Husky Compact Reflection: Integrate Existing and Evolving Technologies
Clara Welhouse

In connection with the project "The Effects of the Increasing Immunization Schedule on Children in the United States and its Influence on the Anti-Vaccination Movement"
Faculty Advisors: Cindy Gruwell & Mark Petzold

My project, which explores the effects of the changing immunization schedule on children, relates closely to this dimension of the Husky Compact at St. Cloud State University. The changing technologies, in this case immunizations, are an essential part to the health of people in the United States. It is evident that the amount, kind, and dosage of vaccines administered in recent decades has changed and grown. It is the purpose of this project to investigate the possible implications of this change. This project is a considerable fit for this dimension of Our Husky Compact because the topic has already proved itself to be an ethical dilemma in the real world. It has become popular talk that some people refuse to vaccinate their children based on the suspicion that the vaccinations can lead to the development of Autism Spectrum Disorder. It is for suspicions like this, that research must be conducted to determine the real effects of immunizations on the human body.

Since vaccinations are an example of medical technology, it is very important to understand the ethical ramifications that may result from unrestrained evolution of technology, especially without proper research on the effects. If, for any reason, there became danger to the immunization regimen, the result could be detrimental to humans. It can be easy to get ahead of ourselves, as humans are always striving to learn more and do more. This dimension of the Husky Compact serves as a checkpoint to remind ourselves to evaluate our own research and conclusions. This is not to say that we should second guess ourselves in making change, but to do so with complete confidence in the safety and ethics of our results.

This dimension of Our Husky Compact brings together my education from my first semester at St. Cloud State, specifically the courses Cell Function & Inheritance and Ethics in the Engineering Profession. These courses influenced my project because of the overall knowledge and experience I gained on both sides of the project: the science and the ethics. The idea from this project came to me after I was assigned to debate the topic: do vaccines cause autism? I had to defend the negative and in my research I came upon some very interesting facts and statistic that left me needing to learn more about the effects of vaccinations on the human body. These two classes were useful to me because they perfectly intertwine to provide knowledge for this project but also to represent the dimension: Integrate Existing and Evolving Technologies. It has the science: the raw knowledge needed to expand and move forward our progress in the medical field. On the other hand, it has the ethics that is essential in critically evaluating our results and accepting any positive or negative consequences of our scientific findings. In the end, this project, which focuses on the effects of the changing immunization schedule on children, serves to ensure that the progress in the field of vaccination science is ethical in terms of doing all good and no harm. Our Husky Compact is important because it prepares us, as students, for a prosperous future in global society; this dimension is especially important because it requires special consideration of the impact that we can have on this global society, and how we can make sure we make a positive impact.