

Starting a Community of Practice

Note: The following list of questions was created from a discussion by a group of Halifax-based educational developers (June 19, 2023). The questions are intended to help guide in the development/facilitation of a community of practice. This list may not capture every question an individual/group may consider.

Designing the Experience: Setting Goals and Expectations

1. Why should this CoP exist and is there interest? How will you persuade others of the why?
2. What is the goal and how will you engage participants? How will you manage group expectations?
3. How will I engage members/maintain their commitment?
4. How will you manage, organize and share the work initially and over time?
5. From launch through evolution, how might our goals evolve? Are you prepared for this shift?
6. How will we develop and maintain momentum as a group?

Designing the Experience: Building Trust and Community

1. Where are the potential challenges and what kind of trust exists already?
2. Who are the allies and champions that might help forward the goals of the CoP? Who are the potential disruptors and how might they be engaged to advance the goals of the CoP?
3. How will you create an inclusive, psychological, and emotional shared space where everyone has a voice and all members can lead discussions?
4. How will you design a CoP experience in a variety of modalities/ensure accessibility?
5. How do you provide members with choice? Support?

Leadership and Building Capacity

1. How are you building the capacities of the members?
2. How will you draw out the strengths of community members?
3. How will you scaffold participant leadership?
4. What roles need to be assigned?

Sharing, Preserving, and Collaboration

1. How do you share what is produced and where?
2. Is everything appropriate to share more broadly?
3. How will you measure and document success?
4. What tools can you use to facilitate collaboration (e.g. blogs, shared docs)

Logistics

1. How long will it last? (indefinitely, 1 year, for the length of a specific project, etc)
2. Meeting times: How often, when, and where? How will you schedule meetings?
3. How to advertise and promote? When/How often to advertise? Who do I invite?
4. What will it look like? Format, modality (F2F, online)

Reflecting on Your Role and Evaluation of the CoP

1. Where do you find value in the group?
2. How will I know it's working for the group? What isn't working?
3. Have you reflected on the following: Am I the right person for this CoP at this time?
4. What is my role? What am I willing and/or able to take on and what must be taken on by others?