Considering Digital Equity in Teacher Preparation Programs:  
A Framework for Integrating Issues of Equity Across Content Disciplines

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The Preparing Tomorrow’s Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) initiative sponsored by the Department of Education funded Schools of Education (SOE) across the country to support the integration of technology into teacher preparation programs. This funding affords SOEs the opportunity to reform or revise their teacher preparation programs in a number of ways including: revising or offering explicit technology coursework; integrating technology into existing methods courses; and helping faculty increase their technology skills. The goal of this work seems clear. The intent is that new teachers will be better prepared to integrate technology into their classrooms, to the betterment of the education for all of their students. In order to better the education for all students, the notion of digital equity must be addressed.

Digital equity exists when two conditions are met. First, every student must have equal physical access to technology tools, computers, and the Internet. Secondly, and equally important, this access must be occur with a meaningful teaching and learning context that directly responds to the needs of diverse students with regard to gender, race/ethnicity, culture, language, language proficiency, and special educational needs. How can we help teacher candidates develop this sensibility.

In this session we will present a Digital Equity Framework that SOEs can use as a guide to develop and assess the extent to which technology and equity issues are successfully integrated in their teacher preparation program. This framework draws upon the collaborative experience and expertise of representatives from PT3 projects with a commitment to digital equity and who have formed the Digital Equity Learning Community.

The Digital Equity Framework can be used with faculty and students to facilitate the systematic integration of technology and equity issues across teacher preparation courses. The Framework allows teachers to plan instructional activities within subject areas, determine appropriate uses of technology and review the degree to which student diversity is being considered. Examples of how this model might be used will be provided.