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7-1-2013
MAET Summer Cohort Year 2
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DreamIT Grant Proposal Overview- Human Geography is Interactive

In this grant proposal my aim is to take a subject that has not been taught in my school for many years and reintegrate it into the curriculum. A focus of the history department of University Liggett School has been to analyze and understand how geography fits not only in our core classes, but also are electives. The overwhelming consensus was that we use geography on a daily basis and touch on a majority of the common core standards. In an effort to further our focus on geography we have decided to create a specific course that will explore aspects of human geography as we head into our accreditation review year. As a focus for this project, while keeping TPACK in mind, I hope to make it evident to my students that human geography is interactive by integrating iPad technology into the classroom so students can connect with the global community on an academic, explorative, and social level.

The overall content goal for this class will be to make students ponder the thought of human geography as interaction. Wiggins and McTighe state this process involves, "confronting students with a real problem for thought if understanding is to be called for and awakened."[1] Considering this information, it will be necessary to provide essential questions that lead students to a deeper thought process and make them consult the resources available to them outside of the class. The hope is that these questions cannot be

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[1]Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, "Chapter 2: Understanding Understanding," *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development,* accessed on June 28, 2013, http://punya.educ.msu.edu/summer/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/understanding-understandingch2.pdf.

easily answered by consulting their text or their classmates, but only achieved by moving beyond this very basic level of knowledge. Therefore, the creation of questions like how do humans interact with the geographic environment around them and how can politics shape both the human and physical aspects of geography will be necessary to further extend the discussion and make students interact and engage with the resources that can help them respond appropriately.

From a pedagogical and technological standpoint I must find ways to implement tools that will make the content seem relevant and influential. Mishra and Koehler discuss the implementation of technology by stating, "creative repurposing is important because most technologies that teachers use typically have not been designed for educational purposes."[2] Certainly the iPad or applications like Google Earth and *The New York Times* were not designed with teachers in mind, however they will be tools that will help lead to more interaction in my classroom. The difficult aspect of this process will be finding applications and uses for the iPad that will allow students to further their study and stay current on issues like population, migration, and political geography. Without my own understanding of how these applications can help my students find deeper meaning in these issues, iPads and applications involving geography will simply just be tools without purpose in the classroom. It will be my job to repurpose these tools to fit an educational standpoint in the field of geography.

Throughout the course of the DreamIT project I will have to engage myself with the materials at my disposal and find ways to take the traditional information that exists (i.e.

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[2] Punya Mishra and Matthew Koehler, "Too Cool For School? No Way!," *Learning and Leading with Technology*, May 2009 and accessed on June 28, 2013, http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/EJ839143.pdf.

classroom textbooks) and the current technologies (i.e. iPads) to create a more meaningful learning experience in my new course on human geography. Considering how content, pedagogy, and technology balance in this process will allow me to create a curriculum that starts with a knowledge of the material, explained and engaged with solid teaching practices, through the medium of current technological tools. By establishing this equilibrium between content, pedagogy, and content students will hopefully gain a more thorough understanding of and believe that human geography is truly interactive.