WhyCS?

An Interactive Discussion on Values behind Computer Science Education

What's the point?

WhyCS is an activity meant to foster reflection, debate and discussion about the purposes of computer science education.

By clarifying our underlying values, we can make better decisions about what kind of CS learning experiences we want to support.

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Who is this for?

WhyCS can be used by:

- *Teachers*
- *District leaders*
- *School teams*
- *Informal educators*
- *Designers of CS curriculum and tools*
- *Researchers and evaluators*

...and really any group that's looking to think through it's values around why it could be important to teach CS to young people.

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How does it work?

The activity has a couple of parts, and you can mix and match them depending on what works for you. This deck has slides that guide the following activities:

- ***Education for What?*** *(~5 minutes) - A general brainstorm on the purposes of CSed.*
- ***Intro to the CS Visions framework*** *(~10 minutes) - a guiding set of slides that introduce the thinking behind the framework and framework itself.*
- ***WhyCS? Heatmapping your group's values around CSed*** *(~30 minutes) - the core activity of reflecting, voting and discussing different rationales and core values around CSed.*
- ***Linking Values to Design & Implementation Implications*** *(~20 minutes) - participants try to imagine the implications of their values when it comes to issues of design or implementation of CS education.*

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What do we need?

- *Sticky notes*
- *WhyCS statement cards (cut up - download cards here: whycs.csforall.org/unplugged)*
- *Sticky 'dots' (for voting)*
- *This slide deck*
- *A group of people interested in discussing values behind CS education*
- *About an hour to an hour and a half*

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Let’s get going!

Visions of CS Education

“Educational plans and projects must have a philosophy... otherwise they are at the mercy of every intellectual breeze that happens to blow."

- John Dewey, 1938

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Visions of Computer Science Education

Unpacking Arguments for and Projected Impacts of CS for All

Paper by:
Sara Vogel, CUNY Graduate Center
Rafi Santo, CSforAll
Dixie Ching, Google

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Why Bother?

Our visions (*should*)
shape the pedagogy we practice.

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Stepping back: Education for what?

Each person should write **3 answers** on **3 separate stickies** to the prompt...

What's one purpose of education?
(2 minutes)

What are the most important needs of your students and community?
(2 minutes)

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Stepping back: Education for what?

Where did you see similarities and differences amongst your group?

Where were there differences between the first and second prompts?

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“CSed Vision” =

Argument/Rationale for CSed

+

Projected Impact of CSed

+

Pedagogical Approach to CSed
(curricular & instructional principles, learning goals…)

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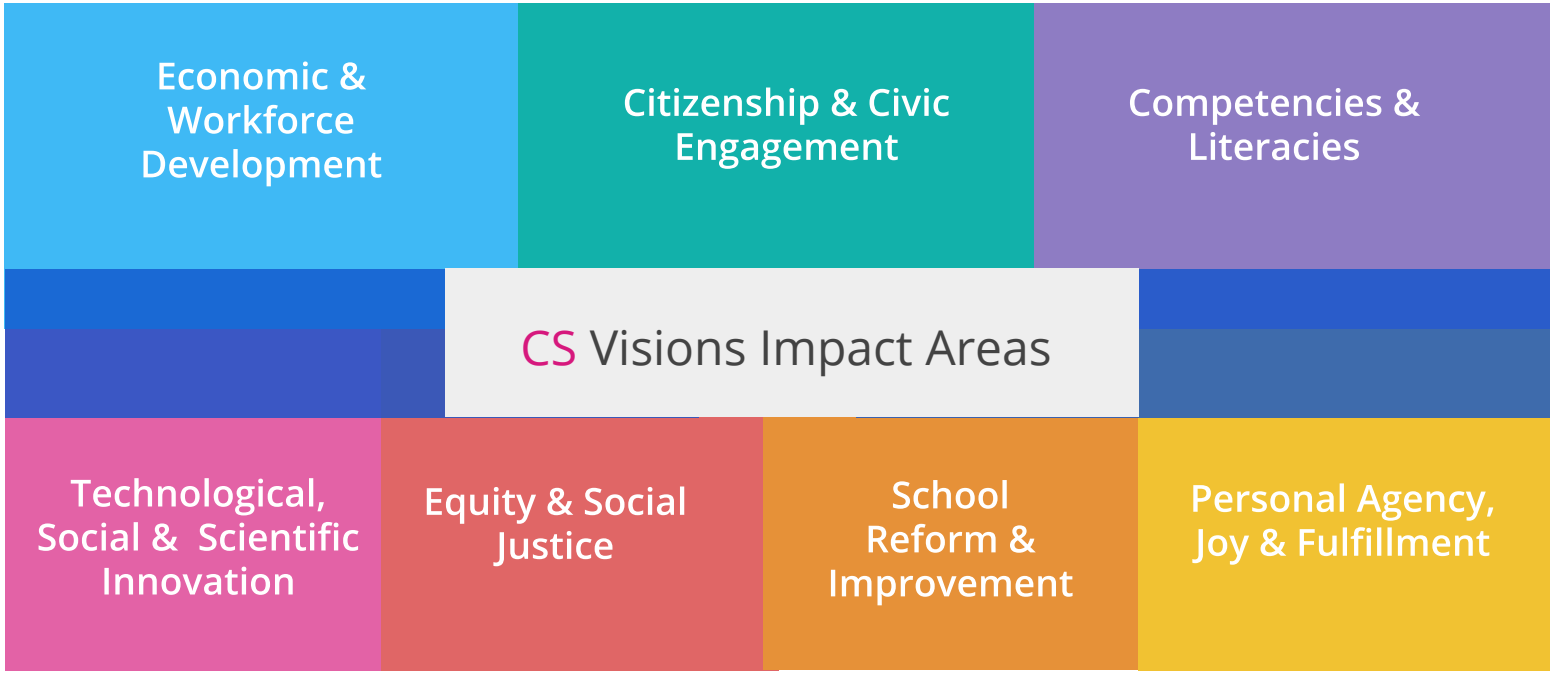
Let’s look at some examples of rationales…



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"We should teach CS because...
...we need to promote a more diverse tech workforce."

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Economic & Workforce Development

"We should teach CS because...
...we need to promote a more diverse tech workforce."

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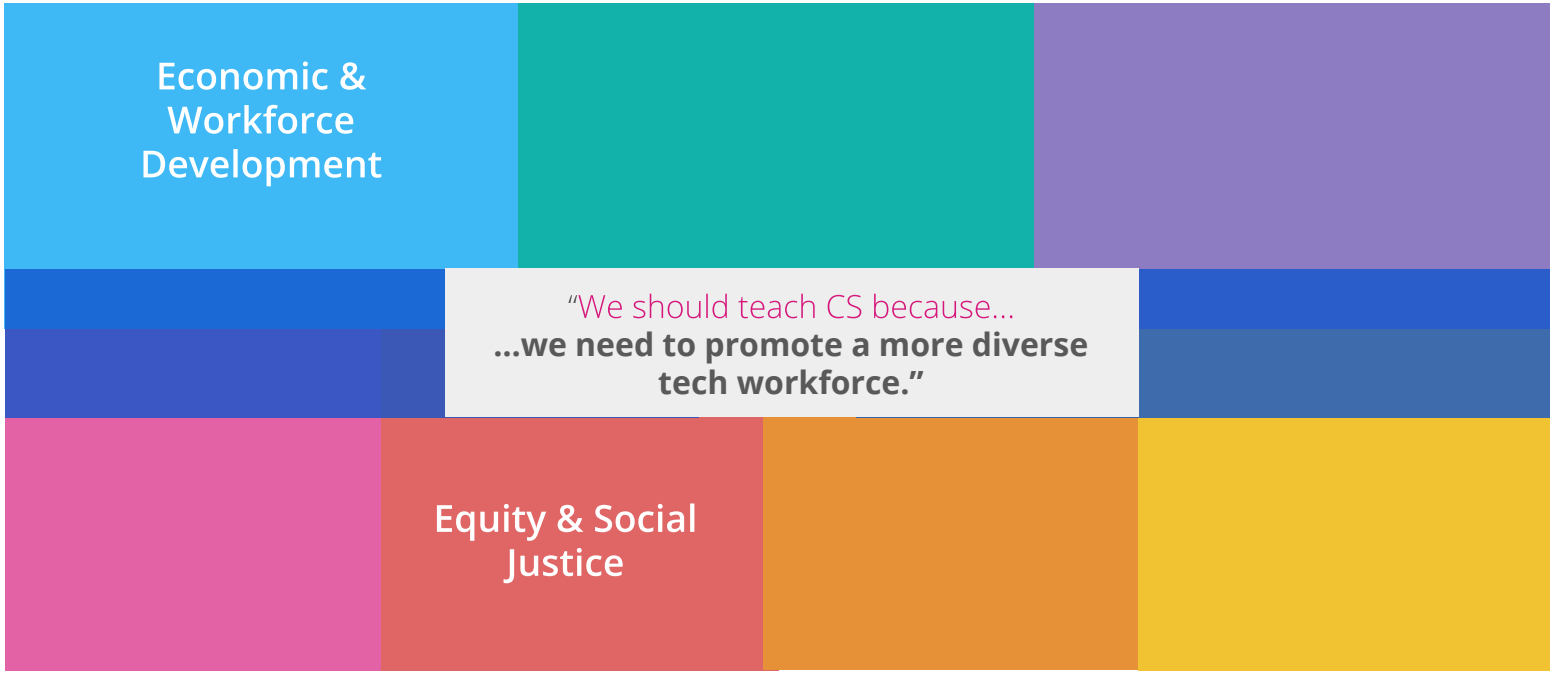

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"We should teach CS because...
...it will allow youth to solve problems in their communities through technology."

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"We should teach CS because...
...it will allow youth to solve problems in their communities through technology."

Technological, Social & Scientific Innovation

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WhyCS? Heatmapping your group's values around CSed

Step 1: Break up into groups of 2-3 within your group, with each group getting one "deck" of WhyCS statement cards.

Step 2: Review, and nominate 5 cards to go into the middle of the table. (10 minutes)

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WhyCS? Heatmapping your group's values around CSed

Step 3: Bonus hand! Each team can add up to 3 additional reasons using the blank cards. (5 minutes)

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WhyCS? Heatmapping your group's values around CSed

Step 4: Full group discussion

(10 minutes)

- Why did you select the ones you did?
- Are there rationales that you hadn't considered for CSed before?
- Are there more or less of certain kinds of statements in the pile? Why do you think that is?
- Are the statements in the pile related to your initial purposes for education or needs for your community?
- What's missing? Is there something critical you think should be added to guide your work around computer science education?

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WhyCS? Heatmapping your group's values around CSed

Step 5: Voting on your groups values (5 minutes)

- Using voting dots, "vote" for 3 cards that are most representative of why you care about CS education. You can't vote for a card twice.
- After everyone in the group has voted, tape any cards that have a vote onto a piece of chart paper.
- Tally the number of cards you have associated with each of the 7 impact areas.
- Take a couple of minutes to discuss and review your "WhyCS? Heat Map" and note any distinctive features. How do they align with your vision of education?

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Setting your Vision for Computer Science Education

Match the statements you chose to the CS Visions Impact Areas. Tally your results.

How do they align with your overall vision of education?

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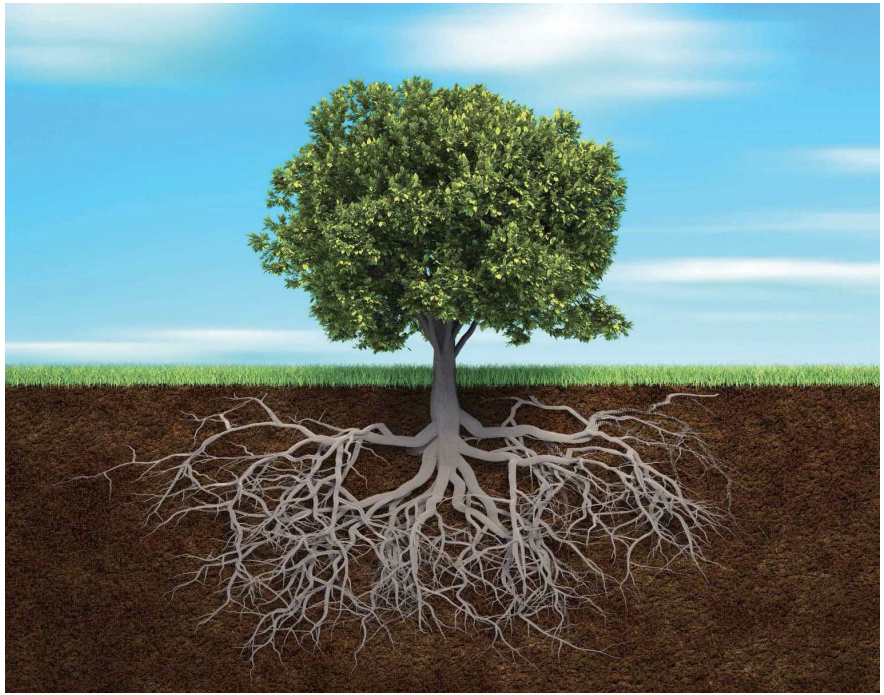
Linking Values to Design & Implementation Decisions



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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Rationale/Value *We should teach CS because…*	**Implementation Implication** *As a result, our CS education efforts might look different in these ways…*
	You can address different levels of implications such as: What learning goals look like* What classroom instruction looks like* What extracurriculars look like What credit policies and course offerings look like Etc…

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Example rationale *We should teach CS because…*	**Example design/implementation implication** *As a result, our CSforAll implementation might look different in these ways…*
…it can deepen learning in other subject areas.	At the level of **learning goals…** …We should look at existing goals/standards and determine where we can integrate CSforAll At the level of **extracurriculars…** …We should offer clubs, programming, and access (on & off campus) that allow students to explore how CS fits in with many different disciplines & content areas.

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Example Rationale *We should teach CS because…*	**Example Design/Implementation Implication** *As a result, our CS education efforts might look different in these ways…*
…there are major disparities in women in STEM fields and universal CSed is part of addressing that.	At the level of **course requirements and credits**…. …we might consider not making CS courses optional. At the level of **instruction**… …we should find or develop curricula relevant to identities of women and girls. At the level of **extracurriculars**… …we should explore models of women/girls focused CS extracurriculars.

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Rationale/Value *We should teach CS because…*	**Implementation Implication** *As a result, our CS education efforts might look different in these ways…*
…it helps students to develop life long skills of creativity, communication, collaboration, and persistence.	At the level of **classroom instruction…** …Inquiry Based Instructional Practice …PBL …Collaborative learning practices …Design thinking …Small group Instruction …Classroom environments that allow for failure in a safe way …Encourage student driven problem solving

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Example Rationale/Value *We should teach CS because…*	**Example Design/Implementation Implication** *As a result, our CS education efforts might look different in these ways…*
…value systems are embedded in our technologies, and youth need to be able to see that.	At the level of **learning goals**… …we should include learning outcomes around knowing how to ask questions about the purposes and values associated with existing technologies.

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Rationale/Value *We should teach CS because…*	**Implementation Implication** *As a result, our CS education efforts might look different in these ways…*
Your statement here	At the level of **learning goals…** *..Your Implication here* At the level of **classroom instructions…** *..Your Implication here* At the level of **extracurriculars…** *..Your Implication here* At the level of **credits/course offerings…** *..Your Implication here*

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Team work time (15 minutes)

Step 1: Form pairs of two within your team.

Step 2: Each pair should choose **one rationale** that you voted for during the WhyCS heatmapping activity, discuss possible design or implementation implications.

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Linking Values to Design & Implementation

Share-back.

What were some examples of implications you came up with?

Were there rationales or values where it was challenging to figure out the implications?

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Find out more about this project and play the online version at:

WhyCS.CSforAll.org

For more resources related to school and district planning around CS education, visit:

CSforAll.org/SCRIPT

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