

The TESH Research Group Q-folio: Reinventing Traditional Notions of Research in Teacher Education

Carl A. Young
Virginia Tech
Department of Teaching and Learning
310 War Memorial Hall (0313)
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0313
Tel. 540.231.1880
E-mail: cayoung3@vt.edu

Abstract:

Presenter will share approach to reinventing traditional notions of research in teacher education characterized by 1) an effort to development a community of practice wedding teacher education faculty with urban high school faculty and 2) the use of an online electronic portfolio, the TESH Research Group Q-folio, to facilitate collaborative research efforts by teacher education faculty.

Creating and sustaining communities and networks of practice within diverse settings has been a major goal for teacher education programs for quite some time now. This proposal focuses, in part, on the efforts of four university faculty and three doctoral students representing secondary English, Science, and Social Studies programs to develop a community of practice with faculty, administration, parents and community members from a nearby urban high school. Like many rural, land-grant institutions in which the majority population for both students and faculty is white, we struggle continually to design curricula that will prepare our pre-service teachers to engage *all* students. As TESH (Teacher Education in the Science and Humanities) faculty, we also face a second concern related to our ability to prepare our teachers not just to use “best practices,” but also to be able to skillfully adapt practices to their particular contexts. For this to become reality, we needed a diverse setting in which to place students. Therefore, when two students we had placed at a nearby urban school returned from their placements enthusiastic about their experiences, we began to consider how this site might not serve simply as a placement location, but as a larger community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

This proposal reflects our initial efforts toward the conceptualization and development of a community of practice through collaboration with our colleagues in the city school as well as our initial efforts at forging a collaborative research community. The TESH Research Group Q-folio tool became the thread that helped us to weave our shared inquiry efforts together, the result being a rich tapestry that we continue to craft and which represents the complexities of our research process and tentative findings—a work-in-progress.

Resources:

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Comments:

I had difficulty in deciding on a presentation category. I chose “New Possibilities with Information Technologies” but “Teacher Education and Faculty Development” might also be applicable. The presentation would include a talk integrated with a demonstration of the tool and some of the research efforts and findings archived there. I am open to suggestions for altering the presentation category should this be a concern.

Possible co-presenters may include Kathleen Carico (Associate Professor of English Education at Virginia Tech), David Hicks (Assistant Professor of Social Studies Education at Virginia Tech), and participating doctoral students in our program.