

# Community of Practice

## *What is CoP*

Evidence from research across the globe suggests that in-service professional development is effective when it is contextual, based on teachers' practice and learned through collaborative and critical engagement with other practitioners, teacher educators, domain experts, and other stakeholders. Based on a social theory of learning, Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner provide a framework for professional learning that is linked to practice.

In this framework, teachers learn by participating in discussions about their practice, sharing and producing different types of artifacts derived from their practice in a collaborative space termed as a community of practice. Participation essentially includes sharing resources, practices, and issues, reflecting on teachers own practice, discussing and commenting on each other's work, connecting evidence from research and theory to their practice, essentially activities that make the teachers practice explicit within the community so that they can share their experiences and engage in critical discussions and learn from each other, building their pedagogical and subject domain knowledge.

## *Why CoP*

The CLIX CoP recognizes the complex task of teaching and the active, evolving and dynamic nature of professional knowledge. As the community develops, a repository of best practices and resources that teachers themselves legitimize and use and reuse in their practice is created. This, in turn, contributes to the discipline of teacher education through rich interconnections between theory and practice, interactions between academicians and practitioners to inform practice, theory, and policy.

## *Participation in CoPs*

- Active participation of the TEs ( including university faculty) /RPs, subject experts includes,

but is not limited to

- Reflecting and sharing experiences of implementing CLIX modules.
  - Sharing photos of students' working on CLIX modules.
  - Sharing students' work.
- Triggering discussions on CLIX Modules Implementation
- Providing pedagogical (and minor technical) solutions for teachers to be able to implement CLIX modules in their schools.
- Triggering discussions regarding the larger context of subject pedagogy and education.
- Motivating teachers to participate
- Active participation of the teachers includes, but is not limited to
  - Reflecting and sharing experiences of implementing CLIX modules.
  - Sharing photos of students' working on CLIX modules.
  - Sharing students' work.
  - Engaging in discussions regarding the larger context of subject pedagogy and education.

### *How to initiate or setup CoPs*

A community of practice requires a medium in which the community interacts. This is traditionally a physical space that is increasingly becoming unviable due to travel costs, space constraints and the lack of time claimed by many participants. Technology can be leveraged to ensure active participation and wider dissemination of ideas. Two popular social media applications - WhatsApp and Telegram - have been leveraged by CLIX Communities of Practice. While WhatsApp is more popular in the Indian context, there are constraints with respect to this technology vis-a-vis Telegram. A summary table of the two applications is presented below to aid the decision on which technology to use. It must be noted that both technologies are constantly evolving and many new players enter the market regularly as well.

	WhatsApp	Telegram
<b>Cost</b>	Free	Free
<b>Compatibility</b>	Mobile-based app (for OS) Web-version available	Mobile and PCs (all OS)
<b>Access</b>	Single Device And PC access if the phone is close by	Simultaneous access to multiple devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Useful for those without smartphones.</li></ul>
<b>Types of Communication</b>	One-to-one One-to-many (Broadcast) Many-to-Many (Group)	One-to-one One-to-many (Channel) Many-to-Many (Group)

<b>Reach</b>	256 maximum in a group	Up to 2,00,000 in a group.
<b>Privacy</b>	The number is visible to all in group	The number is hidden from those who do not already have a number.
<b>Membership</b>	Admin can add members. Link to group chat enables members to join. Only admin has access to the link.	Admin and other members can add newcomers. Link to group chat can allow others to join. Admin can make changes to membership rights.
<b>Editing</b>	Allows message deletion for self and others in the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows editing of messages (with time stamp)</li> <li>• Allows deleting of messages.</li> <li>• In Groups with Admin, admin can restrict the rights of members to delete messages for all.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Storage</b>	<p>Automatically stores in the phone memory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pictures and videos clutter the gallery.</li> <li>• Files and documents are downloaded in a separate folder.</li> </ul>	<p>It does not clutter up the phone's memory.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Images and videos are NOT stored in galleries unless one consciously does so.</li> <li>• Files and documents are stored in a cache that can be cleaned regularly.</li> </ul>

### *Strategies to keep CoP active*

Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos (2009) revealed that 50 hours or more of professional development is needed to effectively change teacher practice. School, district and state leaders will need to ensure that modalities and processes are in place for teachers to consistently be able to transfer learning into practice. CoP posts are a way of documenting and sharing this transfer into practice.

Adult learning is social in nature, adult learners benefit most when they are learning through collaboration in a safe collegial environment, willing to take risks by testing new ideas, starting small while they incorporate new techniques, and getting feedback and validation of their work from their peers. It is in this context that the posts from the CoP facilitators and participants could include one or more of the following:

Activity	Example
Problem Solving	"The way I am teaching a concept does not seem to be working, can we brainstorm some ideas"
Seeking Information	"I need to know how to login to the CLIX platform"
Seeking Experience	"Has anyone worked with blind children, I need some help"
Reusing Assets	"I have an experiment to understand <i>the force</i> that has worked well, would anyone like to try it and share experiences"
Coordination and Synergy	"Can all the schools in the block discuss where we can buy good material for the science lab and get some discounts "
Building an argument	"How do schools maintain ICT labs in other states? Can we get some best practices to recommend to the department?"
Growing Confidence	" Before I implement this new classroom strategy I'll discuss with the other teachers in the community"
Discussing developments	"What do you think the new programme CLIX is all about, how will it really help improve learning"
Documenting projects	"We have faced this problem of uploading files for English module, let us document this problem"
Visits	"Can we visit your learning Lab in HBCSE we want to establish such labs in our schools"
Mapping knowledge & Identifying gaps	"Does anyone know what kind of laptop a teacher should buy, what information is missing, how do we get it"

Content Adapted from the Following Source: Wenger, E., (2006). Communities of practice: A brief introduction. [www.ewenger.com/theory/](http://www.ewenger.com/theory/)

The key to sustaining CoP is to ensure there is chatter on the group. The local leaders identified in the state could lead the discussions.

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