

Curriculum Committee Meeting - December 19, 2016

Attendees: Deirdre Burns, Deirdre d'Albertis, Laura Schulkind, Joe Phelan, Marvin Kreps, Steve Jensen

BMS Computer Lab Curriculum

Prior to our meeting, Marvin compiled all of the feedback received to date for the committee's review. The questions and comments range from overarching impressions of the work thus far, to granular questions about particular lesson delivery choices. Marvin shared that Laurie Keating's role in the development process was to provide not only a best practice overview for K-12 technology integration, but also to provide direction on Middle School Computer coursework and build out of the lab.

Steve re-iterated that Middle School teachers have found tremendous variation in skill level of the students coming up from the elementary school. The committee acknowledged this but also pointed out that it was our responsibility to address this variation for each child. This seems the most appropriate place for differentiation of instruction across all 3 grade levels. The draft presented does not address this point and feels somewhat one-dimensional. What are the range of options and solutions for differentiation? Are there curricula from other schools that we could look to for guidance?

Deirdre d'Albertis asked about the appropriate timing to begin coding for students? The scope document doesn't seem to outline at what age coding skills should be introduced. When and how should students be scaffolded when learning particular skills at different grade levels? Marvin explained that the scope document is tied to the national ISTE and Computer Science standards and is meant to provide guidance on the developmentally appropriate timing for skill introduction.

This led to further discussion regarding the granularity of the scope document for 2 of the ISTE domains (Empowered Learner and Digital Citizenship) but the scant outline for the remaining 5 domains. The committee would like to see further development for the Knowledge Constructor, Innovative Designer, Computational Thinker, Creator and Communicator, and Global Collaborator domains as these are critical to developing students' understanding of how to use the technology tools available over a multitude of disciplines. Joe agreed that a casual reader of this document may not understand the depth of learning in each domain. Perhaps Laurie Keating could work further with the team to develop explicit benchmarks.

So too, the committee asked for a better understanding of the concept of "Mastery." Certainly, cutting and pasting are skills that can be mastered with relative ease, however ethical behavior in the use of digital technologies that change over time as well as developing analytical skills in assessing sources should be concepts that continue to cross-cut multiple classes throughout a student's career. The committee is concerned that "mastery" at a particular grade level for certain "skills" would not accurately portray the importance of revisiting these concepts - not as lessons per sé but as part of a student's digital development.

In order to present the ideas surfaced over our last 2 meetings, Marvin asked that we take the time to synthesize the comments thus far and develop the "essential questions" for curriculum review. He will then be able to reconvene the development team. The committee questioned whether the K-12 portion of the document should be separate from the BMS Computer lab curriculum. Marvin suggested that the scope portion provides a context for the BMS course work but that, in terms of curriculum approval, there might be benefit to making them distinct documents. He will consider the best course of action and make a recommendation.

Next Meeting Agenda: January 23, 2017

- BMS Computer Curriculum update

Additional Topics for discussion:

- Kindergarten entry age follow up
- CLS Health Curriculum
- CLS Math Review
- RHS SS update