**Integrated Experiential Learning- ALY 6080- 81961  
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY  
College of Professional Studies**

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**PROPOSAL OVERVIEW**

This proposal aims to address the 21st-century skills that are required by almost all graduate programs and are not confined to a particular program. Northeastern CPS programs have a clear focus on communication, problem-solving, and leadership which are much-needed skills (based on the dataset given). However, these days almost all the jobs need digital literacy. The data provided to us by CPS has the inclusion of 'Introduction to digital era' but the frequency of skills related to it is lesser than the other important skills.

According to the American Library Association (1), Digital literacy is "The ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

Every program focuses on different technical skills. For instance, for a data profile SQL is important whereas for an informatics profile Java holds more relevance. Graduate institutions are striving hard to provide ample resources to students so that they can impart digital literacy but it is still not considered as a primary skill and hence require more focus from the colleges. Digital literacy is a prerequisite skill required in jobs these days.

Recently, colleges had an additional challenge of switching to online channels due to the pandemic. With such a scenario, the importance of digital literacy is realized even more and this skill requires attention by colleges.

**SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

This project will enable colleges to establish a name and trust amongst the employers. If the employers will get a talented pool of candidates that have the necessary skill set to handle the roles, it will be an ultimate image building for the college. After all, students represent a college. Skill mapping from time to time is also very important and relevant for colleges as market demands keep on changing. Here, we focus more on adding a skill apart from traditional skills (communication, leadership, etc.). The world is digitalizing at a fast pace and during these times the expectations of employers for the type of candidates they want have also increased manifold.

If skill mapping is done regularly, graduate schools will be able to supply the right set of candidates in the job market. It is to be noted that these days employers do not prefer to provide on-the-job training to candidates, which means that they expect this to be done by the colleges. Colleges are often faced by dual expectations of parents as well as employers and hence the colleges need to revise that their curriculums incorporate digitalization and other skills required by the job market.

**BACKGROUND RESEARCH**

After studying various peer-reviewed articles that stated the importance of skills, I would want to establish a hypothesis for this problem statement. Professional schools that focus on skill-building as per the job market render qualified and job-ready candidates in the market. Alternatively, the colleges that fail to adapt as per the market needs and don't focus on skill mapping are unable to do so.

While building graduate programs if employer-driven skills are used as a base or a foundation then students will be able to face this market. Curriculum mapping has a wider range as colleges have to identify from the existing taught skills that which are the 21st-century skills. It is to be noted that here curriculum mapping is done not only for enhancing student's outcomes in jobs but also for the colleges that have to adapt to the digital mediums to impart these skills. In short, this will help colleges to figure out the changes that are required to be done in their teaching patterns.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

However, traditional skills and career and life skills are imparted by colleges, is there importance given to digital literacy skills as well?

OBJECTIVES-

* Colleges must consider skill mapping of the programs offered by them so that they focus on making students ready for jobs.
* Other than the traditional work taught to students, the focus must be on skill-building so that when these students land into a job, they are capable of handling it efficiently.
* While performing mapping, they must make sure that all programs include digital literacy as jobs require these skills.
* Inclusion of capstone projects and critical thinking skills.

Due to coronavirus already the job market is slow. Students who can make out their way are the ones who have the skill set that employers demand.

(2) "The pedagogical move from teaching the traditional core skills of literacy and numeracy to include these additional themes and skills of the 21st century is characterized by Kivunja (2014a) as the pedagogical shift that is needed to ensure that on graduation, students will be job-ready with the skills most in-demand in the 21st-century workplace."

(3) Student's adaptability to represent skill set would also make a big difference. Some leading companies are working on team building games wherein they provide employers with puzzles and quizzes to join the virtual session. This is the perfect amalgamation of digital problem solving and critical thinking skills. Future job market conditions will be known once the pandemic will be in control.

The reason for mentioning the coronavirus job market problems here is assuming future risks that colleges might face. Already colleges face a challenge to provide the most appropriate skill set to students so that they can handle real-life problems. This problem will be further aggravated as the job market is volatile and will undergo changes once the economy will be functional again.

**DESIGN (BASED ON DATA SOURCE)**

The problem statement is supported by the article published in the International Journal of higher education in 2014. This article draws on the work by the Partnership for Teaching 21st Century Skills which was reported by Trilling and Fadel in 2009. In 2014, Kivunja draws on this work as he wanted to articulate the skills that are required by young professionals to succeed in the job market.

Furthermore, critical thinking skills and the importance of capstone projects are also discussed. The peer-review articles suggest that critical thinking, capstone projects, and the inclusion of digital literacy must be focused by professional colleges.

**LITERATURE REVIEW (Method- Based on Peer Reviewed Articles)**

This article discusses that colleges should adapt to digitalization as students are to be imparted with new skills and it's highly likely that with digitalized economies, the skillset required is also different. It very well aligns with the problem statement that skills should be imparted in a way that students are job-ready. Traditional core subjects must be replaced by new skills as they are in

demand in the 21st century. This can be called the 'New learning paradigm' and what is

actually, required is a paradigm shift in teaching skills. The research paper highlights the

skills that are required for this digital economy and these skills are called 4Cs super skills.

(TCS = Traditional Core Skills, LIS = Learning and Innovations Skills, CLS = Career and

Life Skills, DLS = Digital Literacy Skills). They are important for successful learning,

teaching, assessment, and survival in the present-day economy. It also talks about Bruner's instructional Model which is a nice way to approach the New learning paradigm proposed by Kivunja. It discusses the approach towards teaching, learning, developing curriculum, and assessment. Assessment skills are highlighted by other authors as well and focus on Critical Thinking skills is stressed upon by Cain, Giraud, and other scholars (4).

As the article progressed it highlighted the importance of career and life skills domain as digital literacy is one of the important components of success at workplaces. However, the article also focused on other skills and their importance, it held this skill as the most important one.

While digital literacy is ensured, (5) capstone projects must be given equal importance as students get a chance to exhibit learned skills in these projects. These projects are very relevant for professional master's level programs as they help a student develop competencies that are industry-specific within an academic framework.

**CONCLUSION**

I conclude that along with the core curriculum skills that include adaptability, leadership, responsibility, etc. critical thinking, digital literacy, and collaborative capstone projects must be focused by graduate schools. It is of utmost importance that these skills are also focused by colleges to prepare them for the 21st-century job market. Once students will be equipped with these skills, they will be able to contribute greatly towards the current economy that involves a lot of digitalization.

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