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**Author**

SUTHERLAND, Louise (MARKAUSKAITE, Lina)

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**Abstract**

Learning to become a professional is a complex process as students need to not only acquire the knowledge and skills for professional practice, but also new ways of defining themselves as professionals. This article considers the role authentic learning experiences play in the transition from student to professional practitioner. This transition is traced by through the concept of a professional identity. In a graduate teacher education program, the use of online discussion forum with experienced professionals to create authentic experiences is described. The Cognitive Product × Professional Focus (CPPF) model to assess the development of students? professional identity is discussed and applied. The implications an online discussion forum with practitioners as an authentic learning experience for other professional education courses and the use of the CPPF model in assessing the development of students? professional identity are discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Sutherland, Louise, E-Mail: louise.sutherland@sydney.edu.au