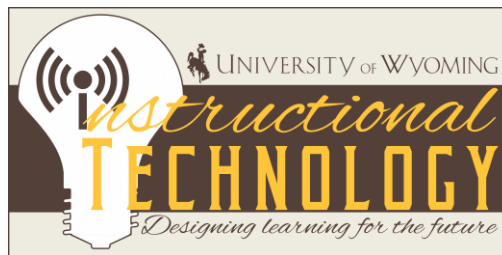




# *Masters Handbook*



Last Revised: April 11, 2016

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# *Welcome...*

to the Instructional Technology master's program in the College of Education at the University of Wyoming. We are excited to have you as colleagues in our program and look forward to collaborating with you.

This handbook provides a general orientation to your program, including resources that will help you navigate your graduate experience. Refer to this guide frequently as you progress through your program. Also visit the [program website](#) regularly to keep up-to-date with department and program news.

# Program Faculty



## **Dr. Doris Bolliger**

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Research Interests: Online communication, community and interaction, online learner and faculty satisfaction, interventions in the online environment, mobile technologies for learning, technology utilization for foreign-language teaching and learning, and message design for online environments



## **Dr. Tonia Dousay**

Assistant Professor  
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Research Interests: Maker spaces, multimedia design, message design, visual literacy, instructional design, learning games, and children as designers



## **Dr. Kay Persichitte**

Professor  
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Research interests: Areas of technology integration that include combinations of people, processes, and devices to support/enhance/extend teaching and learning for all ages, distance learning, and applications of change theory to educational contexts.



## **Dr. Craig Shepherd**

Associate Professor  
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Research Interests: Program community in online environments, inquiry and reflection, technology integration in K12, instructional technology, games and virtual environments

# Advisor Relationships

You were assigned an advisor when you were admitted to the graduate program. That advisor will likely become your committee chair. It is your responsibility to build a relationship with your advisor.

Setup an appointment with your advisor at least once per semester. During these meetings you may discuss course offerings, portfolio and professional goals, research ideas, and other topics of interest. Common interests help create a positive work relationship, promote research collaboration, and streamline work.



## Developing Relationships

Your advisor wants you to succeed but will not force you to do anything. Take initiative to build a successful relationship.

- Don't wait for your advisor to come to you. Schedule an appointment when you have questions, want to discuss ideas, or want to prepare for program exams.
- Do your homework before asking your advisor. Check University, college, and program websites, contact office managers, and ask other students.
- Schedule appointments in advance, be courteous, and thank your advisor.
- Show commitment to your professional development. Follow through when you say you will do something.
- Explore your advisor's research interests on the [program website](#). Individual profiles on the site contain links to recent publications and additional information
- Consider how your research interests align with those of your advisor.
- Be receptive to constructive criticism.

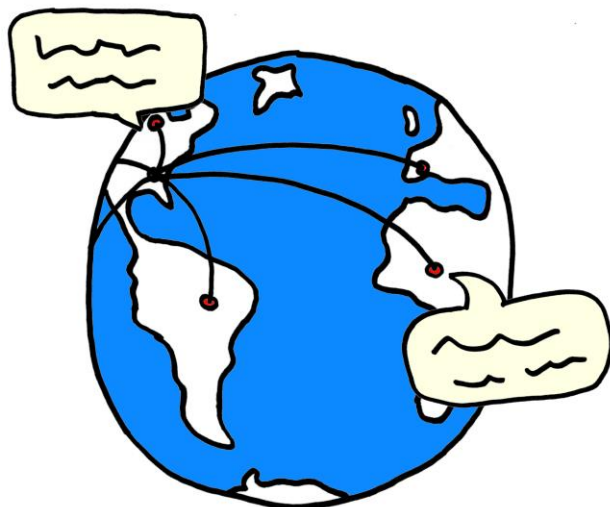
## Selecting a New Advisor

For various reasons, you may need to change your advisor during your program. It is important to familiarize yourself with all faculty members in your program to facilitate this process. Changing advisors is normal and should not cause feelings of failure, frustration, or stress.

To switch advisors, you should first inform your current advisor about the idea. Based on this meeting, setup meetings to speak with prospective new advisors from your program and articulate why you would like to work with them. Remember, they may be unwilling to serve based on current research and advising loads. When a faculty member decides to serve as your new advisor, notify your former advisor, contact the office manager, and submit the [Committee Assignment/ Change Form](#).



# Program Community



Despite the online nature of this program, you don't need to complete it alone. You can join a professional community with faculty, staff, and students that extends beyond course boundaries. This community can foster lasting relationships, help you reach program milestones, develop professionally, and establish lasting friendships.

Take advantage of the community around you by reaching out to others. Students in your classes may provide valuable insights in research endeavors, employment decisions, and design projects.

To facilitate this endeavor, instructional technology faculty and students participate in a WyoCourses group called WyoITEC.

## **Program Entrance**

After you were accepted into the graduate program and obtained a university identification number, you were invited to join WyoITEC. If you did not receive an invitation or do not see a pending invitation upon logging in to WyoCourses, please contact your advisor. Access to this group extends through the duration of your program and allows you to communicate with faculty, doctoral and masters students, and alumni. Use this space to share personal pictures, stories, and goals; discuss the latest book or movie; brainstorm ideas for your next project, post professional announcements, and so forth. The space will evolve with program needs and interests.

## **Post Graduation**

Following graduation, faculty and students in the program want to remain in contact with you. However, the University of Wyoming terminates your email account and discontinues your access to their course management system. We encourage you to provide a secondary email address during your Capstone experience so that you may be re-invited to the group and continue access to WyoITEC.

# Program Pillars

Instructional Technology programs build on four pillars to help students become well-rounded professionals. These pillars are educational foundations, learning and development, technological understanding, and research and scholarship.

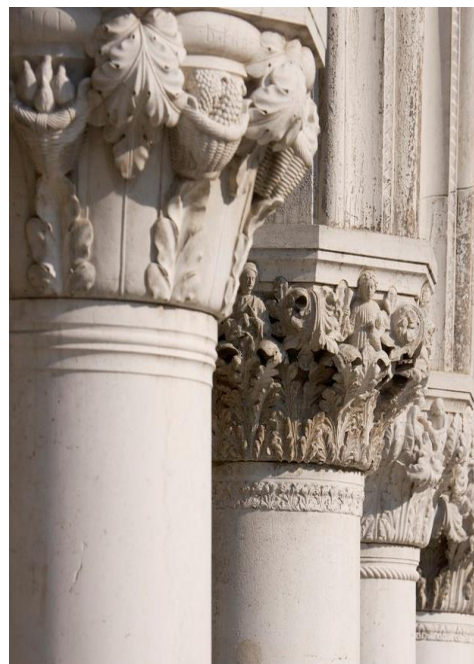
Refer to these pillars frequently as you complete your graduate experience. They lay the foundation of your electronic portfolio, periodic assessments, and professional development.

*Educational foundations* focus on the socio-cultural analyses of education. Foundations include the philosophical and historical perspectives that shape your field over time. They also include relevant theories and rationales that influence past and present research and inquiry.

*Learning and development* includes conceptual analyses of human development, learning theories, principles, practices, and/or models that apply to knowledge or skills acquisition.

*Technological understanding* involves the conceptual analyses of information access, technological skill, literacy, and/or procedures for use in your program.

*Research and scholarship* involves advanced work in research necessary for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting data and research design. This area also focuses on skills and developing expertise in conducting, synthesizing, and disseminating original research.



# Graduate Expectations



Graduate study at the University of Wyoming aims to provide a balance between theory and practice. Attention is directed toward the union of learning that is required by circumstance (requisites) and learning that enriches life. Our nationally recognized program offers courses that prepare individuals to work in diverse areas. To accomplish this, we focus on the following outcomes:

1. *Academic Knowledge*: Students will demonstrate a deep understanding of education and related fields and a broad understanding of various methods of inquiry in education.
2. *Practical Competence*: Students will demonstrate competence with various inquiry methods.
3. *Reflectivity*: Students will demonstrate the ability to guide their own scholarship, foster ethical and professional research and practice in education, as well as demonstrate a reflective and analytical stance towards scholarship in general.
4. *Democratic Commitment*: Students will demonstrate commitment to diversity in education and an understanding of the relationship between the university and the complex process of democracy and a commitment to pursue this process with a focus on access to quality education for all learners in their own professional work.
5. *Professional Engagement*: Students will demonstrate deep intellectual engagement with education as an area of scholarly inquiry. In doing so students will belong to and participate in national/international scholarly associations and make evident benefits and contributions that result from these memberships.



# Professional Organizations

One purpose of your graduate program is to help you transition from a student into a professional colleague. As you complete your program, you will experience some of this transition. Active participation in professional organizations can accelerate this process and help you form networks that span the globe.

Several organizations emphasize instructional technology, including:

- [Association of Educational Communications and Technology](#) (AECT)
- [Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education](#) (AACE)
- [American Educational Research Association](#) (AERA)
- [Association for Talent Development](#) (ATD)
- [International Society for Performance Improvement](#) (ISPI)
- [International Society for Technology in Education](#) (ISTE)
- [International Visual Literacy Association](#) (IVLA)
- [Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association](#) (NRMERA)
- [Professors of Instructional Design and Technology](#) (PIDT)

**You are required to join AECT each year for the duration of your program.** You are encouraged to attend and present at their annual international conference. You are also encouraged to attend conferences from additional organizations listed above. Each focuses on particular aspects of instructional technology and one or two might best meet your professional interests.



# Course Requirements

## Master of Science in Education: Instructional Technology

### Effective with Admission for Fall 2016

Complete the following 24 credit hours:

	EDRE 5530*	Introduction to Education Research (3)
	ITEC 5000†	Intro to the Field of Instructional Technology (3)
	ITEC 5010	Instructional Technology (3)
	ITEC 5160‡	Introduction to Instructional Design (3)
	ITEC 5320§	Message Design (3)
	ITEC 5350	Multimedia Development (3)
	ITEC 5550	Theory of Change (3)
	ITEC 5560	Design/Development of Instructional Systems (3)

Complete 6 additional hours of advisor approved ITEC courses


Complete the following:

	ITEC 5090**	Master's Capstone (3)
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Total Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

(Must equal 33 hours or more to graduate with MS in Instructional Technology)

**Effective: Fall Semester 2016**

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\* This course is offered most semesters (Spring, Summer, Fall)

† This course should be taken near the beginning of your program; your first semester, if possible

‡ This course is a prerequisite for ITEC 5560. It is only offered during Spring semesters

§ This course is a prerequisite for ITEC 5350. It is only offered during Spring semesters

\*\* This course must be taken at the conclusion of your program. It is only offered during Spring semesters

# Sample Program Timelines

Students seeking a Master's Degree from the College of Education are expected to complete their degree within two to three years. Although individual abilities and situations vary, the timelines below suggest completion strategies for planning purposes.

## Fall Semester Start

Fall #1	Spring #1	Summer #1	Fall #2	Spring #2
ITEC 5000	ITEC 5010	EDRE 5530	ITEC 5560	ITEC 5350
ITEC 5550	ITEC 5160	Elective	Elective	ITEC 5090
	ITEC 5320			

## Fall Semester Start

Fall #1	Spring #1	Summer #1	Fall #2	Spring #2
ITEC 5000	ITEC 5010	EDRE 5530	ITEC 5560	ITEC 5350
Elective	ITEC 5160	Elective		ITEC 5090
ITEC 5550	ITEC 5320			

## Spring Semester Start

Spring #1	Summer #1	Fall #1	Spring #2	Summer #2	Fall #2	Spring #3
ITEC 5160	EDRE 5530	ITEC 5000	ITEC 5010		ITEC 5550	ITEC 5090
ITEC 5320	Elective	ITEC 5560	ITEC 5350		Elective	

## Spring Semester Start

Spring #1	Summer #1	Fall #1	Spring #2
ITEC 5010	EDRE 5530	ITEC 5000	ITEC 5350
ITEC 5160	Elective	ITEC 5550	Elective
ITEC 5320		ITEC 5560	ITEC 5090

# *Retention Policies*

Students should be self-directed. Your acceptance in a graduate program does not guarantee your fitness to remain in that program. Faculty members are responsible to ensure that only those students who continue to meet academic program standards and make adequate yearly progress toward degree completion are allowed to continue. Faculty members seek to identify and provide help students may need as well as recognize outstanding student achievements.

## **Enrollment Expectations**

Students are required to demonstrate annual academic progress. A component of this progress requires you to complete a minimum of 12 credit hours per year towards your program of study.

## **Continuous Registration**

Under some circumstances (e.g., work schedule, family situations, travel) you may be unable to enroll in courses for a semester. During these circumstances you should enroll in one credit hour of continuous registration. Continuous registration credits do not count towards graduation.

You may enroll in a **maximum of four credit hours of continuous registration**. Exceptions to this rule are made on a case-by-case basis with your advisor. If you require additional time away from program courses, you should petition for a leave of absence from the university. If you do not enroll in classes for a 12-month period, your status will be deactivated, you will be dismissed from the program, and you have the option to reapply to the program for readmission.

## **Grades**

You are expected to earn a minimum grade of "B" or "S" in each graduate-level course you take. If you border on making unsatisfactory progress (as evidenced by grades and/or less than average evaluations by department faculty), you should meet with your advisor to discuss the problem(s), review appropriate corrective measures, and establish a timeline for change. However, severity of the problem(s) may not allow for this method and informal methods are not procedurally required.

The program defines "unsatisfactory" performance in graduate-level course work as a grade of "U" or "F" in any course or more than two grades below a "B." Obtaining one course grade of "F" or "U," more than two course grades below a "B," a cumulative GPA lower than a "B"



average, or failure to meet all requirements of a remediation plan will result in program dismissal. Students who have been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance in graduate-level course work will not be allowed to take courses in the program as unclassified students.

**Professional Conduct:**

In addition to maintaining high scholastic standards, you should develop professional skills necessary to work effectively with a variety of people. The faculty expects you to:

- Commit to personal growth and professional development
- Care about others
- Receive and give constructive feedback
- Apply skills covered in course work

Further, you are expected to adhere to the codes of ethics of your professional associations (e.g., Association for Educational Communications and Technology). Examples of behavior that may evidence professional impairment include but are not limited to:

- Violation of professional or academic standards such as plagiarism
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire or manifest professional skills or understandings at an acceptable level of competency
- Behaviors that can reasonably be predictive of poor future professional functioning (e.g., extensive tardiness, excessive late work, unwillingness to accept feedback)
- Disrespect shown towards faculty, staff or other students

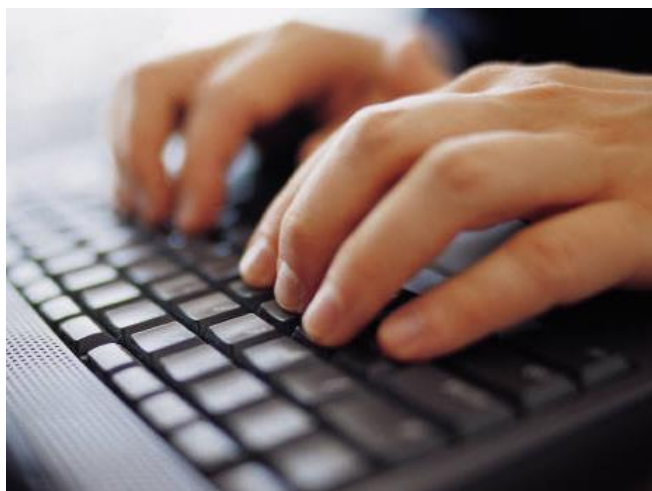
Members of the faculty evaluate student performance on an ongoing-basis. The faculty makes judgments as to students' professional conduct based on observations of course performance, evaluations of students' oral and written work, and performance in internships (if applicable). Formal evaluations are also conducted at key stages of the student's program. When, in the professional judgment of a program faculty member, a student is not meeting professional guidelines or meeting university standards, the faculty member will consult with the department head to determine appropriate actions. Actions may include (but are not limited to) formal reprimand, unsatisfactory grades, a mandatory leave of absence, additional course work, formal probation, encouragement to withdraw from the program, or formal dismissal.



# Computer Requirements

All of your program courses are delivered online using WyoCourses (Canvas) as the course management system. Faculty and staff will do their best to help you access course content and resources. However, you may need to seek help for the University [information technology department](#).

To complete course assignments you must have up-to-date computer equipment and high-speed Internet access.



## Hardware

You may use either a Macintosh or Windows based personal computer during this program. The list below provides minimum requirements for selecting a computer.

Macintosh (OS X.8 or later) or Windows PC (Windows 7 or later)

- Intel Core i5 processor or better
- 4 GB RAM or greater
- High speed Internet access (e.g., broadband, DSL, satellite). Phone and cable companies are the most common carriers of these services but you may need to locate alternative options.
- Program courses may have additional hardware requirements (e.g., headphones, microphones, etc.).

## Remotely Accessing Campus Computer Labs

University students can remotely access campus computer labs to freely take advantage of software offerings that may be difficult or costly to acquire otherwise—including SPSS.

Directions for remote access are found at <http://microlab.uwyo.edu/UWSremote/>

# Electronic Portfolio

Throughout your program you will develop an electronic portfolio in [Google sites](#) (or similar application). Several online tutorials exist to use these tools. The purposes of this portfolio are to promote professional development and facilitate student accountability. The electronic portfolio is introduced in assignments in ITEC 5000, so it is recommended that you take this course *early* in your program.

*Professional development:* With help from your advisor, you should establish goals (aligned with [program pillars](#)) every semester. Document your progress towards obtaining those goals within your electronic portfolio. As you take courses, engage in professional development, and progress through your program, collect evidence to document progress towards meeting these goals.

Electronic portfolios are also intended to help you form and sustain a community of learners. Review other's portfolios to identify interests, goals, and trajectories, provide guidance, and strengthen professional networks.

*Accountability:* Electronic portfolios are used programmatically to monitor progress, provide guidance, and assess performance. At the completion of your courses, your committee will review your electronic portfolio as part of your [Capstone Defense](#) to determine if you have sufficiently mastered program-specific content. Individuals with unsatisfactory portfolios may be asked to take corrective measures.

## Electronic Portfolio Sections

- Introduction
- Course Timeline
- Resume
- Personal Learning Philosophy
- Goal Summaries
- Evidence of Goals and Achievements for each program pillar

Although faculty members appreciate the uniqueness of portfolios to document goals, achievements, skills, and learning experiences, the following sections are required for programmatic purposes.

### Introduction

The introduction is the first page people see when they access your eportfolio. Provide a brief introduction of yourself and a professional photograph. Then concisely state your career objectives and the degree you are seeking.

Next introduce your eportfolio. Highlight one or two major goals that you accomplished during your program and indicate how they influenced you and your career aspirations. You may also want to indicate how your eportfolio demonstrates knowledge and skill to satisfy job searches, promotion requirements, or other professional objectives.

### Course Timeline

Provide a timeline for completing your degree program. Courses and semesters may change but it will help you plan your degree. List any courses taken prior to program admittance that were

accepted to fulfill program requirements. Indicate the institution, year, and semester (or equivalent) they were completed.

Your timeline should then list all Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters between admittance and expected graduation. Group semesters by year. List courses you will take within each semester.

### **Resume**

Include an up-to-date resume that highlights professional accomplishments and summarizes educational experiences. You may want to include a PDF version of this document.

#### **Resume Information**

Include the following information:

- Professional address
- Education
- Honors and awards
- Certification(s)
- Professional experiences (including time frames and brief descriptions)
- Skills
- Other pertinent professional experiences

### **Learning Philosophy**

This section should articulate your personal philosophy(ies) of education and learning. One way to construct a learning philosophy is to write down a list of your professional beliefs, values, and attitudes as they relate to education and learning. Do you notice any patterns, contradictions, or specific conditions that define your thoughts? What learning theories most closely relate to your philosophy?

How do proponents of these theories view education and learning? Do you agree with them? In what way does your philosophy differ from theirs? Once you have identified these ideas you can write your own philosophy.

How does your philosophy manifest itself in your work and professional career? If you altered or changed your positions during the course of your program indicate why and how you changed. Will these changes influence your future work? If so, how will they manifest themselves in your professional life? Additional things to consider include the social and or political implications of your teaching philosophy. Do many professionals share your views? How are your views considered on a national and international level? How might your beliefs influence the way you are treated in your profession?

Make sure that you use scholarly literature to support your learning philosophy. These references need to be primary sources and most of them should be refereed. Format the document according to current APA guidelines.

### **Goal Summaries**

Goals and achievements make up the backbone of your eportfolio; all other documents draw support from your goals. Given their importance, you should develop goals in conjunction with your advisor at the beginning of the semester.

All goals should align to the four [program pillars](#). Within each of these areas you should identify goals that will help you to develop professionally as well as prepare you for successful program completion.

Documenting and reflecting on your approach to goal achievement should drive eportfolio development. Goals will also help you and your advisor identify experiences that suite your interests and drive your professional agenda.

Once a goal is attained, you should concisely summarize how you attained it—reserving details, evidence, and continued reflection to later sections of your eportfolio. If you do not attain your goal(s) you should summarize why you were unable to achieve it; please include whether or not you plan to attain the goal in the future, how you plan on attaining it, or why you decided to discontinue it. This section should be brief (no more than two paragraphs per goal).

### **Evidence of Goals/Achievements**

This section provides details regarding the extent your goals were accomplished. Create a separate page for each for each goal within the pillar.

Documentation in this section should also provide an impetus for future goals. As you gain experience, what new questions do you have? How might you go about answering those questions or accomplishing new goals? Remember that one purpose of the eportfolio is to help prepare you professionally. Documentation included in your eportfolio should clearly articulate knowledge and skills acquired through your program.

To help you show development and synthesize previous learning, this section should include artifacts and reflections that make up the core of evidence regarding your professional skills and expertise.

Keep in mind that artifacts help you to tell a story about your goals and accomplishments; they are not the story. You must provide a reflective narrative regarding the mastery of your goals in each program pillar—using artifacts to support your assertions, highlight details, summarize claims, and provide evidence. Be sure to tell us **why** you selected each artifact (it is a required element). Reflect and tell us what you learned, if it was difficult, how it may have changed your perspective or reinforced your belief(s), or anything that will give us insights into your thinking, philosophy, etc.

### **Sample Artifacts**

This list is not exhaustive but should give you some ideas.

- Course papers and projects
- Pilot studies
- Case studies
- Applications/illustrations of learned concepts
- Professional certificates and credentials
- Course evaluation summaries
- Professional Publications
- Professional presentations
- Awards and recognitions
- Reflections on work experiences
- Peer and self evaluations
- Student work samples
- Lesson plans
- Video-taped performances
- Photographs
- Grant applications/activities

# *Sample Eportfolio Goals*

Goals should correspond to interests that caused you to pursue a graduate degree. If this is your first year in the program, the documents you submitted for entrance are a place to identify goals. Otherwise, your goals should be based on results and feedback from previous activities, courses, and semesters. Below are goal ideas for each program pillar.

## **Educational Foundations**

- Write a 3-5 page reflection paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) that describes how instructional design impacts your profession. Provide evidence of the design process in your work.
- With adequate permission, conduct a front-end analysis on a problem facing an organization. Gather information to determine the causes of the problem and whether they can be reduced or eliminated with instruction. If the problem is instructional based, determine the audience for instruction, their needs, and tasks associated with the need. Develop instruction to meet these tasks and reflect upon your work in a 2-page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines).
- With adequate permission, identify a problem facing an organization and design, develop, and implement instruction to reduce or eliminate that problem. As part of this process, design a 1-2 hour lesson (including assessments), select or develop all resources needed to complete the lesson, obtain feedback on your implementation from members of the target audience, and revise your instruction based on feedback received. Write a 2-page reflection paper about the experience (adhering to current APA guidelines).
- With approval from your advisor, read two to three works deemed foundational to your field. Write a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) that describes how these works shape current practice.

## **Learning and Development**

- Write or revise a personal learning philosophy (3-5 pages) for your eportfolio. Support your claims with citations from relevant literature (adhering to current APA guidelines). Articulate how your philosophy is manifested in your profession. If your personal learning philosophy has changed from what you included in your eportfolio, rewrite it. Articulate how and why you changed your philosophy over time. Be sure to keep both philosophies in your eportfolio for reflection purposes.
- Identify 2-3 job postings that fit your professional interests. Write a 3-5 page paper that compares your preparation with the job expectations and highlights what you plan to work on over the next year to make yourself more marketable for similar positions.
- Distance education is evolving rapidly; tools and environments once dreamed of are now commonplace. Write a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) describing how you will use distance tools to promote education. Include examples and utilize peer-reviewed sources to support your claims. If your views of distance education have changed during the program, articulate how and why they changed.



### **Technology Understanding**

- Review others' eportfolios and provide feedback about their work in our program site. Write a 2-page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) summarizing what you learned. What ideas did you gain? How might you incorporate them into your own professional development?
- Acquaint yourself with the University library. Complete an annotated bibliography in a reference management package (e.g., Zotero, RefWorks, EndNote) with a minimum of 15 peer-reviewed sources and 5 additional sources related to a research topic of interest. Identify what databases and search terms you used. Include a copy of your annotated bibliography in your eportfolio and write a brief reflection paper indicating what you learned about library research and your topic during the process.
- In a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) define the term "technology" and trace the history of the definition through the field. Use sources to support your claims and conclude your paper by creating your own definition and identifying how it influences you professionally.
- Develop a multimedia resource and write a 2-page reflection paper describing how you adhered to principles of message and instructional design in the planning, development, and evaluation of your resource.
- Develop an online learning resource or environment. Write a 2-page reflection paper describing how you adhered to principles of community formation and instructional design during the planning, development, and evaluation of your resource.

### **Research and Scholarship**

- Read 5-10 recent publications of your advisor (listed on the program website) and write a 3-5 page paper indicating how your interests align with theirs.
- Locate a peer-reviewed, professionally relevant research article on a topic of interest and write a detailed article critique. Summarize the main points of the article, identify key players associated with the study, and discuss the appropriateness of the research methods, literature review to establish a need for the study, adequacy of the findings, and relevance to the field.
- Demonstrate mastery of APA formatting to create appropriate headings, in-text citations, and reference lists.
- Write a literature review on a professionally appropriate topic of interest. Use at least ten peer-reviewed sources to support your claims.
- Get involved in a research project with either your advisor or another program faculty member. Summarize and reflection upon your work in your eportfolio. Include timelines, milestones, work samples, and so forth to illustrate your work.
- Attend a regional or national conference. Summarize and reflect on the sessions that you attended and indicate how the experience influenced you professionally.
- Submit a proposal to a regional or national conference and write a reflection about how the experience influenced you professionally.
- Present at a regional or national conference. Include your presentation materials and write a reflection about how the experience influenced you professionally.

# Capstone

During your final semester, you will enroll in a capstone course and prepare documents for your committee to review. All courses in your program provide grounding in appropriate theories, principles, and skills for this course. Capstone allows you to integrate and apply prior learning by developing decisions regarding specific case studies.

Capstone students develop two reports for committee members: an [electronic portfolio](#) and a literature-based case study.



Documents are evaluated on their general acceptability before your committee (consisting of two program faculty members and one external faculty member). Allow for adequate time to complete your capstone work. Make sure that you update and further develop your eportfolio each semester. Although your committee wants you to complete work in an efficient and timely manner, they require high quality products. There may be occasions where you are asked revise writing, analysis, and data interpretations. To maintain balance during this portion of your life, set small goals that lead to your final project. Developing support groups with other graduate students will also assist you in research and writing.

## Capstone Defense:

The capstone defense consists of an individual, oral examination of your electronic portfolio and literature-based case study. The oral examination is a professional discussion focused upon the written materials you provide. Examination discussions are framed by the work you have completed. You may bring notes and other materials if you wish.

# *Graduation and Beyond*

The conclusion of your graduate work can be stressful. Not only are you finishing your capstone project and planning for a defense, but you may also be applying for jobs or promotions, anticipating future moves, and establishing yourself in a professional community that extends beyond the university. Obtaining a masters degree is hard work. Getting this far is reason to celebrate. Take the time to enjoy the moment and reflect on your accomplishment.



If you are looking for employment when you conclude your degree, learn how and when positions are posted for your field. Identify the positions you would like to obtain. Try to do this early in your program. Carefully review position postings and become familiar with the required and desired qualifications for appointment in your field. As you enter the last year in your program, consider applying for one or two of these positions to become familiar with the process. You will also need to think about how will you organize your resume to position yourself for the posting and who will complete letters of recommendation. Most search committees expect you to offer references from faculty members and colleagues who can speak to your leadership experience, problem solving ability, and potential to implement change.

Above all, do your homework before you apply for positions. Learn about the organization's stated mission, values, and operational goals. What is its leadership structure, primary programs and services, reputation in the community and state, primary business clients and partners, and history and viability of its main funding streams? You may not be able to acquire current or complete information about each of these conditions. Remember however that employers are searching for leaders who will add value to their organization. You can only discuss your potential value if you are familiar with the organization.

Additionally, consider whether you are a good fit for the position? Are you a good fit for the working environment? Would you enjoy living in the community? As a general rule it is best to apply for positions that you would accept. Doing this research in advance of an interview will set you apart from other candidates. When you receive telephone and onsite interviews you will have an opportunity to ask informed questions. Have your own questions for the hiring committee. Above all, don't get discouraged if you do not receive an offer.