Editorial: AECT – SITE Collaboration Through the National Technology Leadership Coalition

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The National Technology Leadership Coalition (NTLC) is a consortium established nearly a decade ago comprised of national teacher educator associations, national technology associations, not-for-profit organizations, and some corporate organizations. The purpose of NTLC is to facilitate and encourage cross-disciplinary discussion of appropriate uses of technology in the core content areas across professional associations. The leadership within the Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education has strongly supported this coalition and has often taken the lead on collaborative efforts of the NTLC.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) joined the NTLC in 2008 under the leadership of Mary Herring, providing opportunities for SITE and AECT to explore common goals and consider collaborative synergies. Mike Spector (who was AECT president-elect at the time) met with Gerald Knezek (SITE president at the time) at the spring 2009 SITE conference in Charleston, South Carolina. A SITE representative and NTLC Founder, Glen Bull, in turn, participated in the fall 2009 AECT conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Since then, AECT and SITE have participated in subsequent AECT and SITE conferences in addition to participating in the National Technology Leadership Summit meetings organized by the NTLC. This editorial presents a brief overview of the joint initiatives that SITE and AECT hope to pursue together through the NTLC.

NTLC Background

In 2000, the leaders of a number of professional associations representing teacher educators and educational technology educators began meeting annually at the National Technology Leadership Summit to identify ways of collaborating with one another across disciplines and associations.

The NTLC eventually emerged from this annual summit with the following goals:

- To support and facilitate scholarly dialog in professional journals and conferences.
- To ensure that university theory and research are applicable to effective use in schools.
- To collaborate with federal policy makers and legislators to ensure that this topic remains at the forefront of the national education agenda.
- To serve as a clearinghouse for consultation with corporate partners who are designing advanced uses of technology intended to facilitate learning.

The membership has grown to encompass a dozen teacher educator and educational technology associations. The core of the membership includes the teacher educator content associations representing the following content areas:

- Science Education: Association for Science Teacher Education (ASTE)
- Mathematics Education: Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE)
- Social Studies Education: NCSS College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA)
- English Education: NCTE Conference on English Education (CEE)

Collaborating educational technology associations currently include the following:

- Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
- Association for Educational Communications &Technology (AECT)

In addition to the educational technology associations, ITEEA focuses on technology and engineering education as a content area in its own right:

- International Technology and Engineering Educators' Association (ITEEA)

Teacher educator associations that participate in the coalition include the following:

- American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)
- The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
- AERA Technology as an Agent of Change in Teaching and Learning (SIG-TACTL)

Other members of the coalition include the early childhood teacher educator association and education librarians.

- Educational and Behavioral Sciences Board (EBSS)
  of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE)

The coalition has collaborated with both corporate and nonprofit partners to address common goals through joint initiatives. Corporate partners have included Canon USA, Olympus, Graphtec, Silhouette, FableVision, Software MacKiev, and Promethean, among others. Nonprofit partners, foundations, and academic centers have also participated, including the Buck Institute of Education, the Center for Technological Literacy, the Redefining Teacher Education for the Digital Age Learner initiative, the Craft Technology Group, and the Computational Synthesis Laboratory, among others.

Leaders representing the associations participating in the coalition typically meet each September in Washington, DC. The timing of the meeting makes it possible to plan and coordinate themes and activities across the academic year.

The NTLC editors, representing eight of the leading educational technology journals and periodicals, are an important component of the cross-disciplinary strategy of the NTLC. Journals and periodicals represented by editors who participate in NTLC activities currently include the following:

- *Educational Technology Research & Development* (ETR&D)
- *TechTrends*
- *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* (JRTE)
- *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education* (JDLTE)
- *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education* (JTATE)
- *Learning & Leading with Technology* (L&L)
- *Computers in the Schools* (CIS)
- *Contemporary Issues in Technology & Teacher Education* (CITE Journal)
- *British Journal of Educational Technology (BJET)*

The interaction and collaboration of NTLC editors with leaders from pedagogical content associations plays an important role in advancing the goals of the coalition. The opportunity for in-depth discussions that have pedagogical content knowledge as a focus places the editors in a position to better facilitate needed work.

An important outcome is collective identification and dissemination of activities judged to be crucial for advancing the field of educational technology as it pertains to teacher preparation and learning outcomes in schools. Many of these collaborative outcomes have been communicated in a series of editorials jointly authored by the NTLC editors (Bull, Knezek, Robyler, Schrum, & Thompson, 2005; Schrum et al., 2005; Thompson, Bell, & Bull, 2005). This coverage provides a means of reaching many of those who have an interest in educational technology and teacher preparation.

The NTLC editors serve as a review board for selection of recipients of the *NTLC Award* which recognizes significant leadership in the field of educational technology.
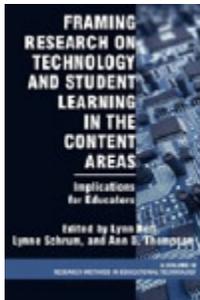
They also have served as editors and contributors to NTLC publications, such as the jointly edited volume, *Framing Research on Technology and Student Learning in the Content Areas.*

The expertise and experience contributed by editors working across associations in this manner ensure a cross-disciplinary perspective that provides direction for the field.

AECT Joins the Coalition

AECT produces two bimonthly journals, *ETR&D* and *Tech Trends*. In 2008, Mary Herring, then AECT president, and Mike Spector and Sharon Smaldino, the editors of the two journals at that time, were invited to attend their first National Technology Leadership Summit. Abbie Brown is now the editor of *TechTrends*, and he has participated along with Mike Spector, Mary Herring, and Barbara Lockee, the current AECT president, in subsequent meetings of the NTLC. AECT is a professional association of members whose activities are directed toward improving instruction through technology. Its members carry out a wide range of responsibilities in the study, planning, application, and production of communications media for instruction. The association

has well over 2,000 members, with 24 state and six international affiliates, who are all passionate about finding better ways to support learning, instruction, and performance.

The benefit to AECT from its membership in NTLC is already being realized. AECT now has a voice at a national level with sister organizations that share compatible and complementary goals. AECT has benefitted from NTLC presentations at its last two annual conference meetings and has made presentations at SITE as a result of membership in the NTLC. AECT's journal editors have been meeting twice a year with other NTLC journal editors to discuss areas of emphasis and share information about policies and procedures. These editorial meetings benefit authors significantly, since a paper submitted to one of the NTLC journal editors that may not be such a good match for that particular journal is now much more likely to be directed to a more appropriate journal. Moreover, the NTLC journal editors have been invited to annual meeting of National Science Foundation ITEST (Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers) principal investigators to help funded projects publish findings. A priority issue in AECT's strategic plan is to have both a voice and recognizable influence on educational technology research and development policy at a national level. AECT's membership in the NTLC provides for this possibility.

Soon after that summit, AECT joined the NTLC. Four potential areas of collaboration have emerged from conversations among the AECT and SITE leaders and editors:

- Extension of the AECT-Sponsored International Student Media Festival
- Contributions to Efforts Related to Performance Assessment
- Collaboration on Joint Grant Submissions
- Establishment of an Instrument Library

ISMF Extensions to Content Areas

The International Student Media Festival (ISMF) celebrates outstanding classroom media projects by students and teachers from kindergarten through college. It has been sponsored by AECT since 1974.

Similarly, SITE has collaborated with the NTLC teacher educator content associations to develop a book, *Teaching with Digital Video*, that discusses best practices for effective use of digital video in the core content areas of science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies. These associations currently collaborate on identification and joint recognition of an exemplary paper on effective use of technology in each content area.

Extension of the media festival to include joint recognition for an exemplary video created by preservice teachers in each of these content areas is a natural collaborative direction building upon the prior efforts of the respective associations.

Performance Assessment

At a panel sponsored by the AECT president at its 2009 conference, Charles Reigeluth noted,

> The things that are the most important to measure are often the most difficult to measure. Frequently we don't measure the most important attributes of learning because of the difficulty in measuring them and the associated expense.

Automated performance assessment is a promising area that offers the potential for achieving more authentic assessments in a cost effective way. Leaders from AECT, SITE, and other NTLC associations are among those working at the forefront of this area. The presidents of the two associations are collaborating on a strand that will be devoted to this topic at the next National Technology Leadership Summit.

Instrument Repository

There is a need for a peer-reviewed library of evaluation instruments. Joint sponsorship of such a repository is another potential area of collaboration. Significant expertise in this area resides in both associations. SITE currently maintains a digital library of scholarly materials, through the support of the Association for the Advancement of Computers in Education (AACE). The proposed instrument repository would be a useful extension. A joint repository would be accessible from the websites of both associations and possibly others involved in the national coalition. The AACE digital library is already available to students and scholars and through academic libraries.

This repository would address a need for future doctoral research, in particular, to build upon prior efforts. This research often leads to queries that place demands on the time of the developers of instruments. Therefore, a structure for modest compensation for such queries, to increase the likelihood of productive dialog, might be another dimension that could be explored when the repository is established.

Currently, two initiatives are underway that could lay the groundwork in this area. Beginning with the annual meeting of this coalition in 2008, the NTLC journal editors agreed to collaboratively "fast track" validation studies of instruments that could be potential candidates to be placed in the repository some day. Editors receiving such manuscripts communicate among themselves regarding where publication of the "credentialing" of a particular instrument might best fit. Some validation studies have already been published under this informal collaboration that retains the integrity of the review process for each journal – and at least one manuscript is currently under review as this editorial goes to press.

The second initiative is complementary to the validation studies and is emerging from the grassroots level. The SITE Research and Evaluation Special Interest Group (SIG) has created an instrument repository wiki that is designed to hold copies of instruments SITE members have found to be useful. The wiki format includes information about authorship and a brief description of the areas the instrument assesses (computer anxiety and/or technology self-efficacy, for example). We envision that the existence of this wiki will cause some instruments to bubble up to the top and have validation studies submitted to journals. This activity and the one described in the previous paragraph will provide the building blocks that enable an extensive repository to be assembled at some point in the not-too-distant future.

Collaborative Grant Proposals

These initiatives and other collaborative work activities could be greatly facilitated by external resources. Although AECT is a 501(3)c nonprofit association, SITE is under the umbrella of AACE's 501c tax status. The leaders of these associations met jointly with NSF program officers and have received encouragement to apply for resources to facilitate joint efforts. Particular encouragement was given to consideration of workshops at the AECT and SITE conferences that would facilitate instrument refinement and other work that would advance the field.

Summary

In the absence of dialog across disciplines, there is little opportunity to develop a unified direction of research or to implement findings regarding best practices in teacher preparation programs. Efforts to establish cross-disciplinary organizational structures represent a deliberate attempt to ensure that the potential of technology to facilitate learning in specific content areas will be realized through successful curriculum-based technology integration in classrooms.

The founding of the NTLC, the establishment of standing technology committees within the pedagogical content area associations, the establishment of awards for exemplary papers on use of technology, the founding of a cross-disciplinary journal, and collaborative work related to key research issues in the core content areas all represent activities designed to accomplish this goal.

In 2008, Jennifer M. Bay-Williams, then president of the Association for Mathematics Teacher Educators, noted that NTLC participation had been worthwhile for that association because "strong leadership and collaboration is important for support of technology in a world challenged by funding constraints, new standards for accountability, and a shortage of technology-using teachers" (CITE Journal, Vol. 8 Iss 1). The current collaborative discussions among AECT and SITE leaders represent the most recent efforts to build upon the foundation of prior work to address these goals.

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