Summary

When does technology benefit education? When does it get in the way? How can we mold practices and pedagogies to integrate technology at different levels of education?

The University of Akron College of Education Center for Literacy (UA) used funds from eTech Ohio to address these questions and form stronger connections to local school districts through the Digital Text (DigiTXT) Teacher Planning Grant.

Throughout the 2011-12 academic year, we introduced technology at three different levels of education. The affected groups at each touch-point were different and related:

❖ **Practicing (master) teachers** embarked on DigiTXT using iPod Touches and a touchscreen computer for teaching literacy in kindergarten through second grade (K-2).

❖ **Pre-service teachers** (undergraduate education students) used audio, video and Web-based tools like Ning, Voicethread and Google Docs to record and reflect on the use of technology in the master teachers' literacy curriculum.

❖ **UA professors** developed an online community of practice to assign projects, provide feedback and communicate with the pre-service and practicing teachers.

These applications of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) paid off in different ways for each group. Yet on all three educational levels, the project exemplifies the active integration of technology and adequate professional development (PD) to take advantage of it, rather than technology brought in as an afterthought or used only by savvy participants.

This report describes the activity in each group, the progress made toward educational goals and an overview of what lies ahead.

Main Messages

• *DigiTXT spread the use of ICT at three touch-points: practicing teachers, pre-service teachers and university professors.*

• *This afforded 65-75 pre-service teachers the opportunity not only to acquire field experience long before they would otherwise have had it in a typical curriculum, but also to conduct an action research project based on that experience.*

• *While many teachers understand the value of technology in the classroom, many struggle to integrate it effectively into teaching and Learning. DigiTXT has removed uncertainty in the test group, with potential for greater adoption of ICT in general and e-Books in particular.*

Background

As technology evolves, a have-and-have-not dynamic emerges that impairs collaboration. While the number of people able to figure out on their own (and afford) Web-based tools, mobile devices and interactive content is increasing, that population still needs to teach or work with people less able to figure such things out on their own.

The goal of the eTech Ohio DigiTXT Teacher Planning Grant was to go beyond introducing ICT at the elementary and undergraduate levels and wrap it in the professional