February 5, 2010

RE: 2010 JAN HAWKINS AWARD: NOMINATING LETTER FOR PATRICIA A. YOUNG PH.D.

Dear Drs. Fishman and Enyedy:

The following letter introduces Patricia A. Young, Ph.D. as a nominee for the Jan Hawkins Award. I am at the pre-tenure stage as an Assistant Professor in Literacy Education at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

The next section details my work in relation to the themes specified in the Jan Hawkins Award.

- explores and demonstrates powerful new ways to think about technologies in contexts of learning and education, and uses innovative research methods to understand the impact of those technologies

The core of my research examines how to design culture-based information and communication technologies (ICTs) that meet the needs of diverse learners and users; this is represented through an innovative model of culture - The Culture Based Model (CBM). CBM is an intercultural instructional design framework that guides designers through the design, development, management and assessment process. CBM has 8 areas consistent with the acronym: ID-TABLET. These areas include Inquiry, Development, Team, Assessments, Brainstorming, Learners, Elements and Training. CBM’s ID-TABLET focuses on project management and project design. As a model that seeks to meet culture-based design decisions, CBM is a comprehensive tool for the design and analysis processes. CBM provides a new way of building ICTs in learning contexts. The research methods employed by CBM focuses on ethnographic research methods to gather data about specific target audiences; over 70 design factors are offered in the collection process. These data are compiled in a database or knowledge management system and then used by designers and researchers to build products, services or online environments specialized to a particular target audience or learners.
places young people and/or practicing educators at the center of the problem-solving process by making their meaning-making process, their needs and constraints, and their priorities central to the project

CBM addresses the needs of young people by providing a framework for designers to build culture-specific or culture-neutral products or services. This means that the needs of all learners are addressed and in particular ethnically and racially diverse learners. By example, the area of Inquiry provides a set of questions to be asked and answered throughout the design process. The questions provide a foundation to screen for product bias, maintain a focus on the target audience, consider the affordability of the product, determine how technology influences the product’s design, and manage the design process. The Development area provides a structure for problem solving. In this area, designers are encouraged to understand the target audience, explore the environmental, group or individual cultures of the target audience and authenticate the product through an analysis of the target audience. Further, there is a need to control for interference related to attitudes, bias and prejudice. In the Team area, a cultural expert should be recruited and the design team should be a culturally informed team with valid interests in the target audience. In the Assessments area, the needs of the target audience are addressed by considering multiple evaluation options and designing culture-specific assessments. Brainstorming promotes the target audience as central to every aspect of the design process. This is advocated in the following ways: involving a community representative on the design team, implementing on-going field tests of product with target audience, reflecting and assessing learning goals, providing creative ways to access the ICT, and promoting adaptable learner outcomes. The Learners area supports designing based on the learner’s cultural frame of reference while meeting the learning outcomes of the project. CBM proposes design factors to extend learning, differentiate opportunities to learn, empower and engage learners, teach proactive learning, identify educational objectives, provide culture-specific instructional strategies, enrich instructional content, adapt instruction to the learner, plan for instruction, and enculturate the learner. The Elements area facilitates content development by providing design factors for defining, evaluating and understanding a society, culture or target audience. CBM is learner centered.

strikes an effective balance between innovation – inventing new approaches to K-12 learning with technologies – and understanding – examining existing educational environments and changes that occur when technologies are introduced

CBM is an innovative model of culture that provides a framework for building ICTs that address the needs of K-12 learners in classrooms, online and beyond. CBM is an interdisciplinary model that has applications when building e-learning modules, intelligent tutoring systems, instructional designs or serious games. Designers who use CBM are provided with an original approach to building culture-based systems; this is one of the first comprehensive models for the design of technologies. CBM offers options to the design of technological educational environments that best meet the needs of learners.

uses technology to bring about broad improvements in educational systems with a focus on issues of diversity, equity, and learning for all
CBM utilizes ICTs as tools to guide the improvement of schools and schooling. Fundamentally, CBM is a humanistic approach to design where the needs of the target audience or learner supersede those of the technology; this includes addressing issues of diversity, equity, access in addition to the anthropological, psychological and scientific. CBM addresses the target audience as the focus of all design and evaluation processes.

This work addresses research and advocacy by providing designers with the tools to influence the future of educating learners. By example, this work provides designers with the tools to change American school curriculums from a Eurocentric approach to more culture-specific approaches. (Multicultural curriculums sit between culture-neutral and culture-specific). Entire curriculums could be specific to Native Americans, Chinese Americans or an indigenous group. A more specialized curriculum might benefit youth in urban schools where the majority of the population is African American. Designers could build systems that were specific to the African American culture. Standardized exams could follow this more culture-specific approach. Even instructional strategies and methods could be more culture-specific. The goal is to minimize the digital divide, educate a population of children who are failing on elementary and secondary levels, equalize educational curriculum content, provide alternative educational materials and utilize the available technologies for the benefit of all. An example of a culture-specific product is the prototype Urban Tales E-Learning System: The Wake; this prototype is provided at the following link: http://userpages.umbc.edu/~pyoung/media.

The following representative works can also be found at the above link:

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Patricia A. Young, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Education
University of Maryland at Baltimore County
1000 Hilltop Circle, Academic IV, A Wing, Room 429
Baltimore, MD 21250
pyoung@umbc.edu
(410) 455-3902 phone, (410) 455-1880 fax
http://userpages.umbc.edu/~pyoung/