SR 953-12: Research for 21st Century Scholarship

**The Lack of Technology Resources in Schools in Lower Socioeconomic Areas of Washington, DC**

Semaj Zachary

Omega Graduate School

October 11, 2024

Professor

Dr. Ward and Dr. Geer

**Introduction**

The lack of technology resources in schools in lower socioeconomic areas of Washington, DC, is a pressing issue that affects educational opportunities and outcomes for students. I chose this topic because of my passion for addressing inequities in technology access, especially in underserved communities. My academic and professional background has exposed me to the critical role technology plays in education, particularly in developing digital literacy skills and providing equal access to information. In this essay, I will explore the challenges faced by schools in low-income areas due to limited technological resources, examine the impact of this deficiency on students' academic performance and future opportunities, and discuss potential solutions to bridge the technology gap in these communities.

**Search Terms**

Search terms related to the topic of this paper are as follows:

* The digital divide in education
* Technology in low-income schools
* Access to technology in Washington DC schools
* Educational equity and technology
* Digital resources in underfunded schools

**Challenges in Accessing Technology in Low-Income Schools**

The lack of access to technology in underfunded schools, particularly in Washington, DC, is an ongoing challenge. These schools often face significant budget constraints, leading to limited resources for modern technological tools. According to a study by the Brookings Institution, many students in low-income areas rely on public libraries or community centers for internet access, and some have no access at all at home (Lee et al., 2020). Moreover, research shows that students in lower-income households are less likely to have dedicated devices for schoolwork, which further worsens the homework gap (Auxier & Anderson, 2020).

**Role of Government and Non-Profit Organizations**

Various governmental and non-profit organizations have taken steps to address the digital divide in Washington, DC. Programs such as Human-I-T have provided refurbished laptops to students in need, but the demand still outpaces the supply. Nonprofits like Digital Charlotte and E2D offer digital skills training, which is crucial in helping students and their families navigate the digital learning environment (Bolkan, 2017; Reisdorf & Fernandez, 2021). However, while these efforts are valuable, the need for infrastructure improvements, such as high-speed broadband access in lower-income neighborhoods, remains pressing (Chamberlain, 2020).

**Potential Solutions to Bridge the Technology Gap**

To bridge the digital divide, it is crucial to implement long-term solutions that address both technological and social inequities. Schools and communities must receive significant investments in broadband infrastructure, as well as continued support in providing digital devices and training. Partnerships between schools, local governments, and tech companies could be instrumental in providing these resources (Aesaert & Van Braak, 2015). Additionally, increasing community engagement and awareness around digital equity could help create a more sustainable and inclusive approach to education technology (Lee, 2020).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the lack of technology resources in low-income schools in Washington, DC, is a significant barrier to educational equity. While various initiatives have made strides in addressing this issue, more needs to be done to ensure that all students have equal access to technology. With the right investments and collaborative efforts, we can help close the digital divide and provide every student with the tools they need to succeed.

**Works Cited**

Aesaert, K., & Van Braak, J. (2015). Gender and socioeconomic related differences in performance-based ICT competencies. Computers & Education, 84, 8–25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.12.017

Auxier, B., & Anderson, M. (2020). As schools close due to the coronavirus, some US students face a digital ‘homework gap.’ Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/16/as-schools-close-due-to-the-coronavirus-some-u-s-students-face-a-digital-homework-gap/

Bolkan, J. (2017). Home connectivity and the homework gap: Is the internet destined to become just another wedge pushing the achievement gap wider? THE Journal, 44(5), 19.

Chamberlain, K. (2020). Municipal broadband is roadblocked or outlawed in 22 states. Broadband Now.  
https://broadbandnow.com/report/municipal-broadband-roadblocks/

Lee, N. (2020). Bridging digital divides between schools and communities. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/bridging-digital-divides-between-schools-and-communities/

Pew Research Center. (2018). Nearly one-in-five teens can’t always finish their homework because of the digital divide. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/26/nearly-one-in-five-teens-cant-always-finish-their-homework-because-of-the-digital-divide/

Reisdorf, B., & Fernandez, L. (2021). No access, no class: Challenges for digital inclusion of students. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. https://us.boell.org/en/2021/03/31/no-access-no-class-challenges-digital-inclusion-students

Lee, N., Trimble, C., & Rosenworcel, J. (2020). What’s being done to address the growing U.S. Digital divide? https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/20200408\_digital\_divide\_transcript.pdf