1. What Was Done?
7 doctoral students sat for written and oral comprehensive examinations. 3 doctoral students defended final dissertations.

2. What Data Were Collected?
Comprehensive examinations are comprised of four questions. The 20-page foundation questions covers the fundamental knowledge to understand student development, organizational structure, history and philosophy of higher education, and institutional research. The 20-page specialization question focuses on the student’s cognate area of interest and invites them to: 1) demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical and empirical literature with respect to that cognate; and 2) apply theory and literature to a series of recommendations for improved practice. The 20-page research design question asks students to design a research study based on their problem of interest from two methodological paradigms common in education research: quantitative and qualitative. Finally, the 15-page article critique demonstrates the extent to which the student has become a savvy consumer of the extant literature.

Pass rates were collected to assess the program. All 7 students who sat for comprehensive examinations passed both the written and oral exams, leading to a 100% pass rate. All 3 students who defended their final dissertations passed, leading to a 100% pass rate.

3. What Was Learned?
The research question asks students to conduct a research study article critique. We learned from students after completion of their comprehensive exams that it would be valuable to develop a comprehensive exam study guide. We also learned that students may be able to demonstrate more in depth conceptual knowledge and clarify their written responses through the oral examination with some level of advanced preparation.

4. How We Responded?
As a faculty, we discussed the key concepts from each required course and how to communicate approaches for preparing for comprehensive exams, particularly with respect to the research methodology and design questions. To facilitate greater clarity in the oral examination portion of the exam, the chair wrote to the student one week prior to the defense date and provided the students with four follow-up questions or points requiring further clarification in the oral examination. This has resulted in students being more prepared not only to defend their written work but also demonstrate deeper conceptual, theoretical, and empirical understanding of the content orally.