

Retention of pre-service teacher education majors using e-mentoring and social networking

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Abstract

The T.E.A.M. 2009 program is designed to give incoming freshman Pre-service teacher education majors a head start in their disposition development toward teacher education. Using social networking and wikis, the program will identify Pre-service majors as they enter the institution and provide high levels of involvement and interaction in their chosen profession long before they appear in their professional coursework. This effort should increase retention, and progression to graduation. This research in progress uses web-based social networking and wikis to provide: (a) a place to locate timely information, (b) a place to engage and interact with other freshman Pre-Service teacher education majors that are located throughout the institution, and (c) a place to engage and interact with upper level students in an informal setting.

The Florida A& M University College of Education teacher education program is structured as an upper level degree program. This structure means that students can indicate their interest in pursuing a teaching degree upon admission to the university. However, these students are not fully admitted into the teacher education major until the start of their junior year. Focusing on identified programs, activities and services that will support these students during the first two years before they are admitted into teacher education, has the potential of increasing the number of students who persist at the institution, the number that remain committed to the teaching profession, and will have been socialized into the teaching profession long before they are admitted to a teacher education program and coursework.

Key Words: Retention, Progression, Social Networking, Web-based, Pre-Service