

Northcentral University
Comprehensive Exam
CMP9500E

Question 1: Theory

Question 1 is designed to help you demonstrate your ability to present specialization knowledge through integration and synthesis of relevant theory and conceptual principles. You are expected to demonstrate comprehension and critical thinking using the body of knowledge attained in the fundamental and specialization coursework you have taken.

Using a minimum of five peer-reviewed articles from your specialization (for instance Education Leadership, Organizational Leadership, eLearning, Curriculum and Teaching, etc.), compare and contrast at least three theories applicable to your specialization.

Using one of the theories discussed above, select five additional peer-reviewed sources and explain how the theory adds or may add to the understanding of your specialization. You should also include a discussion of any controversy or unanswered questions related to the theory.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Compose a theoretically sound and conceptually rich essay demonstrating your knowledge of fundamental subject areas in your academic discipline and specialization.

Question 2: Practical Application

For question 2, you are required to discuss the application of relevant theory and research to real life situations, considering social, cultural, and ethical issues as appropriate. You are expected to compose responses solving specific problems and discuss implications of your ideas for application with a broad range of issues in the field.

Referencing at least five peer-reviewed journal articles, respond to the following questions:

How can a theory guide or inform practice?

What are the issues involved in translating theory into practice?

Identify at least an additional five peer-reviewed articles (published in the last 5 years) and address how one of the theories you discussed in question 1 has actually been applied. Consider, for example:

Are the applications premised upon an accurate understanding of the theory and its scope?

Do the applications "go beyond" what the theory claims?

Is the reasoning linking application and theory sound?

Learning Outcomes:

3. Apply relevant theory and research from the specialization coursework to real life situations to solve specific problems and discusses implications.

Question 3: Research

For question 3, you will need to demonstrate the ability to employ research methods used within your specialization. You are expected to critique research methodologies used by scholar-practitioners and compose responses identifying best practices in educational research.

Select five empirical articles from peer-reviewed journals you consider critical to your understanding of your specialization and:

1. Describe each study, including:

- The research problem, questions, or hypotheses
- The research purpose
- The type of design and elements of the design (e.g., sample, data analysis, operationalization of constructs)
- Threats to validity and if and how addressed
- The findings and implications
- Note if the article makes a compelling case for the meaning and significance of the findings

2. Select one of the five articles above. Using the article, assess how you might conduct the research study differently. Address:

- The research questions
- The research purpose
- Type of design and elements of the design (e.g., sample, the type of data you need to collect and how you will collect it, data analysis)
- The strengths and weaknesses of your envisioned design and methods
- Quantitative: threats to validity and how your design will address them
- Quantitative: the constructs you will measure and what you will do in order to determine how to operationalize them (you do not need to identify specific measures)
- Qualitative: your means of ensuring the quality of your findings
- Justification for why your chosen design and methods are more appropriate for your research question than alternatives you have considered
- Your methods of data analysis
- How the data you collect will enable you to answer your research question and contribute to theory

Learning Outcomes

2. Critique existing research and design a methodologically sound approach to research in the academic specialization(s).

Question 4: Ethics

In this question, you are asked to focus on the integration of ethical principles with professional practice in your specialization. You are expected to defend a personal philosophy of ethical practice using discipline-specific core values and/or essential principles and practices in your field.

Write a paper discussing how doctoral research, from literature review to conducting research, to writing a dissertation manuscript should be done with care and integrity to meet the ethical standards of scientific research. Reference at least five peer-reviewed articles.

Explain specifically how scholars apply published ethical guidelines and concepts to research.

Be sure to address the following:

- Plagiarism
- Risk assessment
- Informed consent
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Data handling and reporting
- Mistakes and negligence
- Working with a Mentor
- Northcentral University requirements for IRB approval

Learning Outcomes:

4. Integrate knowledge of ethical practices with principles of professional practice as it applies to specific scenarios within the academic discipline and specialization.