General Requirements for the Literacy or ESL Capstone Project:
EDU 665 CAS Directed Study

The Literacy/ESL Capstone Project is a requirement for graduation in the Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) Program. The Capstone is an opportunity for students to work on a literacy/ESL project that is of particular interest to them. The goal is for students to apply the skills and competencies they have acquired to a literacy/ESL problem in a professional setting.

Completion of the Capstone occurs under the direction of the faculty member assigned to EDU 665, CAS Directed Study, while the student is enrolled in EDU 665. The project requires both written and oral components. All students must complete the EDU 665 CAS Directed Study Approval Form and submit to the Capstone faculty member at the beginning of the semester in which the student is enrolled in EDU 665 (usually during the first or second week of the semester).

In order to satisfy the written component, students must write a paper. While there are no formal guidelines on its length, it should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual, Sixth Edition (2010). The oral component is satisfied by presenting the project at a professional meeting (conference, faculty meeting), USM graduate course meeting, or alternative venue approved by the Capstone faculty member. Students are required to give a 15-minute oral presentation summarizing their Capstone projects. The presentation should include appropriate visuals and handouts.

The Capstone is typically done during the last semester of study. In a semester prior to completing the Capstone, CAS students may ask to be enrolled in EDU 634 Seminar in Literacy Research, or EDU 635 Seminar in Second Language Literacy, as appropriate. These seminar courses are flexible enough to allow for the development of a Capstone idea and proposal. However, enrollment in seminar is not guaranteed and must be approved by the instructor.

Possible Capstone Projects

Grant Proposal or Research Plan

The Capstone could be a grant or research proposal. The project would include a clear statement of the research question, the specific aims of the proposal, review of the literature, study design, methods of analysis, implications and significance of the work (as applicable). The research question would be one that is encountered in professional work such as the evaluation of a literacy/ESL intervention.

Research

The Capstone could involve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data to address a literacy/ESL issue. The project would include sections on the research question, review of the literature, research methods, conclusions, and implications. Please note that the

appropriate university approval will need to be obtained for such a project (Institutional Review Board).

Literacy/ESL Initiative
The Capstone could involve the development of a plan to implement a school-wide literacy/ESL initiative. The project would describe the purpose of the initiative, analyze the management of the initiative, and discuss the fiscal, ethical, and logistical components needed.

Analysis of a Literacy/ESL Problem
The Capstone could be an in-depth analysis of an important issue in literacy/ESL education. The project would include sections that clearly describe the problem, assess the problem and its magnitude, evaluate its causes and determinants, and discuss prevention and intervention strategies.

Curriculum Manual/Instructional Materials
The Capstone could include the creation of a literacy/ESL curriculum manual or a set of instructional materials. Options include a traditionally authored text in a Word document, an online course or other digital representation, audiovisual on DVD or other types of media, computer software, or a website. The purpose, audience, and proposed use of this program should be clearly stated.