

Anthropology request for Instructional Materials Tablets for Anthropology Students

Anthropology is 100% committed to achieving equity. We are among the few departments in SS/H, which meets regularly to share and discuss strategies to improve success and achieve equity. Our students do not come in our G.E. classes with similar skills, resources, and opportunities. Hence we continue to strive hard to provide a leveled learning field to all our students. We do this by using a student-oriented approach to learning, diverse teaching pedagogies and diverse assessment tools, more hands on activities with an opportunity to do and apply anthropology in all our courses. In order to make more progress in the efforts stated above, the anthropology department is requesting 50 tablets for use in our classes and in the “Applying Anthropology Program”.

Proposal

We are proposing a two-part use of the tablet. The first part is, an in class use of the iPads as a teaching and a learning tool. iPads will be used for assessment (quizzes), doing in class research, and using simulation programs. iPads will provide both an opportunity for content mastery and technology skill building. Apps such as Socrative, Evernote, Nearpod, Piazza and like will be used for assessment – conducting quizzes, doing in class research, collaborative writing, asking and answering questions and using simulation programs to facilitate learning.

The second part use is in the “Applying Anthropology Program”. This project began in Fall 2014 where students from anthropology classes were brought together in half-day workshops with highly ranked Silicon Valley Professionals from various fields (computer and biotech industry, NASA, medical field, legal, marketing etc.). During the workshop professionals / mentors gave the students, a realistic scenario to tackle based on a problem they had experienced in their company, department or profession. The workshops provide a space for curiosity, intellectual and personal growth of students as they work together (under the guidance of the mentors) to seek practical solutions. These workshops provided an opportunity to apply anthropology to real situations and see the wide-ranging application of the field. It also gives the underserved, first generation students an opportunity to build social capital, which is closely linked to student success and retention. Professionals also get a better understanding of what De Anza students and students with an anthropological training bring to the workforce.

iPads will be used in this program by the students to prepare for the workshops and during the workshops as they come up with probable solutions to problems provided by the mentors. The goal of the Applied Anthropology program is to motivate and excite the students as they explore and apply their skills to real world problems faced by Silicon Valley companies, related to issues of globalization, power, race, gender, culture, language, and ethnicity. These goals can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively in terms of student enrollment, success and retention in anthropology courses. Qualitatively the success is measured in terms of student

testimonies, experiences and inspiration, resulting from seeing the application of anthropology to the corporate sector and beyond.

Justification

The anthropology program at De Anza has made great strides in increasing enrollment and success rate in our classes, and narrowing the achievement gap. This quarter (Spring 2015) we were up by 11% from last Spring. During the last program review we reported that there has been a 37% increase, in the enrollment of targeted groups in anthropology courses over the past three years. Which means we want to provide the underserved groups with a fair opportunity to succeed. We see a 6% increase in their successful completion of the courses but would like to increase those numbers.

We have made progress in narrowing the performance gap in two of the targeted groups, the Filipino and the Latino, to 7% and 9% respectively. But overall there is still a 13% performance gap between between the targeted and non-targeted groups. Our anthropology team feels strongly that iPads will enhance the learning experience of all students especially the targeted groups.

Also, we have a classroom and a lab in MLC, where the tablets can be safely stored and be accessible to several instructors for use. At a recent South Western Anthropological Association (SWAA) conference on May 1-2, 2015 at Long Beach, CA, an entire session was dedicated to the use of iPads as learning tools. They presented research from Fresno State according to which this techno-centric approach using tablets reduced the digital divide and enhanced learning of students.