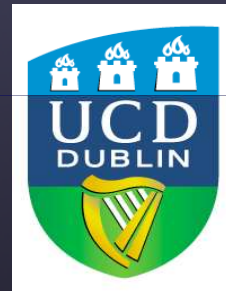


*Capstone Projects @SILS:
Learning & Doing in Collaboration
with Others*



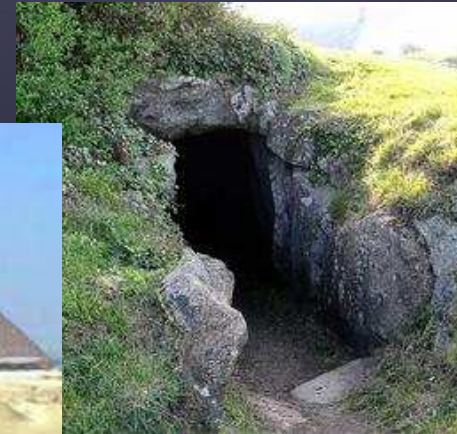
Diane H. Sonnenwald

What is a Capstone?

“A final touch; a crowning achievement; a culmination”

“A stone that forms the top of a wall of building”

Lexic.us



What is a Capstone Project?

- A small group project
 - 4-6 group members
- A research project that focuses a real world problem that is of interest to people within academia & outside academia
 - Use-inspired research
- An opportunity to:
 - Address a significant problem/challenge/issue
 - Practice & refine collaboration skills
 - Produce a significant piece of work to show employers
 - Work on something of real world interest
 - Integrate knowledge learned in different modules
 - Network with professionals
- An opportunity to practice & demonstrate professional expertise & skills

Capstone Project Components



- Project presentation
 - Given to a panel of professionals & academic staff
 - Scheduled during the last two weeks in July
 - Opportunity for students to receive feedback before project report is due

“Our success in the presentation encouraged us to work hard to produce a coherent piece of written work for the final report.”

- Project report
 - Professional report format, e.g., executive summary
 - 10,000-12,000 words in length
 - Examples: The Library Council Reports



Capstone Project Components

- Group member assessment
 - Opportunity for students to *confidentially* provide feedback regarding team members
 - 2 page survey to be completed independently by each team member
 - 10% of grade
- 10% of each student's grade
 - X did more  positive impact on X's final grade
 - Y did less  negative impact on Y's final grade

Capstone Project Process

First Steps for Students

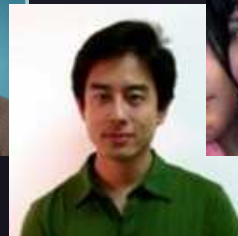
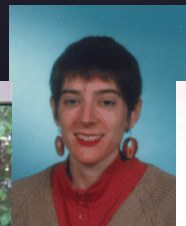
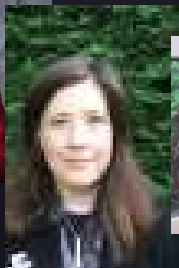
- Group formation
 - Potential groups formed in Research Methods I (core module)
 - Opportunity to modify group membership for Capstone
- Topic selection
 - List of topics provided in December
 - Each topic has an academic supervisor (SILS staff member)
 - Discussions between students & supervisors
 - Or, students propose a topic to a supervisor
 - Students & supervisor must agree on the topic

Examples of Proposed Topics

- In collaboration with HSLG:
 - Using an outcome-based approach to tell the story of the impact of health libraries in Ireland
- In collaboration with UCD Library:
 - Developing online tutorials for teaching information skills
- In collaboration with Aer Lingus:
 - Unpacking Aer Lingus: An oral history of aviation in Ireland
 - Memory collection, preservation & access: Creating an Aer Lingus digital scrapbook
 - Aer Lingus photo identification using user tagging & commentary
 - Developing a prototype digital library
 - Creating a mobile application for children

Examples of Proposed Topics

- In collaboration with SILS & LAI
 - Workforce tracking and development
- In collaboration with Dublin City Public Library:
 - Summer teen programme
 - Programme evaluation
- Based on staff research interests:
 - Information needs, strategies and solutions of non-nationals
 - Knowledge translation and patient support groups
 - Evaluating the usability of the Sakai Open Academic environment



Students' Perspectives on doing a Capstone Project

"I learned more than I would have doing a thesis."

"Working within the group on the project [was] an interesting and enriching experience..the final report is far richer from having input from the perspective and skills of a variety of individuals."

"My experience working with this team has been an extremely positive one...all team members pulled their weight..I enjoyed working with every single member."

"The geographic spread of the members...presented a challenge. However, the problem of distance was overcome through virtual group meetings held in Skype."

"I have learned from this project the importance of having an eye on the bigger picture, and having an awareness from the start that all the individual parts must make up a comprehensive report."

Students' Perspectives on doing a Capstone Project

“I feel I learned a considerable amount about our topic and also about working together as a group on a large project.”

“I could have never completed this by myself.”

“We found that if the energy or enthusiasm of one or two team members began to wane, there was always someone on hand to provide support & encouragement, thus ensuring project momentum was carried on.”



In conclusion...

- Volunteers needed to serve on Capstone presentation panel
 - Listen to project presentations & provide feedback to students
 - Last two weeks in July
 - To volunteer please send email to Diane. Sonnenwald@ucd.ie
- If interested, please contact us with ideas regarding potential Capstone projects in September 2012
 - SILS refines projects with you; students select projects
- Invitation
 - SILS Alumni Talk & Reception
 - 13 Dec 5:00 pm
 - Professor Blaise Cronin, Indiana University
 - Never too many cooks: The evolving nature of scientific authorship
- Thank you!