UNT Summers-Only MMEd
Capstone Project Proposal Template

Topic
Use the following questions to help you develop a topic for your project.
What would you like to be able to do better as a teacher? What would you like
your students to be able to do better (or learn more about)? What changes
would you like to make within your program? What would you like to learn
more about? What is a critical issue in music education, and how can the
profession respond to those issues?

Background
What have other scholars written about your issue? Summarize previous
writings in this area. You should include at least 10 sources, 5 of which must be
research-based (see criteria on next page). The remaining sources may either
be research-based or practice-based.

Method & Procedure
What kind of project could you undertake to address this issue? How will you
collect information? Describe the steps that you would take. How will you
assess your progress?

Product
What will be the end product? The end product can take one of several forms.
For example: lesson plans for a full unit sequencing an important topic in
music education, a new technology learning aid, a method book highlighting
sequencing for a specific type of learner, a research-based paper exploring the
effectiveness of a teaching method, et cetera. **These are only examples.** In
addition to the final product, you will be required to present your project to
your peers during a meeting of the Capstone course.

Timeline

Map out your timeline for the academic year (between your second and third summer of study) culminating in the completion of the project and the presentation of the final product. Expectations are that the project will be presentation-ready at the start of the third summer of graduate studies.

Criteria and Guidelines for Selecting Research-Based Sources (see "Background" above)

A research-based source is a publication that reports findings from *original* data. The authors have a question and then go out to collect original data to answer that question. They are not just depending on what others have written. They are going right to the source.

For instance, if someone wants to know if Sight-Reading Method A works better than Sight-Reading Method B, they will test both methods out with two groups of students and then report whether or not any differences were found. The authors are not just depending on what other people say. They are actually testing the method with new people.

Typically, these articles include the following components:

- Introduction: Why does this topic seem important?
- Review of Literature: What have other researchers reported on the topic?
- Need for the Study: What remains unknown about this topic?
- Research Questions: Formal research questions are stated.
- Method: Details about how the study will be conducted are listed. Information about participants, location, and ways of collecting data are specified in great detail.
- Results: Findings are reported. They may be reported statistically or through detailed qualitative analysis reporting.
- Discussion: How does what I found relate to what others have found?

Some of the top research-based journals in our field include the following:

Journal of Research in Music Education
Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education
Update: Applications of Research in Music Education
Music Education Research
Journal of Music Teacher Education
Psychology of Music
Research and Issues in Music Education
Research Studies in Music Education
Journal of Band Research

Dissertations and Theses are also often research-based.

What is NOT considered a Research-Based Source?

Articles that *do not* report original data are not research-based. They may look a lot like a review of literature, but they do not go any further to collect original data. Practitioner articles often report useful information from *other* people's research and then suggest implications. Alternatively, some authors may simply write about what works for them and suggest that you try it. Some master teachers may have some *great* ideas, but they are not necessarily research-based.

Some of the top practitioner-based journals include the following:

Southwestern Musician
Music Educators Journal
Choral Journal
Instrumentalist
Flute Talk
Clavier

ONLINE SEARCHES

Global Search Engines:

Online Articles:
1. Go to the UNT Library Home Page: http://www.library.unt.edu/
2. Click the "Online Articles" tab on the left.
3. Enter the search term you want with Boolean logic. Use quotation marks to group words for terms (ex. "South Africa" instead of South Africa).

Specific Databases:
1. Go to the UNT Library Home Page: http://www.library.unt.edu/
2. Click on the "Databases" tab on the left.
3. Type in the name of your database.
4. If possible, choose the "Advanced" link underneath the text box.

Typical Databases to Consider:
1. Music Index
2. RILM
3. Proquest Theses and Dissertations
4. Ebscohost
5. ERIC
6. PsycInfo

Helpful Websites:
1. Google Scholar: scholar.google.com
2. Music Education Search System (MESS): http://208.52.166.203/mess/

Donna Arnold's page for Music Education:
http://guides.library.unt.edu/music-education