“Digital Equity, Social Justice and Teacher Education” Symposium

Symposium Abstract

Federal policies and urban/rural realities attest to what overwhelming numbers of children, youth and families experience daily in the U.S., that savage inequalities persist in public education and the wider society and continue to divide along lines of race, ethnicity, immigrant status, language status, poverty or low-income, special needs and prior educational attainment. Further, domestic U.S. gaps echo gaps internationally. This symposium examines dimensions of equity and opportunity gaps and ways of addressing these. It also serves as an invitational session for SITE participants who are passionate and committed to addressing inequities and working for social justice. Symposium papers address issues of (a) current indicators and experiences of Digital and Opportunity Divides; (b) culturally-responsive teaching and learning with technology; and (c) re-focusing education environments on Civil and Human Rights to promote action for social justice. Join us for this engaged dialogue and potential action-planning session.

Papers:

Current Assessments of Digital and Opportunity Divides for Teacher Educators
Bonnie Bracey, Thornburg Center and Outreach Teacher for GLEF.org and Kevin Rocap, LEARN PT3 Project of Long Island University, Brooklyn

This paper examines current data, indicators and stories of digital and opportunity divides and explores the implications for teacher education. National and international data and stories will be shared along with tools and resources for assessing and addressing digital and educational equity as well as for teaching, learning and teacher education for social justice.

Civil and Human Rights Learning and Action Networks
Kevin Rocap, LEARN PT3 Project of Long Island University, Brooklyn

This paper shares the experiences of a new K-12 and teacher education learning network collaboration around Civil Rights education and identifies other relevant Civil and Human Rights teaching, learning and action-oriented tools, resources and opportunities. The paper will also discuss the implications for reform efforts like the creation of small learning community High Schools and invites participants to expand the list of resources and opportunities for action.

Advocating Cultural Awareness: One Course as a Catalyst to Consciousness
Versonya DuPont, LEARN PT3 Project, Long Island University, Brooklyn

Culture within a school context is defined on many levels: 1. School wide - the values and patterns that evolve between teachers and administrators, 2. Classroom - the classroom practices and assumptions promoted by teachers and 3. Student - the prior knowledge and beliefs that students bring to the classroom. This paper describes how “Computers in Education: Application, Selection and Evaluation”, a course in the Masters in Education Technology for the Learning Sciences program at LIU, Brooklyn – School of Education, engages teacher candidates in the process of inquiring into how responsive their work context is to meeting their cultural needs at each level. Participation structures in the course cultivate the movement from inquiry to advocacy. The larger social goals of the course are: 1. To encourage teachers to become advocates for sufficient and culturally-responsive technology-related resources in their schools and classrooms and 2. To organize a community of learners who collaborate and network around issues of digital equity. During Fall 2004, two sections of the course were offered to bilingual math and science high school teachers. Experiences from each section will be shared to illustrate how one course can be designed to awaken cultural awareness in teachers.