

## STUDENT ENHANCES ARTISTIC DESIGN THROUGH THE CULTURAL TRADITIONS OF HIS COMMUNITY



### Self-assessment and critical analysis

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Throughout the *self-assessment and critical analysis* component of his capstone preparation (see pages 15–21 in the Career Education 10-12 Guide for more information about the components of capstone), the student had shared with his teacher-mentor reflections on experiences in school and out of school and an accompanying self-assessment in the Core Competencies, as well as highlights of his learning journey and his preferred options for post-graduation. His teacher-mentor noted that the student frequently spoke of how important he felt it was to continue the cultural traditions of his First Nations community. Consequently, when the student was unable to find a path he was happy with for the *process and representation* component of his capstone, his teacher-mentor suggested that he might want to think about how he could incorporate his personal and future-oriented interests in continuing the cultural traditions of his community into the learning expectation, to which he readily agreed.



### Process and representation

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Long-term learning focus: Enhancing artistic design and continuing community traditions

Theme: Honouring those who have helped you in life

#### Context

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The student decided to integrate his aspirations to continue the cultural traditions of his community with his desire to enhance his artistic design skills by creating a hand drum as a gift for someone who had supported him throughout his education process and who inspired him to continue moving forward in learning. The student chose to create a drum in the traditional ways of his community, which included hunting, cleaning, and skinning the deer; scraping, soaking, and preparing the hide; constructing the drum ring; sewing the drum together; and painting a symbolic image on the drum. The work took place over weeks, and the student worked with an Elder to learn skills and practice the mindfulness and attitude appropriate to cultural protocols.

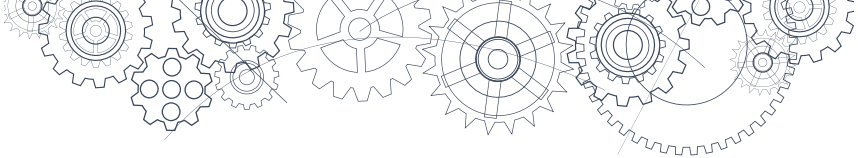
#### Connections

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##### *Curricular or domain connections*

Career Education – Analyzing internal and external factors to inform personal career-life choices for post-graduation; Assessing personal transferable skills, and identifying strengths and those skills that require further refinement; Collaborating with teacher-mentor; Cultivating community relationships to support plans for post-graduation; Reflecting on learning experiences and



personal development in the Core Competencies; Preparing for next steps in personal lifelong learning journey

Applied Design, Skills, and Technologies – Applying design thinking principles and traditional technologies

Visual Arts – Deepening traditional First Peoples worldviews, stories, and history, as expressed through the arts; Intentionally seeking and combining materials, processes, and technologies to convey ideas; Interpreting how artists use materials, technologies, processes, and environments in art making; Demonstrating respect for self, others, and place through art making

Social Studies – Developing understanding of the connections between the past, present, and future and the people and traditions that shape the development and evolution of communities, especially one's own

Mathematics – Understanding how to apply mathematics concepts to overall creative and functional design, including the musical sound of the drum

### **Community connections**

School community

Local First Nations community

### **Connections to First Peoples Principles of Learning**

*Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place):* The student connected deeply with his grandfather, his friends, and the land as he followed his local traditions to learn drum-making

*Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities:* Valuing and applying the expertise of the Elder

*Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge:* Recognizing that Indigenous peoples hold a wealth of knowledge that has been transmitted from generation to generation

### **Core Competencies connections**

Communicating – Connecting and engaging with others; Acquiring and presenting information

Creative Thinking – Creating and innovating

Critical and Reflective Thinking – Designing and developing; Reflecting and assessing

Positive Personal and Cultural Identity – Understanding relationships and cultural contexts; Recognizing personal values and choices

Social Awareness and Responsibility – Contributing to community and caring for the environment; Building relationships



## Create and express process

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### **Inspiration and ideation**

The student reflected on the individuals who had supported him throughout his education and chose to build a drum for a family member who had helped him stay on path in school through both difficult and good times.

### **Design**

The student hunted regularly, and so organized a hunting trip with friends to obtain a deer. Because the student and the family member to whom he was giving the drum are both from the same clan, he sketched an animal illustration that represented qualities of their relationship to be painted on the drum when it was finished. The student made a plan with his grandfather about where on the local river they would soak the hide, as well as a timeline and a list of the materials they would need.

### **Create**

After a successful hunting trip, the student and his grandfather completed the hide work together. The student had watched his grandfather prepare hides before and had learned skills and protocols through observation. The student built the drum and brought it back to the school to dry. He then painted the design on the drum and crafted a drum stick.

### **Coordinate and present**

The student reflected on the process of building the drum in one-on-one conversations with his Career-Life Connections (CLC) teacher-mentor. He spoke about how he had grown through the process, the positive impact it had on his relationship with his grandfather, and how he looked forward to passing on what he had learned to others. The student used the self-reflective conversations with his teacher-mentor to help guide and inform his capstone presentation.

At the graduation ceremony, the student spoke about the importance of his family member and how this person had contributed to his life and education. He spoke about the process of making the drum and gave thanks to his grandfather and the deer. The student then presented the drum to his family member in front of the community.

## Teaching and mentoring tips

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- The student and his teacher-mentor communicated by email on a schedule created by the student to help ensure that milestones of the project were being met in a timely way throughout the *create and express* process.
- The teacher-mentor had two conversations with the student's grandfather in order to find out more about the traditional drum-making process and to express interest and respect for the work they were doing.
- The teacher-mentor was in contact with the student's guardians to ensure he had permission to go on the hunting trip; she also got assurances from them that the student had a gun licence and the experience necessary to hunt safely.



## Additional resources

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- Local First Peoples communities are an important resource for protocols to create in traditional ways. Check in with your school/district Aboriginal Support Workers for appropriate ways to connect with and/or receive permissions from local communities.

## Formative assessment

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- Throughout the process, the student wrote three short activity reports on hunting, preparing the hide, and building the drum. The student also wrote three self-reflections structured explicitly around Core Competencies and the First Peoples Principles of Learning.
- The student presented his initial draft illustration to the teacher-mentor and received descriptive feedback on it, highlighting its strengths and providing suggestions.
- The student presented the first draft of his speech to his teacher-mentor, received descriptive feedback, and incorporated that feedback. He then forwarded the second draft of his speech to the teacher-mentor for subsequent review and approval. The student practiced the final, approved draft on a microphone in front of peers for feedback before the formal presentation at the graduation ceremony.
- The student had previously built two drums from prepared kits. The knowledge and skills he gained from creating those drums were helpful during this more complicated and authentic process. This process of building on his background knowledge and experience to inform new learning was highlighted in the student's reflections in the ongoing email communications with his teacher-mentor.



## Showcase and celebrate

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As part of his class's capstone celebration event, the student described how both the creation of the drum with his grandfather and its presentation to the supportive family member at the graduation ceremony had a profound personal impact on how he sees himself and the way he hopes to continue to contribute to and help others in his community.



## **Self-assessment and critical analysis**

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Throughout the *self-assessment and critical analysis* component of her capstone preparation (see pages 15–21 in the Career Education 10-12 Guide for more information about the components of capstone), the student frequently shared her passions for music and performance. Although she wasn't yet sure whether she would go on to study music at post-secondary, the student knew that playing music would always be an important part of her life, so she decided to integrate this passion into her capstone in some way.



## **Process and representation**

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Learning focus: Developing as a songwriter and performer

Theme: Losing someone close to you

### **Context**

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The student was an experienced musician and had been writing instrumental music, playing guitar, and singing others' songs for a few years. She decided to use the *create and express* process to incorporate this important part of her life into her capstone work. Her private guitar teacher acted as an advisor and supported the student with the music-related aspects of her capstone process.

### **Connections**

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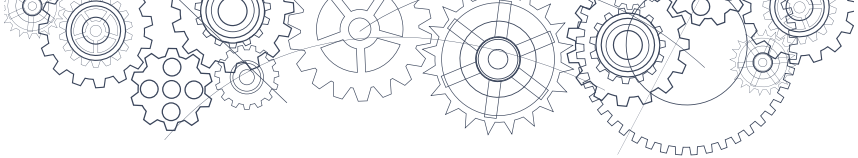


#### **Curricular or domain connections**

Career Education – Analyzing internal and external factors to inform personal career-life choices for post-graduation; Assessing personal transferable skills, and identifying strengths and those skills that require further refinement; Collaborating with teacher-mentor; Cultivating community relationships to support plans for post-graduation; Reflecting on learning experiences and personal development in the Core Competencies; Preparing for next steps in personal lifelong learning journey

Arts Education – Improvise and take creative risks in instrumental music; Adapt performance techniques, processes, and skills for use in innovative ways; Study and perform a variety of musical styles and genres; Develop and refine expressive techniques; Reflect on personal and performance experiences and musical growth; Express emotions and ideas through music

English Language Arts – Construct meaningful personal connections between self, text, and world; Appreciate and understand how language constructs personal, social, and cultural identities;



Transform ideas and information to create original texts, using various genres, forms, structures, and styles

Visual Arts – Interpreting how artists use materials, technologies, processes, and environments in art making; Demonstrating respect for self, others, and place through art making

### **Community connections**

School community  
Private guitar teacher

### **Connections to First Peoples Principles of Learning**

*Learning involves patience and time:* The student recognized and honoured the recursive approach to perfecting her story and her song

*Learning is embedded in memory, history and story:* The student shared her story of the family friend through her crafted song

### **Core Competencies connections**

Communicating – Connecting and engaging with others; Acquiring and presenting information

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Positive Personal and Cultural Identity – Understanding relationships and cultural contexts; Recognizing personal values and choices

Social Awareness and Responsibility – Contributing to community and caring for the environment; Building relationships

## **Create and express process**

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### **Inspiration and ideation**

The student started by identifying her areas of passion and skill, including storytelling, acting, playing guitar, and musical composition. She also identified some of her core values, such as the importance of family and relationships, and the joy she experienced through creativity.

The student then decided to focus her learning goals for the capstone *process and representation* on developing her songwriting and performance skills. While she had written instrumental music and performed in front of small groups of friends and family before, she had not yet written a song complete with lyrics, nor performed in front of a larger audience.

The student tried several approaches to find inspiration for a new song, including listening to singer/songwriters she admired and reading through her journals to find material that spoke strongly to her. After reflection, she decided to write a song that honoured a family friend who had passed away the year before.





## **Design**

The student researched musical theory and composition to better understand the relationship between music and emotion, including the emotions evoked through the use of major and minor keys, different instrumentation, and different tempi.

After speaking with her community advisor – a professional guitar player – and others she knew with musical knowledge, the student initially considered arranging the song for multiple instruments and began to research how to do it well. However, as the song progressed and its intimate nature evolved, she finally decided to incorporate voice and one acoustic guitar as the sole instruments, and to perform it on her own.

The student researched how to record a song professionally, including the equipment and software needed for recording and mixing. After discussions with music teachers at the school and her advisor, she had to change her plans to record at this time due to the significant costs involved. She felt it would make more sense to pursue a recording after she had a larger repertoire of music to share.

Having refined a basic melody and landed on the key themes of her song's story, the student was ready to create her new music.

## **Create**

It took some time to write her song, working through continuous tweaking and revisions until the student felt that the music and lyrics finally worked well together. Throughout the creation stage, the student sought feedback from her music advisor and from trusted friends, performing pieces of the song and practicing the storytelling she planned to use in her performance.

## **Coordinate and present**

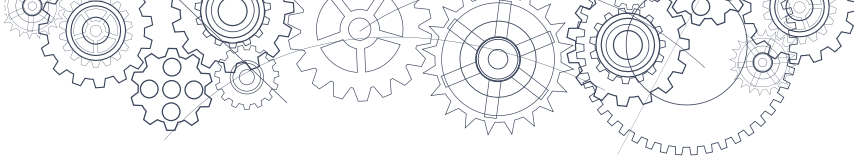
The student wanted her song to be debuted in a classic coffee-house style, with a spoken storytelling opening and the song performed afterwards. She arranged to perform at a local café in the evening and invited friends, family, her advisor, and some of her teachers to join the audience.

The student gathered photos of her family friend to share with the audience and wrote an outline of the story she wanted to tell. She identified the required equipment (guitar, microphone, speaker, projector with screen, laptop, stool to sit on, extension cords) and arrived early to arrange and test them before she stepped on stage.

She began her performance by projecting photos of the family friend and describing the relationship between them, as well as between the family friend and the rest of her family. She carefully crafted an emotional atmosphere that suited the song's intended impact.

The student ended her performance by singing her song while playing the guitar. Her friend videotaped the whole event for her so that she could upload it as a demonstration of learning to her digital portfolio and to show her Career-Life Connections (CLC) teacher-mentor and classmates.

Later, the student reviewed the videotape and wrote an accompanying reflection about how it portrayed her progress with her learning goals and Core Competency development. She then met with her CLC teacher-mentor in a one-on-one conference to debrief this learning evidence and



reflection. It was an informal conversation (approximately 10 minutes) that gave the student an opportunity to share the highlights of her experience and the teacher-mentor an opportunity to ask questions. During this conference, the student also shared relevant pieces of evidence and reflections from her digital portfolio that she had been uploading throughout her secondary years to further illustrate the points she had made about her learning.

### Teaching and mentoring tips

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- Students may struggle with the initial creative stages for writing lyrics and/or music. It may be helpful to talk with them about the concept of “forced creativity” and/or to have them brainstorm key emotions or images related to the theme to use as inspiration.
- There are many ways a student can share songs they have written (and other creative products), such as performing in front of smaller and more supportive audiences (e.g., the class or just the teacher-mentor), recording the song, performing the song at a school event such as an assembly or band concert, or having others sing along.
- There are many ways that students who are passionate about music can pursue learning in their capstone, including a focus on music arrangement or transcription, learning to play a new instrument, and/or learning about recording and sound engineering.

### Additional resources

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Collaborating with music teachers (at the school and/or in the community) can be helpful, not just with advising, research, and community connections, but also with sourcing equipment and sharing performance opportunities.

### Formative assessment

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At the beginning of the project, the teacher-mentor went over the general required criteria for capstone with the whole class. In addition, once the student had selected her focus for learning, she received permission from the teacher-mentor to develop a personalized rubric, in which she added specific detailed criteria in order to make the rubric more relevant to her capstone choices. She and the teacher-mentor negotiated some points until they both agreed on all criteria. Both the student and teacher-mentor then used this personalized rubric to assess progress along the way, and to evaluate her capstone together at the end.



## Showcase and celebrate

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As part of the school’s capstone celebration tradition, graduating students shared their lifelong learning journey and plans for post-graduation during an exit interview with a staff member from the school. The student incorporated key learning and insights about herself from the experience and how it had shaped how she wanted to be as a performer.