# AACTE AND DIGITAL PROMISE PARTNERSHIP

**AACTE, in its efforts to revolutionize education, is partnering with Digital Promise to support their efforts to address systems-level transformation that directly address the challenges students face. To achieve improved educational outcomes, it is essential to recognize that each student differs, and that those differences matter and can be leveraged for learning to occur.**

Digital Promise wants to ensure that each student has equitable access to educators and learning experiences that affirm and honor their identities, expertise, and cultures. Through professional development and its free and open-source tool, the Learner Variability Navigator (LVN), Digital Promise empowers educators to deepen their understanding of learner variability and embrace equitable and inclusive practices that support the whole child.

## Purpose of the Focus Group

Teachers create what they experience. In order to have a systems-level transformation, educators must have learning experiences that challenge the status quo of education. Deepening an understanding of learner variability can support the mindset shifts necessary for the learner-centered practices that support equitable outcomes and student success. Digital Promise has seen this mindset shift in K-12 educators who have used the LVN tool, supported by a self-study guide.

AACTE and Digital Promise agree that by adapting Digital Promise's previous K-12 LVN training success to educator preparation programs, we can ensure that learner variability is something that can be incorporated at the early stages of teacher education. To achieve this, we will convene focus groups strategically chosen based on interest, influence, and capacity to learn about the resources available through the Learner Variability Project and what professional development opportunities would be of interest to AACTE members.

### Education Professors

"The learning models allow me to show learner variability in a visual and hands-on way to supplement lectures and discussions. I build upon the content in my lectures and show accompanying resources that the Learner Variability Project has curated. When I use this in teacher preparation courses, the students respond well as the information is tailored to support instruction with relevant resources and strategies rather than top-down, broad suggestions. Regardless of study program, my students have shown an increase in focus and understanding through using these resources."
—Rachel Besharat Mann, professor of education studies, Wesleyan University

"The Learner Variability Navigator has been an invaluable tool for my students to locate appropriate resources and instructional strategies based on the specific needs of their case study subjects. The LVN allows my students to have a customized list of resources for their work with their case study student at their fingertips. I'm also thrilled that they will have access to this resource as they begin their careers as teachers."
—Jennifer Gray, associate professor, School of Education, Marymount University

"Integrating the LVN with the Triple E Framework is a powerful way to support teachers in developing learning activities that put learning first and technology second in a way that truly allows the technology to engage, enhance, and extend the learning outcomes."
—Liz Kolb, clinical associate pofessor, University of Michigan (blog)

## What We Hope to Achieve

In a K-12 peer-professional development project on learner variability and the LVP resources, we found that educators were supported in building upon their current practices: 100% of educators reported gaining a better understanding of strategies they use in the classroom and 91% of those educators reported making changes to their implementation after using the Learner Variability Navigator. Having the confidence to use tools and strategies in the classroom that are based on evidence is the first step to supporting better student outcomes. We want to create this same opportunity for AACTE members. Join our focus group and share your insights on what professional learning and resources on learner variability would be helpful for AACTE members. Sessions will be 60 minutes long.

### EdD candidate

"Understanding learner variability is key to fostering a safe, equitable learning environment where students feel accepted and empowered. The Learning Variability Navigator is a simple, educator-friendly tool that has allowed me to ensure my learners' unique experiences, strengths and needs remain at the forefront of my instruction. By acknowledging the various factors that affect their learning, they have gained agency toward driving their own education."

—Sarah Oberle, 1st grade teacher and Ed.D. candidate, University of Delaware

### K-12 Teacher

"We have made a huge effort to work on our anti-bias and anti-racist practices in our school and instruction. The learner variability [navigator] is another tool we can use to make sure that our instruction is as culturally relevant as possible."

—Elementary school teacher, Beaverton, OR