Preface

Leadership and Change:
The Integration of Information Technologies into Learning Environments

The Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) is the only organization which offers a focus upon the appropriate and successful integration of instructional technologies into teacher education programs of study. "In 1990 Jerry Willis and Dee Anna Willis founded SITE to provide an academic home for those working to integrate educational technology into teacher education" (Bull, Sprague & Bell, 2001, paragraph 3). As this is the 16th year since SITE's founding, it is appropriate to consider the growth of the SITE organization within the profession.

As the Society's mission is stated:

> The Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education is an international association of individual teacher educators, and affiliated organizations of teacher educators in all disciplines, who are interested in the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the use of information technology in teacher education and faculty/staff development.
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> The Society seeks to promote research, scholarship, collaboration, exchange, and support among its membership, and to actively foster the development of new national organizations where a need emerges. SITE is the only organization that has as its sole focus the integration of instructional technologies into teacher education programs. (Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education, 2005, paragraphs 1-2, http://site.aace.org/)

The SITE International Conference supports the sharing of creative, supportive ideas and discussions with other leaders in the field of instructional technology and teacher education, framed by all subject area disciplines throughout preservice, inservice and graduate teacher education. The value and effectiveness of the organization's strength lies within the constituent members and affiliates. As suggested by Bull, Sprague and Bell (2001):

> To be effective, the core of teacher educators who prepare future teachers must be included in educational technology initiatives. Many of these individuals participate in the professional conferences in their home academic disciplines (e.g., science education, mathematics education, English education, and social studies education) but do not typically attend conferences that have educational technology as a primary focus. (Bull, Sprague & Bell, 2001, paragraph 17)

A strength of SITE is the significance and merit associated with subject area discipline representatives who are actively involved in the integration of instructional technologies so as to support learning environments. Scholarship in the field of information technology and teacher education is enhanced by the supportive theories and research that guide specific disciplines. As stated by Willis,

> Issues such as theory-based versus problems-based research, rigor versus relevance, theory-guided practice versus practice-guided theory, and simplification by isolation versus simplification by integration all deal with questions a scholar in this field must consider when planning a program of research. (Willis, 2000, paragraph 33, http://www.citejournal.org/vol1/iss1/seminal/article1.htm)

The SITE community embraces refreshing insights and values innovations that are at foundational levels of thought and reflection, while establishing and refining more advanced theories and research.

Along with innovations presented within the framework of the SITE International Conference, the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education also leads the way at the national and international levels. The integration of instructional technologies into the learning environments is of primary importance, and implications supported by qualitative and quantitative research are primary influences towards defining the field.

As SITE is leading the integration of information technology into the learning environment, our organization supports the National Technology Leadership Summit's seven conclusions related to the field:

1. Ubiquitous computing will be a widespread force in schools by the end of the decade or sooner.
2. Ubiquitous computing will be a disruptive cultural force with great potential for good or ill.
3. Educators at all levels have a responsibility to articulate constructive visions for ubiquitous computing.
4. Educators must be prepared to take advantage of ubiquitous computing to advance teaching and learning.
5. Educators must work with hardware and software developers to shape pedagogically sound educational tools and evaluate them before full-scale implementation in schools.
6. Small-scale pilot initiatives need to be immediately undertaken to demonstrate feasibility across a demographically-representative range of schools before ubiquitous computing takes place on a larger scale.
7. Pilot initiatives should be evaluated to ascertain the effect of ubiquitous computing on learning and teaching, and these findings should be used to guide future actions.

(Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education, 2002, paragraph 2, (http://site.aace.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Page.NationalSummit)

SITE is guiding the field towards realizing the opportunities related to these conclusions, and focus upon innovatively leading the way towards addressing these potential strengths through the strength of our community. The *SITE Position Paper: Statement of Basic Principles and Suggested Actions* (Thompson, Bull & Willis, 1998) outlined three basic principles that are integral towards realizing the appropriate and successful integration of instructional technologies into the learning environment:

1. Technology should be infused into the entire teacher education program.
2. Technology should be introduced in context.
3. Students should experience innovative technology-supported learning environments in their teacher education program. (paragraphs 3-5)

Following upon these three basic principles are the following proposed actions:

1. Identify and make public positive models of technology-infused teacher education programs.
2. Encourage and support collaboration of teacher education programs with model technology-rich K-12 schools that can serve as authentic environments for teacher education.
3. Establish two to three national centers for technology and teacher education that disseminate current knowledge, develop new knowledge, and coordinate the creation of electronic tools and materials for teacher education.
4. Support innovative models of faculty development that emphasize technology-facilitated teaching and learning strategies (as opposed to general computer literacy skills).
5. Support models of technology infusion that involve preservice teachers in extended, field-based activities as both learners and facilitators of technology innovation.
6. Fund the development of promising teacher education materials. (paragraphs 6-11)

This SITE call to action enhances our focus towards leadership and change throughout the professional field of teacher education. As an international association that consists of individual teacher educators throughout numerous disciplines, we stand as a united community "who are interested in the creation and dissemination of knowledge about the use of information technology in teacher education" (Thompson, Bull & Willis, 1998, paragraph 1). After all, as stated by Bull, Sprague and Bell (2001), "The technology, as always, should be a means to an end rather than an end in itself" (paragraph 24).

References

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