

COFFEE's CoP TOOLKIT

Many professionals find informal conversations with colleagues are a major source of learning. They find sharing stories of work experiences helps them cope with challenges in practice. Although the participants may not be aware of it, they are engaged in a Community of Practice (CoP). CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and, interacting regularly, collectively learn how to do it better.¹ Communities of practice have existed for a long time, but due to their informal nature, have remained largely invisible within organizations and have not been part of the language of management or organizational structure until recently.

Cops Share the following characteristics:

- They are peer-to-peer collaborative networks
- They are driven by the willing participation of their members
- They are focused on learning and building capacity
- They are engaged in sharing knowledge, developing expertise and solving problems

What is the Value of CoPs?

- CoPs identify, create, store, share, and use knowledge
- They decrease the learning curve of new employees
- They enable professional development
- They reduce rework and duplication of effort
- They permit faster problem solving and response time to needs and inquiries
- They illuminate good practise
- They spawn new ideas for products and services
- They enable accelerated learning
- They connect learning to action
- They make for organizational performance improvement

Why the recent shift to CoPs?

1. A growing realization that positive

relationships between people make the workplace more attractive, less stressful and more productive, enhancing performance as well as recruitment and retention.

2. Interprofessional **collaboration** is vital - we work in very complex systems which require groups of people with diverse backgrounds/ experience to work together to resolve issues and challenges.

Organizations need to become more intentional and systematic about **sharing and exchanging knowledge** as a mechanism for improving practice. Organizations are discovering that there is real value in sharing ideas and insights that are not documented and hard to articulate.

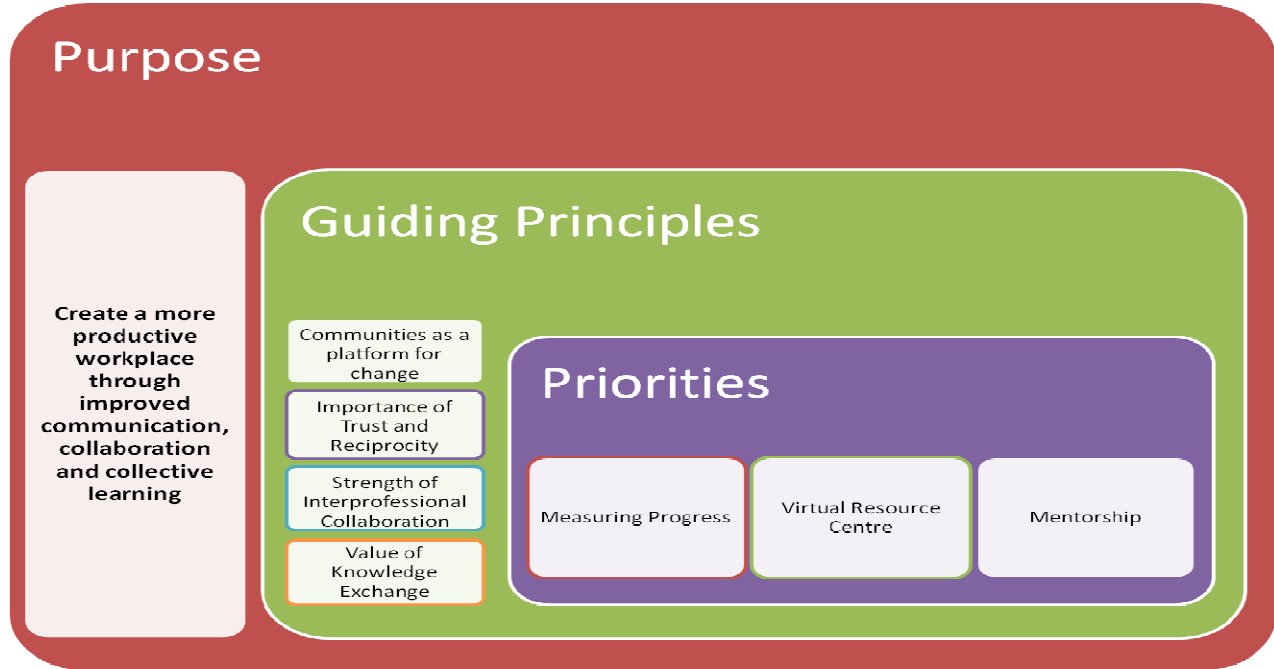
Who is COFFEE?

In the spring of 2008, a group of individuals from practice, academia and various networks came together to explore a mutual interest in cultivating and supporting CoP's in the health and not for profit sectors in Alberta. An Advisory Group was formed with leadership from the Health Workforce Research Network of Alberta (HWRNA) and SEARCH Canada. The membership includes an interprofessional community of individuals with experience and expertise in community development, human resources, medicine, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy and applied health research. The name chosen for this group was Community Of Facilitators For Education and Exchange, or COFFEE. The group is bound by passion for knowledge translation, interprofessional collaboration, the strategic use of CoPs to improve quality within their respective institutions.

COFFEE's purpose is to:

Build and support a community of professionals experienced in facilitating groups to enhance interprofessional interactions, collective learning, and discovery of new and innovative solutions to practice issues and problems in the health and adult education sectors.

What drives our group can be summarized in this diagram:



Our view of CoPs:

- CoPs require a specific and highly skilled form of facilitation, different from the type of facilitation skill needed to run meetings, teach, or direct a task force. Unfortunately professional CoPs don't spontaneously emerge and run themselves. They take a significant amount of work and commitment to operate successfully.
- The complexity of problems found in health care today are typically not solved by doing a literature review. CoPs enable groups to network in order to share stories, learn, and solve issues. CoPs can be an effective way to address complex problems.

Development of this toolkit:

Although the interest in CoPs has increased, many healthcare professionals have had limited opportunities to learn how to facilitate these groups – how to get CoPs started, how to sustain them and how to measure progress achieved. The following guide has been developed as a resource for those individuals. The guide focuses on these particular CoP roles:

- CoPs working on KT and practice

improvement strategies

- CoPs and teams working on strengthening the practice environment (i.e., job satisfaction or work load issues)
- CoPs consisting of people managing different projects who have come together to explore strategies to overcome shared challenges.

Using this toolkit:

This guide provides a practical approach to help you build, nurture and sustain your CoP. The tools and suggestions outlined throughout this guide are not meant to be prescriptive but rather offer you a menu of options based on experience.

This is a living guide which will continue to evolve as more facilitators begin to use it. If you have any suggestions and/or examples that we could learn from, we would love to hear from you. Please email your questions and feedback to: jackie.egg@rdc.ab.ca

For more information and additional resources, please visit our website at www.coffee-ab.ca

BUILDING COMMUNITY

CoPs develop around topics and issues that matter to people. Their practices reflect the members' understanding of what is important to them. Although organizations can sponsor CoPs, and through a series of steps leaders can help foster the community, ultimately the members of the community define and sustain a CoP.

Communities of practice have lifecycles. They emerge, grow, and reach maturity. One of the goals of facilitating a CoP is to help members achieve the outcomes expected of a mature community.

Members of a mature community:

- know who belongs to the community and center conversation around engagement in the shared practice;
- create and exchange knowledge of successes and challenges and develop strategies to enhance the shared practice.
- create and share practice unique resources, including stories, language and tools;
- use language not just to describe reality, but to share member perspectives; and,
- develop a sense of interdependency, trust, peer-influence and self-regulation.

Building the foundation of a community

Your first task is to facilitate the establishment of domain, the shared practice and membership, referred to as Wenger's foundation of a community of practice.

Domain: refers to the competences, knowledge base and goals common to community members.

Shared practice: refers to the activity that community members do and have a desire to do better. It is what they talk about. In the case of a natural CoP of amateur photographers for instance, community development is driven implicitly by the passion within its members to enhance their shared practice.

In contrast, a cultured CoP built for

instance, to support an organizational goal, must be explicitly fostered. Careful selection and promotion of its shared practice is the most effective way of increasing member participation, by increasing the community's WIIFME (What's In It For Me) score.

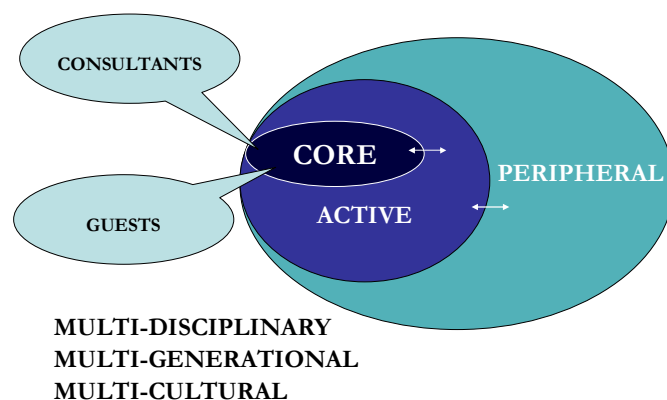
Membership: Refers to the people who make up the community. They fall into three categories:

The Core consists of members amongst whom the facilitator role may rotate. They model CoP behaviors and so doing help the facilitator to build the community. They agree to take on central roles within the community and are considered subject experts. They also give the community of practice its scope and credibility as they guide discussions and validate or dispute contributions to the community.

The Active group makes up the body of the community, showing evidence of community engagement such as giving priority to attending meetings and participating in conversations about the practice.

Peripheral participation in a CoP is valued because of their potential to bring perspectives on issues that are different from those expressed by Core and Active members.

Dynamics of CoP Membership



Tasks to get you started with community building

Task 1: *Identify members who ‘naturally’ communicate regularly.* Ask potential CoP members to identify colleagues with whom they share information. You will notice that groups meet in their own time, for instance, for lunch or coffee. This group may already be exhibiting behaviors expected of a CoP.

Task 2: *Ask your group to identify their Shared Practice; Membership; and Domain.* Once you have gained the interest of group members assist them to debate and decide the Domain (knowledge base), Shared Practice (what do they want to do “better” and will talk about) and Membership (who will join) their Community.

You can never design a community; you can only nurture it. It’s as though you build the trellis for the plant to climb on.
—John Seely Brown

Task 3: *Energize your group by sharing the potential benefits of a well functioning mature CoP.*

Discuss potential benefits with your Team at work. For instance, participating in a CoP keeps members up to date with ‘what is going on’ at work. CoPs help health care organizations to cultivate and legitimize practice reflection; strengthen team cohesiveness; and enhance high quality, safe care. CoPs overcome barriers to information exchange and promote knowledge translation “on the job”.

Task 4: *Assist the group to decide on their preferred modes of communication—email, list serve, web discussion forum; conference calls; face-to-face meetings*

Task 5: *Elect a Facilitator*

You are acting as “interim facilitator” while spearheading the completion of tasks 1 – 4. At this point your membership may request that you continue as CoP Facilitator or another core member may take on the role.

Management intervention needs to be carefully

handled. There is always a delicate balance between member value and organizational value.

Task 6: *Foster the development of a CoP Charter*

While participants are free to determine what they discuss and what they do as a community, they are still encouraged to negotiate a “charter” which provides answers to questions outlined below.

Discussion of the CoP charter is best reserved for an early meeting of an emerging CoP, preferably facilitated by the CoP facilitator.

Communities are reminded (by charter) that they have a relationship to the Team at work and its goals. CoP charters are not necessarily to “control”...but simply to articulate the common vision.

Examples of questions answered by a CoP Charter:

- What arrangements are made for administrative support; funding; time for CoP meetings and technical support for recording of conversations?
- Should CoPs be recognized by your department’s leadership?
- How conversations are kept confidential within the CoP and what records if any, are shared, for instance, with the department’s leaders.
- What are the rules about ownership of intellectual capital created within the CoP?
- What criteria are used to recruit new members to the CoP?

Task 7: *Professional development in CoP facilitation.*

Success of a cultured CoP is dependent on the skills and dedication of its facilitator(s). Although facilitation skills are best learned ‘on the job’, access to a mentor and a CoP resource kit speeds the learning process, helping you to avoid mistakes that can be detrimental to community building and the CoP’s WIIFME score. (See Facilitating Interactivity in this toolkit for more details).

FACILITATING INTERACTIVITY

Part of the reason CoPs are controversial is that there is no clear role for management in them – or indeed, for facilitation as it is commonly understood in teaching, running meetings or heading up a task force. The organic and informal nature of CoPs make them resistant to management supervision or interference in their activities. Indeed, too much managerial interference can spell the death of a CoP. Yet, to succeed CoPs need a specialized form of facilitation. A CoP facilitator is part network weaver and community builder, part team psychologist, and at the same time a member of the group, sharing the domain and practice area of the other members. The facilitator not only assists with community bonding, but guides the community in having generative conversations.

Facilitating in Today's Organization

In this toolkit we have cautioned against excessive management interference in CoPs. This does not mean, however, that their support is unimportant. A CoP facilitator can take on the role of guiding management into appropriate areas of support, whether it is allowing time and encouragement for members to attend meetings, or access to meeting space and technology. CoPs are not resource intensive. Some money for catered lunches or other technological meeting supports could be useful, but facilitators are cautioned against encouraging overly generous resources, or deliverables will be expected that may not necessarily align with the emerging focus of the CoP.

Building the Foundation

The first step is to identify the members of the

...competence is built as much on implicit know-how and relationships, as it is on tangible products and tools, because "you can't divorce competencies from the social fabric that creates them". From Handbook on Knowledge Management 1: Knowledge Matters

CoP and find a core group of people who have a passion for the subject. Facilitator functions can be shared with this group. In addition to recommending candidates for active membership, the core group can brainstorm creative facilitation ideas and act as observers for each other, giving feedback on participation rates, and helping to keep records for attendance or an archive or stories.

Establish Trust and Community Norms and Culture

Building trust is key. While we can learn from other's successes, we can also learn from their mistakes and struggles. However, if people are going to share these mistakes and struggles they need to feel they are in a place that is safe to do so. In addition, people need to feel the environment is safe to disagree and discuss differing viewpoints. Facilitators can help establish this environment by laying out potential ground rules and then collaboratively building a charter with the group that ensures respect and confidentiality. Facilitators can then model the behavior that will encourage the CoP's success.

It takes time for CoPs to emerge, to flourish and to become productive. In the early stages of the CoP, the community may find it helpful to discuss the phenomena and value of emergent learning as well as go through exercises that will demonstrate it. Early in the process the CoP must have a high WIIFME (What's In It For Me) Score. A facilitator will try a group's patience—and kill their enthusiasm—if he or she spends too many meetings having the group discuss charters or administrative details. Even in the first

meeting, try to reserve some time for practice conversation. In this early stage, you can have a "plant" in the meeting – a couple of people you have talked to beforehand who will come with a practice problem or story that the group can discuss,

and possibly brainstorm solutions. Get people excited about what they have heard and the possibilities for their CoP.

The Foundation is Laid – Now What Do We Do?

1. Encourage Generative Conversations

The rapid pace of our work doesn't often provide us with opportunities to participate in reflective conversations and networking in which we can explore questions and innovative possibilities before reaching key decisions. There is an idea that "real work" consists primarily of detailed – and often solitary - analysis, immediate decisions, and decisive action. By working this way, we cripple our collective capacity for creativity and fresh perspectives.¹

CoPs can be facilitated in such a way that the group can take on practice problems. Techniques such as World Café, the Knowledge Sharing Toolkit, and A Tool for Sharing Internal Best Practices can be employed by CoPs as ways to generate dialogue and solutions.

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf>
www.gesci.org/old/files/Knowledge%20Sharing%20Toolkit.pdf
http://www.infoforhealth.org/Sharing_Local_BPs.pdf

2. Storytelling

Story telling helps individuals and groups to connect with each other, share their experiences and reflect on practice in a way that energizes and creates lasting bonds. Listening to people's stories makes a difference to bonds of trust, as well as insights. Having a group tell their stories send a strong signal that many voices and perspectives are

valued. Individuals may feel reticent if they are merely asked for stories in a group situation. A skilled facilitator will start with a small introductory exercise such as the following:

Exercise 1: Introduce yourselves by giving your name and job title, something important about you, plus a surprising fact.

Then move on to something a bit more complex:

Exercise 2: Think of a day at work when you were in a situation – positive or challenging – you will never forget. Take 5 minutes to draw the scene as it, marking "X" on the spot where the most important incident occurred. Make the drawing as detailed as you can. Take 90 seconds each to tell your story.

See: http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_155620.pdf for more ideas.

Other storytelling techniques, such as Anecdote Circles, are also gaining popularity. You can download anecdote.com's ebook "The Ultimate Guide to Anecdote Circles" at http://www.anecdote.com.au/files/Ultimate_Guide_to_ACs_v1.0.pdf

3. Bonding

Don't forget as a facilitator of a CoP you are above all building community. Take time to bond as people with a common purpose, to share some fun and be playful, and to celebrate your successes.

4. Evolution

Encourage evolution in your group. Keep things fresh by trying new things, and do regular checks with the members.

Numerous CoP facilitation resources are listed on the next page.

Like gardens, (CoPs) respond to attention that respects their nature... You can't tug on a cornstalk to make it grow faster or taller...you can, however, till the soil, pull out the weeds, add water, and ensure... proper nutrients.

Wenger and Snyder, 2000

Useful CoP Facilitation Links

- Corrigan C. Open Space Overview Guide. <http://www.chriscorrigan.com/openspace/OST%20overview.pdf> Additional Open Space resources available at http://chriscorrigan.com/parkinglot/?page_id=957
- Vogt EE, Brown J & Isaacs D (2003). The Art of Powerful Questions. Mill Valley, CA: Whole Systems Associates. <http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf>
- World Café Guide. <http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/cafetogo.pdf>
- Cambridge D, Kaplan S & Suter V for EDUCAUSE (2005). Community of Practice Design Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing and Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education. <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/NLI0531.pdf>
- Centre for Disease Control. PHIN Community of Practice Resource Kit. <http://www.cdc.gov/phincommunities/resourcekit/tools/resources.html>
- Knowledge Sharing Toolkit: An Evolving Collection of Practical Knowledge Sharing Techniques by Faul M & Camacho K www.gesci.org/old/files/Knowledge%20Sharing%20Toolkit.pdf
- A Tool for Sharing Internal Best Practices by D'Adamo M & Kols A for the INFO Project (2005). http://www.infoforhealth.org/Sharing_Local_BPs.pdf
- CoP Reflective Exercise by Parboosingh J modified from the CoP Movement Tool developed by Thivierge, Gagnon & Parboosingh)
- Charged Up: Managing the Energy that Drives Innovation by Cross R, Linder JC & Parker A. www.robcross.org/pdf/roundtable/energy_and_innovation.pdf
- The Ultimate Guide to Anecdote Circles: A Practical Guide to Facilitating Storytelling and Story Listening <http://www.anecdote.com.au/papers/Ultimate%20Guide%20to%20ACs.pdf>
- Story Guide: Building Bridges Using Narrative Techniques (2006) by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. http://www.deza.admin.ch/ressources/resource_en_155620.pdf
- Pawar M. Committees and Boards in Healthcare Organizations: Barriers to Organizational Learning? Reflections; 6(4/5): 12-22.
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- Denning S. What is a Story? What is Narrative Meaning? http://www.stevedenning.com/What_story.html
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- Godin, Belanger-Gravel, Eccles & Grimshaw J (2008). Healthcare Professionals' Intentions and Behaviours: A Systematic Review of Studies Based on Social Cognitive Theories. Implementation Science 3:36.
- Parchman ML et al (2008). A group randomized trial of a complexity-based organizational intervention to improve risk factors for diabetes complications in primary care settings: study protocol. Implementation Science; 3.
- Senge P (1990). The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization. New York: Currency Doubleday.
- McDaniel R, Driebe D (2001). Complexity science and health care management. Advances in Health Care Management; 2: 11-36.
- Tarmizi H, de Vreede GJ, Zigurs I (2006). Identifying Challenges for Facilitation in Communities of Practice. Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences. <http://www2.computer.org/portal/web/csdl/doi/10.1109/HICSS.2006.210>
- Kimball L & Ladd A (2004). Facilitator toolkit for building and sustaining virtual communities of practice. In Hildreth PM & Kimble C (Eds.). Knowledge Networks: Innovation through Communities of Practice. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Pub.
- Wenger E (1998). Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saint-Onge H & Wallace D (2002). Leveraging Communities of Practice for Strategic Advantage. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

TROUBLESHOOTING AND REVITALIZING A CoP

A CoP goes through stages as it develops. It is not uncommon for CoPs and other groups to go through stages of lower activity. The challenge is determining what the issues are and how to address them.

Common Reasons CoPs Fail

1. Low attendance at meetings

Check the WIIFME (What's In It For Me) score. We tend to think of learning as something that happens in a classroom, and is a process that happens to a student as a result of listening to a teacher. Only now are we beginning to understand the social and situated nature of learning. The learning that happens when professionals work together is neither trivial nor irrelevant. Yet it can be difficult to convince busy professionals to leave their scheduled work for a meeting that has no specific learning outcomes made explicit before they come. The work of a CoP facilitator is to set up the environment to encourage generative, on topic conversation, and to convince members that they are an integral part of that conversation. Their participation is vital; their absence impoverishes the conversation. Another thing to check is meeting regularity. Is the group meeting too little and losing its rhythm? Too often?

2. Conversations at meeting are off-topic, merely complaints, or negative

Set expectations for meeting conversations; get membership to agree on a charter. The group should agree on their domain (competencies, knowledge base and goals common to community members) and their shared practice (the activities the group does and wishes to do better). The facilitator is key to getting the group to be in practice talk mode.

However, even when a group is focused the resulting conversation can drift into venting and negativity, which will ultimately be poisonous

and counter-productive. Possibly it may be necessary when the group agrees on the shared practice they wish to talk about, that they also agree to avoid turning their meetings into a moan session. This does not mean that challenges are not discussed; it means that a problem is brought up with the intent to discuss possible solutions.¹

3. Conflict between members

Anytime a group gets together there is the risk of conflict. A charter laying out the "rules of engagement" can go a long way towards discouraging disruptive or disrespectful behavior. However, a certain degree of disagreement is not necessarily an undesirable thing. Group members can enrich and sharpen their thinking through listening to opposing viewpoints. A facilitator can encourage an environment where discussion and respectful disagreement is safe and comfortable for participants. Listening to opposing viewpoints and the arguments supporting them can be more interesting for the participants, sparking a livelier discussion and increasing learning.

4. Either too much interference from management, or no support at all

CoPs can't be mandated or managed in a heavy-handed way. CoPs are an investment in the organization's future as well as its people, not a quick fix to be applied for the sake of short-term gain. The CoP's domain and shared practice must emerge from the group. For this reason it is often recommended that CoPs be a community of peers. Bringing supervisors and managers into the mix creates power imbalances that can discourage conversation. Certainly leadership can be invited to sessions, but it is with the understanding that they are guests, there for a specific purpose.

Members may run into the opposite problem – their leadership may not see the CoP as a valuable use of their time. It is important for the core group to know how to talk to leaders and

accountable bodies about their CoP, its purpose, and its progress. It will be important to be clear that the CoP has a WIIFME score for leadership as well as members, and to be able to demonstrate the benefits.

5. We've lost our purpose

A CoP that has drifted off topic (shared practice) or domain needs to review whether or not the drift is due to leadership issues, or whether the issue has been resolved. A CoP does not need to be a permanent construct, it can exist to address a particular issue and then be allowed to “die” or sunset naturally.

A process check can be used to help identify challenging areas for the group to address. The community may need to revisit their domain, shared purpose and membership on occasion. These kinds of activities also serve to keep a community of practice connected.

Key Areas to Check

- Membership review – do we need to invite more people? Would a multidisciplinary membership revitalize the group?
- Facilitation – is the facilitation of this group suitable for a CoP?
- Productive conversations – do members feel they benefit from the conversation? How? If you ask whether people are doing their job better, or feel more supported by this CoP, can they honestly answer Yes?
- Levels of participation – are the numbers of people increasing or holding steady? Are there any segments of the group that are consistently not showing up?
- Surveying members – does the membership feel heard? Especially for on line or distance groups, is there a way to connect easily with the group and is it being used?
- Meeting frequency – too often will be a burden; too seldom and the group loses its rhythm.

Reading List

Halbana Tarmizi, Gert-Jan de Vreede, Ilze Zigurs. *Identifying Challenges for Facilitation in Communities of Practice*. Proceedings of the 39th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences – 2006

Kimball, L. and Ladd, A. (2004). Facilitator toolkit for building and sustaining virtual communities of practice, in Paul M. Hildreth and Chris Kimble (Eds.) *Knowledge Networks: Innovation through Communities of Practice*, Hershey, PA, USA, Idea Group Pub.

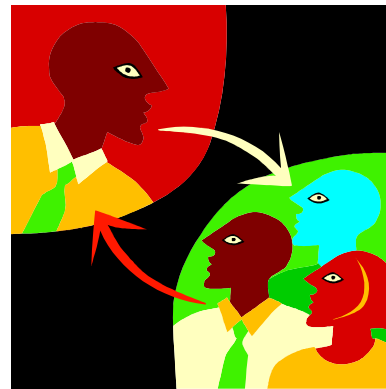
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Hubert Saint-Onge and Debra Wallace. *Leveraging Communities of Practice for Strategic Advantage*

Polin, L. et al. *Lateral Mentoring*. Pepperdine University Online Master of Arts in Educational Technology, 2001.

R McDermott. *How to avoid a mid-life crisis in your CoPs*. Uncovering six keys to sustaining communities. <http://www.mcdermottconsulting.com/pdf/article.pdf>

Valdis Krebs, June Holley. *Building Smart Communities through Network Weaving* <http://www.networkweaving.com/blog/2006/05/characteristics-of-natural-network.html>



ASSESSMENT OF CoPs

WHY Assess?

As organizations initiate and support CoPs for staff learning, problem resolution, knowledge exchange and project development, they will want to see some demonstration of the CoP's effectiveness. In addition, the core members of CoPs may want a way to assess their own progress and assure they are growing a functional and mature community.

As with any assessment, CoP measurement should be outcome oriented and based on clear indicators. Early in the CoP's development, members should discuss what success will look like and how it can be measured. As the CoP matures and changes, desired outcomes and indicators will change with it. Both internal and external assessment can help a CoP gain visibility and influence and guide its development.

WHAT to Assess?

It is crucial to clearly identify what it is you want to know about your CoP and why. Most people want to know if their CoP is having an impact on the issues they face in their practice and if the knowledge they exchange is accurate, effective and informative. Indicators of a mature and functional CoP are:

- frequent conversations about success and challenges at work
- timely and accurate responses to workplace issues
- shared understanding and acceptance of the CoP's vision, aim and charter
- recognition and support of CoP activity

by the sponsoring organizations

- new knowledge created and lessons learned related to practice
- shared project activity and informed proposal writing among CoP participants
- welcoming of new practitioners and participants

HOW to Assess ?

Most assessments use either formative evaluation, which focuses on ways of improving a program/project while it is still ongoing, or summative evaluation can also be used to judge the overall effectiveness of a program/project after it has been completed.

Because CoPs have a lifecycle, different styles of assessment and different questions are appropriate for different stages. For instance, a beginning CoP may focus on frequency of meetings, whether a charter has been created and agreed upon, and whether attendance is increasing, being maintained or decreasing.

In a more mature CoP, members may want to invest in more sophisticated tools. For instance, with member permission audio files of meetings could be transcribed and analyzed for content. Are members helping each other solve complex practice questions, or trading ideas on "work arounds" and tips for their particular practice? CoP members can also be surveyed or interviewed on their CoP experience. Has the CoP helped them connect with other professionals they otherwise wouldn't have? Has it decreased isolation or created a synergy with another department that otherwise might not have happened?

Depending on the information you want, assessment represents a considerable investment of time and resources. It is worth considering carefully what you need to learn from assessments and where to focus scarce resources to collect and analyze them. As with many things, you get what you pay for – while an on line survey is suitable for many types of simple information gathering, the benefits of CoPs are subtle and powerful, and not always easily captured. Interviews, focus groups and discourse analysis are all methods that require skill and a considerable investment of time, yet yield rich results.

How you can assess your CoP depends on what you want to know. It is worthwhile to consider a mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods. A number of resources can be found at the CPSquare (a community of practice on communities of practice) and the Public Health Information Network's (PHIN) Community of Practice websites. Both websites have multiple tools to guide you through CoP assessment:

[http://cpsquare.org/wiki/
Measurement_and_assessment](http://cpsquare.org/wiki/Measurement_and_assessment)
[http://www.cdc.gov/phin/communities/
resourcekit/tools/resources.html](http://www.cdc.gov/phin/communities/resourcekit/tools/resources.html)

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Recommended Reading

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Gittell, J H et al (2000) Impact of Relational Coordination on Quality of Care, Postoperative Pain and Functioning, and Length of Stay: A Nine-Hospital Study of Surgical Patients. *Medical Care* Volume 38(8) August 2000 pp 807-819.

Evaluating the soft stuff . By Shawn Callahan
[http://www.anecdote.com.au/
archives/2006/04/evaluating_the.html](http://www.anecdote.com.au/archives/2006/04/evaluating_the.html)

Dart, J.; Davies, R. A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most Significant Change Technique. *The American Journal of Evaluation* 2003, 24, 137.

The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique: A Guide to Its Use" by Rick Davies and Jess Dart (2005). 104 pages. PDF format [http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/
MSCGuide.pdf](http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf)

McDermott, R. (2001). Measuring the impact of Communities: How to draw meaning from measures of communities of practice. *KM Review* 5(2): 26-29

PHIN Communities of Practice website. Examples of evaluations:
[http://www.cdc.gov/phin/communities/
resourcekit/tools/evaluate/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/phin/communities/resourcekit/tools/evaluate/index.html)

Three Journeys: A narrative approach to successful organizational change:
[http://www.anecdote.com.au/
whitepapers.php?wpid=17](http://www.anecdote.com.au/whitepapers.php?wpid=17)

General information on measurement and assessment:
[http://cpsquare.org/wiki/
Measurement_and_assessment](http://cpsquare.org/wiki/Measurement_and_assessment)