

## Summer 2020 Semester Reflection

Summer 2020 semester was conducted entirely online due to the continue Covid-19 outbreak. During this semester, I took Transformative Practice I (EDLD 9434) and Research Seminar II (EDLD 9632), both of which required a significant amount of work, especially related to the shorter time frame of summer semester. Going into the summer knowing we would not be meeting face to face for our monthly on-campus meetings was disappointing, but I still felt like this summer my cohort bonded more than ever before. Each semester we get closer to being on our own, writing our dissertations and this summer, we worked hard on firming out the pre-prospectus portion of our work. In our Research Seminar I class, writing boot camp days were required and many of our cohort members chose to do this assignment together, even from a distance. Additionally, Transformative Practice required a lot of group work and balancing this with the intensity of the summer months gave the cohort a chance to bond as a unit.

EDLD 9434 consisted of heavy amounts of work on the front end of the semester and a significant amount of group projects. Honestly, group work is not always my cup of tea, but Dr. Tolman allowed us to choose our own groups and so my two other group members and I worked well for the semester. We analyzed and used network data to better understand and implement change and then analyzed a case study for change. As has been the case with other courses with Dr. Tolman, a Learning Contract assignment was part of the course requirements and an assignment I thoroughly enjoy. I chose to read and write a leadership book review and have since submitted it for publication. I think my favorite element of Dr. Tolman's courses is that he wants us to concretely use what we learn whether it be through our Problem of Practice project related to our dissertation topic or the Learning Contract assignment. The further I progress in this program, the more each class directly connects to my dissertation and I thoroughly appreciate that aspect of the program.

The second course this summer, EDLD 9632, continued our work with the pre-prospectus document. I feel like this class allowed me to make huge strides not only in my literature review for my dissertation, but also regarding the topic itself. At times, though, I did feel like some of the assignments could've been given in previous semesters to allow for more timely progress. For example, I wish I had started the In the Know matrix of my sources in previous semesters. Instead, I initially used Zotero for my research gathering and had to translate it into the appropriate tool for the assignment. Regardless, this assignment was great practice for organizing my research. Most of my sources had already been gathered and read at that point, but because I added the SI Leader experience to my dissertation topic, I was able to use this assignment to develop that area of research. Adding this new dimension to my dissertation topic provided me with the opportunity to study the entire college peer educator experience, as opposed to the singular experience of the peer tutor. Without this course and Dr. McBrayer's guidance, I never would have thought of that addition. As is the case with most of the Research Seminar courses in this program, there was a lot of independent work, only submitted upon completion of a draft. I think others can struggle with that type of learning, but I enjoyed the flexibility it allowed for me to get somewhat ahead on my literature review.