Creating Communities of Practice to Support Teaching

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What is a community of practice?

“Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavor” (Wenger, 2011, p. 1).

**Three Characteristics:**

- **Domain:** Shared domain of interest and implies a commitment to the domain and “shared competence that distinguishes members from other people” (Wenger, 2011, p. 1).

- **Community:** “Members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other” (Wenger, 2011, p. 2).

- **Practice:** Practitioners who share resources “experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems” requiring “time and sustained interaction” (Wenger, 2011, p. 2)
Benefits of Communities of Practice

- Learning is situated in authentic problems of practice—a more effective way for adults to learn (Wenger, 1998; Wick, 2000)

- Learning across members can contribute to interdisciplinary ideas, knowledge, and practice (Wick, 2000)

- Sum of community knowledge is greater than individual knowledge, yet as community knowledge grows so does individual knowledge (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2000)
Post-It Activity  (Kortz, 2015)

Instructions

1. Write down your question on the provided post-it.

2. Post it onto the wall. Choose a different post-it & return to your seat.

3. Partner up with a person next to you.

4. Discuss/answer the question on the chosen post-it. Share out. Debrief activity.
Post-It Activity

Diversity at UConn

Prompt questions:

What questions or concerns do you have about teaching, learning and diversity inside the classroom?
Professional Development Opportunity:
“Teaching Through diversity”

Eligibility:
- Full-time faculty or TA, teaching a fall course

Benefits:
- Professional development
- Benefit the field of research

Incentives:
- 1-2 books
- $20 UConn Bookstore gift card

Be part of a research study to understand how participating in a community of practice (NIC) supports instructors’ efforts to improve the teaching of their subject matters to diverse students.
Yearlong study
(May 2017 - May 2018)

Overview:
- Professional Development
  - Monthly NIC meetings and reflections
- Other requirements
  - 3 interviews
  - 3 classroom observations (fall)
  - 2 surveys
To sign up or learn more

Interest Form will be emailed out to workshop attendees.

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