

## **PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDY**

*...PK-20 Partnerships  
affecting statewide  
change...*



### **Virginia Educational Technology Alliance, (VETA)**

Additional Partners:

Virginia Department of  
Education

Virginia Association of  
Colleges of Teacher  
Education

Virginia Society for  
Technology in Education

Virginia Staff  
Development  
Improvement Network

Virginia Association of  
State Superintendents

Virginia Association of  
Secondary School  
Principals

Virginia Association of  
Elementary Principals

<http://pt3.org/stories/virginia.html>

"People at the various institutions said this educational technology thing is too big for us to deal with individually and there is more benefit in collaborating than in not collaborating."

--Rich Ingram

Dean, College of Education, James Madison University

### **Virginia Finds Strength in Numbers**

In 1998, the deans of seven of Virginia's leading teacher preparation programs and leaders from the state higher education agency formed a new partnership to help Virginia's teachers infuse technology throughout the teaching and learning process. The result is the Virginia Educational Technology Alliance (VETA), an alliance that came together because education leaders saw strength in joining together.

Leaders agreed that the alliance brings economies of scale and division of labor that makes for a more effective effort. Collectively, VETA's seven member institutions - the University of Virginia The College of William & Mary, Virginia Tech, Old Dominion University, George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University and James Madison University - graduate nearly 3,300 teachers annually, or 70 percent of Virginia's new teachers.

One of VETA's guiding principles is to align all renewal efforts with ISTE, NCATE, INTASC and NBPTS national standards as well as the Virginia Department of Education's six-year technology plan.

In 1999, the new PT3 grant competition gave VETA the opportunity to expand its scope to include both inservice and preservice teachers. The grant allowed VETA to implement the PREPTech project, or "The Partnership to Renew Educational Preparation in Technology." VETA had already laid the groundwork for methods faculty to be thinking about technology integration.

## **Stakeholders Add to Consortium's Reach**

VETA's PREPTech effort also added several education organizations to the consortium that made the total technology push even more effective. Partners include the Virginia Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (VCATE), the Virginia Society for Technology in Education (VSTE), the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Staff Development Improvement Network (VSDIN).

In addition, VETA involved the Virginia Association of State Superintendents, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and the Virginia Association of Elementary Principals in the planning to ensure that efforts merged with administrative preparation programs.

## **PREPTech Project Goals**

It focuses on three core strands for technology integration into preservice education: 1. methods course renewal, 2. higher educational faculty renewal. 3. collaboration and dissemination.

## **PREPTech Project Highlights**

**Methods Course Renewal.** The benefit of a statewide alliance that includes all key stakeholders is evident in PREPTech's methods course renewal efforts. At the annual Technology Methods Summit the grant hosts brainstorm sessions with groups that include consortia representatives. The results of these sessions are specific recommendations for integrating technology into methods courses. These recommendations are then disseminated to all 38 preservice education programs in Virginia through VCATE and eventually will be disseminated to a national audience through the annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.

**Technology Methods Summits.** To encourage collaboration between methods faculty at consortia institutions, a PREPTech institution annually hosts the Technology Methods Summit. The Summits provide open street fair sessions to share best practice and innovation across institutions and methods groups, methods group course renewal breakout sessions, and open technology faculty development sessions. Content areas include mathematics, science, social studies, reading/language arts, special education/assistive technology, early childhood and technology leaders.

**Technology Internships.** Opportunities for cross-institution internships building on each school's strengths are built into the PREPTech program. For example, preservice history teachers from each VETA institution were invited to do practicum work as visiting students with the Center for Digital History at the University of Virginia, and special education preservice teachers were invited to work with George Mason's assistive technology faculty. This effort reaches both faculty and student participants.

**Technology Resource Depositories.** The technology resource depository at each partner institution is designed to provide increased software and hardware access to preservice teachers and their faculty. These resources are made available for checkout for personal examination or to take into field placements. Each institution has implemented a unique plan for the technology resource depositories based on their needs and preexisting resources.

### **Lessons Learned**

VETA expects 100 percent of its teacher preparation programs to have redesigned their curricula to include technology best practices by the time the three-year grant ends.

**The Multiplier Effect.** "VETA gave Virginia a two-year head start on PT3," says James Madison's Rich Ingram. "There is tremendous leverage in the VETA collective. Instead of doing something that impacts 300 students a year, we do something now, disseminate it through VETA, and all of a sudden we're impacting over 70% of the teacher education students."

**Long-Term Commitment.** VETA project director L.B. Berg cautioned that the kind of change VETA and PT3 are trying to institute requires longitudinal work; systemic reform cannot be achieved in the short term. Scalability and sustainability must be built into the plan from the start, he says, and adds that VETA's efforts will continue long after the PT3 grant funds are exhausted.

**Multiple Communication Strategies:** Working with a state-wide coalition presents certain challenges. Berg warns that state-wide projects need multimodal communication strategies and need to address multiple motivation paradigms. VETA would be even more effective, he believes, if the project were part of a larger vision addressing inter-institutional and inter-organizational collaboration.

Other state wide change initiatives involving PT3 partnerships include the states of Alabama, California, Maryland and Mississippi. To find out more, visit the PT3 web site: [http://pt3.org/stories/statewide\\_change.html](http://pt3.org/stories/statewide_change.html)

