

Community of Inquiry, Practice and Excellence (CIPE) for an Assessment Framework for New IT Programming Courses

Progress Report – June 14, 2020 Submitted by Robert Bunge

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The Community of Inquiry, Practice and Excellence (CIPE) for an Assessment Framework for New IT Programming Courses is part of a larger ongoing project to increase the diversity of enrollments in IT curricula across the district. To that end, the specific actions for current CIPE project will support larger initiatives such as standardizing of IT curriculum across the Seattle Colleges, outreach to K-12 students, outreach to underrepresented demographic groups, and streamlining technology curriculum pathways to improve student outcomes.

The first step in developing this CIPE proposal for submission in early May 2020 was a conference call with a dozen or more IT faculty across the district to determine interest in project participation. Many faculty members expressed interest in the larger project framework and in the CIPE mini-grant project in particular. In the following week, multiple rounds of email exchanges among potential participants helped us determine the makeup of the team that applied for the CIPE mini-grant and the availability of this team to implement the proposed project. In general, most of the faculty involved shared frustrations with moving programming courses online for spring quarter and preferred to defer project implementation activities until after spring quarter was completed. We agreed to move forward on that basis and submitted a proposal for the CIPE mini grant, which was approved.

The CIPE project in general has two main points of focus. One is updating the IT curriculum. The other is filtering IT curriculum through the lenses of diversity, equity, and accessibility. Project work on each of these focal areas has continued with substantial progress during the months of May and June 2020. During that time several members of the CIPE project team successfully proposed a curriculum grant to develop a new introductory IT programming course for North Seattle College. Other CIPE team members did preliminary work on a more advance proposal to be implemented later in 2020-21. The development of these proposal helped to clarify scope and sequence for IT programming courses across the district. As part of the curriculum grant deliverables many specific assessments were specified to be included in

the new course. The CIPE team this summer will be charged with evaluating these proposed assessments and insuring consistency of expectation and approach with assessment practices in similar courses across the district.

Meanwhile, several outreach conversations with conducted with staff in the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and Adult Basic Education around the idea of finding ways to increase enrollment and success rates for non-traditional students in IT curricula. Similar conversations were conducted with members of the Application Development BAS program at North Seattle College to identify gaps in preparation that negatively impact outcomes for current students in the BAS program. Finally, on June 2 there was meeting of the IT+3 NSF grant workgroup including members from Seattle Colleges, Seattle Public Schools, and Computing for All. The goal of these NSF grant is recruitment and training of underrepresented and disadvantaged youth for IT careers. The CIPE team thus will be contributing to multiple conversations and projects all with mutually reinforcing goals around increasing access and outcomes with IT pathways.

In summary, many efforts are underway, each of which sets the stage for the scheduled CIPE team meetings after spring quarter. On the one hand, new courses are in early development which will streamline IT pathways for all students. On the other hand, multiple outreach efforts are advancing in the direction of increasing the representation of non-traditional students in IT programs. The CIPE team will be working at the intersection of these two goals, focusing on the key elements of equity, diversity, and accessibility for assessments. Because assessments are gatekeeping activities, influencing who does and does not pass particular courses, making assessments as equitable and accessible as possible is a central requirement for any meaningful diversity outreach strategy. Recent activities of the past six weeks have clarified the stakes involved and framed the impact the upcoming CIPE project work will have.