

Lucas Tait

Dr. Cheu

HUMA Practicum

21 April 2010

Essay Abstract:

Technology and Education: Foucault's "Panopticism" and the Changing Nature of School

This essay examines the changes that have taken place at Lockerby Composite School since the implementation of its STEP Laptop Program. The STEP Laptop program (Science and Technology Education Program – laptop-based) is an enriched approach to secondary school education; students in the STEP Laptop program must maintain a grade average of 75% or higher, effectively ensuring that only the most successful students at LCS will enter and remain in the program. Because of the grade-average requirement, and due to the fact that it only accepts "academic" level students, the STEP Laptop program essentially divides the "academic" stream in two, leaving non-laptop students in a less-comprehensive educational program. I have applied Michel Foucault's theory of the "invisible eye," described within *Panopticism*, to evaluate the success and importance of the STEP Laptop program's division of the "academic" stream at LCS. The students of LCS are aware of their place within the system of education; therefore, in response to the division of the "academic" stream, a large portion of LCS (approx. 75%) begins to see themselves as "elite" or "above" the rest of the school community. The success of this division, however, is likely a result of the exclusivity of the program and *not* the fact that it implements personal computers into education.