

## Report on Science Community of Practice 2012 – 2013

This year, to complement the work being done in math, language arts, and social studies for the VSUP Test Item Bank, VSUP established a Community of Practice for Science Educators. The goal of the Community of Practice Project is to provide on-going support as teachers prepare their students to meet the challenge presented by the new, more rigorous Science Standards of Learning.

All interested participants were invited to take advantage of the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from other VSUP school divisions, sharing pedagogical strategies and participating in conversations on the challenges they are facing in their classrooms, as well as working on writing items with increased rigor and Technology-Enhanced Items.

The first meeting of the Science Community of Practice was held on November 14, at the Albemarle Resource Center in Charlottesville. Libbey Kitten (Charlottesville), Jen Hancock (Roanoke), and Amy Spoonhower (Goochland) were selected to serve as Lead Teachers, and they provided a three hour training on writing multiple choice items with increased rigor as well as creating Technology Enhanced Items. In the afternoon, participants worked in grade level or subject area groups, discussing the pedagogical issues confronting science educators and writing multi-step questions which require higher-order thinking skills. At the second meeting for this year on February 6, the training was repeated for new members, and then everyone was trained in the process of reviewing and revising items. Once they have been reviewed, the items created by members of the VSUP Science Community of Practice will be shared with all VSUP divisions through a UVA Collab Site.

Our hope is to give VSUP Science Educators the chance to work with colleagues to create items which they can use in their classrooms this spring to help prepare students for the new SOL's. Members of the work groups have also been encouraged to communicate with each other electronically throughout the rest of this year, sharing pedagogical strategies and participating in conversations on the challenges they are facing in their classrooms.