

How to Create a Community of Practice (COPs)

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What is a Community of Practice?

It is a group of people (a community) addressing a problem or question and “practicing” solutions

Why Create a Community of Practice?

There is a challenge or problem you want to address

For example, AB1705 or equity gaps or AI, etc.

And/or you want to build community or enhance what you are doing

Maybe you have new faculty who need pedagogical support or your department is updating a course or you want to try something new like theming your writing courses with Guided Pathways majors or you want to develop linked/ learning communities, etc.

How to Develop and Support Communities of Practice

- **First, put someone passionate in charge and pay them as a coordinator to organize everything; this could be release time paid from AB 1705 funds**
- Next, create stipends (using AB 1705 funds, for example) for faculty who participate, and make sure there is a process in place for writing, approving, tracking, and paying the stipends. We do \$50 per hour, and most COPs range from 5-20 hours depending on the project. You will need lots of administrative and IE support for this part!!
- **Once people sign up, it is time to create goals and outcomes together, calendar the meetings, choose a relevant book for everyone to read, and have fun!!!**
 - The books can be paid for using AB 1705 supply funds, and I highly recommend feeding people at the gatherings too!

How to Sustain COPs and Share the Knowledge

1. Keep all the deliverables (whatever people create for their classes or the department or the campus) in one place. We use our Department Canvas page to house everything.
2. Make the meetings and projects collaborative, innovative, and fun. This is not top-down PD; it is grass roots PD, so everyone needs to feel included but with some gentle guidance and accountability (that is the coordinator's job)

Examples from MC English Department

- English C1000 COP (this one splits into subgroups depending on what issues we want to tackle that semester)
- Co-requisite English C1000 COP
- Embedded Writing Coaches faculty COP
- Innovative Course Development COPs (such as “One and Done” 8 week linked English C1000 plus 1002 course or “Guided Pathways Themed” courses)

Sample Activity for COPs

- Read one of these books from the MC Professional Learning Library: [Book List](#)
- Then, choose one thing you learned from the book to improve/update/change in your C1000 course. Discuss and share your plans with your COP
- Report back to the group about your new activity and how it went. Write up a reflection and post to your department Canvas page.