

MATL Capstone Research Project



Faculty of Education

The MATL Capstone Research Project is an important self-directed component of the professional journey to becoming an adaptive expert teacher and life-long learner. The Capstone Research Project is supported in courses sequentially through the MATL program.

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Guidelines for Completing the MATL Capstone Research Project

The MATL **Capstone Research Project** (CRP) is an important **self-directed** component of the professional journey to becoming an adaptive expert teacher and life-long learner. As such, this project is undertaken in the spirit of augmenting professional growth and scholarship. The central requirement of the CRP is that you tie your investigation to a professional interest and link this work to your future identity as a practicing teacher. Please note: The process outlined below describes a timeline based on a five-term MATL trajectory. Students not following the five-term trajectory may have a different timeline.

Rationale

We each come to the teaching profession enriched by many years of experience - of schools, of previous study, of our interests and expertise – informed by our own particular trajectory through life thus far. We all believe in and care deeply about something. This can be a socio-political issue, a commitment, an approach to life and learning, an awareness of something that needs attention and work and hope. In fact, it may well be this very passion that constitutes, at least in part, your motivation for entering the teaching profession. For the CRP you are asked to identify one such key interest, which will become the capstone concentration and area of particular and motivated exploration throughout the duration of your program. The CRP will also form the basis for a presentation during the timeframe of the final Professional Seminar (in EDPS 620).

There are five steps to the CRP, supported in designated courses:

1. CRP Exploration (Summer Y1 - EDPS 600)
2. CRP Preparation research (Fall Y1 - EDTL 601)
3. CRP Outline (due Winter Y1) and Critical Literature Review (due Winter Y1 – EDPS 610)
4. CRP Final Product (Final draft due August Y2 – EDTL 640; Final corrected version due Fall Y2 – EDPS 620)
5. CRP Presentation (December Y2 – EDPS 620)

Support

In addition to the designated courses, there is a myCourses space dedicated to the CRP as well as to the e-Portfolio. You will have access to this space for the duration of your program. In this space you will find resources to support you in your inquiry. Your instructors throughout the program also have access to this space. Independent workshops to further support the completion of the CRP may be organized as needed.

Timeline

Term 1 (Summer): The CRP is introduced at the beginning of your MATL program in EDPS 600. During that introductory seminar and throughout the summer term, you will explore a variety of topics with the goal of establishing a foundation for reflective practice, and to ground yourself in a broad understanding of education including potential areas of interest for your CRP. You will also begin to develop practices to

document your reflective practice.

Term 2 (Fall): During your fall coursework, you will encounter and engage with rich insights into the complex nature of teaching. You are expected to consider how the complexity of learning to teach intersects with your preconceived ideas of teaching. Throughout your fall coursework, you will identify and develop a number of possible capstone research questions that will guide and sustain your interest in a particular facet of education with consideration of that topic may impact your professional practice as well as the profession itself. This process is supported most specifically by EDTL 601 where you will continue to document your capstone research project thinking.

Term 3 (Winter): At the beginning on EDPS 610, you will submit your CRP Outline. Included in the CRP Outline is: (1) A guiding question that serves as the capstone research question; (2) A brief description of topic or theme and the context or setting in which your CRP is situated. (max. 250 words); (3) a brief explanation of the value of your CRP for your professional practice and how it might serve the profession (max. 250 words); and (4) a detailed action plan that outlines how you will complete your CRP Final Product. In EDPS 610, you will also complete a critical literature review related to your CRP.

Term 4 (Summer): Over the course of the summer term, you are expected to complete your investigation and prepare the final draft of your CRP Final Product. This process is supported most specifically by EDTL 640. This course is offered in a blended learning format consisting of up to six face-to-face workshops and online support and expectations. The goal of this course is for you to complete the final draft of your CRP **Final Product**, which will be assessed in this course.

Term 5 (Fall): Over the course of this term, supported in EDPS 620, you will make any final changes to your CRP Final Product and prepare your CRP Presentation for the student-led Capstone Research Symposium. In advance of the Symposium you will create and submit an infographic, and an abstract for your CRP Final Product. The Symposium is normally scheduled in early/mid-December over two evenings (**attendance at both evenings is mandatory**) and you can choose to present your research in either a 20 minute timeslot, or as a 40 minute 'workshop'. At the end of the Fall term you will be expected to upload your CRP Final Product, infographic and abstract to the CRP myCourses space.

Term	5-TERM TIMELINE	Course	Focus
Term 1 (Y1): Summer	May - August	EDPS 600	Introduction to the CRP. Foundations of reflective practice.
Term 2 (Y1): Fall	September - December	EDTL 601	CRP preparation research
Term 3 (Y1): Winter	January - April	EDPS 610	Completion of CRP Outline and Critical Literature Review.
Term 4 (Y2): Summer	May – August	EDTL 640	Final Draft of CRP Final Product
Term 5 (Y2) Fall	September – November	EDPS 620	Preparation of the CRP Presentation and finalizing CRP Final Product
	December		CRP Presentation at the Capstone Research Symposium

1. THE CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT OUTLINE

Due Term 3 (Y1 - Winter) (EDPS 610)

1.1 Explanation

The **Capstone Research Project (CRP)** will be informed by a question or questions developed and refined through the initial semesters of the MATL program. The **CRP Outline** should integrate the substantive, methodological, and reflective issues raised through the process of completing a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Education, McGill University. Students are to demonstrate and assess their knowledge by developing a question or topic related to their professional lives as teachers and that falls within the framework for *Finding a Wondering* as presented in Yendol Hoppey and Dana-Fichtman's (2014), *The Reflective Educator Guide to Classroom Research*¹. The question will allow students to:

- analyze changes in their understanding of some topic or theme (e.g., leadership, mentoring, curriculum, computers in the classroom) as a result of experiences within the MATL program;
- analyze changes in their understanding and conduct of their professional practice as classroom teachers;
- developing an action plan for one's own further professional growth, and/or providing leadership in the further education and development of colleagues within one's professional community

The precise nature and composition of the question or topic is open to negotiation with the Professional Seminar instructor (within the limits of required academic and professional standards) to maximize the personal relevance and learning of each student.

1.2 Requirements

In Winter Y1 (final deadline to be determined in EDPS 610), the following information must be submitted:

- CRP QUESTION
- ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR THEME (max. 200 words)
- ANALYSIS OF UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (max. 200 words)
- DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

1.3 The CRP Outline Rubric for Assessment

If revisions are requested, you have 7 days to make the required changes before resubmitting.

- For **MAJOR REVISIONS**, highlight all changes in **YELLOW** and include an explanation/rationale to address how those changes address the requested revisions.
- For **MINOR REVISIONS**, highlight all changes in **BLUE**

Capstone Research Project OUTLINE Rubric for Assessment			
CRITERIA	MAJOR REVISIONS REQUIRED	MINOR REVISIONS REQUIRED	NO REVISIONS REQUIRED
CRP QUESTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Question unrelated to education or the development of the professional.Fails to articulate a clear problem or challenge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Question may be of interest to self and others but may lack insight or originality.Articulates a problem or challenge but may not shed new light.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Interesting to self and others.Attempts to shed new light on problem or challenge.Question is complex and

¹ Yendol Hoppey, D., & N. Fichtman Dana, N. (2014). *The reflective educator guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question is too simple, narrow or objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question may be too simple or narrow. 	subjective
ANALYSIS OF TOPIC OR THEME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The analysis lacks detail and/or relevance. The chosen topic or theme may be underdeveloped or irrelevant. • Lacks credible current or relevant research that supports the topic/theme • May not adhere to word limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis needs to be more clearly articulated and/or detailed in order for the question to be considered relevant to the chosen topic or theme • May lack current or relevant research supports the topic/theme • May not adhere to word limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the chosen topic or theme is clearly articulated. • Current research/evidence supports the topic/theme • Adheres to word limit
ANALYSIS OF UNDERSTANDING OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The understanding of professional practice lacks relevant to the teaching professional and/or to the individual's growth as an educator • Lacks detail to substantiate clear understanding of professional practice • May not adhere to word limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The understanding of professional practice demonstrated may be relevant to the teaching professional as well as the individual's growth as an educator but further explanation is required • Greater detail to strengthen the argument is required • May not adhere to word limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The understanding of professional practice demonstrated is highly relevant to the teaching professional as well as the individual's growth as an educator. • Details contribute to the strength of the argument. • Adheres to word limit
DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives are unclear or lack detail • More detailed steps including the timing for each of the steps is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan has objectives but requires greater detail to substantiate those objectives • More detailed steps including the timing for each of the steps is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan has clear objectives & detailed steps to be taken • Includes the timing for each of the steps.
ACTION	<p style="text-align: center;">NEEDS TO BE RESUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Include explanation of how you have addressed the required revisions. Highlight changes throughout the resubmission in YELLOW</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEED BY INCORPORATING FEEDBACK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Include explanation of how you have addressed the required revisions. Highlight changes in BLUE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PROCEED WITH CRP PRESENTATION</p>

2. THE CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT FINAL PRODUCT

Due Y2 - Summer (EDTL 640)

2.1 Explanation

The **CRP Final Product** is typically a 20-25 pages (6000-8000 words excluding references) written document with a minimum of 12 scholarly references. Referencing should follow the guidelines for APA 6th edition (<https://www.mcgill.ca/library/services/citation/guides-o>). Students wishing to prepare the CRP using a different format (e.g. video, web resource, etc.) should consult with the EDTL 640 instructor before proceeding.

2.2 Requirements

The **CRP Final Product** will:

- a) posit a central cogent theme supported by research, thoughtful analysis, logical arguments and carefully selected supportive detail;

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- b) present theory arising out of research, reflection, practice and current thinking on the chosen topic; the arguments presented build to a consistent conclusion;
- c) demonstrate an ability to think critically in the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of relevant information;
- d) demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of MATL course material including an in-depth understanding of the relevant concepts, theories, and issues related to the topic addressed by applying it where relevant;
- e) demonstrate reflexive thinking and explicit connection between learned theory and experienced practice (field placement);
- f) synthesize recent research covered in course work and elsewhere to support the themes that emerge in the paper);
- g) demonstrate an awareness of differing view-points and a rigorous assessment of these undertaken where relevant;
- h) present reflective analysis of the student's learning, including a demonstration of growth over the course of the program;
- i) demonstrate originality, insight, and creativity, and a new understanding of theory or practice related to the question or topic addressed in the examination;
- j) present a clear, fluent, organized, and well-written paper; shows mastery of grammar, structure, style and the APA style of referencing; demonstrates the ability to communicate in writing at the level expected for graduate work.

2.3 Tips for Students

To assist students in avoiding some common errors in completion of the CRP Final Product, the following suggestions have been compiled:

- a) Avoid merely describing the process of your completion of the MATL program; brief focused statements of how particular courses impacted understanding of the CRP topic(s) may be appropriate if directed to specific points.
- b) Avoid an over reliance on summaries of course material; think "synthesis", rather than "Spark Notes".
- c) Avoid lengthy excerpts from previously submitted work; brief reference may be made to previously graded assignments where appropriate, but lengthy excerpts risk a charge of plagiarism. You may cite your own work according to APA 6th edition guidelines but you cannot use verbatim work. (Please consult the *Academic Integrity* website: <http://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/plagiarism>).
- d) One effective approach to completing the capstone response is to carefully integrate theory and practice.
 - i) Use concrete examples from your own professional practice, internship field experience or workplace to illustrate the theories under discussion.
 - ii) Use relevant theory from the research literature to interpret any real world experiences you relate in your paper.
 - iii) Build on your understanding of theory and current practice to propose future directions in a practical action plan.
- e) Ensure that the manuscript includes a formal introduction and conclusion (See appendix A for a template)
- f) Ensure that the manuscript is organized by headings and subheadings; headings and subheadings to be included in a table of contents.
- g) Ensure that the manuscript is in correct APA format.
 - i) All drafts must include page numbers.
 - ii) Quotations, bibliography, citations, and references must be in APA format.
- h) Ensure that the final manuscript has been thoroughly edited and proofread.
 - i) In addition to demonstrating knowledge and skills appropriate to a MATL degree, the **Capstone Research Project Final Product** must demonstrate appropriate standards of written communication; grammatical errors, lack of clarity, poor structure or organization are unacceptable.
 - ii) It is acceptable in this context to engage the services of a professional editor to assist with the final copy editing

2.4 The Capstone Research Project Final Product Rubric for Assessment

Grading is Pass/Fail. The CRP Final Product is a requirement for the MATL program. Students must PASS each criterion of the rubric. If **major** revisions are requested, you have 7 days to make the required changes before resubmitting unless otherwise agreed with the instructor. CRP Final Products with no major revisions required are deemed to have PASSED. Minor revisions do not need to be resubmitted to the EDTL 640 instructor, but we recommend that students integrate them into their Final Product.

- For **MAJOR REVISIONS**, highlight all changes in **YELLOW** and include an explanation/rationale to address how those changes address the requested revisions.

Capstone Research Project Rubric for Assessment

CRITERIA	MAJOR REVISIONS REQUIRED	MINOR REVISIONS REQUIRED	NO REVISIONS REQUIRED
Analytical/ Critical Thinking Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRP topic/theme is not clearly articulated, or its component elements are not identified or described Research information is poorly organized, categorized, and/or superficially examined Research information is often inaccurate or incomplete; presents little if any analysis or interpretation Inaccurately and/or inappropriately applies research methods, techniques, models, frameworks, and/or theories to the analysis Conclusions are often not well supported, inaccurate, and/or inconsistent, and are presented in a vague or rudimentary manner. The connection between research and practice is weak or absent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequately identifies and describes (or sketches out) the CRP topic/theme and its components Gathers and examines information relating to the CRP topic/theme Satisfactorily presents and appraises research information with only minor inconsistencies, irrelevancies, or omissions Generally applies appropriate research methods, techniques, models, frameworks, and/or theories with a few minor inaccuracies Outlines conclusions that are logical and consistent with the analysis and evidence; Establishes an acceptable connection between research and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively formulates a clear description of the CRP topic/theme, and specifies major elements to be examined Selects and prioritizes information appropriate to addressing the CRP topic/theme Accurately and appropriately analyzes and interprets relevant research information Precisely and effectively applies appropriate research methods, techniques, models, frameworks, and/or theories in developing and justifying conclusions Conclusions are insightful, coherent, well supported, logically consistent, and complete Establishes clear and detailed connection between research and practice
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content is unclear, inaccurate, and/or incomplete Support for the central purpose, arguments, or goals of the project is weak or poorly discussed Displays only rudimentary knowledge of the content area; Reader gains few if any insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents clear and appropriate information that adequately supports the central purpose, arguments, or goals of the project Demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of the content area Reader gains some insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents balanced, significant, and valid information that clearly and convincingly supports the central purpose, arguments, or goals of the project Demonstrates in-depth knowledge of the content area Reader gains important insights
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information/content is not logically organized or presented Topics/paragraphs are frequently disjointed and fail to make sense together; Reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest Research project exhibits frequent and significant errors in APA formatting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information/content is presented in a clear and reasonable sequence Topic/paragraph transition is usually good with clear linkages for the most part Reader can generally understand and follow the line of reasoning APA formatting is employed appropriately in the research project with a few minor errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information/content is presented in a logical, interesting, and effective sequence Topics flow smoothly and coherently from one to another and are clearly linked Reader can easily follow the line of reasoning APA format is used accurately and consistently throughout the research project
ACTION	<p>NEEDS TO BE RESUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL</p> <p>Include explanation of how you have addressed the required revisions. Highlight changes throughout the resubmission in YELLOW</p>	<p>PROCEED BY INCORPORATING FEEDBACK</p>	<p>PROCEED WITH CRP PRESENTATION</p>

3. THE CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATION

December Y2 (EDPS 620)

3.1 Explanation

Students registered in EDPS 620 will participate in the Capstone Research Symposium consisting of presentations of their CRPs. The Capstone Research Symposium typically takes place over 2 evenings at the end of EDPS 620. Full attendance and participation at the Symposium is mandatory for all students. You may choose from 20 minute or 40 minute time slots. Presentations are to be interactive and engaging. Depending on the nature of your topic/theme, you may choose to develop your **CRP** into a workshop (for the 40 minutes timeslot). You are welcome to invite family, friends and other colleagues to attend your presentation.

- Presenters: You will be assigned a time slot and room for your presentation
- Peers: You will attend a presentation in each of the sessions that you are not presenting in (both evenings).

3.2 Evaluation Criteria

Each presentation will be assessed based on four criteria:

- Audience Engagement
- Presence
- Content
- Organization

3.3 Submission of Capstone Research Project Final Product

The final submission of the CRP must include:

1. A clean, error-free, APA-formatted document (in electronic format) must be submitted to the CRP myCourses space by the final deadline as determined in EDPS 620.
2. CRP Presentation notes/powerpoint slides

3.4 The Capstone Research Project Presentation Rubric for Assessment

Grading is Pass/Fail. The Capstone Research Project is a requirement for the MATL program. Students must PASS each criterion in the rubric.

- For **MAJOR REVISIONS**, highlight all changes in **YELLOW** and include an explanation/rationale to address how those changes address the requested revisions.

Capstone Research Project Presentation Rubric for Assessment

CRITERIA	MEETS EXPECTATIONS	EXCEED EXPECTATIONS
Audience engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented facts with some interesting “twists”; held attention most of the time by interacting with them. Good variety of materials/media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved audience in presentation; held their attention throughout by getting them actively involved in the speech and using original, clever, creative approach.
Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporates various textual information and describes own opinion and preferences with regard to the topic; Some consideration of the various learning styles of audience members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows creativity in presenting the content in a fashion that moves the argument forward in line with the topic/theme Incorporates various textual information (e.g., personal, public and published stories) and describes own opinion and preferences Obvious consideration of the various learning styles of audience members
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization of content and depth of presentation are noticeable, but may not sustained throughout the presentation; Most expected aspects of the topic are addressed Addresses topics persuasively, although statements are not elaborately linked throughout the whole presentation; Familiarity with the content focus of the topic/theme and ability to relate the personal stories in the texts to the student’s own experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributes information that is highly relevant and shows awareness of culture and genre-specific issues that deserve to be highlighted Addresses all expected aspects of the topics in depth, demonstrating an awareness of the relationship between aspects by going beyond simple statements and combining them into a coherent presentation (introduction, main argument, conclusion/reflection) Presentation reflects ability to handle in depth thematic discussion in class; additionally, to show familiarity with the content focus of the topic, the student will be able to make cross-cultural comparisons and relate the personal stories in the texts to her own experiences.
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central message is identifiable; sections of presentation vary in explicit organizational pattern, which influences audience engagement level or comprehension of central message. Utilizes various medium to deliver key information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains a clear central message and clearly-identifiable sections featuring purposeful organizational pattern (e.g., chronological, problem-solution, analysis of parts, etc.) Effectively utilizes various medium to deliver key information
ACTION	<p>PLEASE MAKE REQUESTED REVISIONS BEFORE SUBMITTING PRESENTATION NOTES, VIDEO AND/OR SLIDES</p> <p>Highlight changes based on requested revisions in YELLOW</p>	<p>SUBMIT THE PRESENTATION NOTES, VIDEO AND/OR SLIDES</p>