Enhancing Candidate Performance and Program Curricula in Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs with Technology

This paper provides a rationale for early childhood teacher educators to fully integrate technology into pre-service teacher preparation programs. The majority of early childhood teacher educators use technology for their professional activities, but have been slow to fundamentally change and enhance teacher preparation programs with effective uses of technology. Specific mandates for incorporating technology in early childhood teacher education programs have been omitted from, or lightly treated in, national accreditation standards. The reason for historically slow or non-existent program enhancements has been the belief that technology has few developmentally effective applications when working with young children, ages birth to eight years. Therefore, technology has been viewed as having little purpose in teacher education programs that focus on developing candidates to work with very young children. This paper will promote the use of technology by early childhood faculty and teacher education candidates: (a) to enhance candidates’ understanding of their discipline and develop positive psychological dispositions about working with young children and technology, (b) to promote personal understandings through creative expression in multimedia formats, (c) to promote developmentally effective learning experiences with young children in formal and informal educational settings, and (d) to effectively develop and archive candidate portfolios as evidence of their performance to support national program accreditation.

The result of these proposed program changes will be candidates viewing technology as an important and developmentally effective means of promoting learning and creative expression among young children. Also, teacher education candidates will be identifying and using technology during formal learning activities with young children and acknowledging the importance of informal technological experiences with young children. Lastly, early childhood teacher education candidates will have more opportunities to reflect upon their own learning and recognize changes in their understandings with respect for child development and learning in a modern society.