

Creative Project Handbook

Master of Arts (MA)

Master of Education (MEd)

Department of Instructional Technology & Learning Sciences
Utah State University

**CREATIVE PROJECT
REQUIREMENTS
INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING SCIENCES (ITLS)**
(A guide for writing the proposal and summary)

The ITLS MA and MEd degree programs allow you to complete a creative project in lieu of a formal thesis or an internship. Your advisor is responsible for approving, monitoring, and signing off the work completed for this requirement. There will be a Canvas course each semester. Or you may choose to work with a specific ITLS faculty member as chair, instead. Work with your advisor to determine the best option for you.

The purpose of the creative project is to provide an opportunity for you to make a practical application of knowledge to the improvement of a teaching/training skill or other interest for professional improvement. Select a project that will permit you to demonstrate a broad variety of skills and knowledge developed during the coursework phase of your degree program. The scope of the project must include the ability to exhibit mastery of the pertinent knowledge and skills acquired. Your project can include the full range of design efforts, including design models, analyses and all the way through development skills, implementation, and evaluation. Review the experiences you have had thus far in your program to help identify possible options. This can be something you are tasked with at your place of employment, something of personal interest, or something someone else instigates. Depending on the scope of the project and with advisor permission, it could be a group effort. It should demonstrate that you are now a 'master' of the program content. Theory and design should be integral components.

PROCESS

- A. Prepare a proposal that meets the requirements outlined in this handbook. If completing your project in the cohort-based class, this will be completed as class assignments.
- B. Submit the proposal for approval to your advisor allowing a **minimum** of one week for review.
- C. Schedule a meeting with your advisor for discussion and approval of the proposal. Meetings can be face to face or at a distance, and take place synchronously or asynchronously. You must have an approved proposal before proceeding with your project.
- D. Carry out the approved proposed project with the highest level of professionalism. A log of activities, insights, costs, resources, and time should be maintained. This record will be useful in preparing the summary, and then later included in a portfolio, if appropriate.
- E. During the process, consult with your advisor/chair as needed.
- F. Upon completion of the creative project, prepare a 3 to 5-page summary following the outline provided in this handbook. Submit the summary for approval to your advisor. An alternate to the summary is a manuscript for an article about your project to be submitted to a professional journal. You should discuss these two options with your advisor.

PROPOSAL

A written proposal for the creative project is necessary to avoid misunderstandings and to protect your best interests, the ITLS department, and the University. In effect, the proposal has many of the attributes of any good contract. It should specify in adequate detail all of the important facets to be completed. The proposal provides a record for both you and your advisor of the specific nature and extent of the

experience agreed upon.

Complete your project proposal. There are several sections to consider and develop.

- 1 – Problem statement
- 2 – Needs assessment
- 3 – Theoretical framework
- 4 – Design model/process
- 5 – Objectives/learning outcomes
- 6 – Evaluation/assessment/learner transfer
- 7 – Timeline with milestones
- 8 – References

Work with your advisor for discussion, feedback, revision guidance, and final approval of the proposal. The expectation is that this will be a relatively quick process, 3 weeks at the most. The majority of the semester should be spent working on your actual project. But it is important to set the context and to identify and describe all of the components to help guide your efforts.

Help with proposal sections

1 – Problem statement – Present the problem to be addressed by your creative project. Problem statements are usually derived from concerns for professional improvement of a program or system.

2 – Needs assessment – Describe the systematic approach (assessment) to be used to determine or address the gap between the current condition (problem statement) and the desired condition. Identify the learners needs, target audience, data sources, resources available, the working environment, priorities, criteria for ‘success’, shareholders, etc. Also establish what is working well and should be continued or incorporated.

3 – Theoretical framework – Within the broad categories of Behaviorism, Cognitivism, and Constructivism, there are many variations. You are required to identify and briefly discuss the theoretical framework for your project. You are not required to use one from the following list; it is just to give you some examples.

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| Experiential Learning – Carl Rogers | Operant Conditioning – Burrhus Frederic Skinner |
| Anchored Instruction – John Bransford | Situated Learning – Jean Lave & Etienne Wenger |
| Transformational Theory – Jack Mezirow | Constructivist Theory – Jerome Bruner |
| Social Learning Theory – Albert Bandura | Social Development – Lev Vygotsky |
| Structural Learning Theory – Joseph Scandura | Connectionism – Edward Thorndike |
| Multiple Intelligences – Howard Gardner | Andragogy – Malcolm Knowles |
| Information Processing Theory – George A Miller | Active Learning – John Dewey |

4 – Design model/process – There are many possible models &/or processes to guide your experience. Once again, you are not required to use one from the following list, but you are required to identify and discuss the model or process you will be following.

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|---|---|
| ADDIE – generic | Bloom’s Taxonomy – committee formed from the
1948 APA Convention |
| Backward Design – Wiggins & McTighe | ASSURE – Heinich, Molenda, Russel, & Smaldino |
| 4C-ID – Jeroen van Merriënboer | Criterion Referenced Instruction – Robert Mager |
| SAM – Michael Allen | Systems Approach – Walter Dick & Lou Carey |
| Design Thinking Process – Herbert Simon, et al | User Experience (UX) Design – Donald Norman |
| ARCS – John Keller | Cognitive Apprenticeship – Collins, Brown, & Newman |
| Rapid Prototyping – Tripp & Bichelmeyer | Conditions of Learning – Robert Gagne |
| First Principles of Instruction – M David Merrill | |

5 – Objectives/learning outcomes – This section should describe what you will *learn* or *be able to do*, not what you will *use* to learn. List the demonstrable skills or knowledge you will acquire in this experience. Here is where you will specify your expected measurable changes or improvements once you’ve completed the experience.

6 – Evaluation/assessment/learner transfer – Identify the evidence/artifacts/documentation you will produce, demonstrate, or collect to show you have done what you intended to do.

7 – Timeline with milestones – A timeline specifying the projected sequence and date of completion of the various steps is helpful to both the advisor/chair and to you during the completion of the experience. Identify milestones, with expected completion dates, that will indicate the clear sequence of events leading to the successful completion of your total experience. These milestones are the checkpoints along the way.

8 – References – There should be "one-to-one correspondence" between the articles cited in the body of the proposal and those listed in the reference section. Supplemental reference lists may be included if you wish to identify other sources you have found to have value for the project/experience, but which were not cited in the proposal.

FORMAT

The proposal should follow the writing standards outlined in the current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA). The APA manual describes and provides examples of current forms for citing references in text, listing references, headings, etc.

Margins, pagination, and typing standards should follow those outlined by the Utah State University School of Graduate Studies Publication Guide. It is available online at:

<https://gradschool.usu.edu/thesis-dissertation-requirements/>

SUMMARY REPORT

Upon completion of the creative project, prepare a 3 to 5-page summary. Submit the summary for approval to your advisor. The written report summarizes your project and is the final requirement for Creative Project approval.

An alternate to the summary is a manuscript for an article about your project to be submitted to a professional journal. You should discuss these two options with your advisor.

Complete your summary report. There are several sections to consider and develop.

- 1 – Introduction
- 2 – Description of the project
- 3 – Conclusions
- 4 – Recommendations

Help with proposal sections

- 1 – Introduction – State the purpose of the project and specific, relevant background information on the project.
- 2 – Description of the project – Describe the project with emphasis on your involvement during all phases of the project.
- 3 – Conclusions – Share what was learned during the project about the organization, the project, and yourself.
- 4 – Recommendations – Based on the above conclusions, give recommendations you would make to future candidates about the project and the process used.