

THE PURPOSES AND PRACTICES OF CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES AT A MASTERS LEVEL INSTITUTION

A POSTER PRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This project investigates current practices and ideas related to the capstone experiences of Master's students at the University of Central Oklahoma. Capstone projects can provide transformative experiences when students apply concepts learned and skills developed during the degree program to address everyday problems and issues. While most evidence supporting high-impact practices, such as capstone experiences, has been conducted at the undergraduate level and most discussions of improving student's outcomes in graduate school have focused on doctoral degrees, we suggest it is time to evaluate capstone experiences at the Masters level.

In addressing this weakness in the literature, graduate program coordinators at the University of Central Oklahoma were interviewed. Program coordinators were asked: (a) to provide a personal definition of a capstone experience, (b) to address the capstone requirements for their program and how the capstone experience prepares students for the workforce, (c) to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students should obtain during their graduate program, and (d) to describe possibilities, other than the current capstone, that might better meet the needs of students. Program coordinators were asked to provide a copy of the criteria, directions, and assessment tools (i.e., rubric or checklist) for the capstone experience. Preliminary findings will be presented at the poster session.

SELECT REFERENCES

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