



Social Learning Configurations

Learning is social!

How we connect & interact with other people and resources depends on what we want to learn, and how we want to learn it. This infographic explores how we learn in communities, networks and other social configurations.

Communities and networks are not two distinct things. They are two aspects of social learning. They can co-exist at differing levels depending upon their features. They can move fluidly from being one, to the other, then back again.

Communities

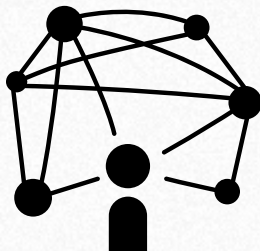
Developed around a shared domain an interest or passion all members share)

May be formal or informal

Members have a collective intention to advance knowledge about the shared domain (this may be explicit or tacit)

Create a sense of identity and a shared practice (stories, language, ways of doing things)

Tightly knit, may have restrictions on participation & often created for a particular purpose and time period



In the work of Dron & Anderson, the model of social configurations includes groups & networks. Groups are very similar to communities, but group was chosen because there are fewer connotations with the word group.

Networks

Based on connections, which may be direct or indirect.

May be intentional or serendipitous

There is no commitment to the shared domain or sustained engagement. Participants create connections as they require.

Typified by a rich web of information sources, which provides the potential for collective exploration, but no collective intention or design.

Loosely organised structures which depend on the individual nodes to contribute and filter,



Disadvantages of Communities & Networks

Wenger, Trayner, & de Laat, 2007, Dron & Anderson, 2007

Communities

Can become inward looking

Vulnerable to homophily & groupthink

Requires sustained engagement & commitment



Networks

Requires strong filtering & ability to distinguish quality from noise

Requires connections to be actively maintained

Depends on self-direction of individuals to add value

What about sets?

In the online world, sets are much more significant. A set is a cluster of individuals grouped by some common feature/s, although they may be unaware of this grouping. Before social media most set communication was one way, one to many. Now, it is much easier to communicate to a set, using tagging or metadata to identify and share to interest groups. Dron & Anderson, 2007



References

This infographic was constructed from material drawn from the following resources:

Dron, J., & Anderson, T. (2007). Collectives, networks and groups in social software for e-learning. Paper presented at the World conference on e-learning in corporate, government, healthcare, and higher education.

Dron, J., & Anderson, T. (2014). Teaching crowds: learning and social media. Edmonton, AB: AU Press.

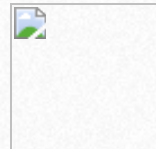
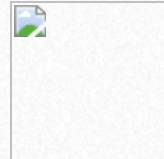
Wenger, E., Trayner, B., & de Laat, M. (2011). Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: A conceptual framework (18). Retrieved from The Netherlands: http://wenger-trayner.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/11-04-Wenger_Trayner_DeLaat_Value_creation.pdf

For further reading on this topic please go to:

<http://teachingcrowds.ca/discuss-the-chapters/chapter-3-a-typology-of-social-forms-for-learning>

and

<http://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>



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