

Mentor's Introduction

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Conventional wisdom suggests that a characteristic of some research is the intellectual movement from a "felt", obscure and amorphous relationship with a general problem to a direct, precise and specific relationship to a particular problem.

Paradoxically, this movement may be the product of beginning with a series of direct perceptual and conceptual personal experiences. These experiences generate a constant and annoying curiosity. That curiosity guides a focus on developing both an audacious knowledge and an alternate array of potential solutions to the original problems gleaned from personal experience. The examined knowledge and the possible problem solutions ultimately are designed to actively communicate with others, whether in the area of theory or in related structure for practice.

Among generalizations which guide educational growth are the often acknowledged principles of learning organization. These principles center on designing learning to proceed from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown or from the concrete to the abstract.

Elisabeth Hartung began her research with a set of personal experiences based on her practices as a high school art teacher. Out of these experiences, involving the thinking behavior of adolescents, she began to generate focal observations about the processes students use to organize their thinking in art. She soon discovered that if the large principles of educational growth were to have more than rhetorical meaning they must be examined in precise detail. Since the "essence" of these principles relates to the general process of thinking and the specific aspect of organizing thinking, she approached the problem at the microlevel of the nature of the sequencing task. If the general principles are to be helpful to both herself and other practitioners the manageable area of sequencing as a student strategy for learning should

be examined with care.

It is both methodological confidence coupled with a persistent need to intelligently respond to fundamental problems that motivates the work of Elisabeth Hartung.