Have you got a CoP on?

The establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) to improve student academic support

Student Engagement Team Community of Practice:

- The Student Engagement Team Community of Practice (SET CoP) was formed in April 2019

- The SET CoP currently consists of seven Academic Skills Advisors (ASAs), who meet every six weeks

- The meetings are minuted and report to the Student Engagement Team meeting

- There is a rolling chair

- Most meetings take place off campus

SET CoP Aims:

- ✓ To provide an opportunity to share, reflect on, evaluate and develop the team's practice

- ✓ To provide a platform for the showcasing and discussion of good practice

- ✓ To provide a showcase for new and innovative teaching and learning development practices

- ✓ To foster collaborative practices amongst the members of the Student Engagement Team

Advantages:

"Having a regular opportunity to get together means we can adapt things fairly quickly and suggest changes if needed"

"Provides a safe space for discussing practice and a valuable informal meet-up"

"I could be open and honest about arising issues / concerns with systems / expectations etc."

"The team could provide reassurance and support which was invaluable"

"Supports a culture of collaboration, trust and respect"

"The SET CoP is friendly and supportive"

"It's reassuring to be able to bring questions or ideas to the group and know that they will be listened to and discussed"

"Useful conversations - I like that the atmosphere is generally informal"

Challenges:

"Not everyone is always present, the time and date doesn't always suit all - particularly for part-time members of the team"

"One member of the team had to travel a long distance to attend, which was not ideal"

"Trying to convene CoP meetings over the summer when people were taking holidays. Due to the small size of our team, it proved difficult to get enough people to make it viable during this period"

"The SET CoP is a forum for discussion about the provision of academic writing and information literacy support."

Contribution to the provision of student Academic Writing support:

- ✓ Highlighting current issues during 1:1s

- ✓ Sharing/applying training attended

- ✓ Discussing student/tutor feedback

- ✓ Disseminating exemplars and discussing how we support students with those assignments

What next?

As ASAs we believe SET CoP brings many advantages to our day-to-day role, but how do we know for sure a CoP has an impact on the quality of student academic support? Can we measure this? And if so, how? This is perhaps something to consider at future SET CoP meetings.

Contact Us...

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Scan the QR code:

Tell us what you think. Have you ever been part of a CoP? We would love to hear about any of your experiences, or provide feedback on this poster.

Further reading

Cox, A., 2005. What are communities of practice? A comparative review of four seminal works. Journal of Information Science [online]. 31 (6), pp. 527-540. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551505057016.

Gómez, R.L. and Suárex, A.M., 2021. Extending impact beyond the community: Protocol for a scoping review of evidence of the impact of communities of practice on teaching and learning in higher education. International Journal of Educational Research Open [online]. 2, 100048. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2021.100048.

Lesser, E.L. and Storck, J., 2001. Communities of practice and organizational performance. IBM Systems Journal [online]. 40 (4), pp. 831-841. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1147/sj.404.0831.

Wenger, E., 1998. Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., 2011. Communities of practice: a brief introduction. In: STEP Leadership Workshop, 20 October 2011, Eugene, OR [online]. Eugene: University of Oregon. Available from: https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/handle/1794/11736 [Accessed 24 March 2022].