

## Waiting for the Expert to Arrive: Using a Community of Practice to Develop the Scholarly Identity of Doctoral Students

Karie Coffman, Paul Putman, Anthony Adkisson, Bridget Kriner, and Catherine Monaghan  
*Cleveland State University*

This qualitative study examined the identity of doctoral students in their quest to become scholars. The research question asked: What impact did a Community of Practice have on the doctoral students? The findings illustrated that on the journey the participants struggled to integrate multiple identities and roles. They also refined their identities within the liminal spaces of the doctoral process and the Community of Practice (CoP). The CoP provided validation to help the participants grow and emerge into scholars as they built relationship through the many opportunities they used to co-create knowledge for themselves and others. Under the guidance and direction of an expert and scholar in the field, we held the vision of becoming experts within our respective subject areas, trusting the CoP to facilitate the process of our transformation into scholars.

Talk with students currently in a doctoral program or those who have completed their program, and they will surely share how the experience comes with an ample amount of work requiring lots of time, sweat, and maybe even tears. In addition, they may further reveal that the experience of a doctoral program is not complete without also facing some anxieties and fears about the mastery of what it means to be a scholar or expert within a chosen discipline: anxieties about the worthiness of his or her research, or the competency to present research to groups of established scholars, or even submitting research for publication and facing criticism of prospective peers in a positive way, and the list could continue. The process of becoming a researcher and adopting a professional and scholarly identity is a process of transformation and identity development beyond that of an undergraduate or masters level student.

For us, the terms “scholar” and “expert” are interchangeable. Merriam-Webster defines expert as “having or showing special skill or knowledge because of what you have been taught or what you have experienced” and scholar as “person who has studied a subject for a long time and knows a lot about it: an intelligent and well-educated person who knows a particular subject very well” (“Merriam-Webster”, n.d.). Caley and colleagues (2014) define an expert as “someone with a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge in a particular area not possessed by most people” (p. 232). Burgman and colleagues (2011) define experts as “those with certain qualifications, track record, and experience” (p. 1). With these definitions, a case could be made for the successful completion of a doctoral program as evidence of becoming a scholar or expert. Yet a scholarly identity was, in our minds, beyond our grasp. It must be the result of more experience, more education, more published research, more conference presentations—whatever we might possess; in our minds a scholar or expert was someone who was a step beyond our own

accomplishments. Berliner (1986) identifies problems in studying expertise; “the grand master in chess, of course, has won thousands of games against tough opponents. Points and wins are accrued over time. In the same way an Olympic champion is accorded his or her gold medal. In such cases agreement about who is and is not an expert is easy to obtain” (p. 8), but it is not always so easy, particularly within academia. Part of our process involved demystifying scholarly practice and moving closer to owning the identity of scholar or expert.

The following is a research project that examines how the identities of three doctoral students and a recent doctoral program graduate in an adult education program at an urban university developed over time using the concept of Communities of Practice (CoP). While demonstrating the use of CoP to influence the development of the participants’ identities, the research will further illustrate how a doctoral program functions as a liminal space complete with traditional practices and certain rites of passage in helping move students closer towards an identity as a scholar. The exploration into the development of a scholarly identity attempts to address the need for further research about identity development of adult students in higher education (Kasworm, 2010), while also highlighting that identity development is not isolated to traditional teaching methods alone (Jimenez-Silva & Olsen 2012).

### Literature Review

Lave and Wenger (1991) first postulated CoP as a means of co-creating knowledge. It has been applied to many arenas, such as business (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), higher education (Monaghan, 2009), and management education (Monaghan, 2011), to name a few. Communities of Practice consist of individuals who organically form a learning community to assist them in self-directed, collaborative co-creation of knowledge. In most instances, this may be driven by a

desire to enhance the learner's professional development. The CoP framework guided this study from beginning to end. This particular CoP formed during a doctoral class in an urban university, and the members of this community continue to meet monthly almost three years later to continue various projects. The continuation of this CoP was a result of the members' desire to continue their professional development from novice to expert scholars in their field. This literature review will focus on CoP in higher education with an emphasis on doctoral studies, identity development and the development of emerging scholars, the liminal nature of doctoral studies, and transformational learning.

### Communities of Practice in Higher Education

Wenger (1999) argues that learning is not an activity that can be separated from other situations and life experiences. He argues for a model of learning he calls a "social theory of learning," which encompasses dimensions of learning such as social structure, collectivity, practice, meaning, situated experience, power, identity, and subjectivity. He does not propose that his "social theory of learning" should replace other models of learning, rather that his model is an attempt to understand better the ways that learning operates with the social structure.

Communities of Practice are used as a tool in many higher educational contexts; they are used in the contexts of faculty development and in both graduate and undergraduate level education. In a CoP, learning is both socially situated and socially constructed (Zimitat, 2007). A CoP can be an important tool for use in education, as it can provide a practice-based situation where learning can develop, moving an individual's knowledge from an accepted to transformed state (Andrew & Ferguson, 2008). Even in an online environment, CoP has been shown to develop elements of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire in participants (Moule, 2006). Further, it has been demonstrated that the use of CoP in university education can foster increased student confidence, improved communication skills, development of problem-solving skills, and acquisition of practical experience in their discipline (Yap, 2012). In a CoP, students learn actively through participation; in fact, "learning by doing" is one of the hallmarks of Wenger's model. Communities of Practice models of learning help prepare adult students for a more successful early college experience (O'Donnell & Tobbell, 2007). A CoP can be especially useful in a doctoral program.

The purpose of a PhD program is to prepare a student to become a scholar. "The program emphasizes the development of a student's capacity to make

significant original contributions of knowledge..." (Council of Graduate Schools, 2005, p.1). This transition requires students to shift from the role of course-taker to independent scholar (Lovitts, 2005). A course-taker is a "consumer of knowledge" that operates in a "tightly bond or controlled environment" (Lovitts, 2005, p. 138). Conversely, a scholar is a "producer of knowledge that often results from uncertain processes that take place in unstructured contexts" (Lovitts, 2005, p. 138).

It is somewhat of a paradox that research and writing are so important in doctoral studies but students feel "unprepared to make this transition" (Lovitts, 2008, p.296). Students encounter ambiguous expectations that they need to conduct independent research but struggle when attempting to navigate the scholarly world. This struggle occurs because students are not familiar with the practices of scholars and therefore do not feel part of the scholarly community (Lovitts, 2005; Vekkaila, Pyhältö, & Lonka, 2013). Creating safe space for students takes time but can make a difference. As noted by Turner and colleagues (2012), "Facilitating the development of an affirming environment can serve to enhance students' understanding of what is needed to become exemplary researchers" (p. 109-110). Doctoral students also need "support in interpreting the scholarly world and its requirements" (Vekkaila et al., 2013, p. 76). In addition to personal traits like intelligence and motivation, doctoral students need the support of experienced academics and other graduate students to facilitate the socialization process into academia and engage in scholarly activities (Gardner, 2007; Lovitts, 2005; Turner et al., 2012; Vekkaila et al., 2013). Pairing seasoned and emerging scholars in a CoP to engage in the process of performing scholarly research can help students make connections similar to the process described by Jimenez-Silva and Olsen (2012), where this combination of processes helped pre-service teachers "bridge the gap between what they learned in the courses...and their future practice" (p. 342). One of the outcomes of a PhD program is to help students develop an identity as a scholar, and CoP are intended to help participants develop their identities.

### Identity

Kim and Merriam (2010) take a sociocultural look at identity within a CoP. Their qualitative study found that participants in a computer learning course increased their self-efficacy and self-esteem, and they felt less marginalized than when they started the course. Another important finding was that the CoP allowed learners to hone their skills by mutually engaging with other learners of varied experience within the context of classes and social gatherings. Novice learners are not only developing a greater competence in a professional

skill. As they become experienced members of a community, their identity changes as they experience integration and empowerment (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Merriam, Courtney & Baumgartner, 2003).

Identity formation plays a large part in how graduate students, as adult learners, go from a position of seeing themselves as students to seeing themselves as scholars. Some of the research (Kasworm, 2010) in the field of adult education examining the role of identity and students has looked at undergraduate students in both community colleges and research institutions. It attempted to address the nature of adult student identity within these respective environments. Using social constructivism, Kasworm (2010) explores the co-construction of positional and relational identities. She points out that a student's identity is positional in the sense that the student is attempting to negotiate meeting the academic challenges set before them and developing a sense of agency as certain goals are accomplished successfully. Similarly, she points to the construction of relational identities as well, which are developed through a student's acceptance by others within their social environment, in particular with their faculty members. Kasworm believes the key to understanding the co-construction of the students' positional and relational identities is recognizing how their identities reflect multilayered, multisource, and paradoxical beliefs of themselves and their positions. This study is key for understanding how adult students 25 and older develop an identity as students in an environment that is predominantly made up of younger students. The result of this study demonstrates how adult students found and valued their voice within the classroom and that this newfound voice was negotiated through their classroom engagements and academic competence.

Deaux (1993) used the term "identity packages" to describe how a person maintains membership in multiple categories (p. 6). An individual's choice of categories and the meaning they attribute to these categories forms their identity. Deaux's concept of an "identity package" illustrates that identity is not singular but the assemblage of multiple identities. Looking to the work of Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004), Goldie (2012) posits "identity is realized through a dynamic process of identification by which individuals classify their place in the world as both individuals and members of collectives" (Ashmore et al., 2004, p. e641).

### **Liminality**

Further looking into the identity of students in higher education, the research of Field and Morgan-Klein (2010) proposes that "studenthood" or "the variety of different ways in which registering for an educational program is implicated in people's sense of who they are" (p. 1) is a distinctive identity form

related to the transitional nature of a learner in higher education moving from one status to another. To expand on this transitional nature of students in higher education Field and Morgan-Klein use the work of anthropologist Turner (1987) to discuss the concept of a liminal persona or liminality. In Turner's research, liminality functions as rites of passage where individuals move through customs and rituals to take on new identities while leaving behind old identities. According to Field and Morgan-Klein, studenthood is a liminal status because of its temporality. It is between the old identities and yet to be formed new identity, it is bounded by time, which determines when you enter and when you exit, and it has a prescribed set of curricula and customs that must be accomplished and mastered before exiting into the new identity.

### **Transformational Learning**

Another lens to examine the development of emerging academic professionals and scholars is transformational learning. Mezirow (1997) describes transformational learning as "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference" (p.5). Transformative learning occurs when an individual's perspective profoundly changes, resulting in a new frame of reference that will guide future action. This change is not the result of a lived experience alone; rather, it requires an individual to examine and clarify the experience through critical reflection and reflective discourse with others. The CoP provided the container for reflective discourse with others.

In summary, a number of studies discussed form the basis of the research gap that is addressed in this study. Both Kim and Merriam (2010) and Jimenez-Silva and Olsen (2012) demonstrate that learning is not isolated to teaching methods but can be strengthened using CoP. Kasworm (2010) concluded her study by stating that there is a need for further research on adult student identity in other collegiate contexts. Our study sought to examine the premise that the validation gained through participation in a CoP could enhance the validation of students in the scholarly community at large.

### **Purpose of Study/Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine the identity development of doctoral students as they became scholars. The research question asked what impact the CoP had on the students' identity as emerging scholars.

### **Methodology**

This was a qualitative study. Qualitative research focuses on achieving an understanding of how people

make sense out their lives, attribute meaning to their experiences, and interpret their experiences (Merriam, 2009). This approach was used to explore how the experiences within a CoP influenced identity development as emerging scholars. Data was collected over the course of fourteen months in the form of written reflection and analysis in response to the specific research question.

### Context

The participants in this study were three doctoral students and one recent graduate of the program who was also the co-instructor in the course. The course was “Advanced Seminar in Adult Learning and Development.” One learner was in her first semester, a second learner was at the beginning of her second year of coursework, and the third learner was entering the candidacy phase. All participants were interested in becoming professionals within the field of adult education and brought different backgrounds and adult education experiences. The fifth member of the CoP was the tenured faculty member who was the instructor of record for the course.

### Data Collection

The CoP conceived of a research project within the course timeframe. Research questions were developed, and all the participants/researchers agreed to write detailed reflection papers in response. In order to separate the course assignment from this research project, the reflection papers were written and submitted to the CoP six weeks after the course ended. That process and the resulting research paper and conference presentation led to the current research question presented here. A prompt was given to address the research question in the reflection papers: “Since the completion of the Advanced Seminar Course a year earlier, how has the evolving nature of the CoP impacted your self-efficacy as an emerging scholar?” After all of the participants submitted reflection papers for this study, the researchers, who were also the participants, proceeded to analyze the data.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data, several in-person data analysis sessions were held to review and code the written responses. Data was analyzed using categorical aggregation (Hébert & Beardsley, 2001). Each individual reflection piece was coded and member checked by two readers to highlight themes related to the research question to provide intercoder agreement, thus to provide some evidence of validity (Mitchell, 1979). As issue-relevant clusters and patterns emerged,

they were coded and recorded. In addition, all the researchers reviewed the themes and supporting data as a further aspect of using member checks. “We have found that members’ feedback [in a research team] is very valuable and sometimes helps us see or emphasize something we missed” (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 147). We report the primary themes that emerged in response to the research question in the next section.

### Findings

Several key themes emerged: multiple identities, refinement of identity, validation of scholarly roles, and struggle. This section provides a description of each theme with participant quotes to help elucidate the various themes. A discussion of the findings follows.

#### Multiple Identities

The CoP allowed us to explore the connection between our experience as scholars and our self-knowledge. We described the scholarly identity as one dimension of multiple identities. The theme of multiple identities emerged because the CoP not only nurtured the development of a scholarly identity but also provided the space to explore the connection between the scholarly identity and other dimensions of our “multifaceted identities.” One CoP participant describes, “I could look forward and think about how my new identity influenced all the spheres in my life – from personal, recreational to professional.”

We discovered that the interaction between the various dimensions of one’s identity is fluid as the meaning attributed to life roles influences identity, but self-perception also influences how one approaches various roles. One participant describes, “As I have worked on the development of my own identity as a scholar, within the field of adult education, I am also working on my identity as a manager within [my] organization.” The image of a bridge emerged to illustrate the connection between multiple identities that are experienced simultaneously. The participants expressed a need to bridge the gap between different life roles, particularly for those who have a career outside of academia: “One path is scholarly; one path is my current job outside of academia. At times I am able to bring the paths in alignment, but it is not as often as I would like.” Social expectations accompany life roles, and struggle can occur when expectations of a multifaceted identity conflict. At times, we experienced an internal struggle when attempting to bridge these gaps or navigate the complexities of our multiple identities.

### Refinement of Identity

Other researchers have discussed the process of identity creation or formation (Ashmore, et al., 2004; Goldie, 2012). Building upon that sense of active formation, we conceived refinement of identity as a process wherein identity is explored and reflected upon as a more fully realized identity takes shape. Similar to the way a sculptor might take a piece of marble and chip away at pieces that do not fit the final vision, members of the CoP had been chipping away at our sense that we could not be or are not yet scholars. The participants kept waiting for a specific moment when they would “feel” like the experts everyone said we would be. If an additive metaphor is preferred, it is also similar to the way that a sculptor might add clay to a sculpture, continuously manipulating and changing the piece until the sculpture is complete. In our conceptualization of this theme, the process of refinement is evolutionary in nature and has not come to an end for any of the CoP participants. Refinement indicates a sense of continuity as part of identity that it is not completed at any particular point in time but rather continues to grow and morph throughout our lives. Refinement of identity is further complicated by the multiple identities that we all possess as mentioned earlier in the literature review. One CoP participant elucidated, “As I add meaning to my role as a graduate student I begin to see myself as a scholar which influences my professional identity as an academic advisor.” Each of our many identities is at a different stage of development and is beautifully multifaceted. The participant continued, “My identification in each of these roles is at different levels of self-actualization as I consider myself an emerging scholar and a practiced academic advisor.”

The CoP began with the vision of “developing a place to help other members of the community develop their identities and expertise as scholars in the field of adult education.” As the CoP has evolved as a collective experience, so too have participants evolved. “...as I have transitioned more into working on my dissertation and research from my role as student and graduate assistant, I am more able to see a future for myself [as an] academic scholar.” The process has helped us validate our own identities.

### Validation

Participants characterized the CoP experience as validating, “[W]hen I shared my research ideas with the group, they provided supportive comments and feedback. They helped me to more carefully think through my work. This helped me to see my own knowledge and curiosity as valid.” Through participation in the CoP, a connection was made to

the larger field of Adult Education: “I had never seen my ideas that way before – as being something fresh and innovative.”

In this CoP the doctoral students found opportunities and space to develop their voices and identity as emerging scholars. Contributing to this is that one member of the CoP, the course instructor, is an established scholar within the field of adult education and served as a role model and mentor to the students. As graduate students, the other participants identified the instructor as someone whose voice and opinion was valued within the field of adult education, thus helping us to feel comfortable taking on the role of emerging scholars and expressing our own voices and opinions. Others have also noted the value of this relationship (Kasworm, 2010).

In addition, engaging in scholarly activities resulted in an informed approach to work outside the academic sphere. Newly acquired knowledge and skills guided decision-making and practice. One participant described, “I have gained program development and assessment knowledge so I am not only reflecting and refining my work but evaluating and considering new ideas to improve advising service.” The CoP provided an environment that nurtured the development of a scholarly identity, as well as a space to reflect on how it is realized in relation to other identities: “This CoP allowed me to sort this out through our interactions, co-creation of knowledge and reflection.”

Part of the challenge in adopting a new identity, especially the identity of scholar, is that there is always another script to complete and level that you need to achieve before you arrive. Academia is rife with milestones that are easy to conflate with clear changes in identity: when doctoral students defend their prospectuses they become doctoral candidates, when they graduate they become “doctors,” when hired by an institution of higher education they become faculty, and when they become tenured they have fully “arrived.” One participant elaborated on his future as a scholar, “I am more able to see a future for myself ... within a community based organization because I think there is a need within the community.” He continued, “There is a need to bridge the communities of higher education and community organizations together, but also as a researcher to tell the stories in an empirical manner of those, I serve.”

### Struggle

An experience of struggle was a very strong theme, as it flowed throughout all of the findings. Bridging the gap between multiple identities, experiencing the process of identity refinement, and seeking validation are not endeavors that effortlessly transpire by following a step-by-step guide for achievement.

Alternately, navigating these processes resulted in struggle as the participants situated a new scholarly identity within our multifaceted identities. “So I am left to wrestle with the question of how will what I have learned in the academic space be useful in the non-academic space.” This struggle became the disorienting dilemma that initiated the transformative learning process. “My challenge as I see it is to both keep up the scholarly momentum while simultaneously figuring out what will be my next steps career-wise. I’m seeking a balance that works well for me and a melding of the paths.” The need for balance revealed the disorienting dilemma as the participants experienced a disruption in their current perspectives. The CoP provided a space for the participants to reflect on the struggle that resulted from integrating the role of scholar into their existing identity.

### Discussion

The concept of “scholar” is often conflated with the title of professor. For doctoral students/graduates who are practitioners outside of an institution of higher education, this adds a challenging dimension to the development of a scholarly identity. Indeed, institutions of higher education may be enforcing barriers to practitioner-scholars through structures that reinforce the role of the institution as the keeper of all practices academic. This can then be enforced through the social network of those associated with the institution as a regulatory power. “One way regulatory power works is by categorizing people in terms through which they come to understand themselves. Individuals become subjected to the rules and norms engendered by knowledge about these identities” (Goldie, 2012, p. e642). In other words, it can become difficult for anyone to consider the identity of scholar outside of institutions of higher education and the roles of student and faculty. This often leads to doctoral students continuing to wrestle with disorienting dilemmas beyond the attainment of their degree. Once again, they may be waiting for the expert (themselves) to arrive.

Participation in the CoP facilitated a transformation from student to scholar by providing the appropriate environment for self-reflection and critical discourse with others (Mezirow, 1997). In the CoP that is both the catalyst and research subject of this current study, the members engaged in transformational learning as we wrote conference papers and articles while presenting at conferences. In working with each other we follow a few key principles for successful collaborations (Nevin, Thousand, & Villa, 2011). First, we choose to work together and continue to make that choice on an ongoing basis. Second, we are clear about the goals that we set both as individuals and as a community.

Third, we nurtured a collaborative spirit right from the start, using deliveryme.com to order food and then taking a break in the middle of, or during, our working sessions. Fourth, we reflect on how our projects and relationships are proceeding and celebrate each accomplishment; this celebration includes collaborative accomplishments as well as the achievement of individual milestones, such as a successful prospectus defense. Fifth, we are each responsible for individual tasks and expect to be held accountable for delivering. Finally, we are willing to allow new paradigms to emerge from our work together and actually find that shift to be part of our growth and identities as scholars. The CoP provided the container for reflective discourse between members (Mezirow, 1997), which fostered the ideal setting for transformative learning to take place: a safe environment that supports collaboration, reflection, and feedback.

Validation as a theme exemplified the relationship between the student and instructor and served as what Kasworm (2010) considers relational identity. Turner and colleagues (2012) present as best practice doctoral faculty members who “provide examples of their own research process, including dissertation completion, and the barriers as well as facilitators encountered along the way,” noting that “when accomplished faculty members reveal their challenges, they promote a safe environment in which students can reveal and overcome their own self-doubt” (p. 107). Further, Lombardo and Eichinger (2002) refer to competencies as the “universal common denominator” (p. 17) critical to success. This CoP has been focused on the education and practice of key competencies connected with academic professionals and leaders—including writing, publishing, and teaching—all grounded in adult learning development theory. In one of our many CoP discussions the statement, “Hold the vision, trust the process,” was used to describe what we were experiencing. Together we held the vision of becoming scholars and trusted the CoP to facilitate the process of transformation. As we waited for the expert to arrive, we realized that through this CoP, we had moved from novice to expert. All we needed to do was claim it.

### References

- Andrew, N., & Ferguson, D. (2008). Constructing communities for learning in nursing. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 5(1), 1-15.
- Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., and McLaughlin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 30(1), 80-114. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.130.1.80

- Berliner, D. C. (1986). In pursuit of the expert pedagogue. *Educational researcher*, 15(7), 5-13.
- Burgman, M. A., McBride, M., Ashton, R., Speirs-Bridge, A., Flander, L., Wintle, B., Fidler, F., Rumpff, L., & Twardy, C. (2011). Expert status and performance. *PLoS One*, 6(7), e22998.
- Caley, M. J., O'Leary, R. A., Fisher, R., Low-Choy, S., Johnson, S., & Mengersen, K. (2014). What is an expert? A systems perspective on expertise. *Ecology and evolution*, 4(3), 231-242.
- Council of Graduate Schools. (2005). *The doctor of philosophy degree: A policy statement*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Deaux, K. (1993). Reconstructing social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 19(1), 4-12. doi: 10.1177/0146167293191001
- Field, J. & Morgan-Klein, N. (July, 2010). Studenthood and identification: higher education as a liminal transitional space. Paper Presented at the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual SCUTREA Conference, University of Warwick. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/1893/3221>
- Gardner, S. K. (2007). "I heard it through the grapevine": Doctoral student socialization in chemistry and history. *Higher Education*, 54(5), 723-740. doi 10.1007/s10734-006-9020-x
- Goldie, J. (2012). The formation of professional identity in medical students: Considerations for educators. *Medical Teacher*, 34, e641-e648. doi 10.3109/0142159x.2012.687476
- Hébert, T. P., & Beardsley, T.M. (2001). Jermaine: A critical case study of a gifted black child living in rural poverty. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 45(2), 201-232.
- Jimenez-Silva, M., & Olson, K. (2012). A community of practice in teacher education: Insights and perceptions. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 24(3), 335-348.
- Kasworm, C.E. (2010). Adult learners in a research university: negotiating undergraduate student identity. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60(2), 143-160, doi: 10.1177/0741713609336110.
- Kim, Y. S., & Merriam, S. B. (2010). Situated learning and identity development in a Korean older adults' computer classroom. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60(5), 438-455. doi: 10.1177/0741713610363019
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (2002). *The leadership machine: Architecture to develop leaders for any future*. Minneapolis, MN: Lominger Limited.
- Lovitts, B. E. (2005). Being a good course-taker is not enough: A theoretical perspective on the transition to independent research. *Studies in Higher Education*, 30(2), 137-154. doi: 10.1080/03075070500043093
- Lovitts, B. E. (2008). The transition to independent research: Who makes it, who doesn't, and why. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(3), 296-325.
- Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide*. Philadelphia, PA: Routledge Falmer, Taylor & Francis.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B., Courtenay, B., & Baumgartner, L. (2003). On becoming a witch: Learning in a marginalized community of practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(3), 170 - 188. doi: 10.1177/0741713603251213.
- Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Retrieved from [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com).
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformational learning: Theory to practice. *New Directions for Adult & Continuing Education*, 97(74), 5-12. doi: 10.1002/ace.7401
- Mitchell, S. K. (1979). Interobserver agreement, reliability, and generalizability of data collected in observational studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, 86(2), 376-390.
- Monaghan, C. H. (2011). Communities of Practice: A learning strategy for professional development. *Journal of Management Education*, 35(3), 428-453. doi:10.1177/1052562910387536
- Monaghan, C. H., & Columbaro, N. L. (2009). Communities of practice and students' professional development. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 20(3), 413-424.
- Moule, P. (2006). Developing the communities of practice, framework for on-line learning. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 4(3), 133-140.
- Nevin, A. I., Thousand, J. S., Villa, R. A. (2011). Working with coauthors. In T. S. Rocco, T. Hatcher and Associates (Eds.), *The handbook of scholarly writing and publishing* (pp. 274-292). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- O'Donnell, V. L., & Tobbell, J. (2007). The transition of adult students to higher education: Legitimate peripheral participation in a community of practice? *Adult Education Quarterly*, 57(4), 312-328.
- Turner, C. S. V., Wood, J. L., Montoya, Y. J., Essien-Wood, I. R., Neal, R., Escontrias, G. Jr., & Coe, A. (2012). Advancing the next generation of higher education scholars: An examination of one doctoral classroom. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 24(1), 103-112.
- Turner, V. (1987). Betwixt and between: The liminal period in rites of passage. In L.C. Mahdi, S. Foster, & M. Little (Eds.), *Betwixt and between: Patterns of*

- masculine and feminine initiation* (pp. 3-22). Peru, IL: Open Court.
- Vekkaila, J., Pyhältö, K., & Lonka, K. (2013). Experiences of disengagement- A study of doctoral students in the behavioral sciences. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 8, 61-80.
- Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Yap, C. (2012). Bridging the theory-practice gap: Work-based business learning. *International Journal of Learning*, 18(8), 127-139.
- Zimitat, C. (2007). Capturing community of practice knowledge for student learning. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 44(3), 321-330. doi:10.1080/14703290701486753
- 
- KARIE COFFMAN is an academic advisor and doctoral candidate in urban education at Cleveland State University. Her research interests include student persistence and adult learners in higher education.
- PAUL PUTMAN, PhD is a Donor Relations Officer at the Cleveland Foundation and an adjunct instructor in the Diversity Management graduate program at Cleveland State University. His research interests are currently located at the intersections of leadership, diversity, and the nonprofit sector.
- ANTHONY ADKISSON is a doctoral candidate at Cleveland State University and Program Manager for an Adult Reentry program at Towards Employment, a non-profit job readiness organization. His research interests are liminal spaces, identity development, transformative learning, and adult education.
- BRIDGET KRINER is a doctoral candidate in urban education at Cleveland State University, as well as an adjunct faculty member at Cuyahoga Community College. Her research interests include literacy in higher education and adjunct faculty development.
- CATHERINE MONAGHAN, PhD is the Director of the Center of Faculty Excellence and Associate Professor of Adult Learning and Development at Cleveland State University. Her research interests are communities of practice, faculty development, and white privilege.