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Article Abstracts

Features Articles of Instructional Technology

ePortfolios in Graduate Educational Leadership Programs: A Study of Faculty Perceptions and Common Practices

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study examines faculty perceptions and practice regarding ePortfolios and explores ePortfolio development and implementation in graduate Educational Leadership (EDL) programs using such a tool. The study combines descriptive (survey) with qualitative (interviews) research methods. The survey was completed by 209 EDL faculty with 105 already using, or poised to use, ePortfolios. In addition, interviews were conducted with a subset of nine survey respondents. Responses have been summarized to elaborate on major survey topics. Findings reveal three central themes: 1) assessment-centered versus learning-centered ePortfolios, 2) individualized versus standardized ePortfolio assessment, and 3) challenge of students valuing the ePortfolio process.

Preparing 21st-Century Teachers for 21st-Century Learners: Using Web 2.0 Tools to Develop New Literacies

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Abstract

Classroom teachers are charged with preparing students for the future in both traditional literacy instruction—reading, writing, listening, and communicating—and new literacies. In this article, the term *new literacies* is defined as the use of technology to expand literacy skills to digital applications (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Technologies, which have emerged as web 2.0 tools, afford all learners opportunities to develop digital literacy skills for learning to meet challenging standards requirements. Given the power and promise of instructional technology, 21st-century teacher preparation programs are compelled to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to gain expertise in technologies for teaching and learning.

The Social Self in a Virtual Context: Teacher Candidate Identities in Online Dialogue Journals

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Abstract

In a qualitative study of 22 (20 female, 2 male) graduate preservice teacher candidates' online dialogue journals, school and non-school related identities were used to construct meaning about course readings on literacy education for elementary learners. Candidates worked together in pre-arranged random small discussion groups online, using Blackboard, to read, write and share responses over 10 weeks. Their situated identities embedded personal experiences in family, community, and school contexts, revealing personal, social, institutional and cultural knowledge and beliefs that contributed to their professional socialization as teachers.

Building, Promoting, and Supporting Successful Hybrid Online Learning Communities: Practical Applications for Effective Collaboration from an Accredited New York City Teacher Education Program

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Abstract

The goal of this manuscript is to highlight experiences and reflections on pertinent issues related to successful collaboration in hybrid online learning communities and practical applications for fostering meaningful online discussion in undergraduate and graduate level courses from an accredited New York City teacher education program. Although the practical experiences with online collaboration shared stem from teacher education programs, techniques discussed may be generalized to other areas. The main purposes of sharing such reflections are: a) to explore effective methods for developing and implementing the pedagogical strategies used to promote effective collaboration in hybrid online learning communities, b) to describe suggestions for enhancement of online discussion techniques to maximize learning, and c) to reflect on the collaborative experiences from the perspectives of both professors and students.

Teachers' Perceptions of their Preferred Instructional Methods in Technology Training Sessions

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Abstract

This study examines teachers' preferences of instructional methods used by technology specialists and professional trainers during technology training sessions. Teachers identified their preferences and dislikes by rating nine different instructional methods. The results reveal that teachers prefer combinations of instructional methods as opposed to using one single method for technology training. The results indicate that when a single method is used without including hands-on activities, teachers' ratings are lower. However, when hands-on activities are combined with each method, teachers' preference ratings are higher. Majority of the teachers rated demonstration/hands-on activities and problem-solving/hands-on activities as their *most preferred* methods of instruction.

Reports of Research

Supporting the Whole Teacher through Whole Child Education

JoAnne Ferrara

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Abstract

This essay describes a professional development school partnership with a community school that focuses on supporting the whole child and also provides multiple supports for the teacher. In this unique school setting the needs of both the children and teachers are addressed through the network of partnerships that are essential to the philosophy of a community school. By their very design community schools create environments where teachers feel safe, secure, engaged, respected, and have rich learning opportunities for themselves and the students they teach.

Gender Inequality in Early Childhood Education: Why Aren't There More Male Teachers in the Primary Grades?

Robert J. Gamble

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Abstract

For the past two decades, there has been much discussion on the part of school administrators, teachers, and parents about the need to recruit more men to teach in the lower elementary grades. It has been argued that men can help to counter the "feminized" environment of primary teaching and help to break down traditional gender stereotypes (Greenburg, 1977). Despite the rhetoric, however, there has been little change in the demographics of elementary school teachers, and primary teaching, unlike other professions such as law, medicine, and business, remains a "gendered" occupational field (Sargent, 2005). In 2007-2008, only 13% of elementary teachers nationwide were men (Coopersmith, 2009). This paper will explore reasons for this situation from the perspective of administrators in Western New York State and report their recommendations for attracting more male teachers to the primary grades.

Nurturing the Imagination of the Teacher: Integrating Aesthetic Education to Develop the Literacies of Teaching

Jeanne M. Peloso

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Abstract

The focus of this article is on the preparation of New York City Teaching Fellows for the secondary English classroom. The challenge was to create a graduate writing methods course that allowed the Fellows to form a sense of self as a teacher while embodying the literacies of teaching. It was determined that each Fellow needed to explore his or her own narrative, or living literacy, to form teachers with embodied literacies of teaching. This article demonstrates the use of aesthetic education as a pedagogical method to develop the literacies of teaching.

“Third Space” in an Urban Social Foundations Classroom

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Abstract

This case study highlights one student and his work completed in an undergraduate social foundations course and underscores two ways autobiography can play a critical role in the social foundations classroom. Through reflection on his life experience alongside course content, the student was able to present insights on the social contexts of his own schooling that supported enhanced understandings of the social context of education. Furthermore, course assignments and pedagogical practices encouraged the student to critique texts associated with an education canon, and to place his own thinking and experiences alongside the ideas presented. Such practices demonstrate that foundations courses can provide a “third space” for students to connect home and community knowledge with more formalized knowledge presented in college. Observing intersections of this student’s autobiography, academic knowledge, and knowledge construction enabled this researcher to identify significance in social foundations courses beyond their teacher-preparation function.

Nota Bene

Book Review of

Differentiating Instruction with Technology in Middle-School Classrooms

By Grace E. Smith and Stephanie Throne (2009).

Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education

René E. Garrison

St. Bonaventure University

Book Review of

Start Where You Are But Don't Stay There: Understanding Diversity, Opportunity Gaps, and Teaching in Today's Classrooms.

By H. Richard Milner IV (2011).

Zanna McKay

State University College of New York at Oneonta