

**EDU 660/776 Faculty Meeting Purpose and Summary**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**  
**December 1, 2005**

Purpose

The primary purpose of our meeting was to discuss and come to consensus on the critical learning outcomes of the two courses, EDU 660 and EDU 776, and to further discuss means for assessing those outcomes with a view to coming to some agreement on a common assignment and instrument for evaluation. The secondary purpose of the meeting was to promote community among the faculty.

Summary

The morning's discussion focused on EDU 660: Methods of Education Research. The group agreed that the critical outcomes of the course fell into three main categories:

1. **Students need to be able to read and critically analyze educational research literature.** Included in this is the need to know what constitutes scholarly research, be familiar with the language of research, and be able to synthesize a body of research.
2. **Students need to have an understanding of statistics.** We discussed this further in terms of what students need to be familiar with in terms of reading research vs. what they need to know how to do in order to do their capstone projects. They need to understand concepts such as reliability and validity.
3. **Students need to be able to apply the above concepts to a research project.** They should be able to summarize and use statistics that are appropriate to their project and need to be able to choose an appropriate research methodology. Toward this end there should be a balance of presentation between quantitative and qualitative research methods, and students should have a working understanding of the differences in research design.

A number of the faculty expressed the desire to have access to a fully licensed copy of SPSS for the EDU 660 course rather than having to depend on the 30-day free download all the time.

One critical question that we discussed was how best to assess the learning in this course. Most of the faculty present at this meeting elect to take the students through the process of writing a proposal with the purpose of using that assignment as a centerpiece to tie in the other concepts of the course. One faculty member disagrees with this as she feels it shuts the door on future flexibility for the project, and she uses instead a detailed worksheet that requires students to think about all the various aspects of the research process, which then forms the bridge for students to approach the capstone project.

**For those who do use the proposal as an assignment, it is important to keep the practice proposal separate from the actual first three chapters of the capstone.** I want to emphasize that EDU 660 is a separate course from EDU 776; each has its own learning outcomes and assessments. The purpose of EDU 660 is to give students an overview of the research process and all that that process entails, and to give them practice with those concepts. Additionally, students are not to start on the capstone in 660 as it is the 776 faculty member who has the authority to approve the capstone topic.

The afternoon's discussion focused on EDU 776, both the course and the project. The group agreed that the outcomes listed on the Master Course Syllabus should not include the first one: *Students will be able to identify contemporary problems in education.* As it is stated, this objective is better suited to EDU 613. The group suggested that the following be included as objectives:

1. *Students will understand the role of the IRB in research and will complete the approval process.*
2. It was suggested that every category on the rubric be represented as a learning outcome.

There was lengthy discussion about the rubric itself with suggestions made to improve it so that it reflects even more accurately what is expected and so that it differentiates better between students' levels of outcome achievement.

We talked about changing the delivery of the course from one 12-hour seminar to a regular course format where faculty would meet with students three times over the duration of the course—i.e. in the usual three-weekend format. All agreed that one 12-hour weekend is not sufficient, that students need more contact and more guidance in order to do the kind of quality work that we expect.

We also talked about the IRB application. **For purposes of clarity and to eliminate time lost in communicating with students, I am asking that every application have with it a typed paragraph that explains the purpose of the project, what the sources of data are, and what method of collecting data will be used.**

We wrapped up the meeting by asking where we go from this point. All agreed that there is a need for an “on-line community” with a secure area for communication. There was also agreement that training is needed for EDU 660 and EDU 776 faculty; a system had been in place which I will look into reinstating.

A suggestion was made to have focus groups of recent 660/776 students across regions to find out whether their needs were met and if not, what didn't they get?

The capstone manual will be rewritten to better help the student through the process and to reflect the current state of the course.