

Learning and Organisational Resources for Communities of Practice

Type of resource: Managing, supporting and evaluating (individual and collective, and informal and formal) learning

Type of scenario: Reification

Analysing Learning Proc: Analysing individual learning processes

Summary

- Objective: to identify the learning processes experienced by the CoP members.
- Scenario: a questionnaire that the coordinator circulates to the members.
- Tools: paper/pen questionnaire or online questionnaire (GoogleDocs) or CoPe_it!

Objectives

This LOR aims at identifying the main or preferred learning processes adopted by the CoP members throughout the CoP activities. It is a questionnaire that the coordinator can circulate. On the basis of the answers to this questionnaire, the coordinator can then organise specific activities oriented towards the preferred learning processes of the members.

Scenario

CoP coordinators give the following statements for members to respond to. This can be done on-line or on a paper based inventory. The two last rows of the table can be used for identifying other statements with which the members strongly agree or disagree. The members write themselves new statements that they agree or disagree with. The CoP coordinator can also possibly add other statements to the questionnaire.

In the statements, the term “CoP” can be changed for the name of the specific CoP. The terms “knowledge/practices” and “experts” can be changed as well for better expressions related to a specific CoP context.

Beside each statement please tick the box that most accurately reflects your interests.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
1. Through the activities of the CoP, I develop my knowledge/practices through presentations by experts and discussions with them.						

Beside each statement please thick the box that most accurately reflects your interests.	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Not relevant
2. Through the activities of the CoP, I develop my knowledge/practices through discussions of practical issues with the other members of the CoP.						
3. I develop my knowledge/practices thanks to informal personal discussions with other members.						
4. I develop my knowledge/practices thanks to collective activities organised within the CoP.						
5. I develop my knowledge/practices thanks to useful readings shared within the CoP.						
6. <i>Personal suggestion</i>					x	
7. <i>Personal suggestion</i>	x					

In addition, a question can be added to the questionnaire asking the members to tell in a few paragraphs a personal learning experience that occurred during the last activities (formal or informal) of the CoP. The coordinator can identify in these accounts the main processes of learning experienced by the members.

The results of the survey can also be shared among all the members in order they situate their own preferred learning process regarding the other members' one or the collective one. The results can be displayed through a diagram in "spider" or "radar".

Tools to support activity

- GoogleDocs (<http://docs.google.com/>) can be used for creating an online questionnaire and getting the answers into a spreadsheet that can then be used for presenting the results into graphics.
- With CoPe_it! (<http://copeit.cti.gr/> - <http://palette.ercim.org/content/view/156/119/>), the coordinator can prepare a map with the five proposed statements as ideas. The members add their own opinions regarding the five statements. Their opinion takes the form of ideas, related to the five main statements. If they agree with the statement, they colour the link green while if they disagree with the statement, they colour the link red. Once each member has added his/her ideas regarding each statement, the coordinator can change the desktop view into a formal view. He/she then will see the green and red opinions regarding each of the five statements. In addition, in order to not lose the nuance between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree", the members are asked to comment their opinion (green or red) into new ideas that will be also displayed in the formal view.

Example of use by a community of practice

- An example of use is provided in the “**NeedCoP**: Understanding the perceived needs of CoP members” activity.
- Did@cTIC, a CoP of young university teachers used this LOR in a face-to-face meeting. Two questions have been added to the questionnaire by the coordinator: “the reasons for participating in the CoP” and “the expected outcomes”. This LOR has been combined with the LOR “**WhatHow**: What and how am I learning?” in order to extend the analysis of members’ learning to their learning processes and outcomes. Their answers to the questionnaire were displayed in a “radar” graph and presented to the members after the meeting. The issues raised by the LOR encourage a reflective attitude of the members. However, people felt the activity would have been more relevant and interesting if the results had been explained and discussed in the CoP, preferably immediately afterwards. This would require a suitable technological solution to make the results available in time (for example, GoogleDocs). According to the coordinators, this activity gave an opportunity for participants to ask questions about these variables. Otherwise, they could participate to CoPs without thinking about the role of CoPs (metacognitive role). In addition, this activity helped participants getting to know the views of others. For the coordinators, the activity helped regulating the functioning of the CoP. As a suggestion, the coordinators proposed to organise this activity several times in order to compare the possible evolution of the members’ learning. In addition, if there is no time to explore their answers with participants, this activity has no impact on them in terms of self-analysis.

Further resources

- This LOR is similar to the “**WhatHow**: What and how am I learning?” LOR but is restricted to the analysis of the members’ personal learning experience.
 - An example of use with GoogleDocs can be found at this address: <http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?key=pJfIT0McOwzmfZ-lm1gRCSw>.
 - This LOR can be combined with the “**NeedCoP**: Understanding the perceived needs of CoP members” LOR in order to get an insight about both the members’ objectives and preferred learning activities.
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