

**Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Poster Proposal
Innovations in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
March 6 – 8, 2009**

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Poster Title: “What Do I Know? Where Did It Go?” A Study on how Student Teachers Use Theory in Initial Teaching Practice

Goals, methodology, significance and results:

Teacher educators have long noted the apparent gap between knowledge and understanding of theory of pedagogy and learning and the student teacher’s actual practice in the lengthy internship that culminates most teaching programs. Literature on teacher development helps explain some of this apparent gap; new teachers often go through developmental stages beginning with survival with maturing teachers developing effectiveness qualities with time, experience, reflection on practice and professional development (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Katz & Weir, 1969; Stroot, et.al., 1998).

In student teaching, this developmental process is encapsulated within this single short experience to some degree, and teacher educators often wonder how the need to survive from day to day impacts the ability to connect theory and practice in ways that appear before this major field experience. As part of a larger study of how teacher education students develop the ability to connect their field-based or teaching experience with theory about teaching and learning, my project explored this question: *How does a student teacher’s ability to reflect on and connect experiences with theory manifest in their written artifacts and thinking during the internship experience?*

The study was completed using the work of five intern teachers finishing the last phase of their undergraduate educations, student teaching. For each of the five cases, data sources included weekly journals written by each student, classroom management papers and philosophy statements along with short writings on a single classroom scenario that was the focus of reflection at three separate moments during the internship experience. Final interviews with each intern were structured around questions emerging from the coding of individual writings. The coding framework derived from the work on understanding described by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe in *Understanding by Design*, 2nd edition (2005). Initial results indicate that while student teachers may not overtly make references to a variety of theoretical concepts, these concepts do shape their practice sometimes in the face of opposing or contradictory teaching ideas in their field situations. The study has implications for helping teacher educators develop more intentional approaches to helping student teachers consistently

reflect on apply their pedagogical content knowledge to this initial teaching experience.

The author would welcome discussion on initial results with conference participants.