

Making my way as an educator: A 'figured worlds' approach to understanding developing identity and commitments to reform-oriented science teaching

Teacher preparation programs are faced with the challenge of understanding how factors beyond content understanding and knowledge of students affect the extent to which beginning teachers engage in practices which support their students' deep and powerful learning. Such understanding is critical in preparing educators who are effective, resilient, and who stay, particularly in those settings where teacher attrition is significant. While constructs such as professional identity and agency are important in contributing to such understanding, it is becoming clear that a more refined exploration of the worlds teachers inhabit is critical. In this talk, I will elaborate on a model we have been developing by making use of the construct of "figured worlds".

Originally proposed by Dorothy Holland and her colleagues in anthropology, figured worlds provides a rich set of possibilities for understanding how it is that individuals develop their identity as teachers and engage in particular practices which support this identity.