

# How Theory Can Inform Practice

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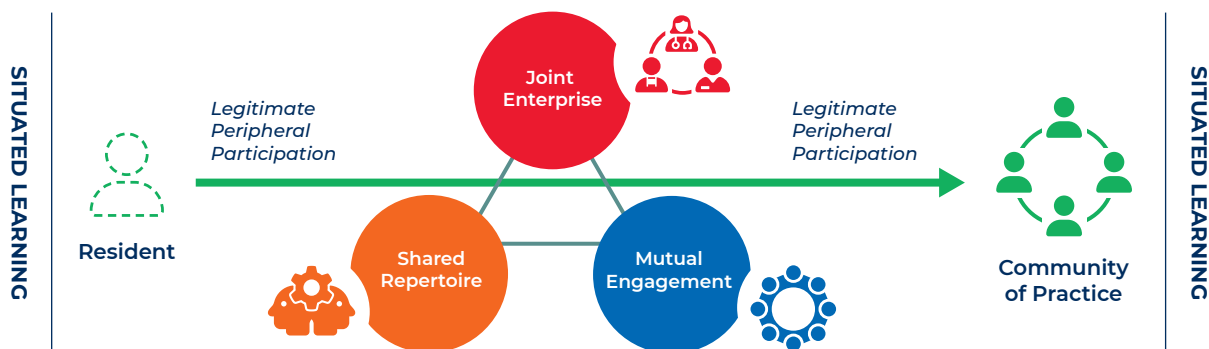
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# How Theory Can Inform Practice: A Case of Easing Transition Into Residency

Stephanie N.E. Meeuwissen, MD, PhD, clinician-researcher, Department of Internal Medicine, Department of Educational Development and Research and School of Health Professions Education, Maastricht University; Yvonne Steinert, PhD, professor of family medicine and health sciences education, Institute of Health Sciences Education, McGill University; Abigail W. Konopasky, PhD, associate professor, Department of Medical Education, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth; and Renée E. Stalmeijer, PhD, associate professor, Department of Educational Development and Research, and School of Health Professions Education, Maastricht University

Health professions educators aim to optimally prepare trainees for future practice; educational theory can help reach this goal. Below we present an authentic case, *I Just Need to Speak With My Eyes*, that displays the significant struggles of transitioning into residency training. Using this case, we show how the application of 4 learning mechanisms described in Lave and Wenger's<sup>1,2</sup> theories of *situated learning* and *communities of practice* can help ease the transition into residency by addressing issues like self-questioning and emotional turmoil (see the colored boxes below). *Situated learning* refers to learning in everyday practice and highlights its fundamentally social nature as well as the progressive participation of the learner.<sup>1</sup> *Communities of practice* builds on the notion of people learning from each other, viewing learning as a shared enterprise among a group of people with a common purpose.<sup>2</sup>



## *I Just Need to Speak With My Eyes*

*I just started as a resident, and from that first day on I keep asking myself "Who am I?" Suddenly, I have responsibilities, I'm on the roster, people depend on me. I'm a doctor now. The attendings say: "This will become second nature. You'll **get the hang of it** quickly. You'll be alright." During the day, I try to manage as best as I can: logistically, medically, emotionally; getting to know new colleagues; figuring out **how to work together** with nursing staff; patients, resident colleagues, supervisors, and all the other professionals. I closely observe my supervisors, their questions, and their solutions. At home, I start **overthinking**, which I share with my peer group: "Should I have done this differently? Should I have told my supervisor that detail I forgot?" In the morning, I check my patients and feel relieved nothing has happened overnight. On the positive side, the masks we're wearing due to the COVID-19 pandemic mean I can more easily hide my emotions: I just need to speak with my eyes.*

Legitimate Peripheral Participation	Shared Repertoire	Mutual Engagement	Joint Enterprise
To help residents answer "Who am I?" in this community of practice:	To help residents gain shared history and "get the hang of it":	To help residents "work together" with the team:	To help residents shift from "overthinking" to negotiating shared goals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively engage residents in meetings</li> <li>Share educators' unique roles and perspectives</li> <li>Think aloud while practicing (e.g., during physical examinations and clinical reasoning)</li> <li>Provide extra support for difficult cases, fading over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage residents to be observed and participate in different settings (e.g., rounds, patient safety efforts, handovers)</li> <li>Acknowledge and discuss important practices like entrustment, professionalism, case presentations, use of abbreviations, and electronic patient file management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create opportunities for meaningful interactions and information exchange (e.g., ward rounds, team meetings)</li> <li>Acknowledge and discuss diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and expertise</li> <li>Encourage and create peer support and collaboration opportunities</li> <li>Celebrate milestones, accomplishments, and transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make time to discuss and negotiate how to attain shared patient care goals</li> <li>Acknowledge and discuss clinical practice diversity within these goals</li> <li>Invite senior and peer team members to share what matters, experiences, and strategies for practice</li> </ul>

**Disclosures:** None reported.

### References:

- Lave J, Wenger E. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; 1991.
- Wenger E, McDermott R, Snyder W. *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; 2002.

**Author contact:** s.meeuwissen@maastrichtuniversity.nl