Preface

Standards-driven instruction, high-stakes testing, and accountability pressure in public schools imply that teachers ought to be highly skilled practitioners now more than ever before. In a digital age, the focus on technology integration into instruction to enhance active student learning also continues to inform pre-service teacher preparation in teacher education classrooms. Moreover, there is pressing need for college faculty not only to prepare current and future teachers to meet the teaching and learning demands of the 21st century classrooms, but also to address the core academic readiness skills of their students to succeed in their programs.

While effective pedagogical issues should be of greater focus than the classroom technology tools, the ever-changing learning environments as well as the current digital characteristics of our students implies that technology integration in education is obviously not a personal choice. Clearly, integration of technology continues to inform the ways that tomorrow’s teachers are currently being prepared in teacher education programs. Computers, laptops, LCD projectors, digital cameras, interactive whiteboards, and mobile technologies such as iPads, iPad minis, mobile applications, e-readers, and smartphones are also becoming real-world tools that should be integrated into the 21st century classroom to enhance active learning. Additionally, literacy is the foundational structure that supports effective teaching and learning. To this end, there is need for teacher education programs to figure out effective ways to enrich the reading and writing skills, as well as the media literacy skills of their students (Hucks & Ragan, 2012).

Appropriate and effective integration of technology into instruction to benefit both pre-service and in-service students constitutes the need for thorough preparation, ability, and willingness of teacher education programs to model best practices regarding advances in available technology (Otero, et al., 2005; Albion & Ertmer, 2002). On one key level, teacher education programs should have access to the similar, if not the same, technology tools that their students will experience in their schools of placement after graduation. On another important level, there is need to invest in teacher education faculty especially in pedagogical strategies to help them become adept at technology integration to foster effective teaching and learning in the college classroom. Any discontinuities between the college classroom and the real field are severely detrimental; when noticeable gaps occur regarding technology training and implementation students are left feeling ill-prepared, and the institution that trained them may be seen as lacking in knowledge of the realities of teaching in today’s classrooms (Bencze, 2010; Mawson, 2003). Thus, it is also critical for teacher education programs to keep current on their knowledge about the impact of technology integration on the pedagogical efficacy and prowess of new teachers. Providing a well-struck balance of practical and theoretical aspects of these pedagogical issues is important in 21st century technology-enhanced classrooms (Means, 2010; Keeler, 2008).
Existing research has shown that there is often a major disconnect between the process of upgrading the technological tools made available to teachers and students in schools, and the upgrading of teaching practices that occur regarding effective integration of these tools (Sessoms, 2008). Reading and mathematics are usually the focus areas of professional development for teachers due to increased emphasis on standardized tests which often leads to missed opportunities for exploring and deepening teachers’ overall understanding of the importance and impact of technology integration and broader media literacy skills across all subject areas in PK-12 schools (Means, 2010; Otero, et al., 2005; Keeler, 2008).

Therefore, *Literacy Enrichment and Technology Integration in Pre-Service Teacher Education* provides peer-reviewed essays and research reports contributed by an array of scholars and practitioners in the field of literacy education, teacher education, and instructional technology. The objective of this scholarship is to highlight research-based practices that address the issues, perspectives, and challenges faced in teacher preparation and teacher education professional development programs. The overarching theme of the text is the examination of best practices for literacy education and technology integration in pre-service teacher education. Writing on this theme, Mott and Williams-Black examine teaching and learning using media-enhanced writing to promote and emphasize the learning experience in K-12 and higher education settings. The researchers provide assessment strategies for supporting and capturing multicultural expression and presentation. Next, Honan et al. explore the challenges of integrating new technologies into literacy education in pre-service primary teacher education. The researchers suggest the need to employ case studies as a methodology for capturing pedagogical practices used to reframe conceptions of the literacy capabilities of pre-service teachers in an effort to reflect the complexities teachers contend with in schools today. Similarly, Polleck and Wirtz provide an overview of a digital poetry project and an analysis of its reciprocal impact on both pre-service teachers and adolescents, including increased engagement with instructional objectives, enhanced literacy and technology competencies, and fostering of intellectual transitions.

In Chapter 4, Farmer argues that preservice teachers need information literacy for both their own study, instructional practice, and as a set of skills to teach PK-12 students. She also explores the role of educator librarians in relation to providing support for teacher educators in the area of instructional planning and implementation. Then, using New Literacy Studies and discourse analysis, Gibbons and Redmond analyze instructors’ discourses, finding a culture of pedagogical beliefs that embody an expansion of what media, technology, and literacy integration means in twenty-first century pre-service teacher education settings. Next, using a case study approach, Delacruz and Shaheen explore the instructional technique of using virtual field trips in the field placements of teacher education students that were created by the pre-service students themselves. These researchers also examine the concept of global awareness and the challenge of access to technology. Similarly, Shambaugh discusses digital media literacy practices for new teachers within a teacher education program that operates in a Professional Development School. He also offers recommendations for the implementation of digital media practices within teacher education courses for new teachers, as well as professional development for public school teachers.

In Chapter 8, Hanewald points out how the integration of technology assists in fostering visual literacy skills of future science teachers via the use of digital knowledge maps in a science communication course within a teacher education program. Next, Glimps and Ford explore the combination of technology and problem-based learning as a vehicle for building culturally responsive literacy and technology skills of teacher educators as they seek to respond to students’ needs and culture. Deyoe et al. extend the focus
on teacher professional development and its impact on meeting culturally diverse and at-risk students. Their research highlights the benefits of continuous professional development and embedded training along with embedded implementation of technology within pedagogical and content literacy instruction.

In Chapter 11, Yildis and De Abreu investigate creative strategies and possibilities for engaging pre-service teachers in transdisciplinary project-based global literacy activities integrating new technologies. Moving specifically into the content area of literacy, Seglem and Lycke examine the understandings of teacher education students to the broader definitions of text and literacy via a redesigned secondary content literacy course in a teacher education program. Similarly, Sturtz and Hucks explore the experiences of faculty and students in a newly designed reading and writing program for pre-service teachers and add to the field of research regarding reading, writing, and technology integration at the college level. Next, Sealey-Ruiz and Haddix share insights for the field of research regarding the potentially positive impacts of using 21st century new literacies and digital tools with Black male middle and high school students. The two researchers highlight ways that teachers can effectively use digital tools in their classrooms.

In Chapter 15, Semingson examines the influence of one program’s shift to offering its elementary pre-service teachers an online literacy methods course utilizing Webinars. Her research explores the challenges the instructor faced in attempting to recreate a learning environment that gave credence to the importance of strong teacher presence in order to facilitate learning of teaching pedagogies. Finally, in chapter 16, Garcia et al. examine the importance of context and access by highlighting how digital technology can help support youth voice and guide teacher education models. The authors share details of a collaborative project between a class of tenth grade high school students and pre-service teachers, and discuss the challenges and benefits of how using digital technology can help support youth voice and guide teacher education models.

Our hope is that each of these scholarly manuscripts will help to address the academic readiness of pre-service teachers as well as help to advance and inform the work of teacher preparation programs in the preparation and transformation of novice teachers to be able to deliver effective literacy rich practices in today’s technology-rich classrooms. Further, the rich content in this book could benefit school administrators, academic affairs administrators, academic deans, faculty, directors of teaching and learning centers, curriculum, and instructional designers, and other researchers or stakeholders interested in literacy enrichment and technology integration in teacher education programs.

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REFERENCES


