#DigitalEquityStories

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Introduce yourself, who are you what do you do? My name is Dr. Desiree Alexander and 1 am the Founder CEO of Educator Alexander Consulting and the Regional Director of North Louisiana for the educational non-profit Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana. 1 am a former middle and high school English teacher, middle and high school librarian, teen public librarian consultant and district instructional technology supervisor. 1 have been in education since 2002 and there is nothing else 1 have ever wanted to do. Now 1 teach educators for a living...1 am truly living my dream!

How did you arrive at this career (or point in your life/work)? 1 was the little girl playing school while others were outside running around. 1 have always wanted to be a teacher. My second semester of teaching, 1 became a mentor to student teachers and in my second year teaching 1 began making materials to help new teachers to my district and my school. 1 feel helping students through helping educators is my life's calling! When 1 was able to do it full-time and on my own terms, 1 jumped at the chance and have not regretted it one second.

What do you believe digital equity in education means? Digital equity in education means not providing the same thing to every student, but ensuring every student has what he/she/they need to have the same opportunities to be successful. And while a first step is to ensure access to devices and access to the 1nternet, we should be beyond that in 2020. We should be taking steps to discuss how digital equity combats social justice issues.

1Technology professional development plans are often surface level and exclude discussing digital equity and literacy as ways to not only increase technology usage, but to combat social justice issues, such as the digital divide. 1 believe true digital equity in education is three-pronged: We have to make sure students have access, they are able to use that access for fulfillment and furthering of life goals, and that access and use lead to combating social justice issues in society.

What does digital equity look like in your classroom/school/community etc? 1t looks like students who have access to devices and strong 1nternet signals who know how to use technology in powerful ways to make statements, get jobs and get degrees. 1t looks like students using technology to advance their lives and it being so commonplace that they do not cherish it or even know how lucky they are to have it.

What three tips do you have for educators starting out with digital equity work? Don't be afraid to speak up. Those who tell you there are such things as "cards," such as the race card, the gender card are using a defense mechanism because you speaking up makes them uncomfortable. Well, if any one person in a space feels uncomfortable because of inequity, then we should all feel uncomfortable. Speak up for yourself. Ask for a seat at the table. Should you have to ask? No, but the only way to change the system is by becoming the system. You cannot do it alone. Ask for help, build your PLN, find others who are doing the work and work with them. As you grow, bring them along and as they grow they will do the same. Work together to create the space that is needed.