

Sample Questions for Comprehensive Examination Adult and Higher Education

Sample Questions

These are examples of a few questions, each with a different focus. If one of these questions are given, then it is often accompanied with other questions, and together, make up the comprehensive examination. Students must directly answer all questions asked.

Example Question A: You are the Director of Training for a small manufacturing firm and are responsible for providing mandated safety training to all line manufacturing personnel. Since you are a staff of one, you have contracted for an outside consultant to do a workshop on the latest government requirements. You have observed the first of ten sessions she is to deliver and it is apparent that though she is a subject matter expert, she does not have an adult education background. Her straight lecture style has caused many of the participants to fall asleep or to tune her out. As an adult educator, given what you know about learner types and about principles of teaching adults what concrete examples will you give her for making future sessions more appropriate to all the learner types present?

Example Question B: Through your course work you have been introduced to a number of educators, who articulate their position on education, with respect to such issues as purposes of education, the learner, the content or subject of study, and methods and processes for education. Among the authors you have studied, which one stands out as offering the most valuable perspective on these issues to contemporary higher education? What about the author's position leads you to say this? In developing your response, consider this author with respect to some of the other authors you have studied. In what way has this author offered a "value added" component to or built upon the contributions of some of the others.

Example Question C: For the following research problem, I want you to state the research methodology. You do not need to describe the statistical procedures you would use, but you must include the following: (1) identify the type of research methodology you would employ (experimental, ex post facto, phenomenological, or historical); (2) comment on the research design, including your sampling technique, how you will be gathering the data, what or who you will be observing, and the limitations of all data gathering mechanisms, (3) identify all extraneous variables for which you must control, and (4) state the limitations of your research approach.

Sample Question

This is an example of one question with a number of sub-questions. If this type of question is given, it is often the only question that a student will receive for the entire comprehensive examination. Students must directly answer all points.

The University of Oklahoma is developing a Center for Transformative Learning. The University Regents are looking to you to develop this Center. In order for the University Regents to understand your vision for this Center for Transformative Learning, you must submit a clear program proposal. The Center may serve a student and/or faculty group of your choice (i.e. returning adults, resident hall students, student-athletes, fraternity/sorority students, student/faculty governance groups, students of a particular major, faculty). The proposal should include the components listed below and any additional components you deem necessary. Please utilize related literature you have studied to support your arguments as found in your four core courses and/or courses outside of the four cores.

The Purpose of the Center. Describe the purpose of the center and share the rationale for why this center is important for the university/student community. You may also want to identify a focus for the Center for Transformative Learning that is of interest to you (such as a Center for Transformative Learning on diversity, social justice, civic engagement, disability, leadership, self-actualization, or self-directed learning).

Description of the Program. Address the content and methods for this Center. More explicitly, what learning opportunities will this Center offer? In addition, identify the learner (i.e. who is this center for?), nature of the learner (i.e. why does this learner need the center?) and the learner's motivation to learn.

Organization of the Program. Describe the organization of the Center and its fit within the university structure. Describe the type of leaders (staff, faculty and/or students) that you will seek to lead the program, the administrative staff (positions rather than names) and a couple of sentences about their roles. In addition, describe the key stakeholders for this Center and the strategies you will employ to gain the support of those stakeholders.

Research Plan. The University Regents are requiring that you include a research plan for studying the program's benefit. This plan should describe and share the rationale for the methodology (i.e. experimental, quasi-experimental, casual-comparative, longitudinal, phenomenological, historical, mixed methods). In addition, outline the research design you would employ (discuss sampling, variables, ways of gathering and measuring data, limitations of data, and strategies for enhancing internal validity and/or trustworthiness).