

PE Academy Research Lab (PEARL) Viewed as a Community of Research Practice

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Principles

Process Education is an organization that relies on recruiting, serving, and being served by its members. As Peter Drucker once quipped, “we're all volunteers”. Some of us are paid, some not, and some, like our members, even have to pay. The point is, our members are free to choose how to spend their time. So, we have to make it worth their time to be with us while being true to our purpose as an organization.

The primary purpose of our organization is to advance the knowledge and practice of process education. We do it through our members and affinity groups. As an organized group with a purpose, we meet the definition of a community of practice, as defined by Lave & Wenger (1991) in their book, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*.

We can view PE in general as a mountain with many known and unknown peaks. Some peaks are low and easily climbed. Others have paths of various difficulty to their tops. And some may be so unknown as to appear infinite and untravelled.

We can view the members as distributed across the PE landscape, each following paths that they choose. Some choose just to hike and enjoy the landscape. Others forge new paths by conducting research. All may benefit from experience of those who have climbed before them.



The new-to-PE folks start in the PE base camp and our long-term-PE folks may be climbing toward a summit unmapped and obscured by clouds.

Any of us may research by advancing up the mountains of PE and thereby becoming more adept. Adept at applying PE in new situations, validating and improving practices, or research that extends or adds new peaks to the map. Each contributes to PE organization and the upward progress of its members.

Applying the Metaphor

Here are some possible directions to apply this information:

- Sustain an explicit community of research practice (PEARL) that supports each member to flourish according to their own goals and to progress on paths of their choosing with the aid of others with more experience.
- Integrate scholarship with practice to improve doing, understanding, and explaining through publication, presentation, and workshops

- Explore the boundaries, in at least three dimensions, of the landscape of PE
- Promote relationships through events (like the annual conference) as well as cooperative and collaborative projects
- Purposefully create opportunities in our new projects
- Create guides with maps of PE's peaks and pathways and don't forget the areas of potential opportunity, aka "here be dragons"
- As we each are able, support members' learning & growth to participate at the periphery (start of a path) and to progress toward the various summits of expertise by progressively developing through training, experiences, projects, and coaching
- Recognize and celebrate member accomplishments
- Measure progress with PEARL by the engagement of the membership, the peaks discovered & uncovered, the paths mapped, the hikers and climbers, and their legitimate participation

