Abstract: This paper will focus on the efforts over the past two years of the South Florida PT3 group to Bridge the Digital Divide. Success stories with African American and Hispanic pre-service teachers will be shared. PT3 collaboration with an African-American elementary school will be discussed from the viewpoint of the teachers and administration of Golden Glades Elementary School in Opa Locka, Florida.

The St. Thomas University Plan to Bridge the Digital Divide in South Florida

A consortium of schools with St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida as the lead partner was awarded a PT3 Capacity Building grant during the first year of the PT3 program. The teacher education program at St. Thomas University serves students of many ethnic groups. It is located in an urban area with a large African American population along with immigrants from many Hispanic countries and the Caribbean.

The purpose of the initial grant was to work with area elementary schools, such as Welleby Elementary, to train the pre-service teachers at St. Thomas University and Trinity International University to use computers effectively in classroom instruction and thereby impact the diverse students in Miami-Dade County. The grant sought to train teachers who will not only teach in the inner city schools but stay in the inner city schools. By serving pre-service teachers who represent these underserved populations, the program sought to impact inner city classroom instruction.

What Do the Administrators and Teachers at Golden Glades Elementary Have to Say About Their Involvement with PT3 and Universities?

Golden Glades Elementary is a small PK-6 elementary school in Opa-Locka (Greater Miami), Florida. Its 520 students are predominately African-American and 90% of its students qualify for free or reduced school lunch.

The use of technology to increase student performance had been a high priority at Golden Glades since 1994. Through numerous grants and commitments from both the school’s regular and Title I budgets, the school had been retrofitted and its infrastructure
expanded with both hardware and software acquisitions. Every classroom was equipped with 4-7 internet ready computers, a local area network equipped with diagnostic/prescriptive software, an instructional management system, and a media center with a fifteen station computer lab. Teachers were mandated to involve students with computer assistance instruction for a minimum of 140 minutes a week.

Yet student performance continued to wane. Technology was used by teachers as required but little integration occurred between the curriculum and that technology. There were few technology experts on staff, and their roles were so diversified that little innovation was in evidence.

Then PT3 occurred. Given the opportunity to partner with Saint Thomas University and Florida Gulf Coast University in a collaborative effort, seven members of the Golden Glades Elementary staff became technology experts. With this diversity of expertise came the beginnings of curricular change. WebQuests and “integrating computer software to match curriculum” became catch words. LCD panels and computer/television hook-ups became necessary. Teachers began asking for different software programs and they began using them in different ways. True curricular change had begun.

The effects of true curricular change cannot be measured in short blocks of time. Yet the test scores of Golden Glades Elementary showed great gains in 2001. Anticipation for further test gains in 2002 is great. PT3 hopes to improve public education by training future teachers for the technology of tomorrow. Yet, when organized properly, it can also influence the public sector today. Golden Glades is a living example.

**On-Line Presence**

Information about our project may be viewed at: [http://garnet.fgcu.edu](http://garnet.fgcu.edu). To view these discussions, one may register for the PT3 Fall and/or spring courses and create an identity. Once this is done, posting will be enabled for the viewer. Our website also contains information that documents our workshop activities with our partners. Our website is located at: [http://coe.fgcu.edu/PT3/home.htm](http://coe.fgcu.edu/PT3/home.htm).

**National Educational Technology Standard-Based Lesson Plans Are Written**

The technology enhanced lesson plans for the Fall 2001 Semester are written and can be viewed on the BEACON database. The website for BEACON is [www.beaconlc.org](http://www.beaconlc.org). Selected lessons will be shown at this session.