

Wait, What? Confronting the Realities of Outdated Practices



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Walking into Totally-Chartered Territory



Exactly 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:
 - a tribe learning to survive,
 - a band of artists seeking new forms of expression,
 - a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school,



Nutshell...

Communities of practice are 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, 2015)



Nutshell...

Communities of practice are 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**.

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Three Important Characteristics

- Domain
 - Identity
 - Shared domain of interest
 - Recognition of expertise
 - Valuing the expertise of the members
- Community
 - Joint Activities
 - Discussions
 - Building relationships
 - Purposeful engagement with each other to learn together
(Not in title alone)
- Practice
 - Developing Shared Resources
 - Shared experiences, stories, and tools to address problems together



Getting Started

- Chairperson
 - ❖ What do we need to know about the operations of our department?
 - ❖ Where do we begin to gather this information?
 - ❖ Who are the key players, gatekeepers, stakeholders, guarding the information?
 - ❖ What will it take to get the information needed?
 - ❖ How important is this information to the survival of our programs?



Silo-Effect

The **Silo Effect** refers to a lack of information flowing between groups or parts of an organization. In an organization, the **Silo Effect** limits the interactions between members of different branches of the company, thus leading to reduced productivity.

(Tett, 2015)



Gauging the Concern

- Started with information that was publicly available about the operations of the university and the department reporting (i.e. agency requirements, certification exams).
- Visited with the individuals who had designated responsibilities for keeping up with the data for operations, asking specific questions about the “why” and “so what” of the information that was being collected.
- Asked about the perceptions of the data collection process, what was easy or hard about it? What were the honest feelings about the “tasks” related to data collection.
 - Responses were unremarkable to significantly important.
- Learned that data collection was just what we must do, but rarely informed what we did in practice.



Raising the Level of Concern

- 5-year Operations Study
 - Current Status of all identified majors over the past five years
 - Available test scores for each candidate over the past five years
 - Current or final GPA
 - Year of Exit
 - Exit type



Results were
extremely
concerning



Data Said What....

- Current Status of all identified majors over the past five years
 - Currently the fewest majors in five years
- Available test scores for each candidate over the past five years
 - Had not maintained an 80% pass rate in five years
- Current or final GPA
 - GPA's were unremarkable
- Year of Exit
 - By campus many students left at one semester in particular.
- Exit type
 - Many of our students across the campuses left without a degree.



Easy to Explain Away
the Results

Everything has a
reason....



We went from asking...How did we get here????

To reframing our question...How do we avoid getting here again???



Efficacy of Instruction: Self-Assessment

- As faculty, how often do we judge our own practices by student performance on assessments either internal or external?



When you know better....

- If we were going to keep a better watch on the operations, we had to organize around data and assessment of our own practices.
- Assessment had to become less of a hassle and more of an integrated component into our everyday work.
- We had to see assessment as less of external factor and more of extension of continuous improvement.



Working toward
bringing the **Passion**
back



If we are doing what we love
to do, collecting information
about what we do should
come naturally.



Ordinary Practice

- What are the things we do that we need to do better, in the school, department, and program(s)?
 - This question is related to assessment plan question, which asks how do we use data, at various levels, to inform our practice?
 - Reading instruction
 - General classroom practices
 - Meeting deadlines
 - Professional Development
 - Use of technology in instruction
 - Connecting with our stakeholders and alumni
 - Information flow – faculty-student, faculty-chair, chair-faculty, chair-dean



What are we doing now?

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) within our CoP to learn about the efficacy of our instruction. Are our practices working in our courses?
 - Alignment in Reading
 - Redesigned our objectives
 - Aligned our course activities, assignments, and assessments to those objectives.
 - Report out with samples of student work, (Objective, What instructor taught, How student demonstrated in assignment, How objective was assessed) at midterm and final.
 - » What went well? What could be improved in your alignment?
- **Program Level** - Integrated assessment that looks at the efficacy of instruction and student performance in an **interactive** way.



What are we doing now?

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC) within our CoP to learn about the efficacy of our instruction. Are our practices working in our courses?
 - Alignment – Curriculum and Instruction
 - Evaluated our course objectives
 - Aligned our course objectives to OSAT competencies.
 - Found that we had large holes in our instruction.
 - » Immediately began to look at our course offerings.
- **Department Level** - Integrated assessment (self-study) that looks at the efficacy of instruction and student performance in an **interactive** way.



How do we avoid
staying here???



Increased the level of information sharing

- Decentralized our data sources
 - Who needs to know what?
 - What level of access is relative to position?
 - How can we **interact** with one another **to do this better?** (i.e. monthly report, professional evidence)
 - Triple D
 - Data
 - Dialog
 - Doing it better



What is a culture of evidence?

“A habit of using evidence in assessment, decision making, planning, resource allocation, and other institutional processes that is embedded in and characteristic of an institution’s actions and practices.”



Integrated Data Collection Examples

