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- British Council Schools Online
10 Global Trends in ICT and Education
Communities of best practice

Educators must be more than information experts; they must be collaborators in learning, seeking new knowledge and constantly acquiring new skills alongside their students.

— Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology (National Education Technology Plan 2010)
What is a community of best practice?

Community of practice (COP)—Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis

(Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)
Communities of best practice

Online communities of practice support teachers’ learning, enabling them to collaborate with their peers and leverage world-class experts to improve student learning and extend the reach of specialized and exceptional educators.

Collaboration is an effective approach for strengthening educators’ practices and improving the systemic capacity of districts and schools—and, ultimately, improving student learning.

(U.S. Department of Education, 2010)
Three core elements of a COP

True communities of practice have three core elements:

A **domain**—A shared area of interest (e.g., science instruction or inquiry-based learning or autism spectrum disorder) to which members are committed and in which they have a shared competence that distinguishes them from other people.

A **community**—In pursuing the domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. This social dimension is a hallmark of true communities of practice.

A **practice**—As a result of pursuing the domain together, members develop a repertoire of resources—experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—that together define the practice of their profession or area of shared interest.

An **online community of practice supports these three core elements with technology-based platforms, tools, features, and configurations, removing barriers of time and space.**

(Wenger et al., 2002)
Benefits of Online Communities of Practice

Build professional identity, relationships, and collaboration.

Online communities strengthen professional identity, including investment in and ownership of education as a profession.

They “provide a sense of place” and reduce “feelings of disconnectedness, isolation, and aloneness”. In fact, this often can be a primary motivation for joining and belonging. Online communities also can “be used to increase communication and collaboration”, and to “explore ideas” while “sharing emotions” and “experiencing a sense of camaraderie”.

(Gray, 2004; Hew & Hara, 2007); (Duncan-Howell, 2010); (Vavasseur & MacGregor, 2008); (Hur & Brush, 2009)
British Council Schools Online
What is British Council Schools Online?

A Global Community of practice for teachers and educators who share a passion about teaching and learning, and who want to deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting with peers worldwide.

Broadening teachers’ and learners’ international horizons, global citizenship and 21st century skills
A domain

A shared area of interest in which members are committed to develop international partnerships with schools in other countries.

Developing their competencies and sharing experiences of teaching and learning through forums and project spaces.
A community

British Council Schools Online members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information about their projects.

Social media ‘wrap-around’ helps to spread the word and encourage others to join - building and sustaining the community through peer-to-peer advocacy.
A practice

British Council and Schools Online members have developed a repertoire of resources—experiences of successful projects, stories of successful partnerships, tools for developing projects online and a dedicated online support team ready to help solve any problems or issues.
British Council Schools Online supports its global community of teachers with a global platform, project spaces and tools, and global resources features, removing barriers of time and space.
Access knowledge

British Council Schools Online provides educators with opportunities to gain equitable access to resources that are not available locally with a quality of dialogue equivalent or in some cases greater than face-to-face interactions.

Take a look at our free online professional development resources
Share knowledge

British Council Schools Online provides notable opportunities for educators to learn from one another, with the potential to expand and enrich learning opportunities for themselves and their learners through experiences not available in the traditional classroom environment.

Large numbers of teachers are participating in successful online collaborations and projects and accessing online training through British Council Schools Online.
Create knowledge

British Council Schools Online provides a fertile and sustainable environment for new knowledge creation by supplying collaborative project tools and brings together “creative geographies”—like-minded educators, or educators with common interests, who may be far apart geographically.
• http://britishcouncil.org/schoolsonline

• https://www.facebook.com/SchoolsOnline.BritishCouncil

• https://twitter.com/bcschoolsonline