

Professor - Curriculum, Instruction & Foundational Studies

Leslie Atkins

Bio

Leslie Atkins began her career in science, earning a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Maryland. During that time, she became interested in the disconnect between the creative, insightful and idiosyncratic work that characterized her work in the research lab and the very procedural, structured, and rote activities that characterized her time in the classroom. As a Professor of Curriculum, Instruction and Foundational Studies at Boise State University, her research focuses on students' participation in the practices of science – particularly writing and design – and how science instruction can support creative and authentic inquiry. Her work emphasizes students' rights to their own ideas and the emergence of scientific practices from disciplinary engagement with those ideas.

Scholarship

Dr. Atkins' scholarship has the broad goal of improving science education by developing curricula and tools to better engage students in the creative, insightful and playful work characteristic of science. In a currently funded project, Engineering Design in Scientific Inquiry (The EDISIn Project), she is examining the importance of materials and design: how can engineering and design be leveraged to support authentic engagement in science? How might we transform introductory science labs so that they allow for such engagement? This project is developing tools and curricula to address those questions. In addition, knowing that new curricula and standards require new methods of teacher preparation, she is examining how teachers become skilled at noticing and responding to their students' scientific ideas. Through the Disciplinary Attentiveness to Student Ideas (DASI) project, she and colleagues Dr. Carney and Dr. Mo are creating assessments to better understand the trajectory that preservice teachers take in becoming skilled science teachers.

Learn More about this Community-Serving Scholar's Work

[Composing Science](#)

Contact

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