



Achieving the Dream™
Community Colleges Count

Disciplinary Communities of Practice

Designing for Evolution

everylearner
everywhere

Communities of Practice: **Presentation Overview**



- What are Communities of Practice (CoPs) and why are they valuable?
- How we designed for emergent learning and captured discipline-specific and interdisciplinary insights
- Insights and takeaways from designing and facilitating our faculty communities

What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

There are three critical characteristics of successful CoPs:

1. **A shared domain of interest.**
2. In pursuing their interest in their domain, members form **communities to engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information.** They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other.
3. Members of a CoP are **practitioners.** And **they develop shared practices through a repertoire of resources:** experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems. *While the domain provides the area of interest for the community, the practice is the specific focus around which the community develops, shares and maintains its core collective knowledge.*

Communities of Practice: Why communities of practice?



“A community of practice essentially divides the work of value evaluation and helps you focus on what you need. Furthermore, there are too many places to find information and it is too much to try to determine the value.”

--Dr. Krys Ziska Strange (Tufts University and OLC consultant on Disciplinary CoPs)



Communities of Practice: **Design Considerations**



From Tony Bates Blog: Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) have identified seven key design principles for creating effective and self-sustaining communities of practice:

1. Design for evolution
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives
3. Encourage and accept different levels of participation
4. Develop both public and private community spaces
5. Focus on value
6. Combine familiarity and excitement
7. Create a rhythm for the community

Disciplinary CoPs: Purpose & Structure



- Faculty and instructional professionals from across institutions (both 2- and 4-year) participated in a series of knowledge-building sessions focused on **effectively leveraging digital learning tools and centering student equity within a disciplinary context.**
 - Monthly live sessions during Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters (6 total)
 - Dedicated asynchronous space (Canvas course site) for continuing conversations and sharing resources
 - Focus on **writing, math, chemistry, and biology** instruction
- Participants met both in their discipline-specific communities and as a single, interdisciplinary group to **share and learn from one another** as well as from guest speakers and facilitators.
- Live sessions and digital space were designed to provide structure and introduce important concepts while also empowering participants to take ownership of discussion topics, work products, and action planning. They were also designed to **encourage professional development, mentorship, and support for innovation in instruction.**

Communities of Practice: **Design Features**



We focused on creating opportunities for:

1. Engagement with a blend of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary perspectives
2. Faculty leaders to share examples/experiences and facilitate discussion within discipline-specific groups
3. Participants to direct and co-create knowledge
4. Active engagement through relevant topics and provocations
5. Active curation of content
6. Tapping into the collective knowledge of faculty to drive the development of assets and resources for the field
7. Differentiated levels of participation (asynchronous digital spaces, ample workshop time in small groups, limited time spent presenting content)

Communities of Practice: **Design Strategies**



1. Offer different levels of information and discussion to engage practitioners with different problems and levels of experience within the same discipline.
2. Set clear expectations for participation and topics upfront. By offering a clear curriculum participants can decide whether to join a meeting and make sure they are prepared to get as much out of it as they can.
3. Bring a plurality of voices and perspectives into the CoPs beyond those present in real time via an intentional digital home in an LMS.
4. Create facilitator- and participant-curated resource and reading lists.

Communities of Practice: Themes & Essential Questions



The communities were built around themes and essential questions rather than strictly defined outcomes.

Overarching themes:

- Fall 2021: ***Getting to know our students: Increasing engagement in digital learning environments***
- Spring 2022: ***Developing critical engagement in and across our disciplines***

Underlying/Intersecting Themes:

- *Evidence-based Teaching Practices*
- *Centering Equity in Course Design & Pedagogy*
- *Effectively Leveraging Educational Technologies*

Essential questions:

- *How do we inhabit a digital learning space that promotes equity and inclusion in our disciplines, and that facilitates the equitable achievement of learning outcomes?*
- *How do we create a digital learning space that invites interaction, collaboration, and belonging?*

Communities of Practice: **Live Session Topics**



Fall 2021:

- *Equitizing your syllabi*
- *Assessing students with care*
- *Integrating self-awareness, self-reflection, and transparency*

Spring 2022:

- *Sharing discipline-specific resources for building critical engagement*
- *Implementing open pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching practices*
- *Supporting instructors and students as agents of change*

Disciplinary Community of Practice



Welcome

On behalf of the [Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities](#), [Achieving the Dream](#), [Online Learning Consortium](#), and [Every Learner Everywhere](#), we would like to welcome you to this community of practice digital collaboration space. This space was created as a central space for all participants to actively engage and contribute to the creation of and participation in events that support the creation of courses that invite all learners to bring their most authentic selves to the learning process.

Submit a Resource to our Community Library

Community Library

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Add-ons Help See new changes

Community Library

You have resources to share that may be useful...

Use the space below to share. This document is open and available to all members of our Community of Practice throughout the duration of our community, so be sure to be as detailed or specific as possible so everyone may more easily engage with your contributions.

Resource	Name, Discipline, & Email
"Syllabus Language, Teaching Style, and Instructor Self-Perception: Toward Congruence" presents interesting data about the incongruence between instructor self-perceptions and their syllabi tone/language.	[Shared in Session 1 by Ayla Moore]
"Gathering Mid-Semester Feedback: Three Variations to Improve Instruction"	[Shared in Session 1 by Ayla Moore]
CUE Equity Tools: http://cue.org/equity-tools	
CUE Equity Examples: http://cue.org/equity-examples	

Submit an Idea to our Digital Community Building Playbook

Digital Community Building Playbook

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Digital Community Building Playbook

Use the space below to share some of your favorite ways to create a digital learning space that invites and builds a generative community of learners from your discipline. This document is open and available to all participants of our Community of Practice throughout the duration of our community, so be sure to be as detailed or specific as possible so everyone may more easily engage with your contributions.

For "Type," please indicate what type of engagement your approach is focused on:

Collaboration: Facilitates engagement with student-to-student and student-to-faculty collaborative efforts.

Content Delivery: Facilitates faculty-to-content and faculty-to-student engagement.

Engagement: Facilitates student-to-content engagement and empowers students to track their progress

Communication: Facilitates student-to-student, student-to-faculty, and faculty-to-student information sharing.

Discipline	Type	Description
All!	Communication	Remind.com : Remind is an app that allows you to communicate reminders, information, and other short bits of information directly to your students' cell phones.

Biology Landing Zone

Math Landing Zone

[\[Math\] Session 1 Introduction Board](#)

[\[Math\] Reflection: Equitizing the Syllabus](#)

[\[Math\] Assessment Miro Board](#)

[\[Math\] Feedback Document](#)

[Math] Introduction

Continue collaborating using your real name. [Sign up for free](#)

Introductions

Directions

Step 1: Choose a sticky note column
You can easily "claim" a column by double clicking on a sticky note and typing your name.

Step 2: Copy/Paste your top sticky note into the two empty cells
To copy your first sticky note, click on the sticky note and press CTRL/CMD and C. Then, press CTRL/CMD and V to paste. You can click and drag the new note into one of your empty cells.

Step 3: Fill out your sticky notes
In the top row, enter your preferred name & your institution. In the second row, give a brief description of something you do to build community & belongingness with your students. In the third row, give a brief description of a challenge or barrier you think your students face.

Step 4: Time to react
Now, explore what your group has shared. Use the following reactions:

- Yellow thumbs up: You agree! This looks like a great idea!
- Green checkmark: You have done this or are doing this in your courses now!

Martial Longa & University of Mississippi	Kat Debeck Lorain County Community College	Ryan Luke (Luke is my Last Name) University of Louisville	Sheila Brachey Volunteer State Community College	Trish White Ozarks Tech Southwest MO	Jasmine Vazquez Broward College South FL	Alecia Byrd Florida State College at Jacksonville	Kyla Williams Broward College Coconut Creek, FL	Rachid Alr Maalem Lahcen UCF
Other zoom office hours for regular discussions not schedules. How can we understand the question?	Flipped classroom and active learning	Group Problem Solving & Think-Pair-Share & Peer Teaching	Many of my colleagues are new. I don't know what to expect	Groupwork and one-on-one meetings	Create activities to have more interaction with fully online courses.	Spent first week getting to know them. Encouraging them to share what they are planning to do.	Engaging students in learning	Personalized & adaptive learning
Prerequisites to courses	Time Management!	Completing Assignments	Students come to my class unprepared. Many of my students are not as committed.	Providing student resources and/or handouts that are accessible to all students.	Lack of new/old information regarding support/ lack of feedback in discussions & lack of editing.	Change in teaching and learning and assignments written for traditional learners		

Writing Landing Zone

[\[Writing\] Session 1 Introduction Board](#)

[\[Writing\] Reflection: Equitizing the Syllabus](#)

[\[Writing\] Assessment Miro Board](#)

[\[Writing\] Feedback Document](#)

[Writing] Assessment & Bias

Continue collaborating using your real name. [Sign up for free](#)

What might students be managing for in their lives that may impact their preparation in your courses?

Directions

To answer a question on the right, create or grab a blank sticky note. Be sure to include only one thought on each sticky note. You can add as many thoughts/sticky notes as you want!

If you see an answer that you share, be sure to react to the sticky note!

To create a new sticky note:

1. Click on the bottom-left red corner in the left menu.
2. Click and drag the sticky note you want to this main area.
3. You can type in the note and drag it where you want or you can place it when type!

—OR—

Copy (CTRL+C) and Paste (CTRL+V) one of the blank notes below!

What challenges could students be facing with the assessments in your courses?

Some are better with exams vs. writing assignments

Difficulties navigating the LMS

Not understanding the terminology or expectations of the assignment

Lacking the confidence to ask for clarification

Unclear writing assignments, lack of scaffolding/practice

International students - comprehension of instructions, difficulty with mechanics of English

Time management

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Communities of Practice: **Facilitator Approach**

Facilitator Ratio/Rationale:

- *8 total faculty facilitators*
- *2 per discipline (1 two-year and 1 four-year)*



Chemistry



Writing

Facilitator Impact:

- *It proved essential to incorporate faculty/disciplinary perspectives and leadership into session planning and delivery*
- *“The energy was very good. The structure of the sessions worked well for focused conversation and cross-disciplinary idea generation” - Dr. Elizabeth Sanders Lopez, writing community facilitator/participant*



Math



Biology

Communities of Practice: Insights and Opportunities



- Closer collaboration with/integration of faculty facilitators enriched our session topics and discussions
- Our session design/structure was a great fit for our participants
 - Monthly, 2-hour sessions
 - Short presentation→facilitator sharing of approaches/ examples→discipline-specific breakouts→cross-disciplinary share-outs
- We could increase engagement/attendance with more intentional action planning, projects, and community building
 - Assignments for participants to work on between sessions/develop throughout the semester
 - Making time during sessions for informal/low-stakes conversation and check-ins
- Our takeaways from each session could be shared more broadly, beyond the communities themselves



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Thank You



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