



Community Wisdom

The newsletter about building and sustaining Communities of Practice

**December 2010
Special Holiday
Edition**

Page 2

**CoP Facilitator's
Course: Pilot Project**

**Back by Popular
Demand: CoP 101
Webinars**

Page 3

CoP Discussion Forum

COFFEE Advisory Announces

the Launch of an Innovative CoP Facilitation Course and Discussion Forum!

The COFFEE Advisory Committee is preparing to launch a course designed especially for those wanting to hone the specialized skills of CoP facilitation. This course will give participants all over the province access not only to information and peer support, but also access to a group of mentors dedicated to this project. In addition, we are creating an on line discussion forum to support COFFEE members and as an integral tool for the Facilitator's course.

As far as we know, this is the first curriculum ever developed to address the specific and complex needs of the CoP facilitator in the health care context. We are very excited to be involved in the creation and evolution of this course. If you choose to be a participant, you will not only be able to influence the evolution of the course but also you will be participating in cutting-edge research as health care looks at new ways to develop leadership and community.

This research has been made possible in part by a grant from Alberta Innovates—Health Solutions, as well as the support of Knowledge Management in AHS, SEARCH and Red Deer College. This support will make it possible for us to rigorously evaluate our virtual tools as well as our curriculum.

Stay tuned for more information on how you can be involved.

Community Wisdom Winter Newsletter

CoP Facilitator's Course: Pilot Project

Reflecting the basic learning philosophy of a CoP, the Facilitator's Course will be its own CoP. We are looking for people committed to enhancing their skill in facilitating group discussions for the purpose of sharing information and influencing knowledge integration into practice. The discussion forum will be an important part of the curriculum, and will allow people to participate no matter where they are located in the province.

Why a course in CoP facilitation?

There are many courses and seminars in facilitation, generally focusing on techniques for getting people to work together. Many have particular slants – facilitating a group of strangers, facilitating in workplaces where the team has conflict, or simply to encourage consensus or creativity. CoP facilitation is also a specialized form of facilitation. Nurturing a CoP with an eye to foster practice improvement requires a unique knowledge and skill set that encourages team member interactivity, teaches narrative-based dialogue and builds leadership.

Your Chance to Make History

Participants who decide to accept our challenge and take this course will be expected to attend the seminars as well as create and execute their own CoP projects.

You could be the first to earn a CoP Facilitator's Certificate. The CoP Facilitator's course is set

to begin in March 2011. Watch your email for more information on the course in the new year.

Webinars are Back!

Back by popular demand—the new year will see a re-offering of our CoP Basics webinars. We have taken the best of our previous 5 part series and condensed them to three based on your feedback. As with the previous offerings, the seminars will be highly interactive with lots of time for asking questions and sharing. The webinar topics are:

- How to build a CoP (Feb 28)

How do you convince group members to allow time for conversation? How do you choose your groups specific area of practice to talk about?

- Facilitating CoPs (March 7)

How do you build relationship capital? How do you keep conversations going between meetings? How does a virtual CoP work?

- Moving CoPs beyond the honeymoon/troubleshooting (March 14)

Is your group having difficulties convincing leadership of its importance? How do you know your CoP is effective?

These webinars will occur at noon and be one hour long, like the original webinars given in early 2010. All you need is internet access and a telephone. Watch your email for the save-the-date announcement and invitation to register.

CoP Discussion Forum

The COFFEE advisory committee has contracted Apis Design Inc, a Calgary website development company, to build a discussion forum platform that will meet the needs of our membership and this pilot project. In addition to the traditional written discussion threads, our discussion forum will have the ability to store narratives in audio format. Most importantly, it will be facilitated by a group of people experienced in CoP theory and practice. If you come to this discussion forum with a question or problem, it is our hope that the entire COFFEE community will engage in the discussion and therefore enrich the experience. However, you can be sure during this pilot phase that people with expertise in CoPs will be responding to posts and supporting people's efforts to facilitate their own CoPs.

In our narrative corner, people can share their practice stories and develop their storytelling skill and confidence. Eventually we hope to create a searchable library of stories for our users.

The discussion forum will also be a tool to support those who are taking the course. They will have their own section of the forum to discuss course assignments. For these participants, the forum will act as a virtual classroom.

We hope the discussion forum will go live by the end of January. Be sure to watch for our email announcement!



Community Wisdom Winter Newsletter

The Way We Live Now

Never before have we had the opportunity to connect to people and ideas like we do today – the internet has revolutionized our access to networks and information, making the idea of having to wait for an answer to a question even one day seem positively anachronistic. Today we often ask questions simply because they are now easy and almost effortless to answer. Even when we are faced with the complex questions in health care, technology gives us access to information we could have had great difficulty discovering before.

And while our networks were once dependent on propinquity, now we can connect with people around the globe instantly. In fact, through the magic and compelling presence of email, you may have more access in any given moment to a Harvard expert than his or her family has!

The COFFEE advisory committee wants to take advantage of everything this modern revolution implies to further the cause of CoPs in our workplace, and thanks to the support of our funding body we are poised for a really exciting year.

Barb Colvin

barbara.colvin@rdc.ab.ca

