The Building Teams and Tools for Teaching (BT3) Consortium, a PT3 project, provides an innovative, cost-effective, replicable model for technology-rich teacher education. Through horizontal partnerships between schools and agencies and vertical partnerships between teachers and learners, the Consortium trains intern teachers in the uses of technology; develops and implements technology-rich curricula in elementary, middle and high schools; supports the further infusion of technology in teacher preparation programs; and advances a collaborative model of teacher preparation. The Consortium includes three higher education institutions, 24 public and private K-12 institutions, three independent school districts and two independent not-for-profit organizations. Current sponsors of the program include: The United States Department of Education, Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), and Engaging Latino Communities for Education (ENLACE). The Texas Infrastructure Fund Board (TIFB) has provided the project with a new education teaching lab to support BT3 partners and participants.

The primary goals of the BT3 project are: 1) to train preservice student teachers, K-12 teachers, and university faculty to effectively incorporate technology into their teaching; 2) to promote collaboration between schools and agencies, and between teachers and students; 3) to develop, implement, and evaluate an effective model of teacher preparation that infuses technology and curriculum; and 4) to create a benchmarking/evaluation tool that teacher preparation programs can use to evaluate their effectiveness.

In its first year, BT3 made considerable progress toward these goals and learned many important lessons to be shared with others. For example, more than 150 K-12 faculty have been recruited as BT3 “fellows.” These “fellows” comprise the pool of K-12 teachers eligible for participation in the BT3 summer workshop program and have access to special technology training supplied by St. Edward’s University. In the summer of 2002, 92 K-12 teachers, preservice teachers, and university faculty participated in the 60-hour technology integration workshops offered at five different Central Texas sites. The BT3 program uses the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) curriculum, which follows a constructivist model for technology integration in the classroom. During fall 2002 and spring 2003, mentor and student teacher pairs implemented the unit plans that they developed during the summer workshops.

Participants in this session will learn successful strategies for reforming teacher preparation to include technology integration training for K-12 teachers, preservice teachers, and university faculty. The Building Teams and Tools for Teaching (BT3) Consortium, a 2001 PT3 project, will be showcased as an effective model for teacher preparation with a technology integration component. Two of the three higher education partners have made the BT3 workshops a required part of their teacher education curriculum.

Specifically, the presentation will focus on the lessons learned and successes experienced during BT3’s first year. First, the design of the summer workshop curriculum will be examined. We will explain how to involve teams in an extended training process.

Second, we will provide strategies for effective communication among a wide array of partners including K-12 and higher education institutions. We will examine the important role that an advisory board, special committees, and administrative officers play in promoting effective communication.

The final topic to be examined is the evaluation component of the BT3 program. Data collected thus far will be made available to all participants. The BT3 evaluation being conducted by TLT/Flashlight Group calls for the collection of formative and summative data on the project. To date, data has been collected on changes in technical skills; the ability to infuse technology into curriculum; and mentor teacher, student teacher and university faculty attitudes towards the use of technology in instruction. Tools used in the evaluation include: a technology self-assessment, a concept mapping tool, multiple surveys, and the reviewing of video taped lessons by leading technology integration experts serving as external reviewers.

Any one who is interested in improving the way teachers are trained to use technology in teaching and learning will benefit from this presentation. No prior knowledge of technology or the PT3
program is necessary. More information about the BT3 project can be found at http://www.stedwards.edu/pt3.

To date, the BT3 project has received $475,992 from the U.S. Department of Education, which is 36.13% of the total cost of the project. Nearly 64% ($517,837.92) of the project will be funded with non-federal sources.