

Supporting New Members as They Transition into our Science Education Community of Practice

Gayle A. Buck, Science Education, gabuck@indiana.edu
Valarie L. Akerson, Science Education, vakerson@indiana.edu

Abstract: The doctoral program is the traditional pathway to the science education research community of practice (CoP). In this chapter, we describe a self-study that explored how well the traditional interdependent processes inherent in the science education doctoral program at our university is functioning in terms of bringing newcomers, first-year doctoral students, into the contemporary field of science education. Specifically, we looked across the components of our doctoral program by focusing on how well the structure influences identity formation and legitimate participation in the science teacher education CoP. Our findings challenged and ultimately enhanced our theoretical and practical understandings of 1) the boundaries and peripheries of our CoP, 2) doctoral students' identity development during the first-year, 3) how to help the students negotiate the path to the CoP, and 4) the distinction between reified standards and competent engagement. These understandings are now taken outside of ourselves and made public, thereby allowing for challenges, transformations, translations, and extensions by others (Loughran, 2004). Although the research focuses on our understandings and practice, the discussion resides within the larger science teacher education CoP.