Was the comprehensive exam question representative of the content included in the learning experiences undertaken during your master’s program (not necessarily in any specific class)?

Yes, but it primarily was over information behavior or 5053.

Yes- 3

I loved that the exam was open to interpretation, encompassed problems that were not library specific, and asked students to tackle a real-world problem in the context of an information professional. Trying to incorporate all the core learning categories of the OU library studies program was challenging, but it certainly made one reflect on how the core classes are important.

Yes, I think it was especially representative of the core courses, and the timeliness of the topic was a relief.

No, not really. I hadn’t thought about the information needed to complete this exam since the first required classes for the degree.

In my opinion, the question was really only representative of one, maybe two classes (5053 and 5033).

I felt as though the primary idea of “digital information networks” was vague and not from any one course. I felt I had to define digital information networks because I felt like the area is so vast many people could give different answers as what is a digital information network.

No, I felt it mostly covered the class on information seeking behavior. I also used work experiences but not much information that I learned in classes.

Yes, for the most part.

While we covered many theories of information seeking behavior, we never specifically covered aberrations of information seeking/gathering behavior. Since no specific library question was postulated (as in a hypothetical reference interview question), I spent most of the paper covering basic psychology, philosophy, media (propaganda), and critical thinking/ information literacy rather than concepts specifically from LIS.

Was the wording of the exam question easy for you to understand?

Yes, I genuinely liked the wording of the exam. The question broke up how you should write your paper – theories/factors/strategies.

Mostly; The vagueness of it was a bit confusing.

Yes- 3

Yes. I had no problems deciphering the intent of the question.
No. I had to read the question numerous times to understand what it was asking.

Once I read and re-read the question, literally about 15 times, I completely understood it.

I felt that the question had unneeded information in it. The question should be simply stated without fluff. The bottom line is when this type of high stakes testing is being done, fancy worded question in which you have to knock out unneeded parts is unfair to the student. Especially if you just want to know if they have the basic concepts and can apply them to the field.

No, I did not know what you meant by certain current events. I guessed at what I thought but afterwards I thought it could have meant twitter and/or Wikipedia. I wasn’t sure if I was to try to include all areas of librarianship or stick only to the topic. I felt it was very narrow and did not allow me to explain what I know about library science.

Yes after re-reading it several times

It was a little confusing. I had to read it several times to understand exactly what was wanted.

**Do you have suggestions that could help SLIS improve the comprehensive exam process for students?**

Perhaps one (short) Q&A session with a professor would have been beneficial.

Ease the stress of the student – it’s a hard, ulcer-inducing wait for the paper and the results. 😊 But in general, professors have always told us to answer the question, not so much the necessary subjects to include, which was helpful. Also, and this is probably just me, but telling the students to have fun with it might help – like a funny title if it calls for it.

Maybe allow students to submit more than one format type? (ie. doc/pdfs/etc)

No- 2

Not really. Although, it would have been better if the maximum word count could be relaxed. I spent a great deal of time trimming my answer in order to fit within the word count constraints. Trying to find ways to get rid of 65 words is much more difficult than I would’ve thought. Maybe it would be better to have a rigid minimum word count but a suggested word count maximum.

Try to make the question easier to understand and more focused on the overall masters experience and not just a section mentioned in one of the first classes offered.

I really like this process; however, I wish there was an alternative for those who fail twice, particularly because I didn’t feel the exam was representative of my entire 2 ½ year learning experience. I would propose that if a student failed twice, then they should have the option of getting to do the portfolio the following semester. If they failed twice and could not defend a portfolio, then I would not grant them the degree. Of course, I haven’t seen the work of those who failed and so my opinion may be different if I were to actually see their exam. 😊

Offering practice exams with a professor or advisor is helpful. Yes study sessions with students are helpful but let’s face it, it is professors who grade the exam. Advisors should offer more support in this regard.

Expand the topic and give better orientation. I was not really prepared for the topic because it was about a class I took nearly 4 years ago. Either offer the theory classes at the end of the program then give the test or give a more comprehensive test review beforehand.

I found the study group really helpful because it listed the main points that would probably need to be on the response
Not really. I thought it went smoothly for me, other than the question being a bit confusing at first.

**Did you encounter any technology/technical problems while taking the exam?**
No, it went smoothly. I did hear of people having a difficult time accessing the Chicago Manual of Style, but I had no difficulty personally.

Yes; the exam REQUIRED the paper to be in a certain format, namely .doc; I have Open office on my computer and even if I convert my paper to .doc, it changes the layout in the saved version, but does not show the changes on the version I see. I had to work really hard to figure out how to get the document to be just right.

No- 7

Not really, but the Bizzell library interface did blink out for an hour or so and kept freezing, but it did not impact my ability to find information. I just had to try other sources.

Not with D2L. The internet went down at OU-Tulsa but that wasn’t anything to do with the school.

No, everything went ok.

**Did you attend a face-to-face orientation to the comprehensive examination?**
Yes – the orientation covered all three end of program assessments.

No- 9

Only during the SLIS Library orientation as I was an online only student.

Yes- 1

**If you attended a face-to-face orientation, please comment on how helpful this session was to you. Did the session appropriately represent the faculty expectations of student responses on the comprehensive exam question?**

This session was helpful in allowing me to fully understand what was expected. I would say not to put so much emphasis on the exam being completely comprehensive though – it is hard to work in management, organization/cataloging, and research methods into the exam but I still felt forced into trying to fit those into the paper.

Yes-1

**Did you view the online orientation to the comprehensive examination video on the SLIS website?**
Yes- 3

No- 8

No, I just read the materials. I am not a visual learner.

**If you viewed the online comprehensive examination orientation video, please comment on how helpful this was to you. Did the session appropriately represent the faculty expectations of student responses on the comprehensive exam question?**

I enjoyed the video, it helped iterate the necessary steps to a successful paper – about not opening the question, how to make the title page, etc. I did notice one thing in the video though, Dr. Burke mentions that you can do
Chicago footnote style or Chicago Author/Date style – I was interested in that but the video was the only thing that brought it up.

I watched the tutorial when I was still deciding on whether to take the portfolio, thesis, or exam option, and that was some time ago, so I don’t remember it that well. I also watched it before a take-home exam was an option, so the parameters are a bit different now.

(If anyone is administratively interested, I thought the orientation video for the thesis option was terrifying. Looking back, I think that would have been the best option for me, so I wish I had talked to someone instead of watching it. I think a kinder, gentler video might encourage more students to pursue this option. On the other hand, the portfolio option video was extremely vague—even now I still don’t really get what the point is 😞 !)

I think it helped. Someone said something about we need to remember to answer the question and not get off on a tangent, which did help me but again, I was afraid to explore more areas of librarianship. I guess I did ok but it would have been interesting to see an evaluation of my test results. I don’t know what was successful about the paper.