Teacher Education Changes, Transitions, and Substitutions: Technology to the Rescue!

Lynn Hartle, Univ. of Central Florida, USA

When, a new updated Early Childhood teacher education program with an entirely different set of courses had to be created to meet a new set of state competencies, a flexible course - Early Childhood Practicum was crafted to ease the transition and provide coursework for twenty-three students who needed a total of seven different courses in to graduate. The course individualized the learning so each student could complete the required competencies.

Technology came to the rescue as means for me to use email to keep track of pairs of students who worked with teachers in several schools on inquiry projects to improve teaching and learning for young children. The course design also included five face to face college class meetings and creation of a video tape. Successes of this learning experiences were win-win for teachers in the field and students. Since so much of the responsibility for creating and implementing the inquiry project was a collaboration of teacher and college student, the motivation levels were high and most results highly successful. As the professor, my job was made easier when the excitement levels reduced the need for an intensive mentoring on my part.