

Creating a place and space to build research and scholarship

Janine Tarr

University of Tasmania, Newnham, Australia
Janine.Tarr@utas.edu.au

Sally Farrington

University of Tasmania, Rozelle, Australia
Sally.Farrington@utas.edu.au

Tracy Douglas

University of Tasmania, Newnham, Australia
T.Douglas@utas.edu.au

Communities of Practice (CoP) are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour (Wenger, 2006). In this showcase we will discuss the genesis, development, features and preliminary evaluation of research and scholarship in a Learning and Teaching CoP. This CoP is a grassroots initiative in response to the increasing demand for teaching focussed academics to publish in the area of Learning and Teaching, regardless of their previous research training and experience. Our CoP is designed to be a collective and virtual place for a geographically dispersed group, a place for learning and for supporting professional development. In our presentation, we will describe strategies implemented to ensure the CoP is negotiated, organic and evolving. Our CoP provides situational and contextualized opportunities for members to develop research skills by actually engaging in the process of collaborative research enabling members to collaborate in joint activities and share their expertise and experience. It also operates as a safe and supported space for members with limited skills and experience in learning and teaching research. Preliminary evaluation of our CoP focuses on the participant experience, investigated using both survey and interview, highlighting individuals' reflections on the challenges and strengths of the CoP and the impact of the CoP on their practice. We will also report on the allocation of space, in the form of time for the CoP within academic workloads, and on concrete outcomes in the form of current learning and teaching projects and research output.