**EDTL 7100: Statement of Purpose/Rationale Aaron Stalsworth**

 Technology has had a long history of directly influencing education around the world. The invention of the typewriter spawned generations of students away from the pen only to be replaced by the word processor. Today, computers have made both completely obsolete with the exception of a few collectors who have the taste for nostalgia. The invention of the television brought moving pictures into our grandparent’s homes and with it an influx of information which has educated the masses (mis-educated?) and now is slowly being adapted to the internet for streaming media so it doesn’t become a thing of the past. The 1980’s brought us the digital calculator, but now our mobile devices have the simple functions built in. Technology of today changes much faster than generations past and teachers are under assault for using established teaching practices instead of constantly embracing every new change of tech on a daily basis (Klopfer, 2009). One question that is left is ‘why are teachers being singled out?’ as the ones to embrace the realism that technology is important in all aspects of life, while the curriculum which was written without the understanding that technology changes daily still is the backbone of most public school systems. The Western Australia Curriculum Council has created a structure for computer based courses from grades 1 through 11 that step away from testable knowledge and move towards adaptable skill sets. The attached CMAP for Computer Science outlines a task based course which lasts for one school year and delivered to my grade 11 students in Vietnam.

**Needs of the Learner/Task-Based Approach**

 The course specific rationale states that “This course provides students with practical and technical skills that equip them to function effectively in a world where these attributes are vital for employability and daily life in a technological society” (Curriculum Council, 2011). The evidence toward student needs of employability and social success are evident, but the question still remains as to how to deliver them practically. What the rationale leaves out is how the subject is actually designed around not having tests, but is based on outcome tasks which enhance variable skill domains and use real world situations to reinforce the knowledge for later use. Short quizzes can be applied to judge student development, but are generally left out of the grading process as the final tasks over the course are weighted to reflect the overall skill development of the student and not how much memorization has taken place. The amount of time spent by the teacher preparing and testing students now is removed from the equation. This allows for the teacher to become a resource, rather than a lecturer, to address individual student interests and skill deficiencies during the increased laboratory hours. The result is a well balanced student who has the opportunity to express themselves technically, develop tech confidence across domains, obtain social tech literacy for outside of the classroom, and all the while gaining social and employable skills for their future.

**Unintended Social Definitions / Social Restrictions**

 The social aspect of the curriculum framework encourages teachers to produce students who are socially conscious of the cause/effect aspects of technology and be responsible. A secondary aspect is that the student learns to be enterprising and enhance collaborative skills in critical thinking/application. The third aspect of note is that students meet the demands of changing technology in the world around them positively affect their society (Curriculum Council, 1998). These social aspects of the curriculum were written with the Australian education system in mind and not originally written with the application of the curriculum within conflicting social structures of other countries in mind. My experience with the application of an Australian curricular framework applied within Vietnam is that it does very well in establishing the values of content mastery, but is restrained by the communist Vietnamese structure which doesn’t promote individualism, initiative, or socially interactive behaviours. The local system in place actually makes it as difficult as possible for change to take place by instilling technology taxes on imports up to 300% and over censoring all forms of media simply to maintain the status quo. By attending our high school, the student is showing that they will probably leave Vietnam to attend university though and the social aspects of the curriculum are left to the teacher to interpret what skills need to be addressed individually over the school year so each student has a chance to succeed. Some students show excessive shyness, some see the teacher as strictly authoritarian, socially defined gender roles inhibit male/female social conversations, while others are afraid to contradict a piece of information with their own opinion. Both traits are social needs of the students before they would study overseas, but again, the curriculum was never written with non-Australian students in mind therefore doesn’t address culture specific social needs.

**Course Content/Assessment**

 The course content within the curricular framework consists of 5 main areas: Systems Analysis and Development, Networks and Communication, Programming, Developing Software, and Managing Data (Curriculum Council, 2011). The selection of those topics has been mandated by the WACC and therefore must be addressed in relation to the time weightings for each topic or else the course will not be accepted for credit. The teacher is free to establish the content, resources, and delivery of the course to the students. The task based system leads the students through hands on exercises which involve large amounts of independent research online and design applications directly applicable to their daily tech usage outside of school. Assessment of each task is solely based on outcomes established to gauge how much of a skill set is being applied to the current project. This form of assessment lends to the student reusing skills under the guise of a new assignment while instilling adaptability across courses as the outcomes are also the basis of most subjects within the school.

**Educational Goals**

 The intention of this course is to produce a student which is adaptable in the domain of technology use and understand how to transcend that knowledge into other aspects of their lives. As technology cycles tend to make today’s current trend obsolete after just a few years, assessment techniques need to move away from testing which requires rote memorization and center more on developing a skill portfolio which the student can revisit and reapply skills to new challenges that present themselves. This course has been designed according to the Western Australian Curriculum Council framework and been audited twice by government curricular officials to meet their standards for accreditation in content. Social goals of the curriculum need to be rewritten on a student by student basis while teaching in Vietnam as the curriculum doesn’t necessarily reflect the social order present in the local school systems.

**References**

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