**Statement of Purpose**

Cognitive skills are essential for success in both higher education and the workforce. Everyday students will encounter concepts that need investigation whether on a personal level or on an instructional level. Students need to be taught how to approach a problem or concept for investigation, the pathway needed to acquire information, and the skills necessary to create logical and thoughtful viewpoints. Another important skill is the ability to teach oneself. Often times, in both the personal and academic environment, we are confronted with decisions to make. Having strong cognitive skills will allow students to consider all sources of information to create their own thoughts and ideas.

The ability to communicate information and viewpoints, both written and verbally, are extremely important. Students need to know how to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas to colleagues and peers. Both personally and professionally, communication exists on several levels, writing, speaking, and listening. We need to enforce these skills and continuously work to hone these skills. Students need to be taught to write cohesively and comprehensively for both higher education and the work force. They must also acquire the skills necessary to speak clearly, concisely, and effectively. As we advance technologically, communication is becoming more writing based via the Internet. Therefore, students need to have the writing conventions to write clearly.

Q.U.E.S.T. is a process by which students choose a topic of interest, in this case, a career pathway, and research the profession from its conception to modern day advances. The components of this project center on cognitive skills, and written and verbal communication skills. The acronym Q.U.E.S.T. stands for Question, Understand, Evaluate, Synthesis, and Technology. The process is broken down into the five stages that coincide with the writing processes, brainstorming, prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, evaluating, and publishing. Students pose a *question* or topic of discussion and brainstorm possible research topics. Students will create their own outlook on the world and determine their own topics for investigation. The students at this stage begin to understand the concepts related to their topic and create their pathway of investigation. This incorporates prewriting strategies allowing students to focus their topics and begin mapping. Students must then do the research itself determining the validity of sources and the relevance of information. Students *evaluate* the information and create a draft of their paper. The unique aspect of this curriculum design is the synthesis phase. Not only do students complete research and investigation of the career path, but they are given first hand experience working in that profession through either an internship or volunteer work. We want students to see the value of the career path and engage in the tasks that accompany it. Lastly, the students use *technology*, in this case, PowerPoint, to create a visual representation of their research and experience with that career pathway. The presentations are given to a room full of their peers, colleagues from the internship/volunteering, and teachers. This allows students to showcase their ten weeks of accomplishments.

This course of study provides instruction and application in skills that translate to all content areas and all professions. The goal is to fully prepare our students to enter into the “real world” with an investigation and curious mind and the tools to tackle any obstacle. Not only are we enforcing cognitive skills, communication skills, and writing skills, but we are also providing students with a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of efficacy. This confidence combined with these skills will allow our students to continue on the road to success.