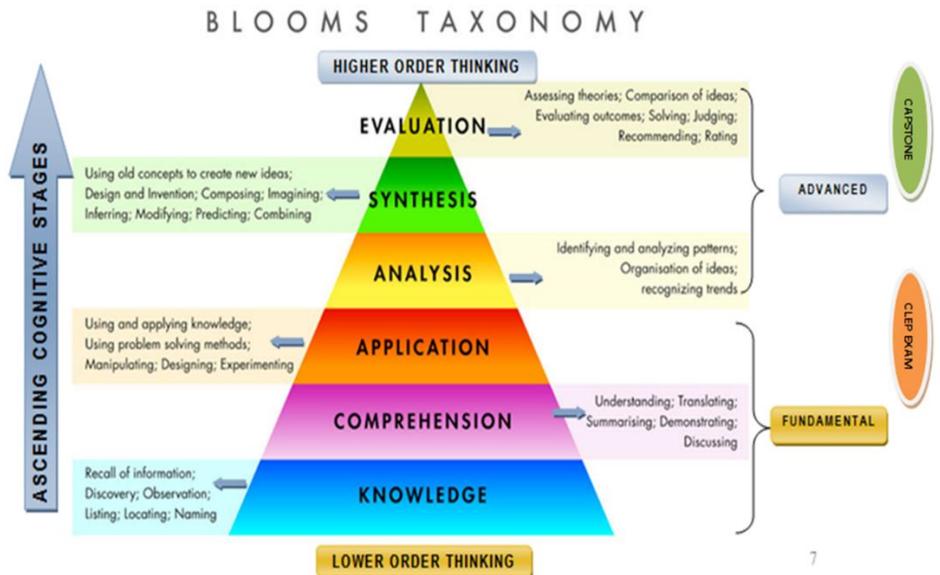


## MARYLAND BMF PATHWAY CAPSTONE AT A GLANCE

A capstone course is a transformative educational experience predicated on student-centered pedagogy. The teacher is not the focus, rather there is a shift as the instructor becomes a facilitator who guides the students on their scholarly expedition (Buzzetto-More, 2013).

Capstones employ a flexible and problem based learning, where students engage in critical thinking, synthesis, evaluation, decision making, goal-setting, problem-solving, and collaboration.



*Capstones occur at the end of a program of study and are organized around a comprehensive project where students make decisions regarding the direction of learning and engage in planning with adherence to an established timeline.*

- Involvement of student in the integration, and application, of course concepts into a comprehensive project that bridges theory with practice indicating an appropriate target: method match*
- Involvement of student in the application of higher-order thinking, guided inquiry, planning, time management, reflection, and problem-solving skills*
- Employment of a community-based approach to supporting students*
- Inclusion of a presentation and showcase component before a panel in order to evaluate projects*
- Adoption of an effective assessment program that includes use of program-wide rubrics*
- A student-centered approach with teachers serving as guides that help facilitate, and not lead, learning*
- Collaboration between students and teachers as they work together to establish, and adhere to, benchmarks*

# MARYLAND BMF PATHWAY CAPSTONE AT A GLANCE

## THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

The online comprehensive guide includes many different examples. Whatever the project, a capstone experience represents a culmination of a program of study and therefore must require a student to work at the highest possible level by integrating and applying advanced concepts.

Teachers discuss with students program learning objectives and major concepts.

When selecting a project students are instructed to select a challenging core question. Teachers should guide students through the employment of higher order questioning where students are challenged to defend their position, evaluate consequences, assess task benefits, analyze information to determine relevance and usefulness, forecast/predict likely outcomes, and reflect on personal understanding and the meaningfulness of activities.

Students prepare a project proposal that includes an activity timeline with benchmarks, and addresses all tasks to be completed and resources to be used. Students are responsible for staying on task and adhering to the schedule as planned. Teachers use benchmarking. During each benchmark a student submits or demonstrates progress.

It is expected that the project will reflect a minimum of 40 hours of concentrated effort by the student.



## WHAT DO WE TELL STUDENTS

The Capstone project is a personally-designed independently conducted activity which enables you to further your knowledge/skill in one or more of the course topics which you have found or believe to be especially interesting or beneficial to you.

### What's the purpose of the capstone?

The capstone is designed as a way for you to:

- Integrate and apply learned concepts into a single project.
- Take a significant step toward your educational and/or career goals. So choose a topic that relates to your goals and will look great on your resume.
- Research and work on a topic you care deeply about.
- Showcase your research skills and academic interests in anticipation of college or the job market.
- Learn and hone leadership and organizational skills as you work through the capstone process.

### WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF EVERY CAPSTONE?

Choose a topic/core question that:

- Focuses on a topic/core question about which you feel passionate and committed.
- Demonstrates appropriate-to-the-subject research skills and methodologies.
- Results in a final project that will contribute to knowledge on the topic.
- Becomes a substantial final product.
- Includes a finished written component that will be placed in the library.
- Acts as a stepping stone toward your career or college goals.

Benchmarks serve as ongoing course assessments, giving teachers an opportunity to review student progress while providing meaningful formative feedback.