

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE – **SHARE, LEARN AND GROW** WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES IN EDUCATION!

“Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”

Etienne Wenger

THREE GOOD REASONS FOR JOINING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

1 You are kept up to date with important developments in your field

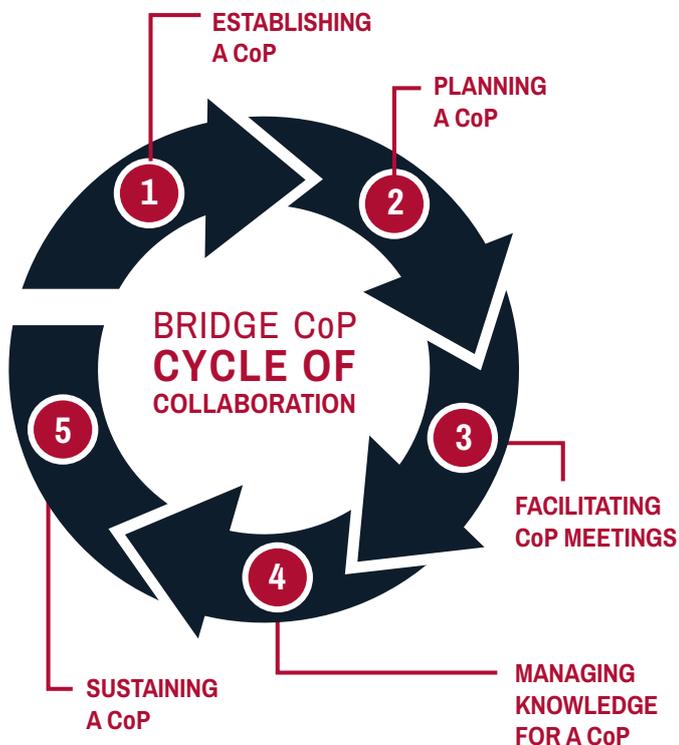
2 You can draw on the problem-solving skills of others

3 You can save time and money by sharing assets and resources

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR **PRACTICAL HELP** ON HOW TO SET UP AND RUN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE SO THAT IT ACHIEVES ITS PURPOSE?

BRIDGE has years of experience in establishing and running Communities of Practice in different areas of education, and can help you shape your endeavour. BRIDGE offers:

- A general guide to managing communities of practice, which can be adapted for different contexts.
- Face-to-face training for successful facilitation of CoP meetings.



See page 2 for more detail on the CoP cycle

“

This guide provides a practical approach to developing a Community of Practice, based on BRIDGE's extensive experience in planning, facilitating, reporting and managing knowledge for a number of successful Communities of Practice. The guide sets out the key elements that go into defining, creating and growing a Community of Practice, while recognising that there may be different needs and contexts to be served.

Extract from the **BRIDGE Guide to Managing Communities of Practice**

To find out more, contact BRIDGE at info@bridge.org.za with the subject line 'How to run a CoP'

ESTABLISHING A CoP

- Establish on the basis of common interests
- Call first meeting with core group
- Define purpose and outcomes
- Set up volunteer planning/steering committee
- Identify members

PLANNING A CoP

- Logistics: dates, venue (collaborative space), costs, refreshments
- Communication: invitations & reminders
- Agenda: key topic, activities, speakers (if required), resources
- Registers & contact details

FACILITATING CoP MEETINGS

- Decide on CoP process (e.g. rotating facilitators or a regular appointed facilitator)
- Define facilitator profile, roles and responsibilities in terms of purpose and outcomes
- Agree on a methodology (e.g. activity-based, task-based, use of reflective questions) that suits the purpose of the CoP

MANAGING KNOWLEDGE FOR A CoP

- Decide on your Knowledge Management [KM] approach in relation to purpose (e.g. sharing tools and resources, collaborating on projects, setting up joint ventures)
- Allocate KM responsibilities (recording, reporting, gathering, distilling & disseminating)

SUSTAINING A CoP

- Have a good communication strategy (ensure regular attendance, follow up on meetings, disseminate knowledge products)
- Check regularly with CoP members that the purpose and processes are still relevant
- Leverage technology effectively
- Keep the database up to date

BRIDGE CoP PROCESS OVERVIEW

Collaborating through
Communities of Practice