Communities of Practice in Higher Education

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Who Am I?

- Industry experience in instructional design and project management for higher education, continuing education, and business and industry
- Teach and mentor master’s and doctoral students in learning technology
- Current research focuses on designs for learning in technology enhanced environments and computing ethics
- Serve on conference steering committee for Online Learning Consortium’s (OLC) International Conference on Online Learning – Co-Chair of Learning Effectiveness track for 2015
- 2015 Best Research Presentation Award – American Educational Research Association (AERA) Design and Technology SIG
Communities of Practice (CoPs) leverage technology to enable people to learn together.

The purpose of this session is to explore how CoPs can be used to support student learning, faculty development, and professional practice. Models to guide CoP development as well as strategies, tools, and lessons learned will also be discussed.
Process

• Define CoP and related terms
• Identify theoretical underpinnings of CoPs
• Identify applications of CoPs in higher education
• List tools used to create online CoPs
• Describe a decision-making framework
• Share lessons learned
Benefit

- Knowledge about CoPs and their potential uses in higher education
- Framework to guide design of CoPs
- Tools to consider for hosting and supporting CoPs
What is a CoP?

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4)
Three Elements

CoP

Domain
Teaching online
Learning online
Online identity
Technology integration
Instruction delivery systems

Community
Faculty
Students
Staff

Practice
Teaching
Facilitating
Designing
Researching
Theoretical Foundation

- Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977)
- Situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991)
- Legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991)
CoPs in Higher Education

- **Students**
  - Department or School
  - Program or Concentration
  - Dissertation Research
- **Faculty**
  - Research Collaboration
  - Professional Development
- **Staff**
  - Professional Development
Community Orientations

- Meetings
- Open-ended conversations
- Projects
- Content
- Access to expertise
- Relationships
- Individual participation
- Community cultivation
- Serving a context
Tools

- Blackboard or other LMS
- LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)
  - Professional network
- PBWorks/EduHub (www.pbworks.com)
  - Wiki-based online team collaboration
- Twitter (www.twitter.com)
  - Micro-blog
- YouTube (www.youtube.com)
  - Video sharing site with forums
- Yammer (www.yammer.com)
  - Enterprise social network
- Weebly (www.weebly.com)
  - Web site builder
Welcome

Welcome to the instructional design and development online research community. This site functions best when using the Google Chrome browser.

This is a place for those involved in instructional design research to collaborate and share relevant information.

Our commitment as community members is to create as much of a balance of give and take as we possibly can. That means that in addition to using this space as a resource, we hope that you “give back” by sharing your knowledge and expertise and adding resources to this site.

I want this learning space to be one that encourages experimentation and risk-taking. Let’s be respectful of each other and generous with our knowledge.

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Dr. Snyder's Web Site
STaR Framework

Snyder (2012)
• **Strategy**
  – What is the goal, purpose, or mission of the CoP?
  – What are the objectives and how will we achieve them?
  – What are the accountability benchmarks?

• **Stakeholders**
  – Who are the stakeholders?
  – What are their goals and values?
  – What are their roles in the community?
  – How do they benefit?
• Structure

– What are the characteristics of the CoP?
– How will we organize the CoP to facilitate knowledge sharing?
– How will we promote a sense of identity?
– How will learning occur (i.e., what instructional strategies and methods will we employ)?
– What will the CoP look like?
• Technology
  – How does technology support teaching and learning?
  – What platform is best suited to support the CoP?
  – What tools will be used to support communication and collaboration (i.e., how will technology be used to support learning)?
  – How will privacy and security issues be managed?

• Resources
  – What kinds of information will be shared?
  – What are the artifacts?
STaR Framework

Support
- Resources
- Strategy

Core

Sustain
- Technology
- Stakeholders

Revise

Evaluate

Snyder (2012)
CoP Action Notebook


Wenger, White & Smith (2009)
Pearls of Wisdom

• Template for sharing best practices
  – Goal – What is this going to accomplish?
  – Technique – What technique is used?
  – Tools/technology - What technologies (synchronous or asynchronous) are used to implement the "pearl"?
  – Outcome – What outcomes have been seen, or are expected, with this technique and how are they measured?
Lessons Learned

- Technology Acquisition
- Technology Stewardship
- Sponsorship/Ownership
- Privacy and Information Security
- Sustainability
- Turning the lights off (Ending the CoP)
My CoP will span multiple organizations. We have no budget nor tech support. We can live with multiple sign-ons. Some have limited bandwidth.

We have global, asynchronous discussions.

We share drafts, pictures, audios, and videos.

Sometimes we talk synchronously as a group. We like to record calls.

We have information about each other (directory). As visual thinkers, we like pictures with bios.

Yahoo! Groups
Google Groups

Email, Google Docs, Wikispaces, Flickr, YouTube, Dropbox

Skype, Google Talk, Screenhero, Google Hangouts

Flikr, PBWorks, Trello

Adapted from Wenger, White, and Smith (2009)
References


Questions?