

service teachers can utilize web-based technologies of email, chat, multi-media and internet conferencing. The Knowledge of the “Self” must have a positive impact on developing pre-service teachers’ commitment to teach all children. Since each learner must be adequately served from within an ideal learning environment that embraces socio-cultural differences and equal participation, technology becomes an instrumental tool to convey each learner’s unique ideas and interests [13]. Hence, during field-teaching pre-service teachers can use student telecollaborations, digital story-telling, virtual field-trips and CD-ROM based programmes for Self-Paced Learning to empower each learner.

9.2. The Other: Intercultural Sensitivity and Social Justice and Equity

Within an educational community, if the cultural background between the teacher and learner (the Other) becomes increasingly dissimilar, instructional mistakes will surface with greater frequency and severity [14]. In Trinidad and Tobago, some pre-service teachers reside in race/ethnic and social class segregated areas where they have limited communication with other groups. Pre-service teachers in particular must be given opportunities to construct new knowledge about multicultural groups and develop dispositions of intercultural sensitivity and teaching for social justice and equity. A real issue is to train pre-service teachers to use technology for increased equity in learning outcomes.

Research has indicated that the implementation of information technologies in teacher education within a larger context of systemic reform can produce marked improvements in learning outcomes [9]. In 2010, the new People’s Partnership Government (PPG) distributed a laptop computer to all Form One secondary school students to level the playing field between the “haves” and the “haves not.” While this is a noteworthy initiative, it is necessary for pre-service instructional technology courses to move beyond the question of access and literacy and explore issues of content, social justice and equity.

Computer mediated communication for on-line intercultural exchanges must facilitate a process through which pre-service teachers can become more sensitive to the complex cultural backgrounds of disadvantaged and “at risk” student populations of Trinidad and Tobago. Pre-service teachers can use virtual multi-cultural-based field experience (video production and multimedia development software) to record multicultural teaching (particularly construction of tasks to suit the developmental needs of students and initiatives to build on the strengths and aspirations of the dispossessed).

Using technology to teach for social justice and equity is essential to guarantee higher levels of learning outcomes and a reduction in achievement gaps between students of strikingly diverse cultural groups.

9.3. The Community: Communication and Reflection

To become equitable practitioners, pre-service teachers require dispositions for communication (inside and outside of classrooms) and reflection to understand that technology is not transformative on its own.

Effective use of technology in classrooms can cater for each student to become engaged in authentic complex tasks within a collaborative learning context. Through “engaged learning” students can interact with data and build knowledge collaboratively. Pre-service teachers can devise a myriad of technology supported engaged learning projects through which students can solve real world problems, retrieve information from online resources and communicate with parents, teachers, other professionals and church leaders. For example, students can use Internet scanners and presentation software to plan and deliver speeches on Crime, Drug Abuse or Peer Pressure for a church seminar on Development of Youths. Thus, technology creates opportunities for pre-service teachers to act as co-learners with students and other education stakeholders in the wider community to tackle issues of diversity and equity.

A reflective pre-service teacher does not only think about what is happening in a technology driven classroom but conducts research into his or her practice to make changes that will create a more ethical and learner-centered environment. A pre-service teacher’s “reflection” stated: “As far as pedagogy is concerned Different classrooms will have different needs and the simulation should be set up to meet those needs. I think it is a really good idea to receive feedback from the students to determine how a multimedia programme can be improved from year to year. The teacher must also reflect each year after completing the project, on what he or she felt went the way the teacher wanted, and what needs to be changed [10].

Some technology tools for reflection are blogs (reflective journal); Interactive Micro Blogging to record small but significant messages that capture “real life experiences” in the learning process; and Social Networking to receive feedback from people in the wider community.

Pre-service teachers must be cognizant of the fact that each domain of knowledge and their

dispositional strengths overlap and are not separate. In addition, each diverse context demands different teacher dispositions and technological skills to observe equity in classroom practice.

10. Future Research

The Bachelor of Education Programme (UTT) will need to continue strengthening pre-service teacher dispositions through the infusion of technology with equity pedagogy concepts in field teaching. The author further recommends that teachers responsible for educational foundations and specialisation courses – incorporate meaningful learning experiences, dialogue and reflection on culturally responsive teaching and use of technology throughout the course context. Both practical training and theoretical groundwork must be integrated to address technology infusion and equity issues in public education. The three domains of knowledge can be used as a guide for pre-service teachers to monitor their own dispositions in relation to the Self (themselves), the Other (their students) and the Community, and thus develop equitable and technology rich teaching and learning environments.

For the purpose of future research, teacher educators must recognize three integral links – “pre-existing teacher dispositions” towards “equity pedagogy” profoundly influences the use of “technology for inclusion.” Equity signifies not only access to but the operational knowledge of technology in diverse classrooms that can reach the excellence hidden in each child to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA).

SSLCE focuses on educational equity and technology for inclusion to ensure that the school system of Trinidad and Tobago remains academically competitive with the rest of the world.

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