

Thinking about the process and product of your Capstone, reflect upon what you are most proud of and what you might do differently if you were to complete a similar project in the future?

In my capstone, there are many things that I am proud of, but none more than my organization and multitasking skills that I demonstrated during my project. Before I began my capstone, I would not consider myself unorganized, but rather I was inconsistent. I noticed that even in my home life, I have become more consistent with organizing my clothing and school supplies. In my capstone, I went through all the donated costumes from Queen Creek High School, took photos of them, and documented how many articles of clothing (including color) we had. I also organized them in an accessible way so that we could piece together costumes. This took much longer than just counting what we had and putting them back into a box. However, it saved us a significant amount of time when it came to costuming characters and figuring out what props we needed to purchase. I also demonstrated a very difficult skill called backward planning. I created a daily completion chart with specific "due dates" that included tasks, like how many costumes we had, who would receive them, and where we would store them.

I recognized an issue while I was a cast member in other productions: our attendance process was unorganized, which caused attendance to be hectic and stressful. To solve this problem, I created a Google Form for cast members to select their names (listed in alphabetical order) once they arrived at rehearsal. The process became much quicker, and cast members were able to spend more time preparing for rehearsal or hanging out with cast mates. Along with the form, I had a Google Sheet (names were in the same order) where I could easily transfer a member's name over to a system. The system also calculated the number of unexcused (U) days (colored red), late (L) days (colored yellow), and excused (E) days (colored blue). In these boxes, I added comments explaining the mark so that my director could review a member if needed. This made it easier for my director to quickly view the attendance for any missing members for choreography or blocking or in case the member violated their contract.

Even though I completed my project on time, I feel as though I could have completed it sooner to avoid the last-minute stress I created for myself. If I were to do a similar project in the future, I think I would make a timeline for myself of when everything needs to be completed. When I created trackers, I was able to better retain information and keep track of my progress. I could also ensure that I am completing steps by the due date or by a created date to stay ahead of the project.

Explain how your life experiences are reflected through your project?

My life experiences are reflected in my project in many ways. I have had many jobs since I was ten, but one of the most valuable jobs I ever had was working with Life Simply Organized. I helped them clean out, consolidate, decorate, and most importantly organize all sorts of homes. Knowing the importance of organization and how much clearer you can think when things are neat, I made sure to organize everything in my capstone. For example, I created an attendance log with cast members organized alphabetically and separated by color depending on their roles. To keep track of their attendance, I also implemented a code into my sheet to visually track absences or tardiness. Stage management made my organizational skills better because it is such an important step. If costumes were unorganized, that not only took time out of rehearsal but also made assigning costumes to cast members more complicated.

Leadership is another important skill that played a vital role in my project. I got an idea over the summer about how I could improve Eastmark Theatre. What if I brought the International Thespian Society (ITS) to Eastmark? So, I did. With the help of Briton Clark and Cynthia Catchpole, we brought ITS to Eastmark and I have been the president for two years in a row. I have led my members through meetings and inductions. Inside my project, I led rehearsals, when directors were absent, and helped contain the cast's relentless energy. Having built former leadership skills, made me a much better leader to my cast mates and a better stage manager. While reflecting I realized that stage managing made me more confident in my leadership skills. I feel that I am better able to lead my fellow peers and guide them when they have a problem.

I discovered in sixth grade that I had a real passion for theatre and I have pursued it ever since. Though this was my first time being a stage manager, I already knew the ins and outs of theatre from being an actor and helping backstage in other productions. I was able to easily come up with solutions and create systems for our musical because I knew what my frustrations were as an actor and what my cast mates needed to make their jobs easier. My theatre knowledge has been expanded since completing this project. I now know more about the theatre and what is needed to put on a production. It takes hard work, dedication, and teamwork to create an amazing show that everyone can enjoy.

Thinking about the Extracurricular hours you completed, reflect upon what you learned through the experiences and/or how you have been impacted as an artist?

My project allowed me to see a whole new side of theatre that I had never experienced before. While I have completed 267 hours in my high school career, very few times did that include me working backstage. This also never included managing a stage crew, preparing costumes, set designs, or drafting lighting/curtain maps. In this process, I learned that organization is key to stage management; otherwise, you will lose track of your responsibilities. It also opened my eyes to a different side of theatre that I had never been interested in before. I believe that it has also given me a deeper appreciation for cast members who work backstage and management as a whole. When you look at stage managers, they always look calm and collected. You never would have guessed the amount of ideas they had swirling around all at once. In my reported 55 hours of stage management, I have gained a deeper knowledge and appreciation of my art.

How is your life positively impacted by the arts?

Theatre has helped me through so much in my life. It gave me a safe space that allowed me to be myself. It was a place where I could break away from the stress of daily life and think about someone else. I also struggled to make friends and never really had any before I joined the theatre. However, when I was there, I was surrounded by others in similar situations, and I realized that I was not the only one. As I got older, I was honored that I became the person that people could come up to and make friends with. I have never felt so valued as I do when I am in theatre. I will cherish the friendships and the lessons I have learned forever.

How do you plan to include artistic experiences in your future after high school?

Though I do not plan on pursuing theatre in my professional career, I know that the skills I have obtained will assist me with this next part of my life. However, I still plan on including theatre in my life. I plan on traveling a lot and seeing some shows during my travels, whether it be at a local theater or on Broadway. I have even thought about participating in community shows or films if I can balance it with my career.

Theatre has taught me many amazing life skills like presenting, leadership, and how to problem solve. In any career, you can expect to deliver a presentation of some sort. It may include giving a speech, a presentation, or pitching an idea to your boss or a potential client. In any situation, you need to be able to calm your nerves, "stage fright," and present your information clearly and directly just like an actor on stage. I would not be as confident as I am in presenting to large crowds without my involvement in theatre.

I became a leader within Eastmark's drama department. Between being president of the International Thespian Society (ITS) and even leading my classes, I have stepped up to guide members/students to achieve a common goal. The workplace is always in need of people who can take responsibility and commit to helping their team.

Improvisation is one of the most important elements of theatre. Despite my love-hate relationship with improv, I know that it has taught me many lessons. On the stage, a disaster can happen at any second and as an actor or crew member, you need to be ready for anything. Life, in general, is always ready to throw one thing at you after another. It is vital that I can overcome challenges with a quick and well-thought-out solution.

What advice would you give an incoming freshmen about studying the arts to help them make the most of their experiences while in high school?

Advice to all incoming freshmen:

Beginning on the journey through high school with a passion for the arts opens up a world of creative possibilities. I would advise you to be ambitious by exploring all sides of the theatre, even if it might seem daunting. Learning all parts of the art is vital to your success within the art. I would also advise you to go for the dream, but take what you are given. What I mean is, you never know what you are capable of until you try, so try everything. Go for your dream role in an audition even if you think that you will not receive that role. If you get another role or even an understudy, do not decline that role. This is given so the directors can help you improve so you can get a better role next time. It also will show the directors that you are dedicated to their program, which goes much further than you might think. Most importantly, take advantage of everything you are given. Begin earning points to be inducted to ITS, take the extra rolls, work on stage crew, do anything. This is going to help you, not only in your high school career but also in your professional one. Also, joining a club or a team with like-minded people allows you to meet new friends with common interests.

When I think about the time I spent in the theatre, I have so many good memories. The people that I have met along the way have helped me progress not only in my acting but also by improving skills that I will need in life. I participated in the activity that I love with the people that I love. Of course, there are times when theatre is hectic and stressful, but there is so much more to it than just stage fright and performing. I enjoyed every last second of my high school theatre career, and that is something that I would not change for the world. Theatre taught me so many invaluable lessons that I know will help me along the way in this new chapter."