The most popular choice for the capstone experience for the Master of Education in Instrumental Music Education is the Individual Research in Education Project (6 credits), which requires two 3-credit enrollments.

The capstone experience may consist of one large project spread over 2 semesters, with specified goals and results for each semester; or 2 different, smaller projects aimed at solving a problem or addressing an area of your teaching that you would like to strengthen.

Please keep in mind that this capstone experience is an alternative to a master’s thesis, so the final documents each semester should represent substantial and thorough research of the topic(s) under consideration. Before you submit your documents, be sure to have one or more qualified individuals read them over for clarity, correctness, and thoroughness. Although the processes for this project differ from those involved in writing a master’s thesis, the writing should reflect the same high standard. Papers that are deemed unacceptable in this regard will be returned for re-writing without further penalty. This becomes especially important when you are trying to meet a local deadline for the completion of your degree or when the results of your project are to be submitted to your school administrator or school committee.

The main advantage in doing the Individual Research in Education Project is that it allows you to solve a problem or to fortify an area of your teaching that you regard as a weakness. It is important to choose a project that will help to make you a better teacher or help to improve music education in your school and district. Past projects have included:

- developing a system-wide curriculum
- instrumental teaching materials and concert repertoire
- student recruitment & retention
- incorporating basic jazz techniques into the concert band rehearsal
- solving local problems with scheduling
- re-designing and renovating school music facilities
- etc.

Before undertaking your research project, you will need to submit a proposal that states the following:

- your rationale for undertaking the project
- a clear statement of the problem to be solved
- your detailed procedure for the first and second semesters separately
- the expected contents of the final document(s) for the first and second semesters separately
- your timetable for completion of the project(s)
Once we agree on the project—its content, and your procedures—you may not change those without our discussion and our mutual agreement. If you wish to submit drafts as you proceed in order to ascertain that you are on the right track, feel free to do so.