

“Networked Learning Communities”: Multidisciplinary Community of Practice on Student E-portfolio

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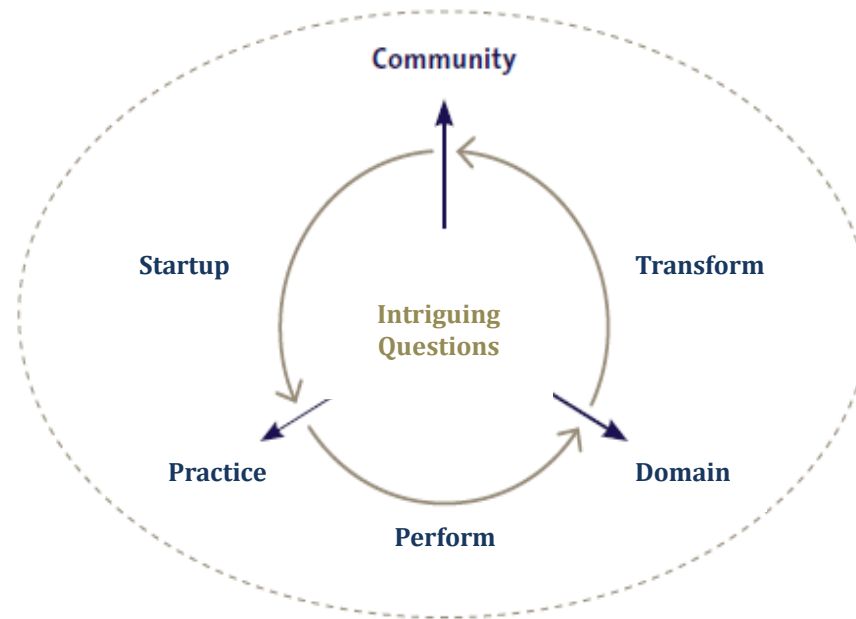
What is a Community of Practice (CoP)?



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Wenger (2011) has summarized the three crucial characteristics of CoP:



- *The Domain*: CoP has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest
- *The Community*: Members build relationships
- *The Practice*: They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools...



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Wenger (2004) further associated Community of Practice as the cornerstone of **knowledge management**:



- *Domain* provides a common focus
 - *Community* builds relationship that enables collective learning
 - *Practice* anchors the learning in what people do
1. Bottom-up + top-down
 2. A new solution is proposed → apply as “strategy” → transform into “performance”
 3. Involve practitioners in knowledge management → feed knowledge back into the organization → “learning loop”

*Combines bottom-up enthusiasm and initiatives from members with top-down encouragement from the organization



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Comparison with other forms of organization:

(Please refer to the table on your handout)

- People-oriented VS. Task-oriented or Target-oriented
- Allows members to organize themselves, set their own agendas, establish their own leadership
- position oneself in a practice-focused discourse and usher in new cultural practices with new orientations (Niesz, 2007, p.610)
- At least 5 years → show a cultural change (Cox, 2002)



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REFLECT

A Community of Practice for Student E-Portfolios





Multi-disciplinary + T&L Units

Discuss, Research, Groupwork

Sharing with other communities

“Symbiosis”



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Re-theorizing and Extension: “Networked Learning Communities”(NLC)



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“Networked Learning Communities” (NLC)

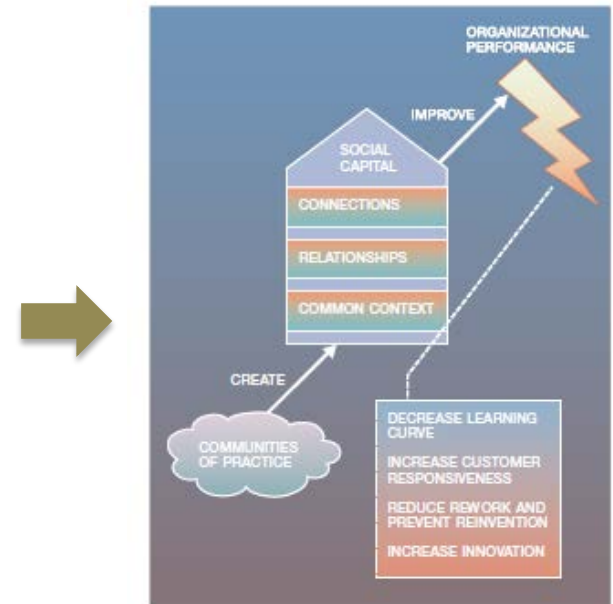
Adapts existing CoP models to demonstrate evolution and development of CoPs’ role :

1. Faculty Learning Community (FLC), Cox (2004) for education
2. The Learning Space Model, Wenger (1998) for education
3. The CoP Model for organizational performance, Lesser & Storck (2001) for business

Communities:

1. Bear potential to overcome the inherent problems of a slow-moving traditional hierarchy
2. A means of developing and maintain long-term organization memory
3. Creates social capital: connections, relationship and common context

→ *Better Performance*



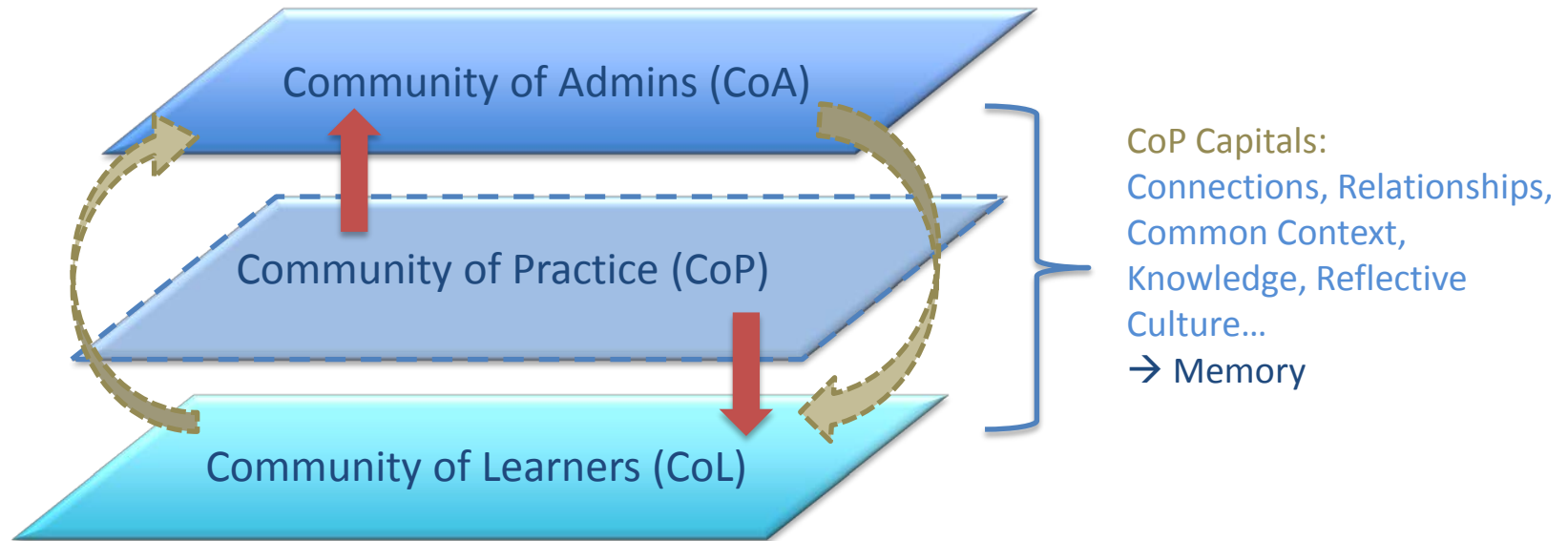


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“Networked Learning Communities” (NLC) in higher education context

Stage I



- CoP: Buffer between the CoA and the CoL
- Learners' performance feeds back into the practice of the CoP
= knowledge for the CoA collected via reports, focus group interviews and questionnaires or professional development programmes
- NLC enables a scenario where the *impetus comes from the CoA* but the *initiative comes from the CoP*

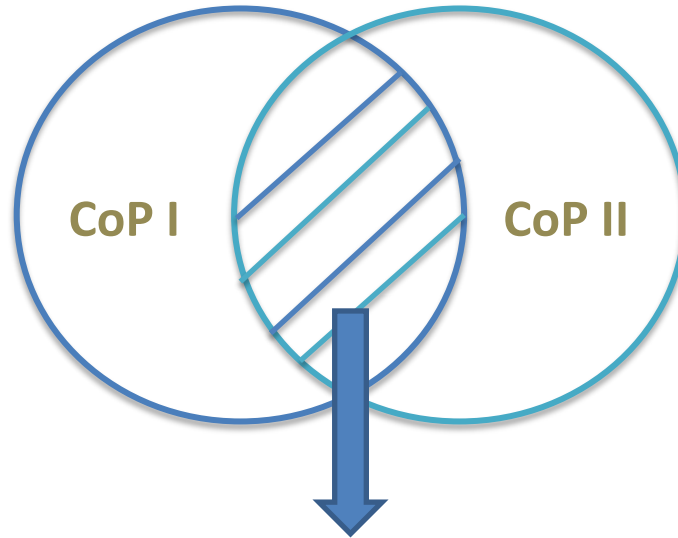


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NLC - Stage 2: Symbiosis

- two or more CoPs → “Symbiotic” relationship through exchanging knowledge and resources



Accumulated CoP Capitals:
Knowledge, resources, experiences...

- Individual CoP takes advantages, efforts and assistances from another CoP(s)
- E.g. involved in parallel with the CoP dealing with the “Teaching Portfolio”

→ *integrate and extend the utilization of student eportfolio and teacher eportfolio*



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Social Capitals [Lesser, E.L., & Storck, J. (2001)]

Dimension	Illustration in CoP in the organization
Structural Dimension	Making connections to others within the organization
Relational Dimension	Reinforcing the development of interpersonal relationships within the organization
Cognitive Dimension	Developing the shared context between two parties



NLC Capitals

Illustration in institutions...

Dimension	Illustration in CoP in the institution	First Stage of NLC	Second Stage of NLC ("Symbiosis" of NLCs)
Cultural Dimension	Prompting cultural and atmospheric change (in terms of learning, teaching and administrating) in the institution	Strong	Strong
Managerial Dimension	Completing the circuit of CoA and CoL, lead to a more transparent and reflective management mechanism within the institution	Medium	Strong



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Voices of Members...

Professional benefits:

1. Collaboration and support from peers
2. Sharing expertise, (personal) experiences, practices, insights and pedagogies
3. Self-reflection on teaching
4. New techniques, approaches, skills and knowledge were introduced

Expectations at the beginning...

1. Work with a group of colleagues
2. Passive observer
3. Open mind
4. Quite reluctant at the beginning

But later found that...

1. Exchanges and brainstorming of ideas
2. Practice was put into a bigger perspective
3. Driving force for change
4. Meaningful



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Voices of Members...

Influence your ideas on teaching & learning:

1. New ideas
2. Explore other ways beyond instructions
3. As a springboard
4. Was convinced of necessity of using such a tool in Language Teaching & Learning
5. Students need ownerships, freedom and space for creativity

CoP influence policy making on teaching and learning in the University:

1. Identify the necessary support needed for front-line teachers
2. Indicate to policy makers which areas/issues to be addressed at the institutional level.
3. Provide evidence of the effectiveness of a particular teaching and learning approach
4. The University will be better able to promote innovative practice
5. Shift from a teacher-oriented philosophy to a student-centered
6. Shift from knowledge-oriented teaching/learning philosophy to the focus / importance to acquire skills and competences



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Something To Do...

- **Identify** a common teaching & learning issue in your institution around which you can build a community of practice
- Classify the components of your CoP as *Community, Practice & Domain*
- Suggest a method to sustain the CoP within your institution and get **admin** interested in your project