YouLearn.ca - Career-Life Connections 12

Capstone Project

What is it?

A **capstone project**, also known as a culminating project or experience, or senior exhibition, among other terms, is a project that allows you to demonstrate your learning using an area(s) of interest as the basis for the project. Ideally, this would be an area that you are passionate and interested about and anticipate you will be pursuing after graduation. Upon the completion of *Career Life Connections*, you will design, assemble and present a capstone project to an audience to demonstrate personal learning and achievement (in and out-of-school), growth in the core competencies, and a reflection on the post-secondary plan. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on face to face instruction, presentations may take place online.

Capstone Projects should:

- Demonstrate new learning
- Be based on an area of interest for the student
- Connect to areas of exploration for post-graduate careers or post-secondary studies

Parts of the Capstone

Capstone projects include the following components:

Groundwork for Capstone Project	
Proposal	The proposal outlines the project and includes disciplinary and core competency connections, timelines, and product.
Mentor *Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this component is not currently a requirement*	The mentor is ideally a shared role that includes teachers and/or community members that provide guidance throughout the culminating project.
Research	The research provides the information needed to prepare the capstone project.
Project and Presentation	
Product	The product is the end result of all the work on the capstone project (e.g. video, document, performance).
Presentation *Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this component may be online*	You may choose from a variety of presentation methods decided when the product is completed. The audience will consist of teachers, community members and/or others connected to you and/or your capstone project.

The Proposal

The first step is to create a proposal that connects the interests, passions and goals from your time at school, that may lead to a potential career path.

A successful capstone project topic should be:

- Something you can research (for example, a career path such as Dentistry or Electronics Engineering)
- Related to your school studies and/or extra-curricular activities (for example, you may have taken a relevant course such as Biology or Physics)
- Consist of a significant visual, oral/audio, or written product that demonstrates your research and skill development in the area of interest

You must be able to research your proposal. It must be related to your career path and be readily usable for a capstone project. The project may include visual, oral/audio, and written presentation that demonstrates the depth of the core 21st century skills learned during your time in school.

A successful proposal should answer the following questions about your capstone project:

1. What skill/area of interest have you learned/explored on your educational journey?
2. Why are you passionate about this skill/area of interest?
3. How will your capstone project allow you to further develop this skill/area of interest?
4. How will you demonstrate this learning through a performance, an essay, artwork, a digital medium(audio, video, game), or other medium?
5. How will this process make you a better learner?

Your proposal must be supported with an explanation of why you feel it is important. Your proposal must be completed, submitted, and reviewed and approved by your teacher before moving on with the project.

Life-long learning

One purpose of the capstone project is to ensure students are prepared to become life-long learners. When students leave school, they will be responsible for making more decisions about their education. Developing a desire to learn, and enthusiasm for learning, requires connecting one's own interests to their learning objectives. Successful learners will guide their own learning and make decisions to pursue educational objectives that are meaningful to them. It's important that your capstone project topic is a topic you will enjoy learning about.

21st Century Skills

21st Century Skills is a term used to describe those skills which are emerging as important to education and workplaces in the 21st Century. A non-profit organization, Partnership for 21st Century Learning, has defined these skills as:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Creativity and innovation
- Cross-cultural understanding
- Communications, information, and media literacy
- Computing and ICT literacy
- Career and learning self-reliance

Consider how your capstone project might demonstrate your ability to use these skills. They are an important part of developing as a life-long learner.

Research

The research you do for your capstone project will be highly individualized. You may be planning to open a business and need to research the process of applying for a business license, securing a business loan, and performing market research. You may be composing a piece of music to submit with your application to a music school and need to find software that will let you present your composition professionally. It will be up to you how much, and what kind of research you will need to do. The

research is part of the process of your capstone project, and how successful it is will be evident in your product.

The Product

What you produce is dependent on your topic, the skill or area of interest you are working on/in, and the goal of your learning.

Examples:

- A Powerpoint presenting detailed research into post-secondary institutions, with a final commitment in the form of a submitted application
- A song that demonstrates new work in composition, vocal range, or creative expression.
- An art portfolio that collects prior and new art to be submitted with an application to a Fine Arts program.
- A robotics project that incorporates skills developed in a school robotics club, with new learning pursued individually.
- An automotive repair on a vehicle that incorporates knowledge of diagnostics, purchasing, installation, and a detailed description of the steps followed.

The depth of learning should be evident in both the product and the presentation. If you have questions about a topic you wish to pursue, contact your teacher.

The Presentation

Some capstone projects will be all about the product. A student may use an off-the-shelf kit to design a self-watering plant system that detects moisture levels and provides water accordingly. While putting together the pieces may not have required much effort or exertion, the student's presentation will guide the audience through the research, planning, and execution that show their acquisition and application of new learning. Another student may use the presentation to provide details on the Powerpoint presentation they constructed of a tour they took at the University they plan to attend in the Fall. In either case, the combination of the product and the presentation should show they have met all the criteria, but it is up to students to determine on their own which component is of greater importance for their project.

During the presentation, their teacher and other faculty will observe and assess their product and performance. Marks will be given based on the entirety of the project. It's important to discuss both parts of the project with your teacher in advance, to ensure all criteria will be met.

Timeline

Students should begin working on the capstone proposal as soon as they start CLC12. The capstone proposal should be submitted and approved before work begins on the project, to ensure that the proposal will meet the criteria of:

- An area that can be researched / A skill that can be developed
- Relation to the student's prior learning
- A product that demonstrates new learning in the area / Development of the skill
- Connection to student's plans for post-graduation

In the case of a student submitting only a capstone project for completion of CLC12, the student or a mentor should discuss the project regularly to ensure that these criteria can be met at a level that is adequate to meet the Career Life Connections 12 curricular outcomes.

Exemplar

The following pages include an exemplar of a student capstone project.

My Values & My Future Career

It's important to me that I find a job that feels right, and that means seeking out roles that align with my values. As a student, I believe honesty is always the best policy. I also believe that everyone should be treated fairly, which doesn't always mean we treat everybody the same way. We are all unique and sometimes that means we need unique support to reach our full potential. I want to be in an environment where my employer treats everyone fairly. It's also important that I get to work with people I get along with. I prefer to be working as part of a team instead of always independently, and I want to be in a role where people are respectful and happy to pull their own weight to reach a shared goal.

May 13, 2017

College vs University: What's right for me?

I reviewed the College and University Guide to compare the differences between these Post-Secondary pathways. While all my family went to University, I think College is a better choice for me. Why? College programs tend to be smaller and more job-focused. I'd like to be in an environment where I get to know my teachers and peers. College also offers more hands-on experience- I learn so much better this way! I also noticed that the college programs I'm interested in are only 3 years instead of 4. I'd much rather be out in the real world working for that 4th year! I reviewed some of the Graphic Designer positions on Job Search and none of them require a University degree, but they do mention the College diploma. Looks like College is the best choice for me!

Sep 10, 2016

Reflection Sep 12, 2016;

I asked my counsellor why there are programs for Graphic Design in both college and university and she let me know there are lots of programs like this. Some other examples include nursing, engineering, and web development. She said the best way to decide if a program is right for me is to compare the details on myBlueprint AND to try to talk to someone who has studied in a program that interests me.

Reflection Sep 25, 2016;

My neighbour told me that her son went to college for Web Development after he had already completed a university degree in Political Science. I'm going to interview him this weekend!

Common Interview Questions

My counsellor shared this link with common interview questions. I will be applying for a part-time job this Summer and I am saving these here so I can review them ahead of my first interview!

Jun 2, 2017

Reflection Jun 8, 2017

Note to self: practise my response to the question "tell me about yourself"

Institution

Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

Sep 25, 2016

Reflection Sep 28, 2016;

Both my parents went to Queen's. They'd really like me to explore some programs here but I'm thinking I might like to go to college instead..

Institution

Niagara College
Welland, Ontario

Sep 26, 2016

Reflection Sep 26, 2016;

My friend who graduated last year went to Niagara College and he really enjoyed studying culinary arts here. I wonder if there's a program here that would be interesting to me?

I interviewed my neighbour, who went to University and then went to College. He is a Web Developer now, which means he creates web content, like pages or videos, for other companies. He works downtown at a Brand Agency. He works with Graphic Designers a lot and also project managers, who tell him what the other companies want him to create.

He went did a 4-year Political Science program at the University of Ottawa. But even though he had a university degree, he couldn't get a job in what he really wanted to do (Create stuff online!) so he applied and got into the Computer Engineering Technology Co-op program at Algonquin College.

Looking back, he said that he wished he knew about the college program earlier. Even though University was a lot of fun, he doesn't need a degree for the field of web development and he could have saved a lot of money by just going to college. He also said that he liked college a lot more because he could do a co-op and learn outside a classroom. I like that stuff too!

Oct 3, 2016

Reflection Oct 4, 2016

This was a valuable interview! I wonder if there are any programs in Graphic Design that have co-ops?

Program

Graphic Design
OCAD University

Nov 8, 2016

Reflection Nov 13, 2016

I found this program at OCAD, which is a university not a college like Niagara. It looks like it would cost an extra $2000 per year and the program is 4 years long instead of 3. However, I could probably save money by living at home if I went to OCAD instead of Niagara. I'm going to create two budgets and compare how much I need to save for each program!

Program

Graphic Design
Niagara College

Niagara College Canada

Nov 17, 2016

Reflection Nov 19, 2016;

I explored the programs at Niagara and I found two I might like: Graphic Design and Game Development. I compared these on the Post-Secondary tool and it looks like the Graphic Design program costs almost $2000 less per year and I already have all the required pre-requisites in my High School Plan! The Game Development program requires me to take Grade 12 college level math, which I am not planning to take.

Program

Computer Engineering Technology - Computing Science (Co-op)
Algonquin College

Oct 13, 2016

Reflection Oct 15, 2016;

This is the program my neighbour did! I think I might like to do a program that has a co-op option as well, it would be cool to work at the same time as I am learning.

Reflection Dec 2, 2016;

If I do a co-op, I could put that on my resume as a job experience after I graduate!

Knowledge

Your Top Subject Area is
Language Arts

Oct 14, 2016

Reflection Oct 15, 2016;

According to my survey results two subjects I would be extra interested in are English and Creative Arts. I wonder if there are any English electives for me to take next year?

Reflection Nov 4, 2016;

I just browsed the courses on the High School section and found a really cool English Literature class I can take next semester! I'm going to ask my counsellor if there's still space!

Reflection Nov 8, 2016;

These results also suggested I check out jobs in the Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications Career Cluster. I went to search this on the Occupations database and guess what job came up- Graphic Designer!

Budget

Saving for Post-Secondary
Oct 2016 - Oct 2017

Income	**$7,000**
Expenses	**$1,560**
Balance	**$5,440**

Mar 17, 2017

Goals

Learn more about the job Graphic Designer
Career • Medium Term

✓ Goal Completed

Oct 18, 2016

Reflection Mar 20, 2017;

Here's how much money I will have after this year! If I choose to go to Niagara College, I will also need to have $5,353.02 for tuition plus $8,800 for residence and meal plan.

Reflection Apr 2, 2017;

If I decide to go to OCAD, I will need $6,956.50 for tuition for 4 years but will not need to pay for residence or a meal plan since I can live at home.

Reflection Apr 12, 2017;

I wonder how much money I could make over the Summer? I could probably make more if I decide to work full-time instead of part-time. I should start building my resume!

Reflection Nov 3, 2016;

Some of the ways I learned about this job included: watching the videos on the job page, exploring the types of companies that need Graphic Designers on Job Search, and reading the Real Talk interviews with real designers.