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Article Abstracts

Reports of Research and Self-Study

Instruction to Understanding: The Emotional Underpinnings of New Teachers' Professional Development

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Abstract

This study focuses on the professional development of 54 newly certified, preservice teachers who participated in a masters program that incorporated a 15-hour-per-week internship in an urban school. Perceptual and independent data were collected from 10 cohorts who completed the program between 1998 and 2007. Findings suggest that new teachers' knowledge and practices change when rigorous year-long masters programs are situated in schools. The roots of these changes are the connections between cognition and emotion that emerge from intensive, context-rich professional development.

Refining Models of Algebraic Generalization among Elementary Preservice Teachers

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Abstract

This article describes elementary preservice teachers' models of connecting algebraic generalizations with a related contextual problem. The study followed a pretest-intervention-post-test design, with an accompanying survey. Subjects engaged in model-eliciting activities by creating instructional materials consisting of sets of related items that illustrated cases of an algebraic generalization of the form $y = ax + b$. Students also filled out an accompanying survey sheet regarding their attitudes towards the intervention. Results indicated (a) refinement and

expansion of models despite initial difficulty with authentic applications, and (b) students' attitudes towards writing generalizations and teaching algebra to elementary students improved.

Voices from the Field: Teacher Candidates Struggle to “Read” Literacy Strategies for Teaching Adolescent Literacy

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Abstract

A multi-case action research study investigated how teacher candidates respond to teaching literacy in interdisciplinary contexts to diverse adolescents after taking a graduate education course that focused on strategic literacy instruction. The data revealed that teacher candidates began to develop more positive beliefs of teaching literacy and that their knowledge of literacy instruction was evolving. By the end of the course, they were able to discover new content-specific literacy strategies and how they could be applied to actual classroom practice. The implication is that teacher educators need to provide opportunities for teacher candidates to discover and practice effective content-specific strategies.

Health Teacher Candidate Dispositions: Presenting a Method of Assessment

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Abstract

According to the standards outlined by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), candidates preparing to work in schools as teachers must know and demonstrate the content knowledge of pedagogy, professional knowledge, and skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn. An assignment was developed in a health education teaching methods course to help health teacher candidates articulate behavioral objectives for beginning to expert levels of teacher candidate dispositions in five dimensions. The assignment created a unique learning opportunity for health teacher candidates where they identified behaviors considered professional and appropriate in five key dispositional dimensions. The articulation of dispositional criteria and behavioral objectives helped the development of a method of assessment that was compiled in a document. This document is a useful resource for teacher preparation programs and demonstrates the educational unit's instructional staff's commitment to teacher candidate learning.

“This Camp Is So Fun. It’s Like Going to the Movies!”: Teachers’ Practices and Transformations in Students’ Affective Dimensions toward Literacy

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Abstract

In this case study, we investigated transformations in 9 first- and 9 third-grade students' beliefs about their literacy abilities and shifts in their attitudes and motivation toward literacy in a summer literacy camp for students at risk. There were 75 kindergarten through eighth-grade students in the camp and 52 graduate education major teachers. Students received considerable support because of the substantial number of teachers. Four sources of triangulated data show that 7 first- and 8 third-grade students displayed more affirmative beliefs about their literacy abilities as the camp progressed and exhibited more positive attitudes and motivation toward reading and writing. Implications are for literacy teachers of young children, literacy teacher educators, and school districts to consider students' affective dimensions.