

Proceedings Submission

Title: Stages of Concern Demonstrated by Student Teachers During Their Clinical Experiences: Reflections from an On-line Journal

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Abstract

Within a science education program at a university in the southern region of the U.S., the methods instructor implemented an on-line journal during the clinical experience. Throughout the nine-week student teaching experience, a total of 66 topics generated a wealth of data related to science student teacher problems, issues and concerns. Using classifications from the Stages of Concern about Innovation instrument (Hord & Huling-Austin, 1986), the researcher coded each topic as a concern for Self, Task or Impact. Of the 66 topics, 59 were classified as concern for Self, 6 were classified as concern for Task and only 1 was classified as concern for Impact. These data do not support the developmental model of concerns in which students move from an initial concern for self to more advanced stages (Fuller, 1969, 1973). In fact, the science student teachers at this university appeared to exist in a “survival” mode throughout the nine-week clinical experience. The student journal entries clearly demonstrated low levels of preparation for the internship and poor coping skills when students were faced with stressful situations. Four recommended revisions to the science education program are articulated to arouse student teacher awareness of problems of authentic practice *prior* to the internship experience and to aid students in designing coping strategies.