

The purpose of the essay is for you to communicate what you *learned* to an audience unfamiliar with your capstone project. It needs to balance providing information about your project and what you accomplished with explicit explanation of what you learned along the way. Make sure that you provide a **focus** for the paper from the start. That focus should be a statement of the central goal or question you identified at the beginning of the project or the goal/question that emerged through the work that you did.

**Each paper – like each project – will be unique, but each paper needs to include the following elements:**

- An introduction that provides a focus for your paper, an explanation of the origin of the project, and an explanation of how the project was a learning stretch/challenge.
- Detailed description of the important steps in the evolution of the project and what you LEARNED at each point.
- Description of the resources (human, digital, print, other) used and how they helped inform your work. Provide the reader with information that will help them better understand why it was necessary for you to explore your chosen field or area of exploration (A good place for some citations in MLA format!)  
Note: In the past students have failed to meet standard when they have not shown substantial evidence of relevant and reliable research and/or clear explanation of how it informed their work in the body of their paper. The annotated works cited is not adequate on its own.
- Commentary about the problems you faced and solutions you found. What did you learn about yourself from overcoming these challenges?
- Reference to how this project helped you to develop or foster leadership, scholarship, self-direction and communication skills.
- Explanation of how the project has impacted your future plans and/or your understanding of the world.
- A works cited in proper MLA format.