

## **Capstone Information**

### **1. What *IS* the capstone?**

*The capstone is a culminating experience that takes place at the end of the course, providing the student with an opportunity to apply theory within an actual classroom. The capstone is designed to extend the learning process via actual implementation, assessment, and reflection. The capstone was developed in response to former student teachers' feedback that they needed more practice time prior to student teaching to build confidence and teaching skills.*

### **2. Where does the capstone take place?**

*The student selects the site and the cooperating teacher who will serve as mentor. A body of research indicates that a self-selected mentor will be more effective for the student's learning than one assigned to the student. The capstone experience takes place in the mentor teacher's classroom.*

### **3. Who may be a mentor teacher?**

*Any certified teacher in a private or public school may serve as mentor.*

### **4. How *long* is the capstone?**

*The capstone is designed to be a consecutive three-day experience; this configuration provides the student with the opportunity to modify lesson plans based on time constraints and students needs.*

### **5. When does the student do the capstone?**

*Ideally, the capstone will be done right after the course ends (during Christmas break for first semester students and during May for second semester students). It will be to the student's advantage to wait until all of the course has been taught. However, if these times do not work for the student, the professor will work with the student to ascertain an appropriate time.*

### **6. What subjects are taught?**

*The student may teach the subject of the student's choice; however, it is expected that the student will include the multiple literacies discussed in class within the student's capstone unit.*

## **7. Which factors are considered in developing the three-day plan?**

*Working collaboratively with the mentor teacher, the Educ 470 student develops a unit of study within the parameters of given standards, scope and sequence, time constraints, etc. The Educ 470 student is a “guest” within the mentor’s classroom; therefore, the student must cooperate with the cooperating teacher in developing the capstone experience.*

## **8. When does the student construct the *lesson plans* for this teaching experience?**

*The capstone preparation is not in addition to the student’s regular assignments; it **is** the student’s regular assignment! The professor will assist the student in developing appropriate lesson plans throughout the semester. For example, once the vocabulary unit has been taught, the student will then develop a vocabulary lesson plan for the student’s capstone experience. In this way, the student’s learning is purposeful and authentic. The Educ 470 student will be teaching specific students rather than preparing a lesson plan for hypothetical students. The professor will review the student’s plans prior to the capstone and provide the student with “coach’s” comments.*

## **9. What is the role of process writing (*writing workshop*) within the course?**

*Educ 470 has been designated as a **writing intensive course**. The writing workshop approach is utilized throughout the semester. The process consists of direct instruction, modeling, and guided practice by the professor, followed by writing of a lesson plan incorporating the strategy that was taught. The rough draft is reviewed by the professor and/or peers and revised until it is of superior quality. Blackboard is extensively used for this submission, review, and revision process.*

## **10. Why is *Understanding by Design* incorporated into the capstone experience?**

*Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) is also known as “backward design”. Understanding by Design is highly endorsed by ASCD and other professional education organizations as “best practice”. The process involves identification of the standard(s), the “Big Ideas” and “Essential Questions”, as well as foundational knowledge and skills. The student then develops a performance task in which the adolescent learner documents true understanding (application). The Common Core also emphasizes performance tasks and authentication application, thus reinforcing what has been the practice since the course was developed.*

*A general description of the Understanding by Design philosophy is available at:  
<http://www.authenticeducation.org/ubd/ubd.lasso>*

## **11. What does the capstone *unit plan* consist of?**

*It is impossible to prescribe one template for all experiences due to the unique characteristics of each context. However, most of the components listed below should be included:*

- Content area
- Theme or title of unit
- Grade level
- Background information about students
- Name of mentor teacher
- The standards, big ideas, essential questions and performance task (Understanding by Design)
- Assessment of prior knowledge
- The “Hook”, initiating activity
- At least 3 lesson plans that include a goal, objectives, materials, procedure (with time allotments), assessment, assignment, reflection, and accommodations
- Before, during, and after reading comprehension strategies
- Introduction, teaching, reinforcement, and assessment of vocabulary
- Evidence of methods designed to foster student participation and engagement
- Culminating activity
- Variety of texts or teaching materials
- Use of technology
- Informal or formal assessment
- Connections to literature and the language arts
- List of resources

## **12. How is the capstone *evaluated*?**

*The capstone is evaluated by the **professor, the preservice teacher, the mentor (cooperating) teacher, and the students at the site.***

*The **professor** evaluates the unit prior to the ending of the course. At that point in time, the unit should be of **outstanding quality**, given the fact that the student and professor have revisited the documents multiple times. The professor evaluates the capstone process and product by using a criteria sheet (see **Exhibit A**). The capstone is designed to be a non-threatening, supportive way for the student to grow prior to student teaching. The student’s grade is not impacted by the success or “failure” of teaching of the capstone. **However, if for some reason the student does not do the capstone, the student will not have sufficient field experience hours to enter student teaching.***

*During the capstone, the **Educ 470 student** writes anecdotal notes on the lesson plans and video-tapes himself/herself during a direct instruction segment. The preservice teacher uses a video evaluation tool developed by the university to professionally reflect on his/her teaching (see **Exhibit B**). The **mentor teacher** will also provide feedback to the student during the entire three-day unit.*

*After the capstone, the **student** will fill out a reflection questionnaire supplied by the university professor. The reflection is both holistic and analytic in nature (see **Exhibit C**). Insights derived from the video evaluation should be reflected in the final student reflection. The **mentor teacher** completes a summative evaluation (see **Exhibit D**).*

*In addition, the preservice teacher asks **his/her students** to complete a brief survey evaluating the teaching of the unit.*

*The student reflection, log of hours, and final mentor evaluation are submitted to the Field Experience Office at the conclusion of the capstone.*

### **13. Which data are examined in order to evaluate the capstone, thus serving as the basis for refinement?**

*The following data/artifacts are gathered, examined, and evaluated in order to refine the course and the capstone experience:*

#### ***Educ 470 student:***

- *Reflection document*
- *Log of hours*
- *End-of-course evaluations*

#### ***Students at capstone site:***

- *Evaluation of the unit (survey given by Educ 470 student)*

#### ***Mentor teacher:***

- *Evaluation (long form)*
- *Anecdotal observations, communication*

#### ***University professor:***

- *Units assessed according to criteria sheet*
- *Professional observation of the writing workshop process*
- *Examination of the reflection document submitted by the Educ 470 student*

#### ***Field experience director:***

- *Examination of the student's reflection document and the coop's evaluation*

*The university professor and the field experience director work collaboratively and frequently to refine the capstone process and product.*

# **Capstone Scoring Criteria Sheet**

Name of Concordia Student Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Congratulations on completing your unit! It has been a joy to watch your progress during the writing workshop. The days spent in class, in individual conference, and in independent writing have been productive! Extensive feedback was provided to you during the process. The purpose of this summative evaluation is to evaluate the final project. Points are earned in the following areas:

\_\_\_\_\_/25      **Provided background of class**

\_\_\_\_\_/25      **Stage 1**

\_\_\_\_\_/25      **Stage 2**

\_\_\_\_\_/25      **Rubric**

\_\_\_\_\_/50      **Hooks**

\_\_\_\_\_/300      **3 complete long form lesson plans that include:**

## **Grading criteria for lesson plan #1:**

\_\_\_\_Standard—5 points

\_\_\_\_Goal—5 points

\_\_\_\_Objectives—10 points

\_\_\_\_Materials—5 points

\_\_\_\_Procedure (with time allotments)—40 points

\_\_\_\_Assessment (what will be assessed and how)—10 points

\_\_\_\_Self-evaluation (record what you will be intentionally looking for)—10 points

\_\_\_\_Assignment—5 points

\_\_\_\_Accommodations—10 points

## **Grading criteria for lesson plan #2:**

\_\_\_\_Standard—5 points

\_\_\_\_Goal—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Objectives—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Materials—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Procedure (with time allotments)—40 points

\_\_\_\_ Assessment (what will be assessed and how)—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Self-evaluation (record what you will be intentionally looking for)—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Assignment—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Accommodations—10 points

**Grading criteria for lesson plan #3:**

\_\_\_\_ Standard—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Goal—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Objectives—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Materials—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Procedure (with time allotments)—40 points

\_\_\_\_ Assessment (what will be assessed and how)—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Self-evaluation (record what you will be intentionally looking for)—10 points

\_\_\_\_ Assignment—5 points

\_\_\_\_ Accommodations—10 points

\_\_\_\_/50      **Comprehension strategy**

\_\_\_\_/50      **Vocabulary strategy**

\_\_\_\_/40      **List of resources and artifacts**

Total:

Total Possible: 590 points

University professor comments: