

Standard 5: Digital Citizenship

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Introduction

According to Maughan (2017), it is technology and social media's increasing presence in our global world that drives the need to teach learners appropriate technology use, responsibilities, and how to be safe using technology online. It is also fact that educational institutions have not kept pace with these technological advances. Educational administrators have a responsibility to facilitate understanding of social, ethical and legal issues, as well as user responsibilities as it pertains to evolving digital culture. In addition, administrators must also model understanding and appropriate technology use to the digital learning community. This is the primary focus of standard 5, digital citizenship.

The computing sciences (CS) department at Coastal Carolina University should demonstrate a mastery of this standard as they are leaders in the field of technology. The department represents the knowledge-base of networking technology, developing technology systems, and programming technology functions. In addition to appropriate infusion of technology into the classroom and content of courses, the CS department should also support the learning community by including other technology experts, such as media specialists and information technology services (ITS) technicians, to ensure technology availability, to maintain proper technology operation, and to provide additional training to faculty, staff, and students.

Performance Indicators

Standard 5 has four indicators discussing equitable access to technology for learners, ethical use of technology, promoting responsible social interactions using technology, and promoting communication and collaboration as it pertains to understanding global issues. The indicators for standard 5 represent more than digital literacy, they represent a digital culture of

learning that supports the implementation and use of technology without inflicting harm. The CS department demonstrates success of this standard in its use and support of university policy that sets goals to ensure safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology. The department partners with Huaqiao University in Xiamen, China to share knowledge and support cultural understanding. Finally, the department sets requirements for all classes for all students pertaining to technology, to ensure equity, but also provides technology in computer labs to meet the needs of all learners.

Indicator 1

This first indicator looks for equitable access to appropriate digital resources to meet the needs of all learners. The CS department requires that all students have access to a laptop, whether they currently own or need to purchase, in order to enroll in a course. There is no way to determine that students have satisfied this requirement, but the policy is set for all students regardless of course. Computers are provided in two lab classrooms. Students have access to these computers not just when they are enrolled in a class that uses the labs, they may use the computers at any time during regular department hours or when tutors or faculty are available in the building. The presence of these computers are to ensure that students have access to digital tools and software, should they not be able to use their own laptops. Should a student require special technology accommodations, ITS will install and/or implement them once they contact the office of accessibility and disability services (ADS).

Indicator 2

This second indicator's focus is on policy that ensures safe, legal, and ethical use of digital information and technology. The CS department primarily follows university policy as it

pertains to these topics. There are a variety of accessibility issues to consider. The most complex surrounds the ability to share information with parents. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) does not allow anyone to share information with parents without the consent of the student (those 18 and older). Members of the CS department, and I am sure other departments as well, constantly receive phone calls or emails from parents wanting information concerning their student's classes or grades. Many parents are upset when this information cannot be shared. So it is the department's job to help parents understand this policy.

The CS department leaders must also work closely with ITS to make sure data and information is secure on the network. This includes preventing student work from being hacked as well as private, personal data. Faculty, staff, and leaders are responsible for helping students understand that department (or campus) equipment is not for personal use and that they should definitely not store personal data on the machines. The department is responsible for keeping current on policy that is set concerning technology safety and security by going to the university policy site each year.

Indicator 3

This third indicator addresses responsible social interactions when using technology. The CS department and its administrators should model appropriate use and be responsible for egregious acts by faculty and staff. Social interactions come in a large variety; however, the important ones to the department include respectful and ethical behavior. An example of respectful behavior is to not 'flame' or otherwise threaten peers on discussion forums. Another would include not using chat technology to cheat during an exam/quiz. The CS department has experienced both behaviors from students. The latter incident caused the department to enforce stricter policy in syllabi as it pertains to what students can or cannot use/access during an exam

or quiz. Students were able to challenge failing grades because the instructor's syllabus did not state specifically that they could not use technology to communicate with other students during an exam (seems like common sense). Additional policy should also be written concerning particular social media outlets students can access during class, especially while the teacher or other students are speaking during lecture or presentations (maybe in general).

Indicator 4

This fourth indicator considers collaborative efforts when sharing cultural understanding and involvement in global issues. The CS department has a small level of collaboration through its partnership with Huaqiao University, as stated earlier. There is information sharing via technology and learning communities for both faculty and students. Students from the university are able to complete their technology degree at Coastal Carolina (CCU) and vice versa for CCU students. There are other research efforts by individual faculty; however, I believe there are greater opportunities for both faculty and students, should the department focus more effort in this area.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the CS department is quite successful as it pertains to standard five. The administrators promote digital citizenship by promoting a digital culture that is collaborative in nature and supports appropriate policy to keep technology interactions safe, ethical, and secure. The department could improve by promoting more collaboration and research across borders where faculty and students can work together on projects that build stronger bonds within the department and within global communities. As for policy, the department could be more proactive in ensuring that syllabi contain specific language as it pertains to use of technology in

and out of the classroom. This can remove confusion on the part of the students, especially in the case mentioned where the student stated they did not know they could not use technology to communicate during an exam—given the exam was being taken on the computer.

References

Maughan, S. (2017). Teaching digital citizenship: school librarians lead students in the tech age. *Publishers Weekly*, (34). 35.