

## **Breakout Session II: Education Research and Pedagogy**

### **Title: Student Narratives as a Tool for Professional Development in Teacher Education – A Study in Progress**

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When a Norwegian student enters a teacher education program, he or she has had approximately 12,000 hours of instruction with up to 50 different teachers before even starting at university (Terum og Heggen, 2010). Many instructors in teacher education programs have a tendency to overlook this past experience (Bollough, 1991). The project aims to improve teacher qualifications by challenging teacher students at the start of their education program to consciously process their own stories and experiences.

Metaphors and stories are suitable for combining self-understanding, reflection and creativity (Ricoeur, (1981, 1984), Kvernbekk, 2012 in Press). In September 2012, 180 metaphors and educational narratives were gathered from the novice students. The data material has a narrative structure, and it has been structured in different narrative patterns (plots).

At the breakout session, we want to present and discuss our study more in depth. For us it would have been very interesting if some of you could be interested in doing a comparative study on some of these areas.

## **Breakout Session II: Education Research and Pedagogy**

### **Title: IT-applications, media, digital tools for learning and teaching purposes and their added value**

**Author: *Stefanie Hillen*** is associate professor of education at University of Agder.

There are three objectives for the workshop: The first objective is to find interdisciplinary and educational researchers who work with IT- applications, media, digital tools etc. for learning purposes, specifically, those who are investigating the use of digital tools, media, and IT applications in different educational institutions and contexts. Research shows that educational approaches have the tendency to follow the technological development. As a result of this approach, scripts for these applications are driven by the technology itself (how does it work? what are the functionalities?), and are not thoroughly considered for instructional use. The value of investigating IT applications would be the potential to increase learning opportunities, enhance the learning processes, and identify ways of learning which *would not have been able without the technology with the objective* of empowering the learner. These applications of IT have the potential to enhance learning within classrooms and for distance learning. In addition, the use of IT applications can be a remarkable benefit to students with disabilities by providing alternative modes of learning and access to curriculum. Learning outcomes and accountability oriented paradigms have influenced educational policies and practices – the efficiency for the application and use of IT, media, and digital has become important. This is a quite necessary but not a sufficient condition.

The second objective of the workshop is to establish a sustainable communication platform for researches specialized in different fields of IT- application for educational purposes from both Universities to find partners for collaborative work.

As a starting point, the third objective is to publish a book together, about the topic presented above. The focus will be on recently conducted research or ongoing research on the use of IT for learning purposes with a reflective view on the 'added value' for the empowerment of the learner.

## Breakout Session II: Education Research and Pedagogy

### Title: Learning at your own pace

**Authors:** *Hallgeir Nilsen, UiA; Even Åby Larsen, UiA*

The University of Agder has experienced poor results and high dropout rates in the introductory programming course, and many students are struggling in the more advanced courses. This is not an uncommon problem, and while discussing the problem with colleagues from another university, we were introduced to the Keller plan, or Personalized System of Instruction (PSI). The main idea is that every student works at his own pace; with tasks that are challenging and at the same time manageable. Our experience so far is very promising. We have seen improved grades for the students that pass, and recently some improvement in the number that pass the course.

We strongly believe in using PSI in programming courses. A programming course covers a large number of tightly coupled concepts. When we run a traditional course we assume that all students learn in the same pace. But they do not. The slow learners will not learn the topics presented in the beginning of the course properly, and they will struggle with the topics taught later in the course, because the students must have understood the basic topics to learn the later ones.

Using PSI the students will spend the time they need to learn the basics, before they are allowed to proceed to more advanced topics. The goal is that each student will reach his potential. The students will not learn the same (but will not with a traditional course either), but they will all learn more. A more long term effect is that students that experience mastery will strengthen self-efficacy which will improve their motivation to learn.

There are some pitfalls though; the most commonly reported one is known as procrastination: The students will delay working on the course, particularly if other courses are competing for the students' time. Improving the students' motivation to work on the course is the ideal remedy, various forms of reward systems might also work.

Another potential problem is that PSI can be labor intensive, which means it can be difficult to use on courses with a large number of students.

We have done this for three years now, started in 2011, and we have done adjustments every year. Next time (spring 2014) we will focus on:

Students work together, more community

- Have more variety in assessment elements
- Progress, suggesting 3 tempos: Strong, Middle; Weak

Discussion topics for the workshop in Omaha:

- Is learning in own pace a good idea?
- Is this a good idea in your courses?
  - Why?
  - Why not?
- How to achieve efficient management, tracking
- Costs?

## **Breakout Session II: Education Research and Pedagogy**

**Title: e-Learning**

**Author: *Ilze Zigurs, Ph.D., UNO***

Ilze Zigurs' research has focused on the intersection of teams with technology, in a variety of contexts, including e-learning. With Alanah Mitchell, she has published on the topic of virtual teams and ways in which virtual teams can develop their capabilities for effective communication and use of technology. With Deepak Khazanchi and a team of doctoral students, she has published on her experiences in conducting doctoral and master's seminars in virtual, global contexts. One experience was focused on virtual research collaboration and another on virtual projects and the technology capabilities that make them possible. Currently, she is teaching online courses and interested in exploring capabilities of technology for enhancing engagement in online education.

## **Breakout Session II: Education Research and Pedagogy**

### **Title: School Leadership Development: A Comparative View**

**Author:** *Kay Keiser, Educational Leadership, and David Conway, Associate Dean, UNO*

School leaders are crucial in shaping the school climate and in creating effective learning experiences for all children. Traditionally, principals, superintendents, supervisors, directors, headmasters, and others have been identified as the school leaders. Recently, the notion of school leadership has broadened to extend leadership to curriculum/content specialists and even classroom teachers who may function in other capacities outside the classroom. The traditional and broadened view of school leadership has implications on how individuals are prepared to serve in these roles, the demands of the various roles, and how this impacts student performance.

As part of our continuing collaboration with our colleagues at the University of Agder, faculty in education have been discussing opportunities to advance leadership preparation at both institutions. In June 2012, Astrid Birgette Eggen and Ragnar Thygesen visited UNO and met with faculty in Educational Leadership. The purpose of this proposal is to address three specific aims, namely 1) developing instructional modules that can be delivered across institutions using various distance delivery formats, 2) establish student and faculty exchanges, and 3) identify and undertake research projects (including theses and dissertations) that examine school leadership internationally in the areas of policy, educational structure, and learning outcomes.