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ANNEX III

Hemispheric Program on Critical Literacy and Digital Education (LICED)

Executive Summaries

(Document prepared by the Technical Secretariat at the request of the CIE officers)

**Hemispheric Program on Critical Literacy and Digital Education (LICED)**

**Executive Summaries**

1. The relational factor in the integration of technologies: access, equity, and quality

**Honduras: Systematization of the National Program for Digital Transformation in Education**

**Keywords**: digital divide, digital skills, pedagogical strategies

**Frame of reference**

The Deputy Directorate of Educational Research (SDGIE) of the General Directorate of Professional Development (DGDP), part of the Ministry of Education, is contributing to the restoration of education by systematizing the implementation of the National Program for Digital Transformation in Education (PNTED).

The PNTED is an interagency effort of the Government of Honduras and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to support the Honduras’s public education system in the adoption of technologies and new pedagogical practices in the teaching and learning processes. Its specific objectives are as follows:

* Reduce the digital divide, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities.
* Strengthen Honduran teachers in digital skills and active pedagogical strategies.
* Effectively integrate technology into the classroom.
* Develop twenty-first century skills and competencies through a personalized training plan, pedagogical accompaniment and follow-up, and specialized technical support.

The program components are as follows: 1. Technological devices; 2. Connectivity; 3. Teacher training; 4. New pedagogies; 5. Educational platforms; 6. Institutional design. These components are integrally linked to facilitate the transition from a conventional, face-to-face educational model to a hybrid model that effectively incorporates technology.

The program provides students with the opportunity to use different digital tools and resources that enable them to acquire knowledge in a more dynamic and entertaining way.

**Purposes/objectives**

The purpose of this report is to systematize the PNTED experience at each of its stages, with a view to the possible replication of the experience. It also describes the results of its implementation in the 72 pilot schools in 2023, as well as the support that the DGDP provided to participating teachers, facilitating relevant pedagogical processes to ensure installed capacity, according to the area or field of knowledge to be strengthened.

**Methodology**

This experience is being systematized according to a mixed research strategy carried out through virtual and in-person focus groups.

The target group included the principals, teachers, parents, and students at the 72 schools that benefited from the PNTED in 2023.

The instruments applied were digital surveys conducted with 100% of the target group, focusing on the following topics: (a) use of ICTs in the classroom through PNTED platforms; (b) perceived impact of PNTED on learning; (c) recommendations for improving the PNTED.

Focus group interviews were conducted with a representative sample of 30% of the total target group, with managers of cycle III teachers, parents, and students benefited by the PNTED. The interviews focused on the following: (a) experiences and perceptions of the implementation of the PNTED; (b) strengths and weaknesses of the PNTED; (c) recommendations for improving the PNTED.

The procedure involved different initiation, process, and final activities.

**Results/trends**

According to the systematization report, the greatest benefit that the PNTED has been able to provide is access to information for homework and in-class research assignments. This has enabled beneficiaries to access a wide range of educational resources, which has enhanced their learning.

The Fiction Express platform, which is used to strengthen reading comprehension, has been the most used and shown a high percentage of effectiveness. This platform offers users the possibility to read interactive stories and participate in their development, which has helped improve reading comprehension.

The teacher training provided by the PNTED has contributed to the development of teachers’ digital skills. This has enabled effective use of digital technologies in the classroom, which has improved student learning.

The PNTED has the potential to improve the quality of education in Honduras by providing students with access to information, strengthening their reading comprehension, and developing teachers’ digital skills.

However, to ensure the program’s success it is necessary to continue its implementation and make some adjustments.

**USA: A Call to Action for Closing the Digital Access, Design, and Use Divides**

**Keywords**: technology, learning, student needs, barriers.

**Reference framework**

Technology can be a powerful tool to help transform learning. It has the potential to empower students to expand their learning beyond the confines of the traditional classroom, support self-directed learning, help educators tailor learning experiences to individual student needs, and support students with disabilities.

Technology also has the potential to allow students and educators to collaborate with peers and experts worldwide, engage with immersive learning simulations, and express their learning creatively. Furthermore, it has the potential to collect student performance and engagement data, providing insight into student progress and allowing educators to deploy targeted support.

**Purposes / Objectives**

The 2024 National Educational Technology Plan (NETP) examines how technologies can raise the bar for all elementary and secondary students.

**The 2024 National Educational Technology Plan (NETP)**

The 2024 National Educational Technology Plan (NETP) offers examples of schools, districts, classrooms, and states doing the complex work of establishing systemic solutions to inequities of access, design, and use of technology in support of learning.

The identification of specific programs or products in these examples is designed to provide a clearer understanding of innovative ideas and is not meant as an endorsement.

Where technology has realized its potential, it is often for a small minority of learners and contributes to growing inequities. Similarly, educational technology (edtech) tools sometimes claim (without independent, research-based evidence) that student assessment results will soar if school systems adopt a given digital resource. Such claims are not only misleading, but they can undermine the true potential of edtech. Reliance on a specific tool to accelerate learning or deliver a comprehensive and rigorous education for every student places all responsibility on the content. It ignores educators and students and the relationships between all three.

Building on the concept of the instructional core, this plan considers the barriers to equitable support of learning through edtech as three divides: 1. Digital Use Divide; 2. Digital Design Divide; 3. Digital Access Divide.

As a path to closing these divides, the NETP also provides actionable recommendations to advance the effective use of technology to support teaching and learning. The recommendations in each section are also followed by tags identifying whether they are most immediately intended for states, districts, or school buildings. These recommendations are meant as components of solutions that bridge each divide but cannot comprise all of what is necessary within a given geography, culture, or context. Throughout each section, examples are offered of states, school districts, and schools engaged in the work of putting these recommendations into practice.

Many schools in the United States are equipped with greater connectivity and access to devices and digital learning resources than ever before as a result of the need for emergency remote learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this continued bridging of the access divide will only add to the failure of edtech to deliver on its promises if systems do not consider its use in conjunction with all components of the instructional core. This NETP attempts to chart a path for all schools, educators, and students to realize the potential of technology in supporting better “everywhere, all-the-time” learning.

Somewhere between the promise of transformation and the barriers to realizing that promise lies the potential for states, districts, and schools to build systems that better ensure that edtech’s promise is afforded to all students, no matter their geography, background, or individual context.

**Conclusion**

Technology holds vast potential to improve teaching and learning for every student and teacher in the United States. In recent years, driven by the emergency of a pandemic, schools have found themselves with more connectivity, devices, and digital resources than at any other moment in history. This current context presents a unique opportunity.

States, districts, and schools across the country can leverage this momentum of a narrowing access divide to focus key efforts in providing all teachers the time, support, and capacity they need to design authentic learning experiences for all learners supported by this proliferation of digital tools. Furthermore, states, districts, and schools can eliminate barriers and uncover biases in practice that have historically limited innovative and promising learning experiences supported by edtech to a predictable minority.

The nation can close the digital access, design, and use divides. The NETP includes examples from every state in the country where schools, districts, and their partners are proving it’s possible. For this possibility to reach all students will require an understanding that the kinds of instructional tasks students need to prepare them for the world they will inherit cannot rely on content alone. The instructional core requires attending to both content and people.

**USA: Community-Based Recommendations for Developing Effective Digital Equity Plans to Close the Digital Divide and Enable Technology-Empowered Learning**.

**Keywords**: digital equity, access: availability, affordability, adoption.

**Reference framework**

Digital equity is achieved when all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States (U.S.). Reaching this goal for all learners is a challenge that has been highlighted and exacerbated by the digital opportunity and equity gaps exposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal government, states and territories, localities, Tribes, nonprofit and community-based organizations, community anchor institutions, districts, schools, institutions of higher education and many others have each contributed to the ongoing progress toward digital equity.

To ensure all learners have equitable access to reliable, high-speed broadband and technology tools for learning, we must consider the three components of access—availability, affordability, and adoption. While availability and affordability are often the focus of discussions around digital equity, adoption barriers—including, but not limited to, the lack of information, support, and skills necessary to obtain regular, adequate access to reliable, high-speed broadband and technology tools— currently impact 6 million learners.

Additionally, 32 million Americans have limited or no digital literacy skills, including half of Black and Hispanic workers. While leaders should certainly address availability and affordability challenges as they advance digital equity, they must simultaneously put forth solutions to overcome human-level adoption barriers that currently reinforce the digital divide.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology (OET) is well-positioned to support efforts to advance digital equity, particularly with regard to human-level adoption barriers. In developing this guidance resource, OET leveraged its experience in setting the national vision for the effective use of technology for learning, strong relationships with educators and education ecosystems, and commitment to co-creating solutions with communities to drive national dialogue on the adoption of reliable, high-speed broadband and technology for learning.

**Purposes / Objectives**

The purpose of this guidance resource is to support leaders in developing effective digital equity plans in these ways:

* Exploring the three components of access: availability, affordability, adoption.
* Highlighting existing barriers to achieving digital equity.
* Providing promising strategies to overcome these barriers.
* Identifying key action steps for leaders.

**Methodology**

This guidance resource was informed by conversations with community leaders and members who participated in a series of listening sessions hosted through OET’s Digital Equity Education Roundtable Initiative. These sessions provided valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges related to digital equity across different communities.

These learnings may inform decision making for leaders in their path to achieving digital equity. While each community will need to design and implement strategies that are aligned to their unique circumstances, several common themes were identified, which provide a foundational understanding for leaders and communities as they work together to co-develop strategies to advance digital equity.

**Organization of the guidance resource**

This guidance resource describes and analyze the three components of Access (availability, affordability and adoption), barriers and strategies, and exemplify with case studies. It helps catalyze collective action to remove barriers for learners, families/caregivers, and communities, creating more equitable access to technology-enabled learning experiences for learners in both in-school and out-of-school learning environments and further enabling access and adoption among their families/caregivers and communities.

When learners and their broader ecosystem are connected, they are also better able to access vital online services, such as tele-health, counseling, social services, remote employment opportunities, and job training.

In this sense, OET further identified key steps leaders can take in their digital equity planning efforts to ensure access for all learners:

* Develop and earn public trust through partnerships.
* Learn from those impacted by inequitable access and provide opportunities for feedback.
* Co-develop clear goals and strategies with communities to craft a comprehensive digital equity plan.
* Raise public awareness and provide ongoing support for low- or no-cost broadband programs.
* Provide digital literacy training and professional learning opportunities.

**USA: Home Access Playbook: Strategies for State Leaders Working to Bridge the Digital Divide for Students**

**Keywords**: hybrid and remote learning, home internet, device access for students.

**Reference framework**

In spring 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a shift to hybrid and remote learning for most students, leaders at all levels took action to ensure students had access to the devices and home internet necessary to stay connected and continue learning. Although progress was made during the pandemic to address the digital divide, issues of home internet access have long impacted students and families, particularly students from low-income, rural, Tribal, and other under-resourced communities.

**Purposes / Objectives**

The Office of Educational Technology (OET) hosted a series of listening sessions with state leaders—from state educational agencies (SEAs), state broadband offices, state libraries, and state economic development agencies—to identify what digital equity issues were magnified as a result of school closings, what immediate actions states were taking to address these issues, and what long-term solutions were being considered to sustainably address these issues.

**Organization of the Playbook**

The Playbook outlines seven strategies, or “plays,” that state leaders are taking to address issues of home internet and device access for students. The plays address several of the needs identified by state leaders in the listening sessions, including a need for more accurate broadband availability data and data on students’ home broadband access, a need for continued collaboration across government agencies and with internet service providers (ISPs) and community partners, and a need for additional training for teachers and families to effectively use the technology to improve student learning.

The Playbook and the individual plays are not intended to be prescriptive and may not be universally applicable across state contexts. However, the Playbook aims to share actionable strategies and state examples so that other state leaders might discover a new approach that can be adapted to their context.

Each play provides a brief overview outlining the importance of the play, frequently asked questions that provide additional background context, exemplars that demonstrate each play in practice, a checklist of considerations for implementing the play, and key questions to ask for each consideration.

The plays, which can be adapted and implemented across different state contexts, include:

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| **Play 1**:  Find or Form a State Broadband Coalition | Get involved in statewide broadband or digital inclusion efforts to leverage resources, capacity, and expertise across multiple state agencies and create a greater collective—and ensure education leaders are included. |
| **Play 2**:  Collect Data on Broadband Availability, Affordability, Adoption, and  Quality and Use It to Drive Decision-Making | Collect data to drive decision-making, understand the existing barriers to broadband deployment and adoption, identify the most appropriate long-term solutions, target resources, assess progress, and build public support for broadband initiatives. |
| **Play 3**:  Identify Needs and Recruit Partners to Fill Specific Gaps | Build collaborative, cross-sector partnerships to increase capacity to implement solutions, introduce new expertise and skills, build broad project support, and open new avenues for funding or leadership support. |
| **Play 4**:  Assist Districts with a Menu of Options | Equip districts with information on the available broadband solutions and the factors that will impact their effectiveness to support informed local decision-making. |
| **Play 5**:  Leverage Bulk Purchasing to Optimize Use of Funds | Support districts by offering centrally managed procurement vehicles or contracts that leverage bulk purchasing power or longer contract timelines to increase affordability. |
| **Play 6**:  Provide Training and Technical Support for Families to Enhance Basic.  Digital Literacy Skills and Effectively Support Remote Learning | Provide families with training and support on the use of technology and platforms provided by the school. |
| **Play 7**:  Provide Professional Learning and Resources for Educators to Drive Meaningful Classroom Learning | Provide professional learning opportunities that support improvements in instructional design and empower educators to effectively use technology to support student learning. |

**Conclusions**

As our students continue to return to school buildings and we move from pandemic response to recovery, technology will be essential for meeting the needs of diverse learners, supporting teachers, and providing school and district leaders with flexible models to support and accelerate learning.

Reliable home internet access is also critical for ensuring an equitable recovery for our students’ families and across our communities—by providing access to online workforce development resources, job skills training, and telehealth services.

It is important that we remain focused on addressing the digital divide for students in order to strengthen the resilience of our learning ecosystem in the face of future disruptions and provide equitable access to high-quality education.

2. Crosscutting theme: use and promotion of artificial intelligence as an innovative, pedagogical strategy and evaluation.

**USA: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Teaching and Learning: Insights and Recommendations.**

**Keywords**: artificial intelligence, opportunities, risks, policies.

**Reference framework**

This report addresses the clear need for sharing knowledge and developing policies for “Artificial Intelligence” (IA) a rapidly advancing class of foundational capabilities which are increasingly embedded in all types of educational technology systems and are also available to the public.

We will consider “educational technology” (edtech) to include both (a) technologies specifically designed for educational use, as well as (b) general technologies that are widely used in educational settings.

AI can be defined as “automation based on associations”. When computers automate reasoning based on associations in data (or associations deduced from expert knowledge), two shifts fundamental to AI occur and shift computing beyond conventional edtech: (1) from capturing data to detecting patterns in data; (2) from providing access to instructional resources to automating decisions about instruction and other educational processes.

Detecting patterns and automating decisions are leaps in the level of responsibilities that can be delegated to a computer system. The process of developing an AI system may lead to bias in how patterns are detected and unfairness in how decisions are automated. Thus, educational systems must govern their use of AI systems.

**Purposes / Objectives**

This report describes opportunities for using AI to improve education, recognizes challenges that will arise, and develops recommendations to guide further policy development.

**Methodology**

To develop guidance for edtech, the Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology, works closely with educational constituents. These constituents include educational leaders—teachers, faculty, support staff, and other educators—researchers; policymakers; advocates and funders; technology developers; community members and organizations; and, above all, learners and their families/caregivers.

Through a series of four listening sessions conducted in June and August 2022 and attended by more than 700 attendees, it became clear that constituents believe that action is required now in order to get ahead of the expected increase of AI in education technology—and they want to roll up their sleeves and start working together.

**Organization of this report**

It begins by elaborating a definition of AI, followed by addressing learning, teaching, assessment, and research and development. Organizing key insights by these topics keeps us focused on exploring implications for improving educational opportunity and outcomes for students throughout the report.

Within these topics, three important themes are explored:

* Opportunities and Risks. Policies should focus on the most valuable educational advances while mitigating risks.
* Trust and Trustworthiness. Trust and safeguarding are particularly important in education because we have an obligation to keep students out of harm’s way and safeguard their learning experiences.
* Quality of AI Models. The process of developing and then applying a model is at the heart of any AI system. Policies need to support evaluation of the qualities of AI models and their alignment to goals for teaching and learning during the processes of educational adoption and use.

Recommendations in this report seek to engage teachers, educational leaders, policy makers, researchers, and educational technology innovators and providers as they work together on pressing policy issues that arise as AI is used in Education.

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