



ADVANCING SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN LARGE ENROLLMENT COURSES: LESSONS LEARNED FROM AN ONLINE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

What is it about?

In response to COVID-19, the University of Calgary immediately transitioned to emergency remote teaching, which prompted a Large Enrolment Online Community of Practice (OCoP). The structure of the OCoP was informed by educator interaction, knowledge sharing, and strategies to sustain student engagement. The goal of the OCoP was to foster a space whereby educators could engage in dialogue regarding how to respond to COVID-19. It is the university's responsibility to support all educators to succeed during these unprecedented times. In this article, the authors reflect on how the creation of the OCoP can benefit interdisciplinary faculty in multiple ways.

What did we do?

The authors created a framework to guide the OCoP, which was impacted by Wenger et al. (2011), Hoadley (2012), and Xue et al. (2021). The need for the OCoP emerged from educators who wanted a space to discuss teaching and learning strategies. A video-conferencing platform was utilized to administer the OCoP. This technology helped connect members and foster a trusted space for their ideas to be shared and circulated. A learning management system was also utilized to connect the OCoP members: Meeting minutes, email addresses, and discussion forums outside of the meetings were available for educators to further their knowledge.



Need to know

The structure of the OCoP was informed by Wenger et al. (2011), which understood the foundation of the OCoP to be predicated on three factors: domain, community, and practice. Broadly, Xue et al. (2021) and Hoadley (2012) speak to the communal regard for learning, shared camaraderie, and technological implications, mutual mentorship and leadership, and knowledge mobilization that comprise the framework that the authors used.



What did we find?

Four themes were isolated from the OCoP framework in relation to faculty development: collaboration, interdisciplinarity, innovation, and validation. Communication between educators, especially new educators, in different faculties fostered a virtual space for normalized and meaningful collaboration that would have been less opportunistic in an in-person space. Knowledge mobilization prompted educators from different backgrounds to share contextual knowledge. This also extended outside of the OCoP, as educators continued to mobilize with other faculty and students who were not a part of the OCoP. The innovative strategies and practices that educators could implement into their virtual classrooms encompassed diverse aspects of blended and online teaching and learning such as student participation and virtual classroom frameworks. Educators must realize they are not alone in their uncertain experiences. Through validation, educators are reassured that their work is quality. Yet to sustain that quality, strategies and practices are shared pertaining to blended and online learning.

What does it mean?

In this article, the authors discussed the benefits that an OCoP can have on faculty development in blended and online classrooms in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this OCoP was solely focused on blended and online learning, this is still a burgeoning field even though multiple discussions and debates regarding the effectiveness of face-to-face instruction in comparison to blended/online learning classroom instruction are emerging. A year into the OCoP, the authors have noticed a strong community begin to form, which justifies future research to continue to examine the OCoP's impact on faculty and their blended and online learning practices.

About this snapshot

For a complete description of the research and findings, please see the full research article:

Anselmo, L., Stepanchuk, A., & Wright, A. C. (in press). *Advancing scholarship of teaching and learning in large enrollment courses: lessons learned from an online community of practice*. *Imagining SoTL: Selections from the Banff Symposium*.

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