

Call for Chapters

Communities of Practice: Creating Learning Environments for Educators

A book edited by Chris Kimble & Paul Hildreth

Deadline for submission of chapter outlines, May 26th 2006

As with our previous book, 'Knowledge Networks' (ISBN: 159140200X), the aim of this book is to bring together the expertise of people who have worked with Communities of Practice (CoPs) in authentic educational settings across the world in a convenient, internationally based, workbook for people in the field of training and education.

1 Prospective Audience

"Communities of Practice: Creating Learning Environments for Educators" will examine CoPs from a practical, rather than an academic, point of view. Consequently, this call for papers is directed primarily at those who can provide 'real world' examples of working with actual CoPs.

Teaching is a very personal and 'individual' activity, yet teachers can also benefit greatly from links with others: both colleagues in their own establishment and colleagues in the wider community. Educators are prime candidates to benefit from membership of CoPs. CoPs can be powerful catalysts for enabling people to improve their practice. The fields of teacher training, newly qualified teacher induction and on-going professional development are fields where locally based CoPs are already being used.

CoPs not only have the potential to support the work of teachers but also that of administrators, graduate students, researchers and educational consultants. So called virtual CoPs can also prove valuable: technology has made it possible for educators to be involved in larger, more widely distributed communities. Membership of these communities allows them to collaborate, to develop new knowledge and to develop and learn about new resources in ways that would not have been possible before.

2 The subject area

The early literature on Communities of Practice emerged as a counter to arguments that held that learning was simply concerned with the transmission of knowledge from teacher to learner. However, CoPs are now seen as having an influence well beyond their original field and have been applied in several new areas - ranging from teacher training to distance or distributed learning.

Interest in using CoPs as a tool for educators, rather than simply as a mode of learning, has only recently begun to develop; currently the field has only a small number of books and papers, most of which tend to concentrate on the underlying theory. Our aim is to create a practically oriented book built on the expertise of people who have worked with or in CoPs in real educational settings across the world. Such settings might include:

- CoPs in higher and adult education
- CoPs in the classroom, i.e. the school as a community of learners
- CoPs supporting educational consultants and specialists
- CoPs supporting students
- CoPs supporting new and existing teachers in specific geographical locations
- Curriculum specific CoPs
- Virtual CoPs in e-Learning and in supporting teachers

3 Themes and major sections

The book will be organised into four major themes; each addresses a particular topic and we will hope that the majority of chapters in each section will contain practical examples rather than being based solely on theory.

3.1 Communities of Practice and Self-Directed Learning

This section will cover some of the basic ideas behind CoPs as a theory of learning and will act as an introduction to lay the groundwork for what follows. It will probably be shorter than the other sections and could include chapters covering learning and CoPs in the school / college / university / workplace.

3.2 Communities of Practice in Teaching

The second section will deal with CoPs as they apply to profession of teaching, i.e. the focus will be on educators using CoPs as part of their practice - either directly as mechanisms for learning or indirectly as support for networks. The examples here could come from primary, secondary, further or distance education.

3.3 Communities of Practice in Training

Here the focus is on CoPs as they apply to training. While this might be seen as a special case of the above, this is really a more specialised section that should appeal to a wide range of educational professionals. Here we want to address some of the issues that arise when CoPs are used for training: either directly, e.g. as part of teacher training or indirectly as part of a programme of continual professional development or life long learning.

3.4 Virtual Communities of Practice

This section will focus specifically on the particular problems of using CoPs in wholly "virtual" settings such as distance learning or support networks for teachers who work in geographically remote areas.

4 Key dates and author instructions

Prospective authors are invited to send a 500 word outline of their chapter, by e-mail (Word document or plain text), to Chris Kimble <kimble@cs.york.ac.uk> by May 26, 2006. The outline should clearly explain the content of the proposed chapter and suggest a theme and section under which it might appear in the final book. The outlines will be reviewed and the authors notified of the outcome by July 17th, 2006.

Date	Activity
May 26th 2006	Proposals to be sent to editors
July 17th 2006	Notification of acceptance by editors
Sept 15th 2006	Full chapters to be sent to editors
Dec 4th 2006	Reviewers comments returned to authors
Jan 22nd 2007	Revised chapters to be sent to editors
Feb 13th 2007	Final acceptance

The book will be published by Information Age Publishing, Inc; the language of the book will be English.

Further details and a copy of this call for chapters can be found at:
http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/mis/CLEE/Call_for_Chapters.html