

Teachers Working Together: A Successful Community of Practice

Best practices and innovative ideas can be shared and cultivated in a collaborative and engaging professional network called a Community of Practice (CoP).

Participating in a CoP can help educators gain a positive outlook towards professional development through increased autonomy—choosing learning topics as well as how and when to learn.

In this webinar, we will:

- define a CoP and its components
- examine practical steps for building a sustainable CoP
- discuss CoP participation benefits
- share the successes of an ongoing CoP



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Having lived and worked in international settings, she strongly believes in the power of the global community.



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Teachers Working Together: A Successful Community of Practice



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Webinar Overview

- **Define** a Community of Practice (CoP) and identify its key characteristics
- **Discuss** the steps to developing a sustainable CoP
- **Examine** the benefits of a CoP
- **Share** experiences, successes, and challenges of a regional CoP



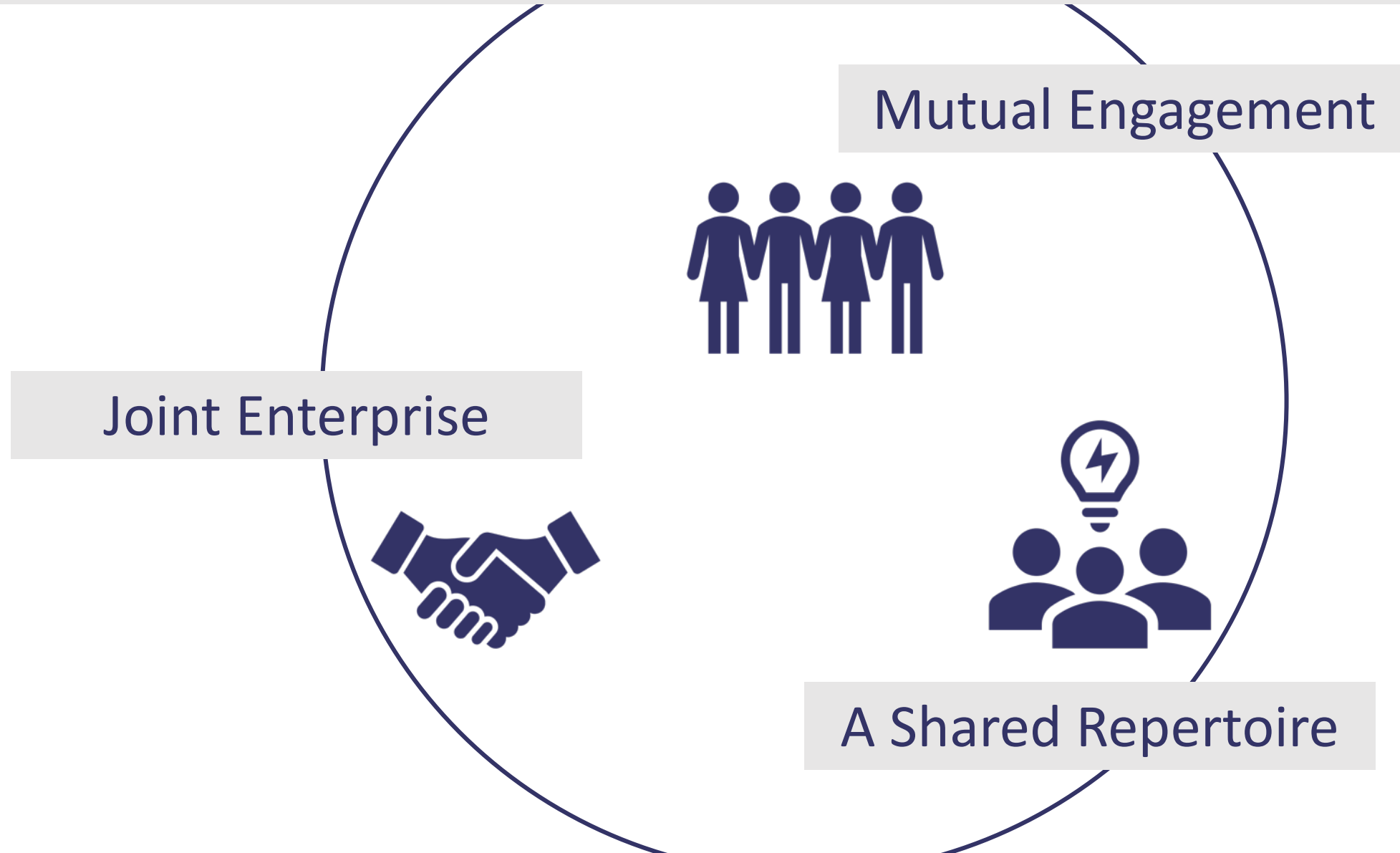
Community of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is “a persistent, sustained, **social network** of individuals who share and develop an **overlapping knowledge base**, set of beliefs, values, history, and experiences focused on a **common practice or mutual enterprise.**”

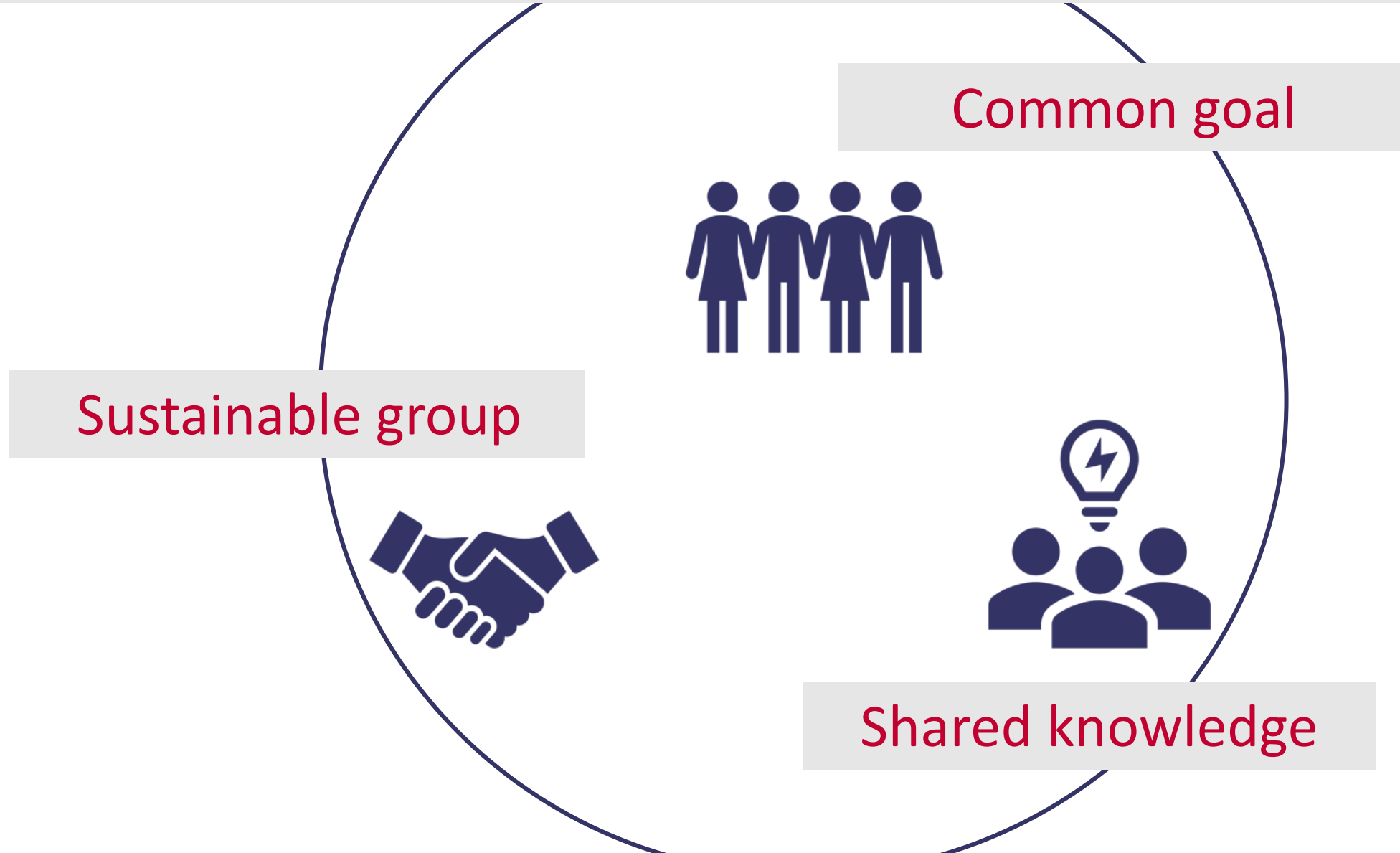
Community of Practice

A CoP is a **sustainable group** of teachers who develop a **shared knowledge base** focused on a **common goal**.

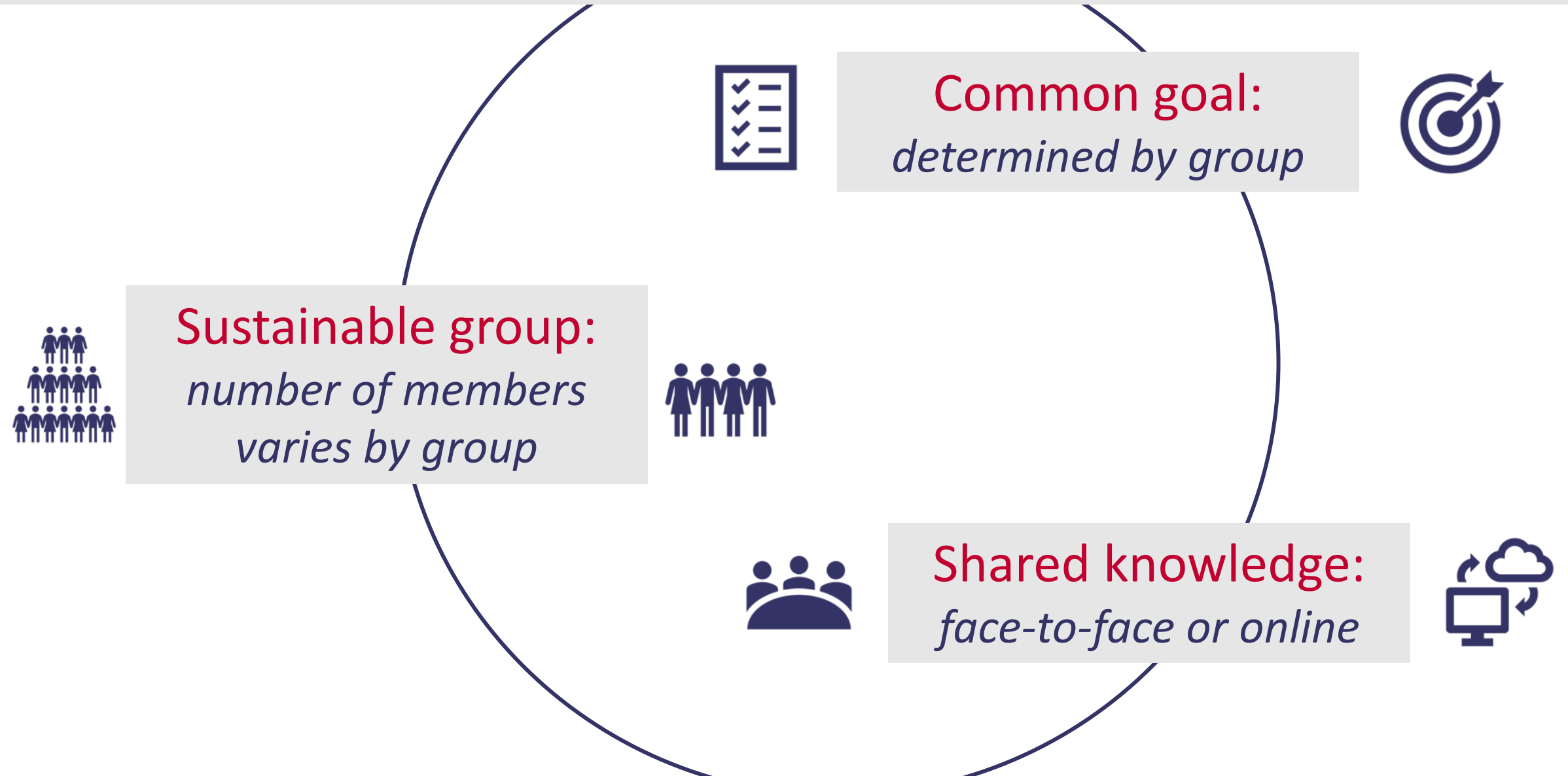
Essential Elements of a CoP



Essential Elements of a CoP




Essential Elements of a CoP: The Basics



Which is a CoP?

Option A

Teachers gather during breaks or other free time and talk about their problems of the day: students, needed changes, additional work given.



Option B

Five new teachers get together every week to identify issues and share strategies to increase students' classroom participation.

How to develop a CoP

1. Establish the group
2. Establish the purpose
3. Identify goals
4. Get organized
5. Learn to collaborate



1. Establish a core group

How?

From your school

From your town

From a conference

2. Establish the purpose of your CoP

Goals

Benefits

Why?

3. Identify goals

Establish key issues

Develop a timeline

Reflect on progress

3. Identify goals

Develop a timeline:

Meeting A: Brainstorming **key issues**

Meeting B: Select issue for focus: *increase student participation*

Meeting C: Members each research one strategy

Meeting D: Share strategies

Meeting E: Try one strategy in the classroom

Meeting F: **Reflect on progress**

4. Get organized

How?

Logistics

Where?

How often?

Who?

Leadership

Expectations

What?



Introductory CoP
orientation

5. Learn to collaborate.



Review: How to develop a CoP

1. Establish the group
2. Establish the purpose
3. Identify goals
4. Get organized
5. Learn to collaborate



Question

What are
the benefits
of a **CoP**?





**Develop meaningful and professional relationships
in a specific and personalized setting**



Collaborate in a supportive environment



Share and discover best practices



Support sustainable changes



Develop leadership skills and build confidence



Gain a positive outlook toward professional development

What are the benefits of a CoP?

- Develop meaningful & professional relationships in a **specific and personalized setting**
- Collaborate in a **supportive environment**
- Share and discover **best practices**
- Support **sustainable changes**
- Develop **leadership skills** and build **confidence**
- Gain a positive outlook toward **professional development**



Question



*How could
participating in a
CoP help you?*

Experiences from a successful CoP



Activities of CoP Participants



Grant writing
and mentorship



Action research



Mentoring new
teachers



Online
discussions




Co-teaching
workshops and
training events



Conference
participation or
presentation

Comments from CoP Participants

"I am finally enjoying teaching English because of the wonderful people I've met along the way . . . students and colleagues in rural areas."



"Action research modules have rekindled my passion for research when I was busy teaching. The research I'm conducting is not too complicated either. It's manageable."

*CoP members
describing
their experiences...*



Comments from CoP Participants

... Online collaboration *“allows me to connect with other as well as a chance to see other people’s ideas.”*



“(Collaborating) online ... gave us unlimited opportunities to collaborate with other CoP members. Moreover ... every member can read one another’s feedback or responses. So, it’s easy to share ideas.”



Question

*Who would you
like to work with
in a CoP?*



Webinar review

- **Defined** a Community of Practice (CoP) and identify its key characteristics
- **Discussed** the steps to developing a sustainable CoP
- **Examined** the benefits of a CoP
- **Shared** experiences, successes, and challenges of a regional CoP



References

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Reflection Questions

1. Around which topics or goals would teachers in your local area form a Community of Practice?
2. Would you prefer to participate in a CoP that works mostly face to face, mostly online, or a combination of both? Why?
3. What challenges would you expect to face when forming a new CoP in your area? How might you overcome these challenges?
4. How might you share the practical findings and other benefits of participating in a CoP with teachers beyond the core group members?



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