and inquiry-based learning

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Environmental Consciousness)**

Describe the central components of a critical ethnographic study of students' responsible environmental behavior (REB), specifically focused on examination of the relationship between environmental stewardship and learning. In the study description, be attentive to iterating the rationale for the chosen study method(s), participants, context, data sources, data collection, and analysis techniques. Explain why these particular study elements are requisite to the study's efficacy. Make a compelling case for how the study will contribute to the existing body of research on student REB, particularly how it will fill gaps and/or extend understanding in multicultural education. In making this case, pay particular attention to possible cultural dimensions of student REB that could emerge in the study, and the extent to which REB may evolve based on student interaction with nature (i.e., toward the development of students as environmental stewards).

### **EXAMPLE 4**

### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Educational Leadership)**

Discuss school climate from the perspective of a public PK-12 school administrator. Summarize and analyze the role of the administrator in current critiques of school atmosphere as “negative,”

“adversarial,” or “toxic.” Compare and contrast “best” practices with “good” practices for creating and maintaining an affirming school environment from the administrator lens. Describe other demands that hinder administrators from fostering an educationally engaging school community.

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Teacher Education)**

Discuss the terms “teacher satisfaction” and “school climate” as they are used in U.S. schooling contexts. Analyze resistance to critical discussion of these terms in U.S. teacher education programs, especially the realities they seek to codify (e.g., teacher quality, perseverance, and attrition, persistent student performance gaps, school funding, standardization, class size, school violence).

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Curriculum and Instruction: Teacher Contentment)**

Define the term “teacher happiness” by differentiating it from other, perhaps related, terms in the research, including “teacher success” and its relationship to teacher preparation and attrition/persistence/retention in general, but particularly in high needs schools (e.g., if teachers are prepared well to teach in urban schools, they are successful and, thus, stay), as well as “teacher satisfaction,” especially, how people come into the field and, where relevant, what it is about teaching that drew them to/keeps them in the field. Discuss teacher happiness as: 1) an individual teacher “satisfaction quotient” that may be the function of very personal and, therefore, different things for different people; and, 2) related to school climate and, thus, leadership orientation (knowledge, experience, skill, and disposition).

### **EXAMPLE 5**

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Teacher Education (Ed.D. in C&I))**

From an historical perspective, chart the evolution of student engagement as a pedagogical practice in elementary schools from its inception to the present. Discuss key concerns related to teachers' use of student engagement versus other pedagogical practices in elementary education. Connect these concerns to corresponding ones concerning how the pedagogy of student engagement is taught to pre-service teachers in teacher education.

### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Technology Education)**

Based on the existing research bases, review and discuss the ways in which educational technology has been implemented to support (or inhibit) elementary school student engagement in learning.

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Student Engagement)**

Describe the central components of a study on the use of student engagement as a teaching methodology in an elementary educational setting. In the study description, be attentive to iterating the rationale for the chosen study method(s), participants, context, data sources, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Explain why these particular study elements are requisite to the study's efficacy. Make a compelling case for how the study will contribute to the existing body of research on student engagement pedagogy, particularly how it will fill gaps and/or extend understanding in teacher education.

### **EXAMPLE 6**

### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Multicultural/Interdisciplinary Studies)**

Explain the theories of Racial Identity Development (RID) and Stereotype Threat. Discuss the influence of RID theory on ST theory applied to black students' educational success. Discuss how both theories have been and/or could be applied to the education of black students to bring about systemic improvement in these students academic performance; specifically, describe what a school environment might look like that encourages the development of an Afrocentrically- conscious multicultural curriculum that embraces RID theory and challenges ST theory.

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Cultural Studies)**

Explain the idea of the "rightness of whiteness" in the context of schooling in the United States. Discuss how this idea permeates and, thus, influences educational culture in PK-12 schools; specifically, define and discuss how educational tracking, curriculum standardization, high stakes testing, and teacher preparation put minority students at risk of leaving school before graduating (e.g., opt, stop, push, kick, drop out).

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Curriculum and Instruction: Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline and/or Enacting Resilient Educational Practices for Prison-Vulnerable Student Populations)**

Explain the role of literacy skills has played in the proliferation of the school-to-prison pipeline, Discuss the actions teachers take/do not take that make students perpetually vulnerable to flowing into the pipeline, while simultaneously ensuring that other students are able to swim strongly against all pipeline currents; specifically, how does teacher assessment of student literacy skills impact teacher-student communication, including conflict negotiation.[At the defense, be prepared to discuss how an inquiry process to study these concerns might be designed and executed.]

### **EXAMPLE 7**

#### **Cognate Area Question(s) (TESL)**

Discuss language, especially first language, as culture in and of itself, and as a transmitter of culture. Describe how Neoliberalism impacts U.S. education policy. Using a post-colonial lens, describe the relationship between language and power relative to Neoliberal impacts on approaches to L1 and L2 teaching and learning.

#### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Cultural Studies, International Education, & Multicultural Education)**

Describe the emergence of, and sociopolitical conceptualizations of, multicultural education. Discuss multicultural education as an educational process that foregrounds affirmation of diversity. Compare and contrast how multicultural education includes affirmation of linguistic diversity, as well as how it is limited in its attention to linguistic dimensions of diversity.

#### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Teacher Disposition to Teach Linguistically Diverse Student Populations)**

Describe the central components of a qualitative study of former or current teachers' (who have been enrolled in a multicultural education course in the last five years) disposition to teach linguistically diverse student populations.

Make a compelling case for how the study will contribute to the existing body of research on formal or current teacher disposition to teach linguistically diverse student populations, particularly how it will fill gaps and/or extend understanding in multicultural education. In making this case, pay particular attention to "disposition" as an important area of assessment of teachers' preparedness to teach all students.

Describe how Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) and Critical Social Theory (CST) can enhance a teacher's understanding of linguistically diverse students' L1 as a form of prior knowledge that can be

leveraged to establish a Linguistically Responsive Teaching Environment (LRTE) (quality education) across the curriculum.

In the study description, be attentive to discussion of the rationale for the chosen study method(s), participants, context, data sources, data collection, and data analysis techniques. Explain why these particular study elements are requisite to the study's efficacy.

## **EXAMPLE 8**

### **Emphasis Area Question(s) (Cultural Studies, International Education, & Multicultural Education)**

Discuss neoliberal influences on the public education of 1.5 generation students in U.S. schools. Specifically, discuss the impact of race- and language-conscious policies on these students' and their recent immigrant parents' abilities to navigate the education system in the United States.

### **Cognate Area Question(s) (Recent Immigrant Parents)**

Review the literature regarding recent immigrants parents' use of "funds of knowledge," as coined by Moll, and "community cultural wealth," delineated by Yosso. Discuss how these parents learn to bilingually and biculturally navigate between their home (indigenous) and the host (U.S.) cultures in seeking to successfully acculturate, while also resisting pressures to assimilate. Describe the challenges that these parents have in supporting their 1.5 generation children's integration into "peer culture" in U.S. schools.

### **Educational Research Area Question(s) (Parent Involvement in Schools)**

Describe the central components of a multiple case study of recent immigrant parents' school involvement. In the study description, be attentive to discussion of the rationale for the chosen study method(s), participants, context, data sources, data collection, and data analysis techniques. Explain why these particular study elements are requisite to the study's efficacy. Make a compelling case for how the study will contribute to, and extend, the existing body of research on 1.5 generation student's parent involvement in U.S. schools, particularly how it will fill gaps and/or extend understanding in multicultural education.

***Examples of Questions from Students in the Teacher Education Degree Program.***

## EXAMPLE 1

### **1) To demonstrate student's general understanding of Teacher Education as a field.**

Discuss the roles of teacher education beyond the mere provision of technical skills for aspiring teachers. Define and discuss the roles of teacher self-disclosure and auto-biography in the study of teacher identity development. Describe the inherent and (often) subconscious role teacher education plays in instilling (heteronormative) teacher identity.

### **2) Focused on student's particular research interest, and to demonstrate that the student is ready to move into designing and implementing a study based on that interest (the gap in the existing literature the student's research will seek to fill).**

Review the literature on the “staged” models of primarily racial identity development from the 70s and 80s to the more contemporary, socio-contextual views of identity formation that include attention to GLBT identity. Justify the proposed study by constructing a theoretical framework for research on GLBT teacher identity that takes into account the limitations of previous studies.

### **3) Focused on methodology, and to illustrate the student's ability to critique the efficacy of previous work and, from there, design a cogent methodological approach to a study based on the student's research interest.**

Design a multiple case-study approach for studying gay and lesbian teachers. Identify data sources, participants, and analysis techniques. Explain how this approach will help researcher(s) study GLBT teachers' identity negotiation.

## EXAMPLE 2

### **1) To demonstrate student's general understanding of Teacher Education as a field.**

Beginning in 2001, with the No Child Left Behind Act as a point of entry, discuss the historical evolution of approaches to, models of, and practices for evaluating teachers and teaching effectiveness. Using feminist and antiracist education theoretical frameworks, discuss issues central to teacher evaluation from the lens of teacher education.



**2) Focused on student's particular research interest, and to demonstrate that the student is ready to move into designing and implementing a study based on that interest (the gap in the existing literature the student's research will seek to fill).**

Based on a review of the empirical research, discuss: 1) negative impacts of teacher evaluation on administrator-teacher relations, teacher retention, and school climate; and, 2) good practices for teacher evaluation. Identify relevant themes that emerge from the review and their implications for future research in teacher education.

**3) Focused on methodology, and to illustrate the student's ability to critique the efficacy of previous work and, from there, design a cogent methodological approach to a study based on the student's research interest.**

Describe the central components of a study on the negative performance evaluation experiences of teachers in urban schools. In the study description, be attentive in iterating the rationale for the chosen study method(s), participants, context, data sources, data collection and analysis techniques. Explain why these particular study elements are requisite to the study's efficacy. Make a compelling case for how the study will contribute to the existing body of research on teacher evaluation, particularly how it will fill gaps and/or extend understanding in teacher education.