

## COPS' 4 PRIMARY AREAS OF ACTIVITY

Cambridge et al. (2005) propose that beyond the above CoP lifecycles, each community is characterised by their unique goals, purpose and the members' characteristics and needs. Therefore, it is important that all social and technical design choices are primarily driven by purpose and the context of the CoP. Communities that succeed and last are characterised by focused and well-defined purposes that are linked to the strategic mission of the sponsoring organisation. The most effective way to define a CoP's purpose is to assess how this initiative will benefit the community's stakeholders and also what specific needs are to be met by the community.

CoP purposes are categorised into four areas of activity: building relationships, learning and developing practice, taking action as a community and creating knowledge in the domain (Images by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay).

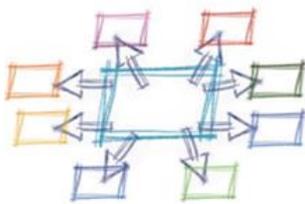


### Building Relationships

This area of activity is built on the premise of interacting with and developing a wider network of peers, and instilling commitment necessary for strong communities. This purpose might not be the end goal in itself for a CoP, but a means to an end. This is because community activities are contingent on a safe environment of mutual trust, respect, openness, and listening, which is needed if we want to encourage idea sharing, exposing one's ignorance, and asking challenging questions.

The toolkit thus encourages a **continuity** and **depth of interactions** between members. Therefore, the participative methods should be enjoyable, attractive, fulfilling and rewarding. Moreover, they should help to develop a **shared understanding** of the community's domain and an **approach to practice**.

Suggested activities include Five-Minute Favour, Focus Groups, Four Quadrants, Heart, Hand, Mind, Interviews, Mentoring Circles, What I Need From You.



### Learning and Developing Practice

The purpose of learning and developing a shared practice, based on an existing body of knowledge underscores this area of activity. The community helps to evolve the practice as a collective product, which becomes integral to members' work and is reflective of their perspectives. It is important to balance the production of documents and tools through practice and deep learning experiences for community members.

The toolkit facilitates **accessing** the community's knowledge representations for existing practice, and supporting **deeper learning and knowledge sharing** for community members.

Suggested activities include 1-2-4-All, Brainstorming, Fish Bowl, Five-Minute Favour, Focus Groups, Future Workshop, Interviews, Mature Your Ideas, Mentoring Circles, Nine Whys, Storyboards, SWOT and PESTEL, W3, What I Need from You, and the World Café.

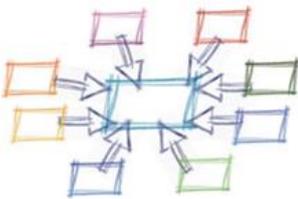


### Taking Action as a Community

This area of activity is built on the purpose of making things happen through tasks and projects. For example, establishing small group projects could help members create close relationships and also design and pool the resources for practice development and knowledge generation.

The toolkit facilitates **collaborative efforts**, and **working with others**, but also **recognising** and **rewarding members** for their contributions.

Suggested activities include Future Workshops, Critical Uncertainties (Theory of Change), Mentoring Circles, Nine Whys, Plan of Change (Theory of Change), SMART Criteria, SWOT and PESTEL, W3: What, So What, Now What.



### Creating Knowledge in the Domain

This area of activity fulfils the purpose of generating and discovering new knowledge. It concerns members going beyond what is currently practiced and exploring the cutting edge of the domain in order to innovate. Fulfilling this purpose may necessitate redefining the CoP's boundaries and membership to facilitate boundary crossing and engaging with external communities to explore new ideas and practices. The toolkit should help a **cross pollination of ideas** and **spreading leading-edge knowledge**, outside engagement.

Suggested activities include Argument Mapping, Fish Bowl, Focus Groups, Infographics, Mentoring Circles, Photo Documentation, Storyboards and the World Café.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS	LEARNING AND DEVELOPING PRACTICE	TAKING ACTION AS A COMMUNITY	CREATING KNOWLEDGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five-Minute Favour</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Four Quadrants</li> <li>• Heart, Hand, Mind</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Mentoring Circles</li> <li>• Stinky Fish</li> <li>• What I Need From You</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-2-4-All</li> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• DAKI</li> <li>• Fish Bowl</li> <li>• Five-Minute Favour</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Future Workshop</li> <li>• How Now Wow</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Lightning Decision Jam</li> <li>• Mature Your Ideas</li> <li>• Mentoring Circles</li> <li>• Nine Whys</li> <li>• Storyboards</li> <li>• SWOT and PESTEL</li> <li>• W3</li> <li>• What I Need from You</li> <li>• The World Café</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Uncertainties</li> <li>• DAKI</li> <li>• Future Workshops</li> <li>• Lightning Decision Jam</li> <li>• Mentoring Circles</li> <li>• Nine Whys</li> <li>• Plan of Change</li> <li>• SMART Criteria</li> <li>• Stinky Fish</li> <li>• SWOT and PESTEL</li> <li>• W3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument Mapping</li> <li>• Fish Bowl</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> <li>• Infographics</li> <li>• Mentoring Circles</li> <li>• Photo</li> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Storyboards</li> <li>• the World Café</li> </ul>

Table 4. CoPs' Four Primary Areas of Activity and Available Tools

## REFERENCES

Cambridge, Darren, Soren Kaplan, and Vicki Suter. 2005. "Community of Practice Design Guide: A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing & Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education." *EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI)*. Available from: <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2005/1/community-of-practice-design-guide-a-stepbystep-guide-for-designing-cultivating-communities-of-practice-in-higher-education>.