Communities of Practice

Team Up 4 Anything

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Key Concepts

Definition

"Groups of people who **share a concern or a passion** for something they **do** and **learn** how to do it better as they **interact regularly**" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, emphasis added)

3 Crucial Characteristics

The Domain: Shared domain of interest

The Community: Shared activities and discussions, help one another and provide insight

The Practice: Active practitioners in their domain

Some Characteristic Activities

- Problem solving
- Requesting information
- Seeking experience
- Building arguments
- Growing confidence
- Identifying gaps in competence

(Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015)

Key Qualities

- Founded on a "charter" or "manifesto"
- Membership voluntary
- Nonhierarchical
- Leadership in some form needed

(GOTO Conferences, 2016)

"A Living Curriculum"
(Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015)

"We learn better when we learn together" (GOTO Conferences, 2016)

Team Up 4 Anything: We are a CoP!

Domain: Shared passion for creating an impactful CoP presentation!

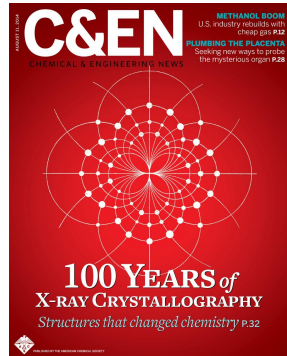**Community:** Maintained via regular Zoom meetings and text message updates

Practice: We are active practitioners in the MIST program creating a class project

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Team 4's CoPs

Caitlin: American Chemical Society

Tricia: Basketball (Team Sports)

Mandy: Nurse care management

Jeremy: Accessible Technology Initiative

Jessica: Teachers

CoPs and (4 of the) 5Ps

Presentation

- Members WANT to be there
- Largely discussion-based

Practice

- Contribution + Feedback = **Proficiency**
- Community fosters sense of **competency/accomplishment**
- **Goal-focused** = build comprehensive knowledge web

Production & Posting

- Lots of opportunities to apply the skill, knowledge/ability
- Intention is to bring knowledge and skills together to a CoP

Participation & Collaboration in CoPs

- "We learn better when we learn together"
  (GOTO Conferences, 2016)

- Community shares wisdom to build cohesive knowledge

- **Code of Conduct**

  ○ Success = **consistent member contributions**

  ○ **Nonhierarchical** and **voluntary** membership

GOTO Conferences, 2016; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015

Collaborativism

CoP Roots
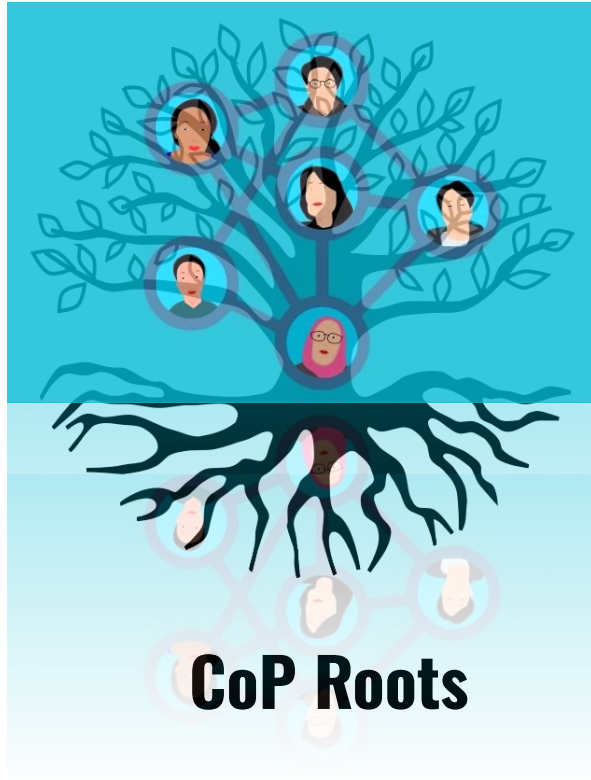
- Multiple global perspectives

- Constant evolution of knowledge web

  - Agreed upon 'truth', if there is one

- Community participation

- Facilitator/moderator

CoPs and the Other "-isms"

- Behaviorism ❌
- Cognitivism 🤔
  - Reliance on computers 👍
  - CoP is too free-form ❌
- ✅ Constructivism ✅
  - *Build* knowledge together, instead of *acquire*
- Connectivism 🤔
  - Online forums have connectivist roots 👍
  - "network-organized learning" <u>without an instructor</u> ❌

Planes of Stimulus Appraisal

Schumann Scherer Model
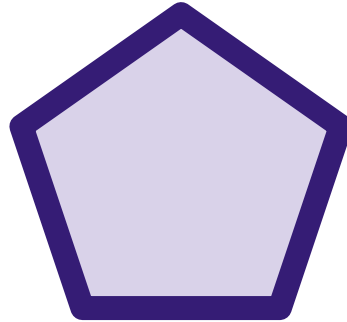
Novelty ✅
- knowledge web creation

Relevance ✅
- Voluntary involvement

Pleasantness ✅
- sustainable community

Coping ✅
- Member support

Self & Social Image ✅
- Community engagement aims to increase confidence & sense of belonging

How to Measure

- CSU ATI has existed for nearly 20 years and the CoP has never measured its effectiveness.
- Shared the Harasim model in the CoP.
- CoP will be doing an assessment based on this information.
- 4 campuses have said they are planning on taking this back to their communities to implement in other areas.

CoP in Action!!!

Critiques

- In thinking about the example of wikipedia, there are potential issues with verifying content.
- A CoP is vulnerable without leadership from a moderator who handles meeting schedules and prompts.
- Resistant to change: Prior knowledge can affect acceptance of new ideas under certain circumstances.

General Thoughts/Enhancements

Broadly applicable, requires that the community generate their own specifics (charter); needs effective moderator/facilitator

Flexible structure
- Community members empowered to enhance their particular CoP as they see fit
- CoPs: Always under construction; constantly evolve by nature

References

GOTO Conferences. (2016, Oct 31). Communities of practice, the missing piece of your agile organization – Emily Webber – GOTO 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Owrovki730

Harasim, L. (2017). *Learning Theory and Online Technologies* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.

Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015, June) Introduction to communities of practice. be@wenger-trayner.com. https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/