

## **The "Tech Speak" Translator: A database tool for educators and technologists**

### **Abstract**

One of the main challenges in preparing teachers to integrate technology in classrooms is helping them overcome barriers created by what can only be described as a “techie” vocabularies. Examples are as common as hearing terms such as LCD projection, firewall, USB port, and so on. On the other hand, technologists often struggle to understand what teachers are saying to them when they use words like inquiry-based learning, Standards of Learning, or heterogeneous grouping. The standard approach to technology training has been to prepare teachers to speak the technology lingo. This approach takes time and does not always result in the teachers’ readiness to communicate her/his needs in the same language. As part of its 2001 PT3 grant, Virginia Tech has developed an innovative database tool that translates the language of teachers and technologists so that both can come understand the others limitations, desires, and needs.

### **Overview:**

Virginia Tech received a Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Use Technology grant in 2001 in order to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) Enable communication among faculty, pre-service teachers and instructional technologists for the purpose of solving instructional problems.
- 2) Ensure that pre-service teachers and faculty can locate, modify, or create products and programs that address and satisfy identified instructional needs and meet national standards.
- 3) Develop a collection of sustainable tools and resources that assist faculty and pre-service teachers with the integration of technology into instructional practice.

Each goal relates to the development of the translation database.

### **Objective:**

The objective of the presentation is to justify the underlying philosophy used to conceptualize the tool, provide an overview of the development process, demonstrate the functions of the tool, and make its availability known for further use and distribution.

### **Presentation Format:**

Given the interactive nature of this tool, a roundtable format has been selected.

### **Outline:**

Part I. Explaining the underlying philosophy.

Part II. Overview of project development.

Part III. Demonstration of the tool.

Part IV. Questions and feedback.

**Presenter Background:**

Each of the presenters has a role in the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to use Technology (PT3) project. Individual members of the presentation team have experience in areas ranging from educational administration and technology implementation, teacher education, distance learning, ESL instruction, and the development of data-driven educational tools. All presenters have given papers at national educational technology and educational research conferences, including EDUCAUSE, AECT, EERA, and VSTE.

**Prerequisites:**

People attending the session should have an interest in the development of sustainable, data-driven tools for teacher education. No prior experience with these tools is necessary.