

SOUTH DAKOTA

Senior Experience

FRAMEWORK



**SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE:
A GUIDE FOR SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOLS**

Senior Experience: Enter to Learn, Leave to Achieve

2010

**South Dakota Department of Education
800 Governors Drive
Pierre, SD 57501**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Senior Experience Capstone Framework Committee wishes you the best of luck in implementing Senior Experience Capstone in your school district. We have tried to include in this initial framework the most relevant information, guidelines, and materials for school districts. In your journey to implement this Framework, let us know what worked and what didn't work for you. We would also be interested in any new materials or strategies that you used in addition to the Guide. Please send this information to:

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USING THE SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE (80019) FRAMEWORK

The Senior Experience Capstone Framework is intended to be a menu for school districts to use in designing a local Senior Experience Capstone program. The Senior Experience Capstone is divided into four components – the research paper, project, portfolio and presentation.

The Framework is available on the South Dakota Department of Education website including downloadable forms that may be used for the local program. Refer to the Senior Experience and Entrepreneurship Experience Capstone: Resources and Rubrics handbook for additional forms.

The Senior Experience Capstone is implemented as a stand-alone course or integrated into a Senior course. The Senior Experience Capstone is one of the three capstone options to fulfill the high school graduation requirements.

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INTRODUCTION

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

The Senior Experience Capstone is a high school capstone experience that requires students to demonstrate not only what they know, but what they can do.

The Senior Experience Capstone consists of four components. **The first component includes the research paper by each student.** The research paper contains a thesis that the writer proves (supports) or disproves through research evidence. A student should carefully consider a possible product before selecting a research topic. The paper exhibits the acquisition of knowledge through researching, writing, interviewing, and synthesizing an application of the real-world skills of time management, organization, self-discipline, persistence, and problem-solving.

The second component includes the creation of a product that is an appropriate and logical extension of the research paper. The product must demonstrate the application of acquired knowledge through a reflective, physical, and/or intellectual stretch.

The third component is the portfolio, which includes specific writing throughout the Senior Experience period. These writings will include reflective and informative journals, business letters, brochure, overviews, and a final Senior Experience Capstone reflection.

The fourth component is a presentation before a Senior Experience Capstone panel. The presentation is ten to fifteen minute formal speech on the paper, the Experience, and personal growth. A question and answer period will follow the presentation. The portfolio will be provided to the panel of judges for review. The Senior Experience Capstone panel can be composed of teachers, mentors, parents, and community members, preferably with knowledge or background of the product or research content. The panel and portfolio provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize their information, Experience, and self-growth journey using communication skills related to fluency, knowledge depth, listening, explaining, defending, comprehending, and application.

Throughout this process, students will benefit greatly from the expertise of a carefully selected Experience mentor and faculty advisor. They will serve as resources to the student during all components of the Senior Experience Capstone. This Framework was developed with the following quotation as its guiding theme: “Enter to Learn; Leave to Achieve.”

Senior Experience Capstone allows students the opportunity to consolidate and showcase the learning from their high school years into a meaningful and relevant Senior Experience. It is their venue to connect with the world outside of school and to demonstrate they have the skills to go on to further education and/or enter the workforce.

Senior Experience Capstone allows schools an avenue to promote the relevance and increase the rigor of the high school experience. Senior Experience Capstone allows students to see the connections between what they are learning now and the application to their future lives. They become an “expert” in their chosen topic area and showcase the skills and abilities they have gained through their high school experience.

The Senior Experience Capstone also provides students with focused and structured learning, gives them experience with the responsibility for meeting timelines, making decisions, doing research, preparing a presentation and making presentations – all skills needed for success in the workplace. Senior Experience Capstone provides an opportunity for students to model the 3 R’s for schools – rigor, relevance, and results!

Senior Experience Capstone

Criteria for *Exemplary* Programs

Program Description:

The purpose of the Senior Experience Capstone is to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and maturity they have gained during the course of their high school education. The Senior Experience Capstone is a four-part process consisting of a research paper, a portfolio, a project/product that is an extension of the research and an oral presentation. The Capstone must be a “learning stretch,” meaning that it must go beyond what the student already knows or has experienced.

1. Seniors complete the Senior Experience as a requirement for graduation.

- The Senior Experience should reflect the student’s chosen career cluster/pathway and be reflective of their Personal Learning Plan.
- Students have a teacher advisor.
- Students have a professional mentor.
- Students evaluated on each of the four Capstone components.

2. Students complete a research paper.

- The research paper is based on the Senior Experience project topic and relates to the students chosen career cluster/pathway.
- The research paper should be adequate in length to meet the student’s goals and formatted using the appropriate formatting style guide (APA, MLA, Chicago).

3. Students complete a portfolio.

- The portfolio should reflect new information learned and demonstrates how that knowledge was applied in new and creative ways.
- The portfolio should include all forms, journal entries, references and activities associated with the Senior Experience.

4. Students create a product related to their research topic.

- The product should be oriented around performance of a skill, the development of some physical product or the study of a profession.

5. Students present their final product/project to a panel of judges.

- The presentation should last from 8-10 minutes and include time for questions from the judging panel.
- The presentation should cover what was learned from doing the research, from writing the paper, and from completing the Senior Experience.
- The presentation should also include what worked and what did not work, how the problem was solved and the nature of personal growth.

6. School district has the structure in place to offer and operate the Senior Experience Capstone.

- A Steering Committee comprised of school staff and students is in place.
- The school has designated a Coordinator for the program.
- The Senior Experience Coordinator is allotted time during the school day to manage the program.
- A program guide provides information on the purpose, operating structure, all forms and documents, and program and student evaluation.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE PROGRAM

1. **Clear and Aligned Purpose** - Student learning outcomes are aligned with school, district, and state mission and goals.
2. **Explicit, Rigorous Criteria** - Performance is assessed by application of established criteria.
3. **Student-Directed Learning and Youth Engagement** - The student takes leadership for selecting, planning, and implementing his/her own learning goals.
4. **Clear Scaffolding of Skills** - Students need instruction and practice for the skills required in the Experience. Some schools include a culminating project in elementary and middle school levels as well as high school.
5. **Learning Stretch** - The Experience poses a challenge that requires significant new learning.
6. **Authentic Experience** - Students apply core academic knowledge and skills beyond the traditional classroom setting to address a real problem.
7. **Community Involvement** - Members of the broader community play an important role in Experience as mentors, panelists, advisors and/or resources.
8. **Authentic Audience** - Expert individuals and community organizations are critical members of the audience to hear and review the Experience.
9. **Coordination and Comprehensive Communication** - Students, parents, community members, teachers and administrators understand the purpose and processes of the Experience.
10. **Adequate Staffing and Supervision** - There is sufficient staff to coordinate the program and provide support to teachers, parents, and community partners.
11. **Mechanism for Training Community Partners** - Community partners are provided training to perform their role as co-educators and authentic partners.
12. **Mechanism for Parent Involvement** - Expectations are developed for parent involvement in the design, implementation, and celebration of the Experience.
13. **Ongoing Professional Development and Program Improvement** - School leaders and community partners organize formal training sessions, reflection activities and opportunities to continuously improve the program.
14. **A Plan for Risk Management and Liability** - Schools and communities ensure the Experience takes place in a safe environment and risk is managed.
15. **Celebration and Recognition** - All collaborators are provided opportunities to be recognized and celebrate the success of the Experience.

Education Commission of the States, 2004

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

1. Organize

- _____ 1. There is support from administration, faculty, and the school board for Senior Experience Capstone.
- _____ 2. An Experience Coordinator has been assigned.
- _____ 3. A budget has been designated.
- _____ 4. A steering committee has been formed for the purpose of putting together the Framework.
- _____ 5. A suggested timeline has been determined.

2. Plan

- _____ 1. Seek input from parents, faculty, and administration through surveys and conversations.
- _____ 2. Review the State Framework for Senior Experience Capstone to become familiar with Experience components.
- _____ 3. Visit with other schools who have implemented the Senior Experience Capstone.
- _____ 4. Review and refine the suggested timeline.

3. Design

- _____ 1. Identify components from the State Framework to include in your program plan.
- _____ 2. Revise the identified sample forms and documents from the Framework to include in your Guide.
- _____ 3. Decide if the Senior Experience Capstone program will be a stand-alone course or integrated into the English course.
- _____ 4. Determine if high school credit will be offered.
- _____ 5. Determine if successful completion of the Senior Experience Capstone is required for high school graduation.
- _____ 6. Determine if the Senior Experience Capstone will be pass/fail or assigned a letter grade.
- _____ 7. Determine if the Senior Experience Capstone program will be a semester in length or year long.
- _____ 8. Get endorsement of your program plan from administrators and staff.
- _____ 9. Identify roles and responsibilities for the Steering Committee, Experience Coordinator, Faculty Advisor, Experience Mentor, and students.
- _____ 10. Create action plans, timelines, and calendars.
- _____ 11. Prepare your plan for review including a draft of the Guide for your school, as well as the action plan and timelines.

4. Implement

- _____ 1. Communicate the Senior Experience Capstone program design and plan to staff.
- _____ 2. Conduct staff development.
- _____ 3. Refine course content, if needed, to fit program requirements.
- _____ 4. Initiate the Senior Experience Capstone course, if this is part of your program design.
- _____ 5. Review progress regularly, adjusting expectations and plans as needed.

5. Evaluate

- _____ 1. Goals have been identified for the Senior Experience Capstone program.
- _____ 2. Student outcomes have been identified.
- _____ 3. Analyze program and student results.
- _____ 4. Recommend program modifications based upon results.

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE GUIDELINES

Topic Selection: The topic can be developed around a career cluster focus. See sections of this Guide for forms and suggestions to help with the process of determining an Experience topic.

Research Paper: The research paper is a formal document that encourages the student to develop and demonstrate proficiency in conducting research and writing. Following are basic criteria for the paper:

1. Research-based with at least five sources, one to be an interview. Examples of sources would be periodicals, library references, technical manuals, Internet, etc.
2. Note cards to document relevant information and to help in preparing the outline for the presentation.
3. Word processed and conforming to MLA (Modern Language Association) or APA (American Psychological Association) standards. Refer to an MLA or APA handbook for information on this type of writing style.
4. Suggested page in length of 5-8, not including the title page and bibliography. An appendix with other supporting information may be included.
5. Electronic mediums are being explored at the time of print.

Product/Project: This is a tangible creation based on choosing, designing, and developing an product related to the research topic. A minimum of 15 hours should be spent outside of class on the project. An approval form must be submitted for the project before proceeding. A mentor and faculty advisor must be identified to assist with the project.

Portfolio: The pages from each of the following entries could be placed individually in plastic sleeves and organized in a three-ring binder.

1. Coversheet (inserted in front sleeve)
2. Title page (same as cover sheet, first page of notebook)
3. Product Proposal Contract (front pocket)
4. Table of Contents
5. Letter to Judges
6. Journal Entries
7. Senior Experience Capstone Overview
8. Senior Experience Capstone Reflection
9. Research Paper (Outline, Paper, and Works Cited)
10. Product Proposal
11. Mentoring Log
12. Letter of Intent
13. Presentation PowerPoint (optional)

Journal: The journal is part of the portfolio. It should contain the following:

1. A log of the hours spent on the Senior Experience Capstone.
2. Journal entries about Experience and knowledge gained. Use the forms (see the Portfolio section of this Framework) that are provided, but add thoughts and descriptions as well.
3. Photographs or other visual documentation.

Presentation: A formal presentation describing all components of the Senior Experience Capstone is the culminating event. A panel of judges will review and critique the presentation. Speech content should include information about the research paper, the product, and what was learned from this experience. This content should be supported by appropriate presentation media (e.g. slide presentation, display with tri-fold boards). Following are the basic guidelines for the presentation.

1. 8-10 minute overview of Experience
2. 5-10 minute question and answer time
3. Multi-media must be included as a part of the presentation
4. Product
5. Portfolio

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE ROLES

Role of the Student

It is the responsibility of the student to meet all guidelines and timelines for the Senior Experience Capstone.

1. Complete requirements of the Experience in accordance with the pre-established checklist and timetable.
2. Select a Senior Experience Capstone Mentor.
3. Maintain copies (paper and electronic) of all work in progress, rough drafts, final draft, etc.
4. Submit a rough draft of the research paper to the assigned Faculty Advisor and English teacher.
5. Document product/process selection with the Faculty Advisor.
6. Keep a project log or journal.
7. Develop copies of the oral presentation outline for the evaluation panel.
8. Develop a portfolio to display work.
9. Write and distribute teacher-approved thank you letters to the Mentor and members of the Senior Experience Capstone panel. Complete and return a Senior Experience Capstone evaluation concerning the experience.

Role of the Faculty Advisor

All professional staff members (teachers, counselors, and administrators) are available as advisors. Advisors should limit their advisees to no more than five to be able to work effectively with each one.

1. Act as a consultant to the student, providing assistance with selection of the Experience topic and final approval of Experience scope.
2. Assist and advise the student in the technical portion of the Experience.
3. Serve as the liaison with the student and the Mentor. The Mentor should be contacted during the first week of the Experience and any other time that may become necessary.
4. Oversee student work in accordance with Experience guidelines.
5. Review the rough draft of the research paper and advise the student about needed revisions.
6. Evaluate the final draft of the research paper.
7. Allocate related class time to work with students regarding their Senior Experience Capstone.
8. Evaluate the product/process according to the Experience guidelines.
9. Coach the student in preparation for the oral presentation and verify technical accuracy of the presented materials.
10. Administer an end-of-project student evaluation survey form for the purpose of Experience improvement.
11. Serve as the liaison with the Mentor and Senior Experience Capstone Committee, providing them with information such as individual student abilities and appropriateness of goals and activities.
12. Assist with the role of the English teacher that follows.

Role of English Teacher

The English Teacher is responsible for monitoring the research component of the Experience.

1. Instruct the student in the proper form and process of the research paper.
2. Collect and evaluate all documentation pertaining to the Senior Experience Capstone.
3. Review the rough draft of the research paper and advise the student as to where revisions may be needed.

4. Evaluate the final draft of the research paper.
5. Discuss with the Faculty Advisor the content of the research paper and integrate evaluations of form and content to final Experience grade.
6. Coach the student in appropriate methods of giving an oral presentation.
7. Conduct a post presentation discussion with the student for the purpose of Experience improvement and implementation.

Role of Senior Experience Capstone Mentor

The role of the Experience Mentor is essential to the success of the Senior Experience Capstone. Each student must have a Mentor who has expertise/experience with the topic.

1. Assist and advise the student in technical aspects of the research paper and/or product/process.
2. Serve as a resource to the student in all stages of the product/process Experience development.
3. Allocate time and make arrangements to work with student on the Experience.
4. Sign and return the Mentor Agreement Form.
5. Provide accurate and honest verification of the student's work.
6. Document the hours spent with the student working on the Senior Experience Capstone.
7. Additional assistance could be provided by:
 - a. reviewing student research materials,
 - b. evaluating the product/process,
 - c. advising student in planning the oral presentation, and
 - d. attending the oral presentation.

Role of the Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee

The Steering Committee provides overall direction of the Experience. Committee members should include representation from the following: administrators, teachers, parents, students, and business/community members.

1. Agree to meet on a quarterly basis.
2. Create an action plan for implementing the program.
3. Prepare an Implementation Guide specific to your school.
4. Determine timelines for all components of the Experience.
5. Approval of all Senior Experience Capstone topics and projects.

Role of Senior Experience Capstone Coordinator

Schools should have one person designated as the Coordinator. This could be a paid position with release time provided. Specific duties are as follows:

1. Serve as the Chair of the Experience Steering Committee.
2. Prepare a yearly calendar with timelines for the Experience.
3. Organize the panel of judges for student presentations.
4. Coordinate assignments of students with Faculty Advisors.

FACULTY ADVISOR GUIDELINES AND CONFIRMATION

Faculty Advisors are assigned to each Senior to provide support and guidance throughout the Senior Experience period. *It is recommended that no Faculty Advisor have responsibility for more than five students.* Even though a student may have a mentor who has specific expertise in the research topic, a Faculty Advisor is recommended. The responsibilities of the Faculty Advisor should include, but are not limited to:

1. Assisting/advising the student with topic selection.
2. Working with the English teacher on progress checks and documentation.
3. Meet with the student to suggest the proposed product/project.
4. Meet with the student for periodic progress checks during scheduled Senior Experience Capstone time.
5. Advise the student during the presentation of the product/project.
6. Provide student with feedback.
7. Maintain a log of time spent advising student in this process.
8. Report to the Steering Committee or English teacher any Senior not meeting timelines or requirements.
9. Review the completed project and evaluation form before submission to the committee. Determine a time to have student portfolio submitted and read projects for recommendation to accept or rejection. Then submit results to the Senior Experience Capstone Committee by a pre-determined date.

STUDENT NAME: _____

FACULTY ADVISOR NAME: _____

RESEARCH TOPIC: _____

I understand my responsibilities as a Senior Experience Capstone Faculty Advisor and will oversee the above student's progress during this Experience.

Signature of Faculty Advisor

Date

PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Student's Name: _____

I have read through the Senior Experience Capstone Student/Parent Handbook and understand the requirements of all components of the Senior Experience Capstone. I acknowledge and give permission for my son/daughter to participate.

My son/daughter will do the following as his/her Experience:

and will write a research paper on the following topic:

Parent or Guardian's name: _____

Parent or Guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

Medford (OR) School District

CHOOSING A MENTOR

A Senior Experience Capstone Mentor is someone who has experience and an understanding of the students topic and will take a sincere interest in guiding the student to successful completion of the project.

Mentors:

- Provides expertise in the product area
- Gives suggestions and advice
- Supports your efforts
- Gives you feedback

Preparation to share with the perspective Mentor:

- Clearly defined product
- Specific expectations from the Mentor, including time commitments
- Mentors benefits in assisting the student

Choosing a Mentor:

- Brainstorm possible experts within your chosen field of study
- Talk to parents, friends, and teachers about possibilities
- Look for someone who has the expertise and is interested in mentoring you through completion of your product/process

Next steps after the mentor is identified:

- Meet with your Mentor
- Determine how often you will meet with your Mentor
- Decide what areas of your Experience the Mentor will assist with (i.e. project details, review speech)
- Ask the Mentor to be part of your review team

MENTOR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is common to hear Mentors described as:

- teachers
- trainers
- sponsors
- role models
- advocates
- coaches
- openers of doors
- friends

What are the benefits of having a personal Mentor?

- Skills and knowledge relating to careers
- Positive role model of a professional in the field
- Connections with other professionals in the industry
- Knowledge of how school and work interrelate
- Learn what it takes to be successful in the industry
- Expanded resources to help advance your care

What is the role of the learner in the mentorship?

(The following information has been adapted from the General Motors AYES Mentor and Student handbooks)

- Learners participate in a mentorship in order to gain experience and knowledge from the “experts”. Learners are expected to reflect regularly on the experience of the mentorship.
- The mentorship provides students with the opportunity to take what they have learned and are learning at school and be able to “practice” or apply what they have learned in a “real world” setting.
- Learners need to receive immediate direction, feedback, and evaluation on the application of their skills.
- The intern development plan must be a valuable and progressive one. It should:
 - Provide opportunities to apply what the student learns at school
 - Complement his or her school curriculum
 - Include varied tasks and duties
 - Not consist of “bottom-feeder” tasks
 - Be structured (it should start with the basics and become increasingly more challenging over the life of the internship)

What will your Mentor expect from you?

- Good work habits
- Punctuality - be on time
- Dress appropriately
- Bathe, use deodorant, brush your teeth, and groom your hair
- Wear clean, comfortable clothes in good repair
- Do not wear a hat, shorts, miniskirt, or sunglasses
- Do not wear too much jewelry or make-up
- Do not eat while working
- Maintain and demonstrate a positive attitude
- Come prepared
- Be alert and enthusiastic, try to make a good impression
- Be willing and eager to talk; be willing and eager to listen
- Be honest. Don't brag or exaggerate
- Look at the Mentor and other adults when speaking to them

Challenges you will face.

- You will be in the “real world” and using “real world” rules
- Working as an intern is quite different from what you have experienced at school
- The typical day is very fast paced and very demanding
- You will need to learn the expectations of your Mentor quickly
- Listen to your Mentor and follow his or her directions

ROLE OF THE MENTOR FORM

(This page is to be given to the Experience Mentor at the time you discuss with him/her what his/her duties will be. Be sure that your Mentor reads your finished written proposal and understands the commitment before signing the proposal.)

The role of the Senior Experience Mentor is essential to the success of the Senior Experience Capstone at _____ High School. As responsible men and women in the community, the Experience Mentors play an active part in the students' learning experience.

As Senior Experience Mentor, you will be asked to accept the following responsibilities:

1. To help the student organize his/her Senior Experience and indicate approval by signing the appropriate statement at the bottom of the proposal form.
2. Supervise the student as he/she follows through on his/her Experience proposal.
3. Sign time sheets indicating the student has completed the required hours.
4. Complete an evaluation form at the close of the Senior Experience.

Additional useful information:

1. The Senior Experience Capstone begins on _____ and continues through _____. Students are to work with their Mentor for a minimum of fifteen (15) contact hours.
2. A student may not be paid for his/her Experience work.
3. No relative may be in a direct line of supervision for the student. The student may not work at a relative's place of business or in a position in which he/she has been previously employed.
4. Each student will also be assigned a Faculty Advisor who acts as a consultant for the student when writing the research paper and again during the process/product development. Because the Faculty Advisor may or may not have expertise in the Experience area, your assistance is especially important to the student. The Advisor will further act as a liaison between the Experience Mentor and the school. Your contacts with the school can be made through this person or the Senior Experience Capstone Coordinator listed on the following page.
5. The student is bound by a set of guidelines that he/she should share with you. Failure of the student to comply with these guidelines could jeopardize graduation.
6. The student will keep a journal and write a final evaluation of his/her Experience. These are not to be done during his/her meetings with you.
7. In a pre-Experience conference with the student, please establish a mutual understanding of what will be expected during Experience time.

We have asked each student to discuss with the Experience Mentor the rationale and guidelines, as well as the aims and objectives of the Senior Experience Capstone as it operates at _____ High School. If the student has not done so, please ask him/her to clarify these items for you.

We trust that the student's work will be beneficial not only to him/her, but also to you as the Experience Mentor and that you will both gain satisfaction. Thank you for your interest in the Senior Experience Capstone program. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call (Name and Contact Information).

Senior Experience Capstone Coordinator

Senior Experience Mentor Signature

Date

MENTOR AGREEMENT FORM

Student Name _____

Experience _____

In order for students to complete a Senior Experience Capstone, the student must work with a Mentor who has expertise in the area being explored. The Mentor must be willing to verify the student's efforts and time spent. A student should spend at least 15 hours with the Mentor. If you are willing to serve as this student's Mentor, please complete the form below.

Neither the School District nor the training station employer shall discriminate against any student or employee on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, or handicap in employment practices or on-the-job training experiences.

I agree to serve as a Mentor for the above named student for the Senior Experience Capstone during the 20____ - 20____ school year.

Mentor Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Relationship to Student _____

Senior Experience Coordinator Signature **Date**

Student Signature **Date**

Parent Signature **Date**

Senior Experience Mentor Signature **Date**

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE MENTORING LOG

(Duplicate this form as needed)

Student Name _____

Faculty Advisor _____

Mentor _____

Use this form to keep a record of your meetings with the Senior student. This will serve as documentation of the time spent in consultation on the Senior Experience Capstone. Please note and initial any time spent with your Advisee in any aspect of the written or physical project, including travel time, phone, and other correspondence. The time requirement for mentoring is fifteen hours.

If you have questions regarding this form, please call the high school at _____ and ask for the student's Senior Experience Capstone Faculty Advisor.

Date _____ Time Spent: _____

Description of what was done:

Mentor's Signature _____

Date _____ Time Spent: _____

Description of what was done:

Mentor's Signature _____

MENTOR WORK VERIFICATION

Student Name _____ Project _____

As a Senior Experience Capstone Mentor, you have been chosen to verify this student's efforts on the Senior Experience Capstone. Since most of the time spent on the project component of the assignment has been out of class, verification of the student's efforts is necessary. Please answer the following questions to help us evaluate/document the 15 hours required in the mentoring process. Please keep in mind that this student's research paper has already been evaluated. This form refers to the physical product/process.

1. Can you verify that you spent at least 15 hours mentoring the student on this project?

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments:

2. Have you seen/discussed this project at different stages of completion, not just the final component ?

_____ Yes _____ No

Comments:

3. What specific problems did this student encounter and overcome?

4. What successes have you seen this student achieve?

Signature _____ Date _____

We appreciate your support and contribution to the student.

ROLE OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee is essential to the existence and success of the Senior Experience Capstone. Without the contribution of the parents, teachers, and community members on the committee, administering such an undertaking would be impossible.

The Senior Experience Capstone Committee may be divided into subcommittees. Each subcommittee is assigned a certain number of Senior Experience to oversee. Because the subcommittees make every attempt to be consistent and fair in evaluating Senior Experience, students may not move their project from one subcommittee to another. The subcommittees' duties include:

1. Reviewing the Senior Experience Capstone proposals

In this capacity, the subcommittees determine whether the proposal meets the criteria and follows the guidelines of Senior Experience Capstone. Each member reads the proposals individually. The subcommittee then meets as a group to discuss their impressions of the Experience. At this meeting each Experience is either accepted as submitted, returned with suggested revisions, or rejected outright.

The revisions suggested by the committee are designed to bring the Experience into compliance with Experience criteria and guidelines, to give the Experience clearer focus or better structure, to assure that the student has enough activities to fulfill the fifteen hour mentoring requirement, to increase the accountability of the student, to protect the student applicant, and to improve the quality of the Experience.

2. Evaluating the Experience

The subcommittee will evaluate the success or failure of the Experience assigned to it. This review includes reading the journal, the final evaluation, the mentor's evaluation, and the faculty advisor's comments, as well as reviewing any other materials promised as part of the Experience. The subcommittee has the right to require the make-up of missing hours, the addition of material to the journal, the revision of final evaluations, or any other revision deemed necessary by the subcommittee to consider the Experience as completed.

TOPIC SELECTION

TOPIC SELECTION GUIDELINES

A Senior Experience Capstone is about doing and learning! Choose a topic that will be interesting and worthwhile and will extend your knowledge. However, making the decision may not be easy. Consult with your Faculty Advisor, and remember to keep your Senior Experience manageable. Carefully choose a product or process that you can build or produce or a community-based service you can provide. Questions used for topic selection:

- Is there a clear connection between the research topic and the product/process you want to produce?
- Does the product/process represent significant amounts of time, effort, and appropriate complexity? Does it go beyond what you already know how to do?
- Is the Experience something you will do outside of your regular class or co-curricular requirements?
- Will the product involve tangible evidence of your work – either something physical that can be seen and touched, a community-based service that can be documented as beneficial or something that can be written, produced, taped, or presented?
- Is the Experience related to your chosen career cluster?

Guidelines to help guide the topic selection:

- 1. The research topic should be one in which the student is interested, but not one about which the student is already an expert.**

If a student has been a diabetic for ten years, worked closely with the Juvenile Diabetes Association, and has been a volunteer in the children's diabetic ward in a local hospital, he or she probably knows a great deal about the subject juvenile diabetes. Unless that student pursues a new approach to diabetes, that topic may not yield much new learning.

- 2. The research topic may be one that requires cumulative knowledge across grade levels and content area.**

It should be a natural outgrowth of interest and combined skills of all, or most content areas. For example, a student who researches the changes in the ozone layer is using cumulative knowledge from at least English, math, science, and history.

- 3. The research topic is challenging to the student academically and creatively.**

The student should take care not to choose a topic that is limited to relatively simple ideas or one that has little application or extension possibilities. The topic should require an academic and creative stretch/risk.

- 4. Preliminary research may be helpful.**

By reading about a certain topic, the student may expand his/her areas of interest. Possibilities for new areas of exploration may surface. It may be wise, therefore, to explore the possibilities for personal interviews, informal surveys, empirical observation, etc., before making a final topic selection.

5. Students should avoid choosing topics that might involve expenses they are not prepared to handle.

For example if the research involves travel or long distance calls, the student may want to make another choice. If the product that grows out of the research will require materials, the student may want to make another choice. Remember, the student is not required, encouraged, or advised to spend money in order to complete the Senior Experience. Expenditures will not enhance the evaluation of the Senior Experience.

6. Students should avoid choosing topics that might endanger themselves or others.

For example, experiments which are potentially explosive or activities such as handling poisonous snakes are not appropriate. Remember that the student must have *Experience Proposal* approved by the Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee and Faculty Advisor prior to beginning the Experience.

7. The research topic should be one that is broad enough to allow the student access to enough information, yet narrow enough to make the research scope reasonable.

For example, a student choosing the career cluster *Health Science* would find it impossible to include everything about health science (home remedies, history of emergency services, the treatment of burns, how to stop bleeding, evolution of first aid courses, etc.) On the other hand, a student choosing to research *The Application of Band-Aids to Skin Abrasions* probably will not find enough information. A better choice would be *Bandaging for Sports Injuries*.

8. The research topic should be related to the student's chosen career cluster.

South Dakota has adopted the following 16 career clusters:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology and Communications
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

EXAMPLES OF SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE TOPICS BY CAREER CLUSTER

The following list is a sampling of topics that could be used for Senior Experience Capstone. It is not an all-inclusive list, but is intended to serve as a starting place when beginning the process of topic selection.

Career Cluster	Research Paper	Experience
Agricultural and Natural Resources	Animal Abuse	Humane Society volunteer
	Crop	Planting a new crop, measuring yield results
	Deer Population	Wildlife study
	Floral Design	Make floral arrangements and market them
	Horse Training	Train a horse
	Horticulture	Build a greenhouse
	Landscape Design	Create and prepare a landscape design for a house
	Organic Farming	Analyze organic versus regular farming techniques by planting test lots
	Orphan Wild Animals	Animal rehabilitation volunteer
	Veterinary Medicine	Shadow veterinary doctor
Architecture and Construction	Home Building	Help build a Habitat for Humanities house
Arts, A/V Technology and Communications	Architecture	Draw blueprints, make a model
	Art Show	Organize an art showcase of your photography work
	Cartooning	Design a cartoon character
	Commercial Art	Commercial art advertising
	Impressionist Artists	Paint impressionistic art
	Murals	Paint mural
	Plays	Write a play, coordinate its presentation
	Poetry	Write a selection of poetry for possible publication
Business and Administration	Business Ownership	Start a small business which markets or produces a product or service
	Marketing and Promotion	Prepare/implement a business marketing plan
	Medical Secretary	Shadow medical secretary
	Stock Market	Chart stock
Education and Training	Coach	Serve as a coach for a sports or fine arts group
	Elementary Education	15 hours aiding in a Kindergarten classroom
	Hearing Impaired	Learn sign language, teach it to a group of elementary school students
Education and Training	Karate Skill Demonstration	Learn karate, do a demonstration of techniques and a report on the history and origins.

Career Cluster	Research Paper	Experience
	Sports Broadcasting	Announce at a sports event, coordinate broadcasting arrangements with the radio station
Health Science	Children's Book	Research and write a children's book on a health topic. Read the book to an elementary school class.
	Crack Babies	Community Awareness program
	Dentistry	Work at a dental clinic
	Drug Testing	Work in health care facility
	Drugs in Elementary Schools	Present program in schools
	Emergency Room Medicine	Shadow emergency room doctors
	History of Diseases	Research changes in different types of diseases from the 1900's to present
	Nutritional Cooking	Prepare and sell a cookbook with recipes of nutritious foods
	Teens and Drugs	Write and perform a one-act play
	Tobacco (Substance Abuse)	Conduct a school awareness program that could include presentations, guest speakers, brochures, posters, etc.
Hospitality and Tourism	Dance	Organize a dance team, prepare a program to present at a Senior Citizens Center or during half time at a sporting event
	Music	Coordinate/present a piano recital, proceeds for charity
	Music Arranging	Write a composition for an orchestra
	Radio Broadcasting	Take part in a radio broadcast
	William Shakespeare	Shakespearean monologues performance
Human Services	Babysitting	Offer a series of classes in babysitting
	Care of Elderly	Volunteer in a retirement/nursing home
	Child Abuse	Design a prevention program
	Handicapped Housing	Design a barrier-free house
	Homeless	Coordinate a food and/or clothing drive
	Homeless People	Food-clothing drive
	Homeless People	Volunteer at a shelter
	Preschool Learning	Serve as a student teaching aide for a preschool
	Student Rights When Arrested	Handbook on What to Do
	Teen Peer Pressure	Write, direct, and perform a play
Teen Pregnancy	Volunteer at a Crisis Center	
Information Technology	Programming	Create a record-keeping program for a business
	Web Page	Design and maintain a web page for your school or a community organization
Law and Public	Community Safety	Survey/analyze the community for

Career Cluster	Research Paper	Experience
Safety		safety issues. Prepare a written analysis to present to the city commission. Select one issue, such as vacant buildings, as the focus of your Experience.
Retail/Wholesale Sales and Service	Design	Research fashion design in history, create a dress/suit for a particular period
	Fashion	Sew prom dress
	Fashions 1940-1990	Fashion show
	Modeling	Study modeling techniques, model fashions for an event
Scientific Research/ Engineering	Hydropower	Create a model
	Water Pollution	Examine and test water nearby, compile statistics, compare to reports from some time ago
	Weather	Study and report on the changing weather patterns for a certain time period or region
	Weather Forecasting	Forecast weather for a week
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics	Car Restoration	Restore an antique car
All Clusters	Individual Career Plan	Prepare a career plan for your interest area, arrange for job shadowing in your career area
	Job Certification	Select an occupational area and attain certification – child care, computers, nurses aide, etc.
	State/Community Analysis	Research, analyze, and predict the current job/occupational outlook for your community

TOPIC SELECTION GUIDE EXAMPLES

Senior Experience project are in the following categories: Career Exploration, Design a product system or service, Event/activity planning, Investigation, Learn a new skill or improve an existing skill, or Research.

Career Exploration

Research: Conducts research into required education, professional responsibilities, ethical issues, salary, employment outlook, and opportunities for advancement.

Networking: Develops contacts within the chosen field.

Career Plan: Creates a professional career plan.

Application: Applies the information acquired about a chosen career to the development of a quality product or activity.

Design a Product System or Service

Research: Conducts research into similar work done by others.

Fine Tuning: Makes appropriate adjustments as necessary.

Evaluation: Evaluates the quality of the design by gathering information from sources such as impact studies, product testing, or market research. Identify specified standards of quality and/or safety and make adjustments.

Event or Activity Plan

Research: Conducts research into relevant precedents, laws and/or regulations.

Understands what made similar events successful or unsuccessful.

Publicity: Takes appropriate measures to insure that the target audience takes part in the event or that the event is attended.

Efficiency: Makes efficient use of time, money, people, resources and facilities. Makes contingency plans for unexpected circumstances.

Evaluation: Evaluates the success.

Investigation

Focus: Develops a central question.

Procedure: Designs an appropriate procedure to gather information.

Objectivity: Objectively observes, measures, and records results.

Generalization: Generalizes about the data by comparing and contrasting and noting trends.

Learning a New Skill or Improving an Existing Skill

Research: Conducts research into current methods and practice.

Documentation: Determines a way to measure and document progress.

Evaluation: Establishes qualitative measurable standard for skill level based on expert advice.

Research

Focus: Develops a central question of social, economical, environmental, political, historical, or scientific significance.

Research: Investigates a variety of primary and secondary resources and formulates a thesis.

Writing: Write a paper building and developing an argument using logical thinking and data from research to support the conclusion.

Application: Applies the information acquired about the topic to the development of a product or activity.

LETTER OF INTENT

Once you have selected your topic, formally declare your paper and process/product in a business letter to the Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee. This letter announces to parents, teachers, and steering committee your intentions.

Knowing how to write a business letter is an important communication in establishing a favorable image of you to people you have never met. The following is suggested for basic letter writing skills.

1. The style of letter is block style.
2. The entire letter is typed at the left margin and one inch.
3. Do not indent at the beginning of each paragraph. Leave a line space between paragraphs.
4. The body of the letter is single spaced.

Proof read for spelling and grammar errors. Continue to redo your letter until it is perfect for your portfolio.

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

Due Dates

Proposal _____

Mail to Mentor _____

Your proposal should include the following:

What is the topic or area of study that will be the focus of your Senior Experience Capstone? Why did you choose this topic? What previous knowledge or experience in this area do you have?

What will be the focus of your research paper? Describe your topic, discussing any preliminary areas of exploration or questions you have identified.

What will your Senior Experience be? How will you make your research “come alive”? Who can serve as a mentor to you to complete the Senior Experience and what is their experience or expertise in your chosen field? What resources (time and/or money) do you anticipate this will require?

What is the connection between your research paper and your Senior Experience? How are these components related and how do they together show a concerted effort to explore your topic or area of study?

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE TOPIC CHANGE FORM

As sometimes happens, a student may need to modify the original Senior Experience Capstone. If that happens, a student should address the following questions as he/she modifies the original proposal and secures the required signatures.

1. How do you wish to change the proposed Senior Experience?
2. What is the purpose of the changes?
3. How will these changes help to further explore an area of interest?
4. How will these changes allow better demonstration or representation of learning?
5. Have the proposed changes been discussed with others, such as parents, Faculty Advisor, and Senior Experience Capstone Mentor? What were the responses about the proposed change?
6. How will these changes affect the Experience time line?

Student **Date**

Faculty Advisor **Date**

Parent/Guardian **Date**

Steering Committee Approval: _____ **yes** _____ **no**

RESEARCH PAPER

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

Length: Eight pages minimum; if using another medium to communicate learning, how will you determine the rigor? For example, using a slide presentation to replace the research paper, what guidelines will be used?

Paper Submission: All students must submit a hard copy accompanied by an electronic copy in Microsoft Word saved on a CD or diskette.

Format: APA or MLA format, 12-point font, Times New Roman, all double-spaced. Use the format of heading and title when no title page is required.

Use a cover page and include:

Your name
English Teacher's name
Course
Date (month day, year)

Works Cited: This is an alphabetical listing of the sources cited in the paper to prove, support, or disprove the thesis statement. A minimum of five sources is required. One may be an interview.

Parenthetical Documentation: Any fact you use to back up the central point of your paper must be documented, *whether the fact is directly quoted or in your own words*. Paraphrasing does not mean changing every third word of the original language of the source. If you do not document a fact that supports your central point, you are guilty of **plagiarism**. If you use a writer's exact words but do not give credit and/or do not place the exact words in quotation marks, you have committed **plagiarism**.

Quotations: The only reason you need to use exact quotations is if the language of the original resource is very unusual and cannot be paraphrased or the exact quote supports or gives an example of the thesis statement already established. **If you think the original language must be used, please follow these guidelines:**

Never use a quotation without introducing who gave the quote and/or the significance of the quote. A quote by itself, even punctuated correctly, makes little sense if it is not worked smoothly into the context of your own sentence structure and into what your paper is trying to prove.

For quotations that are **four** (or 40 words or longer) lines long or longer, **indent** each line of the **entire** quote **one inch** and double space the material. **Do not use quotation marks, cite source at end.**

Adapted from Fremont County School District, Dubois, WY

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is cheating or stealing another author's words and ideas without giving appropriate credit. If you do not give credit to the person or persons who wrote the information you receive when researching, you are stealing the information. Colleges or businesses can and will terminate you because of plagiarism. It is more of a moral and ethical issue than a legal one. Most of the problems occur outside of copyright infringement. Plagiarism will cause many problems nonetheless—from failure of the course to expulsion in college.

Avoiding plagiarism is easy to do by citing all of your sources. Plagiarism will result in loss of credit and required enrollment in a credit recovery course that may delay graduation.

- Keep careful notes. Differentiate in the manner in which you write ideas, paraphrases or quotes.
- Give credit to the author's ideas, arguments, or thinking. Be safe—cite it. All information must be documented, not just what you have copied word for word.
- Documenting sources also helps you as a researcher evaluate what you believe about a subject.
- You do not have to document information that is common knowledge, such as dates of well-known events in history.
- If the information is a little-known fact, be sure to document it to give you credibility as a writer.
- Always document statistics, charts, maps, or graphs—the author prepared them, so he/she must be given the credit.
- DO NOT turn in a paper that has already been graded for another class or another teacher or the same teacher but a different year, without the teacher's permission.
- DO NOT change the order of a sentence or replace just a few words without citing the sources. You are still using the author's ideas.
- If a person or persons are quoted in your source, then you MUST quote the information within your text.
- "Cutting and Pasting" downloaded articles from the Internet is plagiarism if you do not cite the source immediately after the information.
- Downloading an essay from an Internet site, changing the wording or allowing the computer to change it for you is plagiarism.

**When in doubt, ask the teacher, and
always, always, always accurately cite your sources.**

Adapted from Mitchell Technical Institute

ASSEMBLING RESEARCH INFORMATION

Checklist for a Research Paper

- Construct a working bibliography
- Make note cards
- Organize the note cards and make an outline
- Write rough draft
- Revise to final draft
- Complete final paper

Making Note Cards

- Use a separate note card for each source and for each main idea
- Place the source number in the upper right corner of each card
- Write a label in the upper left corner of the card
- Write the page number at the bottom of each card
- Use only one side of the card
- Be sure to indicate quoted or paraphrased materials
- Be sure all notes exist within context and are accurately recorded
- Reread the notes to make sure you understand them

Organizing Note Cards

- Use label topics (from upper left corner) to organize the cards
- Discriminate between main and subordinate ideas
- Arrange cards in the order they will appear in the paper
- Write an outline that indicates the order

Writing a Rough Draft

An introductory paragraph is:

- A general statement of information
- A transition sentence using works directly related to the thesis
- A thesis statement and explanation that:
 1. Contains a one-sentence statement of the topic being examined.
 2. States an opinion.
 3. Narrows the topic so it may be adequately supported in research.

The body of the paper contains:

- The weakest pro-argument or least important reason/example in support of the thesis.
- A secondary strongest point.
- The strongest pro-argument or most important reason/example in the support of the thesis.
- Proper documentation of the sources.

The conclusion:

- Restates the thesis.
- Paraphrases or summarizes ideas supporting the thesis.
- Takes the topic one step beyond and predicts the future of the problem.

The bibliography:

- Is an alphabetical list.
- Contains all sources used in the paper.

Miscellaneous:

- Follow either MLA or APA style
- Avoid plagiarism - presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own
 1. Borrowing someone's words or ideas is acceptable as long as you give appropriate credit.
 2. Common knowledge does not require documentation

Writing the Final Paper

- Revise and edit the evaluated rough draft.
- Make a copy to share with your Mentor.

RESEARCH PAPER STUDENT EDITING SHEET

Name: _____
Thesis Statement: _____

1. Content/Organization

- Length appropriate Yes _____ No _____
- All sections support thesis Yes _____ No _____
- Clearly written Yes _____ No _____
- Well-phrased sentences Yes _____ No _____
- Good transitions Yes _____ No _____
- Conclusion restates thesis Yes _____ No _____
- Conclusion offers solution Yes _____ No _____

2. Use of Sources

- Correct number of sources Yes _____ No _____
- How many:
 - Works cited _____ Works consulted _____
- Paraphrased information correctly documented Yes _____ No _____
- No paragraph citations Yes _____ No _____
- Number of citations in paper Yes _____ No _____

3. Mechanics

- Underlined publication titles Yes _____ No _____
- Quotation marks around quotes Yes _____ No _____
- Parentheses around citations Yes _____ No _____
- Periods follow parenthesis Yes _____ No _____
- End punctuation mark before closing quotation marks in a direct quote Yes _____ No _____
- Corrected all spelling errors Yes _____ No _____
- Eliminated fragments Yes _____ No _____
- Eliminated run-on sentences Yes _____ No _____
- Eliminated contractions Yes _____ No _____
- Mechanical/grammatical errors Yes _____ No _____

Adapted from Northwest Ohio Region Tech Prep

THE PRODUCT

THE PRODUCT DEFINED

The physical product gives you the chance to explore your career cluster in greater depth than possible during the normal course of your busy senior year. Frequently, students begin knowing what they want to do for their Senior Experience Capstone, yet are unsure what to produce as a product. Your Mentor is an invaluable resource for feedback and ideas.

The product can be oriented around performance of a skill, the development of some physical product, or the study of a profession. Whatever the product, you must keep in mind that during your oral presentation, you will be required to illustrate your activities in some way. Products that have been built should be photographed at various stages of completion. Other fields of study must be illustrated in the same way. Problem-solving your way to a well-documented presentation is a vital part of putting together a dynamic speech.

The product is an appropriate and logical outgrowth/extension of the research paper. It demonstrates application of acquired knowledge from the research and maintains attention to the thesis and focus. The product shows evidence of inventiveness/creativity in its concept(s). The student-generated product demonstrates care and attention to detail in its design.

Northwest Rankin High School

GUIDELINES FOR THE PRODUCT

1. The product must be student-generated. It must be a showcase of the student's skills – not a parent's, friend's, or mentor's.
2. The product should show evidence of application and synthesis of the research paper.
3. The product should be tangible evidence that reflects the academic stretch/risk, which the student has experienced during completion of the Experience.
4. Students are not expected to spend a lot of money in order to complete the Experience. Expenditures will not enhance the evaluation of the Experience.
5. Research for the product should reflect one or more of four primary areas: personal experience, experiment, survey and/or interview.
6. The product can be community service oriented.
7. A group/community could benefit from the product.
8. There will be no pairing or sharing of products.
9. The Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee must approve the product.
10. The product may include one or more of the following media:
 - Audio/visual aid - playing original music, sounds, etc.
 - Charts/graphs - visual graph of surveys, experiment results, etc.
 - Video of process – video steps to final product such as building a barn
 - How-to demonstration – step-by-step video of project/process such as grooming a pet
 - Visual product – showing the final creation of a dress or a painting, etc.
 - PowerPoint/I-Movies – physical record of an experiment or experience such as growing wheat
 - Work of fiction – collection of poems, stories, novel, interview, bibliography
 - Non-fiction work about an individual, historic writings, etc.
 - Other – as approved by the Faculty Advisory or Steering Committee.
11. All products must be completed and proof-of-project Journals are due to the Faculty Advisor on pre-determined date.
12. The product should be related to the student's chosen career cluster.

THE PORTFOLIO

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

Introduction: A portfolio is required as part of your Senior Experience Capstone and submitted as part of the presentation. The portfolio includes all documentation acquired during the Senior Experience.

Required Portfolio Components

Binder and Paper:

- Portfolio Cover:** Create a portfolio cover page that includes 1) Experience title, 2) student name, 3) school name, 4) your Senior Experience Capstone teacher's name, and 5) the presentation date. Optional: a graphic related to project.
- Title Page:** Organize similar to your Cover Page.
- Table of Contents Page:** Organize it similar to the checklist below.

Section 1 divider labeled: **Proposal**

- Senior Experience Approval Form and signatures
- Original Approved Proposal
- Addendum, if needed
- Senior Experience Capstone Contract

Section 2 divider labeled: **Field Expert (Mentor) Forms**

- Information Form
- Initial Interview
- Proposal Review
- Experience Progress
- Exit Interview

Section 3 divider labeled: **Experience Journal**

- Completed Experience Journal

Section 4 divider labeled: **Research**

- Annotated Bibliography
- All research documents gathered regarding the Senior Experience are included here.

Section 5 divider labeled: **Appendix**

- Photos showing progress and completion of your Experience
- Other Senior Experience documentation created, such as project notes, conclusions, graphs, charts, etc.
- Budget Page with a list of expenditures and the total cost of your Experience
- Required class assessments
- Optional: Senior Experience Capstone Guidebook
- Optional: Rough Drafts, Outlines, etc.

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE PORTFOLIO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

All contents must be clean copies and separated by dividers or title pages. You may substitute page numbers for sections.

Senior Experience Capstone Overview	Section 1
Letter to the Judges	Section 2
Letter of Intent.....	Section 3
Proposal.....	Section 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Experience Capstone Overview• Expected Expenses• Time Expenditure Sheet• Mentor and Resource Information Sheet• Question and Parent Signature Sheet	
Research Paper	Section 5
Research Paper Self-Evaluation	Section 6
Senior Experience Capstone Time Sheet.....	Section 7
Senior Experience Capstone Journal Entries	Section 8
Mentor Evaluation Form.....	Section 9
Audience Verification Form (if applicable)	Section 10
Evidence of Experience	Section 11
Experience Self-Evaluation	Section 12
Thank-You Letters	Section 13

THE JOURNAL COMPONENTS

1. All students must complete a Journal as a part of their Senior Experience Capstone. The Journal is a component of the Experience portfolio.
2. Students should record at minimum of one entry per week during the Experience period.
3. Include the following information at the top of each Journal page: the date and the number of hours that you worked on the Experience during that particular week.
4. Each entry should cover the following:
 - a. Describe what you did on the Senior Experience Capstone during that week.
 - b. Write your personal reaction or evaluation of what you did that week. Some things you may wish to include:
 - i. Did you like what you were doing? Why or why not?
 - ii. Did everything happen exactly as you expected, or were there some surprises?
 - iii. How will you benefit from what you are learning?
 - iv. What frustrations did you experience?
 - v. What successes did you achieve?

Please note: Even if your Experience is repetitive in nature, your Journal must meet these minimum requirements.

5. Remember that your Journal will be read by your Faculty Advisor and the Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee.
6. It is your responsibility to have your Faculty Advisory check your Journal each week.

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE REFLECTION

Directions: Using the format below, use complete sentences to complete the reflection and professional in appearance.

Your Name
Faculty Advisor's Name
Instructor's Name
Mentor's Name
Date

Reflection

What were the total hours spent on the Senior Experience? (This calculation does not include class time.)

- A. Research**
- B. Product**
- C. Mentoring**

What were at least two of the largest problems you encountered as you worked on the Senior Experience?

What did you do to manage your time?

What did you learn from the experience of working with other people?

What personal satisfaction was gained from this Experience?

Briefly describe the "risk" you took in completing this Experience. Include what you consider to be the "stretch" for you.

How were your original plans for the Entrepreneurship Experience the same or different from the final outcome of your Project?

Assess the success of your product.

What did the Entrepreneurship Experience teach you about yourself?

What would you do differently now that you have finished?

What grade would you give yourself for the Experience? Give your justification.

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE SELF-EVALUATION

1. Describe your Senior Experience in at least 25 words.

2. Estimated total hours spent on your Entrepreneurship Experience:

Date Started _____ Date Completed _____

3. List type of resources and materials used to complete project:

Circle the appropriate response

- | | | | |
|--|-----|----|-----|
| A. Did community resources help? | Yes | No | N/A |
| B. Have you asked for advice/comments about your Experience from other people? | Yes | No | N/A |
| C. Did you utilize task analysis and time management principles? | Yes | No | N/A |
| D. Have you ever done a project like this before? | Yes | No | N/A |

E. Explain:

F. Materials:

THE PRESENTATION

STUDENT GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESENTATION

The Senior Experience Capstone presentation is a culminating event. It should reflect elements of the research, project, and the portfolio.

1. Prior to the presentation confirm the time and place. Also confirm with the Faculty Advisor that the judges have been invited.
2. Plan the presentation *using the presentation checklist*: Check the speech itself – Do you have an introduction (attention-getting device)? Is your outline completed? How are you going to conclude your presentation (a concluding device)?
3. Prepare audio / visual materials that you will need. Check the technology to make sure it's working and ready to use.
4. Practice and time the presentation using the audio/visual materials.
5. Arrive early to check that everything is in order and functional.
6. Keep these tips in mind when answering questions following your presentation:
 - a. Answer with confidence.
 - b. Request clarification when necessary.
 - c. Admit when you don't know the answer.
 - d. Pack up and remove product/presentation materials.
7. Send thank you notes to your Mentors, Faculty Advisors, and judges.
8. Please dress according to business standards. If you are not sure what constitutes appropriate dress, consult your Faculty Advisor.
9. Do not chew gum.
10. Be aware of your body language. Avoid nervous gestures that may adversely affect your presentation.
11. Maintain eye contact with the judges.
12. Do not read your presentation.
13. Practice your presentation several times until you feel comfortable with its format and content.

Try to anticipate what questions the judging panel might ask and plan the answers you would give.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS

Preparation

- Practice your presentation and know your subject well.
- Prepare handouts for your audience that highlights the main points of your presentation.

Format

- Think “multi-media!” Use a variety of formats, including video images, slides, overheads, computer graphics, 3-D models, and 2-D presentation boards. Plan carefully to make sure you have all of the equipment you need.
- Use materials such as poster board, markers, colored paper, and cardboard to prepare “professional style” presentation boards.

Standards

- Set high standards for your presentation; check all written work for grammar and spelling errors; create a clear graphic layout; and thoroughly label all products and exhibition board.
- Ask your Mentor to review the materials before your presentation.

Speech Organization

- Introduction: Introduce your topic and try to capture the audience’s attention.
- Body: List and explain five key points that you want to make:
 - Point 1: How did you become interested in the topic?
 - Point 2: How does the topic relate to your career cluster?
 - Point 3: What did you learn from the research?
 - Point 4: What did you learn from the Experience?
 - Point 5: What did you learn about yourself and how has this information affected your plans for the future?
- Connect the introduction, learning, and possible plans for the future.

Northwest Ohio Region Tech Prep

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE PRESENTATION

I. Presentation of the Senior Paper and Experience Activity

- A. Describe thesis research paper
- B. Connect content of paper to Experience activity
- C. Explain what you learned about the overall topic and about yourself
- D. Describe whether the Experience affects your future plans and how you can use what you learned from this Experience later on in life.

II. Professional Development Portfolio

- A. Personal Statement
- B. Best Works: Highlight sections of the portfolio as evidence of both academic and employability skills that support the Personal Statement including but not limited to the following areas:
 - 1. Investigative Planning/Problem Solving
 - 2. Technology Information
 - 3. Teamwork
 - 4. Written Communication
- C. Accomplishments and activities highlights
- D. Post High-School Plan

III. Time

- A. Formal Presentation of research paper and Experience activity (8-10 minutes)
- B. Question and Answer Session (5 minutes)
- C. Judges Scoring (5 minutes)
- D. An audio/visual aid is required.

IV. Presentation Performance Evaluation

- A. Audience: Community Members and Teachers
- B. Areas to be evaluated with feedback:
 - 1. Content
 - 2. Organization
 - 3. Delivery and Professionalism
 - 4. Impromptu Skills

PRESENTATION POISE

Posture

- Stand up straight, but not stiff.
- Point your feet toward the audience with your weight evenly distributed.
- Don't place your weight on one hip and then shift to the other.

Movement

- Move to the side or front of the podium to get nearer the audience.
- When no podium is available, stay within 4-8 feet of the front row.
- Don't stay in one spot but don't pace either. An occasional step to either side, or even a half step towards the audience for emphasis, can enhance your presentation.
- Stay close, stay direct, and stay involved with your audience.

Shoulder Orientation

- Keep your shoulders oriented toward the audience. This becomes critical when using visual aids.
- You will have to angle away from the audience sometimes, but it should not be more than 45 degrees.
- Avoid talking to your visual aid.

Gestures

- Learn to gesture in front of an audience exactly as you would if you were having an animated conversation with a friend-nothing more, nothing less.
- Using natural gestures will not distract from a presentation; however, doing one of the following certainly will, so avoid:
 1. Keeping your hands in your pocket
 2. Keeping your hands handcuffed behind your back
 3. Keeping your arms crossed or flapping
 4. Wringing your hands nervously

Eye Contact

- Good eye contact helps establish and build rapport. It involves the audience and reduces the speaker's feeling of isolation.
- The rule of thumb for eye contact is 1-3 seconds per person. Try not to let your eyes dart around the room.
- Try to focus on one person, not long enough to make that individual feel uncomfortable, but long enough to pull him or her into your presentation. Then move on to another person.

Voice

- Learn to listen to yourself; stay aware not only of what you are saying but also how you are saying it. Videotape your presentation and critique it.
- Monotone: Anxiety usually causes monotone voices. The muscles in the chest and throat tighten up and become less flexible, and airflow is restricted. The voice then loses its natural animation and monotone results. You must relax and release tension. Upper and lower body movement is vital.
- Talking too fast: When we become anxious, the rate of speech usually increases. Articulation is what is important. Breathe and slow down. Listen for the last word of a sentence, and then proceed to your next sentence. Pausing can be very effective in a presentation. This allows important points to sink in. Sometimes the audience needs a period of silence to digest what you are saying.
- Volume: Practice will solve most problems in volume. Have a person who will give you a straight answer listen to your presentation from the back of the room. Ask that person if you can be heard, if you trail off the end of a sentence, if lack of volume makes you sound insecure, or if you are speaking too loudly.

JUDGES PANEL

Make copies of this recruitment form to distribute at school functions and meetings of community clubs and organizations. Establish a database of information taken from the forms.

Judges' Information:

Name _____

Business/Organization _____

Address _____ Phone Number(s) _____

E-mail _____

Please check the career cluster in which you have the most expertise.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality and Tourism
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture and Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts, A/V Tech. and Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Management and Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
<input type="checkbox"/> Education and Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/> Government and Public Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Science	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

Place check marks to indicate which day(s) and time(s) you can appear.

Day	8 a.m. to 10 a.m.	10 a.m. to Noon	1 p.m. to 3 p.m.	3 p.m. to 5 p.m.	5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					

SREB

GUIDELINES FOR JUDGES

Thank you for volunteering your time as a judge for the Senior Experience Capstone. You have been asked to evaluate the presentation component of this Experience. The student is required to speak on his or her topic for ten to fifteen minutes using presentation notes. Students should not read from their notes. He or she should address the following issues:

- an explanation and defense of the research paper, (this constitutes 75-80% of the presentation)
- the subject of the physical product,
- the connection between the paper and the product,
- the **stretch/risk** for the student, and
- a self-evaluation.

At the end of the speech, each judge should have at least one question about an aspect of the student's project. Final scores include an assessment of the student's ability to field questions as well.

You will use the following form to evaluate the oral presentation part of the Senior Experience Capstone. The checklist includes a point system of evaluation. Listed below are a few suggestions for the judges.

1. Watch your body language--students receive feedback from your facial expressions, level of attention, and posture.
2. You will be asked to introduce yourself.
3. Do not ask questions until the end of the presentation. When asking questions, do not challenge the student's selection of the topic or personal beliefs. Do not argue with the student or ask personal questions.
4. As a judge, you should write comments to the students concerning their strengths and weaknesses.

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JUDGES PRESENTATION EVALUATION

Name _____ Experience _____

CONTENT (35 points)

Introduction – personal introduction; reason for choosing topic; purpose of product/project clearly stated or implied attracts attention	1	2	3	4	5
Body – clearly states main points; accurate, appropriate supporting details	6	7	8	9	10
Organization – logical flow of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Conclusion – summarizes; reflects personal growth/learning	1	2	3	4	5
Language Usage – transitions; avoids slang; appropriate word choice	1	2	3	4	5
Relation to Learning – relates research to project and product to presentation	1	2	3	4	5

CONTENT TOTAL _____

DELIVERY OF SPEECH (15 points)

Non-verbal – eye contact, poise, posture, appropriate/natural gestures			1	2	3
Verbal – volume, rate, clarity of speech			1	2	3
Dress/Appearance/Demeanor – neat, appropriate dress; courteous, punctual and prepared			1	2	3
Audio/Visual Aids – support speech and enhance presentation; limited use of information on note cards	2	3	4	5	6

DELIVERY TOTAL _____

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION (15 points)

Impromptu Skills – fluent, confident; answers questions easily	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Responses – evidence of knowledge; responds directly to questions	6	7	8	9	10

Q & A TOTAL _____

PRODUCT (35 points)

Well Constructed – visually attractive; shows evidence of time spent in production in written, model, or visual form	16	17	18	19	20
Evidence of Research – product relates to research and to presentation	11	12	13	14	15
IF NO PRODUCT EVIDENT – give 0 if product is missing, or 1-4 for an unclear or poorly defined product. Do not mark any points in the first two criteria above.	0	1	2	3	4

PRODUCT TOTAL _____

TOTAL POINTS: _____ (100 possible)

Comments:

SENIOR EXPERIENCE CAPSTONE FINAL GRADE

POINT DISTRIBUTION

MAXIMUM POINTS	ASSIGNMENTS
50	Conference (Winter)
50	Conference (Spring)
100	Evening display
50	First 20 hours of logs
50	Goals and Plan
50	Judges' copy of Senior paper, letter, and resume
100	Letter of intent OR Declaration of hours
50	Mentor confirmation form
100	Mentor's evaluation of student
100	Parent information letter
250	Portfolio of service project
100	Practice boards
300	Research paper
50	Roles and responsibilities
100	Resume
300	Senior Boards
100	Senior letter
50	Thank you letter
50 Bonus Points	One additional thank you letter
50 Bonus Points	Return of signed FERPA form

The seniors' final grades will be based on these assignments.

The total possible points is 1950.

Passing is 60 percent or 1170 points.

Grade	Percentage	Points
A	= 94-100%	1833-1950
A-	= 90-93%	1755-1832
B+	= 87-89%	1696-1754
B	= 84-86%	1638-1695
B-	= 80-83%	1560-1637

Grade	Percentage	Points
C+	= 77-79%	1501-1559
C	= 74-76%	1443-1500
C-	= 70-73%	1365-1442
D+	= 67-69%	1306-1364
D	= 60-66%	1170-1305

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Senior Experience Capstone?

The Senior Experience Capstone is an independent student program in which students directly apply what they have learned in school to Experience that may range from a career interest area to a hobby to something they would like to learn more about. These Experience are intended to be a student-led learning experience with set guidelines and timelines along the way. Students are required to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise through a product/process, a paper, a presentation, and a portfolio. Each student will have a Mentor and a Faculty Advisor for further support.

What is the purpose of the Senior Experience Capstone? The Senior Experience Capstone is intended to:

1. enable students to integrate various skills, perspectives, and bodies of knowledge they have encountered throughout high school.
2. give students an opportunity to direct such skills, knowledge, and perspectives toward practical application and/or original research on issues of their choosing.
3. provide students the opportunity to develop specific skills and areas of expertise.
4. provide students with personal experience of the activities and organizational structures they will encounter in the workplace.
5. provide students with a focused, challenging, and meaningful Senior year.
6. engage students in a major project where they demonstrate their skills in research, writing, speaking, and creating.
7. encourage student independence and initiative.

What do first-year Senior Experience Capstone schools commonly experience?

School districts will experience a combination of excitement, apprehension, resistance, confusion, challenges, but most of all, a great deal of success and a feeling of accomplishment and pride by students. The program is complex and labor intensive. Schools will not experience perfection during the first year –maybe never. It will be a time of learning and building.

Can incorporating a Senior Experience Capstone cause resistance?

Yes. However, careful planning up front will take care of many issues. Use this Framework as your guide. Select and use those items that best meet the needs of your school. Implement your program in stages. Don't take on more than you or your staff can handle. Plan a public relations and information campaign to provide students, parents, and faculty with information on the Senior Experience Capstone. **Many times resistance comes from a lack of knowledge about what is required and what the benefits will be to the students and school.**

What are common mistakes schools make when implementing the Senior Experience Capstone?

One of the most common mistakes is not developing a long-term vision and plan. The commitment and vision need to be supported, revisited, revised if needed, and carried out. Faculty roles need to be determined, grading issues discussed, timelines developed, etc. Use this Framework as your resource in developing the Senior Experience Capstone program for your school.

How many hours are involved in the Senior Experience Capstone?

This semester long Experience will involve approximately 120-150 hours in and outside of the school day. This amounts to approximately ten hours a week. Time spent on the Experience will be documented in a project log.

Who is involved in the Senior Experience Capstone process?

In addition to the student, Senior Experience Capstone will generally have a Faculty Advisor and an Experience Mentor. In addition, classroom instructors will be involved, specifically the English teachers. School districts may elect to have a Senior Experience Capstone Steering Committee, as well as a Senior Experience Capstone Coordinator. A panel of judges will be needed for student presentations.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Q. What did you do to manage your time?

- A. I tried to manage my time by completing assignments early. I also completed other class assignments when they were first assigned so that I could devote more of my time to my Senior Experience Capstone.
- A. I got a big calendar to put on my desk at home. I marked important dates on it.
- A. I had to learn and teach myself new time management skills in order not to get behind. My life quickly went from calm to busy in a matter of days.

Q. What personal satisfaction did you gain from the Experience?

- A. Overall, I would say that I feel a sense of pride in the final completion of the Experience, and I know that I can do anything that I put my mind to.
- A. I am impressed with the time and effort I put into this Experience. I have never had a project where a year-long focus was required.
- A. I feel I have grown in my time management skills as well as in my social skills.

Q. What did the Experience teach you about yourself?

- A. The Experience taught me that I am capable of completing a large project and that the work is easier if I do not complain and just do it.
- A. It enabled me to realize that I can fit in to the world outside of school and that high school students are not secluded from the rest of the community.
- A. The Experience taught me how to work with a wide range of people with many different personalities and opinions.
- A. I found that I can accomplish projects this huge with patience, determination, and most importantly, time management.

Q. What would you do differently now that you have finished?

- A. If I could do anything differently, I would probably spend more time researching and probably a lot more time in preparing for the final presentation.
- A. I would have started on my product earlier and taken advantage of the “dead” time that was available to me instead of procrastinating.
- A. I would have spent more time talking with a variety of people about my subject to fully understand the broad range of perspectives and opinions.

Northwest Rankin High School