

# BUILDING LEARNING COMMUNITY THROUGH A TRANSDISCIPLINARY MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH

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## FRAMEWORK OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- **CoPs** are:
  - “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).
- **Three elements** of CoP
  - Domain, Community, Practice
- **Capacity building** for learning communities
  - Personal
  - Interpersonal
  - Organizational capacities



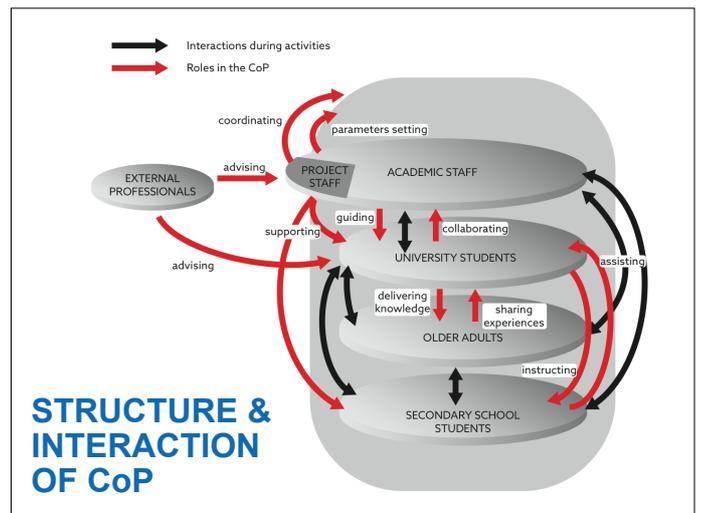

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## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

- **Project aims**
  - infuse academic and professional knowledge while integrating it with practice and connecting with society
  - create the necessary synergy to provide the best opportunities for successful contribution to society
- **Key features**
  - Transdisciplinary
  - Intergenerational
  - Multi-layered




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## OUR CoP EXPERIENCES

### ETHNOGRAPHIC PRACTITIONER RESEARCH

### STRUCTURING THE COMMUNITY

#### RECRUITMENT, MEMBERSHIP & ROLES

- A CoP involves people **coming together to work on a common goal or concern**

First of all, we started with a small idea... I really wanted to have something which will be along the line of a Learning Community. Coming from education, they use the perception of a Learning Community of a school. But I thought that we should do something so members can really target some issues in the community and at the same time learn. (F1)




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## WORKING TOGETHER

### LEADERSHIP, AUTONOMY & OWNERSHIP

- **First level leadership:** Faculty members were leaders in forming the CoP and take a steering role.
  - At the very beginning we didn't know what target would we work with — that is a problem. But I guess it's okay. We discussed, so we decided on older adults and also approaching (a center) nearer to our community. (F5)
- **Second level leadership:** Student members were leaders of individual project activities.
  - Each group had to take on board their own activities. Of course, we got support from fellow students when we encountered difficulties, but at the same time, we took care of everything, from buying materials to briefing the secondary school students. (SA35)




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## WORKING TOGETHER

### LEADERSHIP, AUTONOMY & OWNERSHIP

- **Implicit power hierarchy** assumed by students looking up at their teachers for advice and assistance  
I think we enjoyed a lot of autonomy. Our teachers were not authoritarian when we planned our activities, they did not explicitly interfere. We had the autonomy to design and write up our activity plans. (SA11)
- **Autonomy granted to students** revealed the faculty members' trust and helped them build confidence  
(The professors) just respected our creativity and offered help when we needed them. I really appreciate this kind of trust and appreciation from the professors. I really agree with this because it lets us go through a kind of self-actualization and it helps our confidence, especially when we succeed. (SA23)

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## MAKING PROGRESS & DECISIONS

- **Collective planning and implementation** were core features. Academic members found **the collaborative and open-ended nature** different from conventional research work.  
Not that we do not have a purpose of getting into the field, but there are so many of us getting into the field. The kind of dynamics and situations, you know, is very exciting. (F3)
- **The CoP model was a challenge to students** as they found themselves confused and barely understood the aims, objectives and missions.  
The progress was slow all the way... From the initial discussions, the weekly discussion to the actual implementation, to the point that the idea was confirmed. That period... lasted for 2 or 3 months. (SA32)

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## BUILDING THE TEAM

### TEAMWORK, COLLEGIALITY & BELONGINGNESS

- **Rapport and collegiality** were reported between students and faculty members as they worked together towards the Community goals, the relationships went beyond the traditional teacher-student interaction mode  
I had more communication with the professors. My opinions about them changed and I don't see them as professors, I talked with them like we are peers. (SA32)
- **Tension and conflicts arose** when students complained about others who failed to give support or assistance as expected  
I am a bit upset to see some members not joining meetings or activities, and not paying much effort. As a responsible person, it is our responsibility to contribute. (SA36)

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## INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

- The CoP provided a platform for **mutual learning across generations** to take place
- The **planned and unplanned interactions** that occurred before, during and after activities were the basis among which learning occurred  
  
I think the main achievement is the increased interaction between older adults and the younger generation. I think that I have learnt much more about older adults... Different people have different skills and abilities, which are not based on how much education they were able to have. (SA21)

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## DISCUSSION

- **Formation:** Shared domain in community involvement and learning
- **Membership:** Network-based recruitment
- **Structure:** Multi-layered
- **Process:** Collective planning and implementation
- **Socio-cultural context:** Chinese emphasis on hierarchy and collectivism

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## IMPLICATIONS

- **Capacity building:** Personal, interpersonal and organizational
- **Value-addedness** of a multi-layered intergenerational CoP
- Enhancing student learning through community involvement for **the development of affective domain**

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