

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Mr. Stacey Armstrong and his recently published curriculum A+ Computer Science. I have known Stacey for about 7 years as a colleague in Computer Science competitions. I have come to learn many things from him and admire his teaching ability. I first met Stacey at the Region I UIL computer science contest at Angelo State University. Previous visits to Regionals had us watching for one opponent and this particular year - the other school led us by only a small margin. We soon realized something was different when we saw the scores of Stacey's students. Coaches usually discuss how they are teaching their classes and what methods they are using during these meets. I have always found these meets the best way to become a better educator. Stacey's methods were going to be successful and I knew that from watching the sheer overwhelming power his students had when it came to that first contest. (After all when Stacey's team is only 10% from surpassing the combined scores of the next 2 teams behind, well... that speaks a lot of the students and the preparation. My students wanted to be that prepared)

Shortly there after with the change to Java, I landed a local area grant and used it to buy Stacey's materials. I knew then that I wanted to try and use his approach to further my own schools computer science success. Since the change over to his curriculum, my students have won 4 District championships, 1 Regional Championship, and the top Regional individual twice. My number one student has a record of 3 losses when competing against his own classification. As a soph, he was 6th at Regionals, as a junior he was 1st and scored 10th at state as he led his team to a 4th place state finish. This current year he was again 1st at Regionals and placed second at UIL State. In 3 years - and some 30+ contests, those are his only losses in individual competition. That is due to his total complete immersion in Stacey's materials. It was a special time at UIL State this past week when I go to introduce him to Stacey face to face. In addition to UIL success, my students have qualified to TCEA the last 3 years and finished 2007 state with a 9th place finish. this year, my students doubled their previous years score and set a new school record as they finished in 6th place.

All I did was to get this curriculum and start using it. He offers a lot to teachers while making it easy to adapt and change to your students needs. No other curriculum is as current or up to date anywhere. The A+ curriculum comes with slides, worksheets, quizzes, tests, source code, and labs so that anyone who has never taught a class before can jump in and start teaching. My only real changes were in taking the tests to Examview form for my personal use. In converting the materials - I learned a lot as I read each and every test and every answer along the way. The slides are very thorough in teaching concepts of computer science and are sequenced to help build into bigger ideas. Not only do they lead to AP growth but growth for contests ranging from UIL to ACM. The slides travel with me on my jump drive as well as my pen tablet. I find myself reviewing with them as much as my students do. Stacey has also gone out of the way to add in Gridworld labs throughout both A and AB curriculum. That is not standard with most CS texts. The A+ curriculum has been an incredible resource and even a former student talks of how it has helped him with college work. In writing this letter, I went back to see the original stuff he sent me and then looked at the success of my students since changing to it and I am amazed. This curriculum has motivated even my female students to push and achieve more and my first ever student to take the AB exam expects to make a 5 because he fully understands what is expected. Preparation like that does not come anywhere else.

Want a truly great experience? - Get this curriculum and then get around Stacey for a workshop or a presentation. His knowledge is only surpassed by his infectious enthusiasm for the subject.

Only thing better than that..... would be to team teach at the same school with Stacey.

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