Professional Learning Community:
Thriving While Facing the Challenges of Faculty Life Together

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Abstract:

Researchers have begun to focus attention on the participation of teacher educators in communities of practice (CoPs) and the role that participation plays in improving the quality of teacher education. This case study explores an inter-university CoP (sustained for over 10 years) that includes four faculty members at three universities, who work collaboratively on teacher education program development (e.g., accreditation), research, and service. This exploration is situated in the literature on CoPs, professional capital, and teacher educators' involvement in CoPs. In this paper the evolution of this inter-university CoP and each CoP member's personal meaning is shared. Key influences of this involvement in our professional learning (PL) and suggestions for teacher educators' PL as members of an academic community are offered.

Key Words:

communities of practice, situated learning, teacher education, professional learning, higher education.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to explore the professional learning (PL) of four physical education teacher educators engaged in a community of practice (CoP) that has been sustained for over 10 years. This exploration is situated in the literature on CoPs, professional capital, and teacher educators' involvement in CoPs. In this paper the evolution of this inter-university CoP and each member's personal meaning of the COP is shared. Based on our research on this inter- university CoP we will offer key influences of this involvement on our professional learning and provide suggestions for teacher educators' PL as members of an academic community.

The following operational definitions help to situate this paper. CoP refers to "any collectivity or group who together contribute to shared or public practices in a particular sphere of life" (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998, p. 380). Wenger (2007) highlighted three CoP elements: a) members share a domain of interest, b) members actively pursue that interest, and c) through sustained interaction members develop a shared practice. Through the joint social construction of contextualized knowledge of practice, CoPs engage in a collective process of learning through ongoing interactions and writing (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Developing new sets of relationships and progressing towards legitimate peripheral participation occur within sets of relationships. In these sets of relationships newcomers can move toward full participation by being involved in particular experiences. Engaging in various apprenticeship roles (e.g., attending, observing) facilitates learning though legitimate peripheral participation in a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Recently researchers have begun to focus attention on teacher educators participating in CoPs as key players in improving the quality of teacher education and, by association, examining the role of teacher educators'(TEs) professional learning (PL) and development (Brody & Hadar, 2011). Further, Parker, Patton & Tannehill (2012) implied that a community of teacher educators might provide new teachers to the field,

or even new teacher educators to a given university, with the *professional capital*, proposed by Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) to develop confidence and impact practice. When the work of teachers and teacher educators, engaged in a CoP, is viewed as a professional capital approach (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), then teaching is viewed as hard work that requires technical knowledge; highly educated faculty; effective practice; a focus on continuous, collaborative improvement over time; and the expertise developed over time to make wise decisions about students, curriculum, and instruction.

We know that "teacher educators learn by studying, doing and reflecting, just as their students do. Teacher educators also learn by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see" (Darling-Hammond, 1999, p. 18). Several researchers have suggested that professional learning communities and communities of practice in teacher education aid in sustained professional learning and growth, and can positively impact programs and student learning (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; McPhail, Patton, Parker & Tannehill, 2014; Parker, Patton, Madden, & Sinclair, 2010). McPhail et al. (2014) offered insight on how physical education teacher education communities of practice can work to sustain themselves and offer continuous learning and growth. McPhail et al. (2014) offered a continuum for the landscape for professional development in a CoP. This continuum describes the potential for success and growth, and offers effective guideposts from the CoPs they studied. Success for these groups was when their activities were transformative. The guideposts included: "(a) a positive learning environment that is social, as well as physically and mentally active, and where the PD focus is meaningful to teachers both in terms of content and context; (b) a supportive emotional environment, where deficiencies are discussed without teachers feeling deficient, and (c) a top-down and bottom-up structure of groups, acknowledging that while ideas may be generated from one group of participants they need to be supported by those in positions to provide financial and conceptual administration. A fourth, critical guidepost was the role of facilitator, who guides rather than directs, questions rather than shows the way, and listens rather than tells" (p. 44). Groups that were unsuccessful had roadblocks that served opposite roles as guideposts. In this paper, the PL of a sustained, decade long CoP of physical education teacher educators will be explored.

Methods

Participants and Context: The Evolution

The CoP members' paths first crossed during the AIMS-PE research project (A Collaborative, Multi-Institutional Assessment Initiative in Middle School Physical Education). Two of the members of this CoP where graduate students (Kelly and Kodi) of the research director of the project. Kodi joined the project in its third year. The third member of this CoP (Stephanie) was invited to join the research project and the fourth member responded to a call for volunteers for the project (Dorothy). Stephanie, Kelly and Kodi are graduates of the doctoral program where the research project initiated.

The AIMS-PE project ran from 2001 through 2007. During the 7-year period the research group met and worked collaboratively, worked in small groups, and

individually. The research project included working with teachers in 10 public schools to improve teaching practices and assessment in physical education.

While the research group worked collaboratively to present and publish the findings locally and nationally, the individuals in the group were at different career stages. During a 3-year period (2004-2007), two of the members of the current CoP changed university/college positions; one member secured her first higher education position, while another member continued her doctoral studies.

Although the CoP members stayed in contact through their career changes in and/or accepting their first higher education positions, the members of the CoP continued to cross paths in diverse ways. Dorothy and Kelly created a new connection through their contributions to state AHPERD, working with the Council of Future Professionals beginning in 2003, while Kodi and Stephanie initially connected through AIMS-PE in 2004. Over the next few years, Stephanie, Kodi, Kelly, and Dorothy co-presented a series of well-received professional development workshop sessions across the state. In 2007, Stephanie accepted a position at Kelly's institutions and a new chapter for the CoP began.

Presently, the members of this CoP work at 3 different State University PETE programs. Three of the members of the CoP are now mentors to junior faculty (one serves as chair, and two as program coordinators). The new roles in their academic institutions bring vibrant and challenging experiences, which are shared among the CoP. The shared interest of CoP members in engaging their students in the state AHPERD continues to connect them. Presently, three of the members of this CoP are members of the state AHPERD Executive Board.

Data Collection and Analysis

This case study uses theoretical lenses of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and self-study (Lassonde, Galman & Kosnik, 2009). Methodological framework includes grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). Two three-hour focus group interviews with four CoP colleagues (pseudonyms used) were conducted by outside researchers from the University of Limerick and California State University-Chico. Personal narratives were also constructed by each participant. Interview responses and narratives were constantly compared, axial and selectively coded, then triangulated to develop categorical narratives (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). Trustworthiness was established through the use of public forum, individual researcher memos, and two critical friends from two separate universities.

Results

CoP Leadership

The CoP selects to operate in an open collaborative manner, where there are seemingly no boundaries. Ideas are generated individually and collaboratively; accepted or rejected without the notion of power or hard feelings. Kelly elaborates on the notion of generating ideas, "I know for me, I have to be able to take an idea and talk it through. So the opportunity to talk to my colleagues is absolutely essential. So I'll throw out an

idea and they help me change my mind or I come to a new way of understanding…For me that's when and where I get to understanding something."

Since the three universities are geographically located across the state, the members of the CoP's primary means of communication include phone calls, texts, and emails. As Stephanie highlights, "We burn the batteries out on the phone. Kelly and I, we start with the home phone, then we go to the cell phone. And the meeting is over when the batteries are dead." Kelly remarks about email communications, "I think Dorothy tends to be the one to reach out to us and then that gets things rolling." The CoP is able to function in a meaningful and highly productive manner, despite the physical locations of their employment.

The conference calls and emails exceed the hours of the work-day and into the weekends, willingly. Each member of the CoP is accountable for her contribution to the group or the project. Although the roles, responsibilities, and work demands shift to meet the needs of the group, a high level of commitment to the CoP prevails. The notion that one individual is designated with the role of "leader" is non-existent. Dorothy clarifies, "At different times all of us (all agree) lead. Depending on what the project is, the support system shifts too." Dorothy continues, "There is a shift in mentorship.., but we all serve as mentors to each other at different times for different reasons."

The strengths and weaknesses of each member of the CoP are transparent. Kelly acknowledges, "I am not a big details person, but I am a big picture person. Stephanie and Dorothy, you are really good at the finer points." While Dorothy and Stephanie are attentive to details, Kelly has a global perspective, and Kodi gravitates towards an inquiry of practice. Without formal assignments or direction the group instinctively shifts to support one another. The following dialogue captures the group reminiscing about submitting a completed manuscript for review that all four had co-authored:

Kelly: Just submit it, it's fine

ALL: laughing

Stephanie: We [Stephanie and Dorothy] will agonize over the details

Kelly: Just hit send!

Dorothy: I usually say here it is. Here's my input, but somebody else has to hit send, because I'll never press it. So then one of them sends it. That's how it happens!

The above conversation demonstrates a simple struggle of closure. Sending the manuscript for peer review is difficult for Dorothy. Kelly, however, moves the process of submission forward. Her confident, light-hearted direction reassures the group and the submission is sent.

Integrated Group Focus on Scholarship, Teaching and Service

Scholarship, teaching, and service naturally interact for each member of the group. By virtue of being pedagogues, completely immersed in the profession, this engagement in scholarship, and what is learned through this collaboration, extends to the teaching of students and the engagement in service with the profession. One

interviewer described the practice of this CoP by saying, "It goes everywhere." Scholarship, teaching and service are all included in the group's collaborative activities. This CoP shares every aspect of their professional lives/careers. They engage as active learners/participants in all three endeavors: teaching, scholarship, and service.

Personal Meaning and Benefits of the CoP

In this section, each CoP member shares a personal narrative on their entry and continued involvement and meaning associated with their membership in the CoP. Dorothy's comments are specifically related to the significance of the trust she has developed in the CoP. Kelly comments on the value of the relationships she has formed. Stephanie focuses on professional transformation. Kodi, shares her perspective on how support allowed her to move from the periphery of the CoP to full participation in the CoP.

Dorothy -"I don't trust easily."

For me, trust is the most powerful aspect of our CoP. I don't trust easily. I certainly don't trust some of the individuals in my department and I don't trust the administration [at my institution]. The CoP is a safe and trustful place for me. We engage in serious conversations, venting our frustrations and emotions with no judgments. I can't communicate with my junior faculty the way I communicate within our group. Everyone needs a mentor, a trusting person to shepherd her through her professional career. We mentor each other, and the safest aspect of that mentorship is that it is outside of my institution; certainly a like-institution, so there is a common understanding. I place great value in honestly sharing experiences and talking through challenges with our CoP.

We also have fun while we work and socialize too. One of my favorite times is when we debrief after a presentation. I find the post-presentation debrief highly engaging because I want to learn more and improve for the next presentation. After the debrief, I also like the social time going to dinner and having drinks.

In PETE, our roles are very demanding and exhausting. Yet, our CoP increases our/my productivity. I would never accomplish all the presenting and publishing (in addition to directing the PETE program, teaching, service, and mentoring my junior faculty), without the energy and drive of our CoP. Moving out of my comfort zone and thinking differently about my teaching and research challenges me. Clearly, I moved out of my comfort zone by flying to national conferences to present. Our CoP is embedded in my practice and me; it helps me make critical decisions, even when we are not physically together and involved in deep discussion.

Kelly – It's about the relationships.

It was in the AIMS-PE context that I met Dorothy and Stephanie, as we attended regular meetings and spent time in schools collecting data. I developed a sense of respect for them in our initial interactions, however, I didn't feel connected to them, any more than others in the project, until we started to do presentations about AIMS-PE and writing a manuscript from the study. In my second year as a faculty member, the meaning of these new found relationships changed for me. I

was feeling isolated in a new home and work environment. I remember looking forward to going to meetings and writing together, as it felt so good to be in a group of people I felt comfortable working with, which was in stark contrast to navigating my way through my first years as a faculty member. I had the responsibilities of the PETE program on my shoulders, as my pedagogy colleague retired during my first year, and every aspect of this work life was new. At this time, Kodi also joined AIMS-PE as a new doctoral student. I soon felt connected with her as we had the same advisor, and shared similar research interests in TGfU, and I was only one year removed from completing the doctoral program.

Over the years, the meaning that I made of our CoP has shifted. Early on, the AIMS-PE group and eventually our CoP was an oasis, with a singular focus on scholarship, away from the many challenges I faced in my role as a new faculty member. As Dorothy, Stephanie, Kodi and I have continued to work together, and have shared so many experiences, what I value most about our CoP is our relationship. For me, this is a relationship that is bound by our mutual respect for each other, a deep commitment to educating future teachers, and now what I would call a genuine friendship. I have found three like-minded colleagues, with similar work ethics, and a diverse set of skills that can come together on all aspects of faculty life. I find comfort in our CoP, because it is a place where together we can solve a problem, brainstorm or just buoy each other up. At this stage in my career, I am often in a leadership position in many of my academic responsibilities, which always requires me to be on top of my game. Our CoP, with shared leadership is thus a comfortable space where I can be vulnerable, and a place that not knowing or understanding something is accepted and valued. I feel responsible to our CoP, but not responsible for it.

Stephanie - Professional Transformation.

I was invited to participate in the AIMS-PE project and this is where I met Kodi, Kelly, and Dorothy. Even though Kelly was an integral member of the AIMS-PE group, my interactions with her came later in the process, which looking back became the impetus for a career move. When I saw a presentation of hers, she was well spoken, yet down-to-earth and the presentation was so very inspiring. I remember thinking to myself – "Wow! I would like to work with her!" Kelly took the job at the University and I watched to see if she would remain there. When a job opened up, I decided to apply. I was uncertain as to whether they would hire me, but when I went to the interview it was like I was whole.

I cannot believe it has been 7 years, since I began transforming myself from a behaviorist to a constructivist teacher through the medium of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU). I now know how the caterpillar feels when it is transforming to a butterfly… it was a struggle… one that I welcomed, but it wasn't easy. I had Kodi helping me on the weekends by practicing the lessons I was teaching and helping me learn how to teach with questions. This whole notion of an evolving class, was completely new to me. I remember telling her, 'I don't even know enough about the content myself to ask higher level questions'. At the same time, Kelly was helping me during the week. She would ask me how my

class went that day and she talked with me about the questions she was asking and how the students responded. All of which gave me the courage to continue even after over 20 years of experience, as a college professor, to continue learning and growing and questioning. I realize I still have much more to contribute to the profession. Between the two of them, they literally saved me professionally by helping me to reinvent myself. All the time Dorothy reminded me to keep a sense of humor and supported me through this process of transformation in my teaching and professional life. One unique aspect our CoP provides is momentum. Together, we have accomplished so much more, and it is through our togetherness with like minds and passionate hearts that we move forward and that we make a difference.

Kodi - Moving from the periphery to the center with support.

I first became involved in AIMS-PE during the first semester of my doctoral program in 2004. During this time, I got to know Dorothy, Kelly, and Stephanie. In working on this project, I developed a strong connection with Stephanie, immediately, at my first meeting with the group. She had a catchy energy, was personable, and was interested in my story and what I had to say. Stephanie showed me the ropes of living in New England, as I was 2,000 miles from where I call home, away from my family or anyone I knew. Our relationship went beyond the professional realm. She became my best friend.

As I struggled through my doctoral program Stephanie was my back stage mentor and my stability rock. She mentored me as I taught classes as a graduate assistant, as I collected and analyzed data, as I navigated the doctoral processes and relationship with my advisor, and even as I began to interview and apply for faculty positions. As Stephanie struggled with philosophical issues at her current institution, a job at a sister institution became available. I, along with others, encouraged her to apply. Stephanie ended up taking the position at the University, working with Kelly. By virtue of Stephanie being at the University, I was able to spend a great deal of time at her institution and get to know Kelly better.

Kelly and Stephanie jived together. It was like they spoke the same language. Hanging out with the two of them and listening to their work stories was like riding a wave! It was fun and exciting. Like a sponge, I was soaking up knowledge of being a professor. Stephanie began to ask me more and more questions about TGfU, and she began to bring more and more information back to me that she was getting from Kelly. I would go to Stephanie's Games Course and just hang out and watch. The dialogue and inquiry shifted between us as we were learning the pedagogy of TGfU.

As their University came in need of an instructor to teach a course, I immediately jumped on it when Kelly and Stephanie asked me to teach it. I would spend my week taking my doctoral courses and working as a research assistant, then take off to the University, two hours away, to teach a course. I spent a lot of time with Kelly learning about this course and how she previously taught it. This connection also afforded me time to have one-on-one conversations with Kelly

about my dissertation and TGfU, as well as how to navigate the doctoral process with my advisor, who was her former advisor, too.

Up until this point, I defined myself as a doctoral student, despite my role as an adjunct faculty member at the University. I took in information wherever I could find it. Stephanie and Kelly worked together; and the two of them along with Dorothy served on the state AHPERD together. Sometimes the three of them would get together after a state AHPERD meeting to work on one of the manuscripts they were writing for AIMS-PE. Stephanie would invite me along and I would just hang out and see what was going on. I helped to edit their drafts. Editing and writing these drafts together is how I began to know Dorothy better and became more involved with the three of them as a group.

As I began to apply for full-time faculty positions, Stephanie encouraged me to talk with Kelly and Dorothy. I sought advice from both of them to get different perspectives on job searching. Dorothy became my job search "coach". The following year, I accepted a one-year, full time position in a southern state. During that time I continued to be connected to Stephanie, Dorothy and Kelly. Weekly phone calls from Stephanie for support and sharing of course materials, help from Kelly and Stephanie on my dissertation, and Dorothy as job coach maintained our connections. I finally landed a full-time faculty position at a sister institution to two universities, where my three CoP buddies work. My dissertation was still not complete. Kelly and Stephanie both continued to mentor me through the dissertation and cheer me on during that year. As I came closer and closer to finishing, and as I grew into my role as a professor, I felt empowered with time and finances. I could feel my role in the group shifting.

The TGfU conference was coming up in Spain as part of AIESEP in 2010! How exciting would that be? I asked Stephanie and Kelly if they wanted to go; because, of course, I did not want to go alone. We had a collaborative project to submit, so it made sense. I encouraged them mostly on the notion that it would be fun to get out of the country and explore TGfU from another perspective. We went to Spain! This experience spring boarded us into a bigger world of TGfU and from my perspective, a more cohesive CoP. That summer, Kelly, Stephanie and I made a trip to the University of British Columbia in Vancouver to do some collaborative work with their TGfU Cohort and to share ideas for a manuscript with a professor from the University of Victoria. Kelly, Stephanie and I continued on to our next International TGfU Conference in London in 2012, prior to the Olympic Games. This conference propelled me to Treasurer on the International TGfU Executive Board.

Stephanie, Dorothy, and I presented on game modification in TGfU at the national physical education conference, and had over 150 people in attendance. It was a rush! After the presentation, all four of us gathered together for a few hours to write a manuscript based on a previous PETE presentation. At this juncture, I felt like I was in the center of this community of practice, too.

Sometimes I feel like I struggle to keep up with the three of them and what's going on, and being so far away and not being part of the state AHPERD board.

Though when we collaborate, I get reassured that I am doing the right things, even if I feel behind compared to the progress they are making in their courses, in their scholarship, and in their learning. All in all, one could say that I went from a baby-doc to a full-time faculty member with these three colleagues at my side. Essentially, I grew up with them!

Discussion

Consistent with the literature, trust and respect among members were essential ingredients of this CoP (MacPhail et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2010; Parker, et al., 2012; Whitcomb, Borko, & Liston, 2009). Trust and respect have been shown to contribute to a safe and supportive environment in which members are more "likely to take risks and engage in challenging discussions that push them to deepen understanding and attempt new practices that will reach more learners" (Whitcomb et al., 2009, p. 210). In this CoP, trust and respect supported the group's momentum to produce scholarship together, to engage students in professional organizations, and to lead nationally accredited teacher education programs. All participants referred to trust and respect, however Dorothy pinpointed this aspect in her personal narrative.

Also noteworthy, is the transformational aspect of the CoP that includes members moving from the periphery of the group to the center, at different times, under various conditions. Two of the most powerful individual transformations occurred with members in different career stages. Kodi, as junior faculty, expressed her confidence about moving from the role of quiet observer to her current position in the CoP with a respected voice in both her writing and group engagement. Stephanie, a senior faculty member, noted that the CoP supported her as she reinvented herself in both a new institution and as she embraced teaching from a different theoretical perspective. Such individual transformations strengthened the CoP. Wenger (2007) suggests membership in a CoP implies a commitment to the domain and a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. Stephanie and Kodi indicated that the CoP was pivotal in their transformation. Collectively, the CoP provides value to the professional learning process of its individual members. All members benefit as they develop a common body of knowledge, a common set of practices, and a common set of values (Wenger, 2007).

McPhail et al. (2014) provided that a challenge for a CoP is sustainability, as barriers may impede the group process, whereas guideposts have been identified in the literature as aspects that keep a CoP on track and vital. Several structural features serve as essential guideposts for this CoP including: (a) a common university system, (b) state AHPERD, (c) conferences and scholarship, and (d) a common philosophical perspective.

Common University System. As CoP members have each attempted to navigate their way through the politics of higher education, they have been able to draw on the commonalities among the institutions as a resource. For example, they have the same governance system, the same union, and therefore the same expectations for tenure and promotion. Often, when an issue such as for promotion and/or tenure ensues, not only can the CoP members support each other, but they can also provide contextually accurate advice. Dorothy said, "I was thinking of going up for full professor and I

emailed Kelly…[she] gave me the encouragement to do it." The value of such endorsement, outside of one's university, is meaningful and motivational.

State AHPERD. Another important guidepost for the CoP is the state AHPERD association. With three out of four of members on the executive board, the monthly meetings and annual events (e.g., conferences, student summit, and awards banquet) provide opportunities for face-to-face time and established events to work on collaboratively. Stephanie noted, "We think of each other a lot because we see each other a lot. Once a month the three of us are sitting together at a state AHPERD meeting…. We're involved. But you know it's a bonding kind of thing." In addition, the service that the CoP does for the state organization has resulted in a collective, respected position as the voice for "higher education," within the organizational structure. Stephanie commented, "I don't think we shifted their thinking [state AHPERD Board]. I think we made them think differently. We promote that different thinking." Further, the state AHPERD is where they get a chance to know each other's students. Their students involvement in state AHPERD serve as a guidepost because the CoP collectively works together to help students become teachers who are committed to continuous learning and growth. Dorothy said:

> The state group is where we all intersect. I get to meet Kodi's, Kelly's and Stephanie's students and they meet my students. And we are modeling what it means to serve in our professional organization. We let them practice that. They come to our board meetings and they come to dinner with us. Our students don't necessarily define us as a CoP, but they certainly connect us in a deeper, practical, and meaningful manner.

Conferences and scholarship. Conference presentations provide another important guidepost for the CoP. First, they provide time for members to work together and to socialize, face-to-face, over a period of a few days, at least two times per year. The CoP uses conference time to write together, to connect with other professionals and often something or someone at the conference leads to their next project. Second, planning and preparing for the conference makes each member of the CoP accountable to create time for scholarship. Conferences, and often the papers that follow a presentation, connect the CoP in an authentic way over a long period of time. With research based presentations, they are involved in data collection sometimes a year prior to the conference and work on analysis over a period of months. The CoP typically has a flurry of extended conference phone calls, texts and emails leading up to a conference presentation. All four CoP members participate at the state convention, and they have contributed to at least one national conference per year over the last few. Kodi has been the leader of their international travel, encouraging Stephanie and Kelly to submit work together to go to AIESEP in Spain in 2010, TGfU in England in 2012, and New Zealand for AIESEP in 2014.

Common philosophical perspective. A final guidepost for the CoP is their common philosophical perspective of teaching/learning and their work life that connects the CoP in scholarship, teaching, and service. Broadly defined, each member of the CoP uses constructivist teaching in their classroom, they embrace inquiry; they engage in a collaborative approach and value authentic learning experiences for their students. Furthermore, this constructivist approach is consistent with how they function as a CoP.

For example, as two of the three institutions were going through national accreditation, and were developing program reports, they brainstormed together and shared successes and failures. They shared ideas about assessments that would enhance their programs and reinforce programmatic messages. The sharing process was useful because of their common philosophical approaches and the belief that to overcome challenges together allows them to benefit from the wisdom of multiple perspectives. They keep each other going often through encouragement or reinforcement of commons beliefs about quality teaching and quality teacher education programs. They value the wisdom of each other, and build each other up. The CoP is sometimes a buffer to the insecurities and challenges that they each face at their institutions. Further, they have a deep commitment and accountability to each other, which is essential to being productive in their academic careers.

Lessons Learned

One of the most significant lessons that this CoP provides for the reader is the notion that the power of the group can be leveraged to help the group (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013). The collaborative power of the group supported the work of CoP members in all aspect of their academic life; teaching, research, and service. The members of the CoP each brought different talents to the group and diverse backgrounds and experiences (e.g., human capital) in K-12 education and higher education. As the personal narratives illustrate, the CoP worked together to collaborate on teaching (TGfU), research and service. CoP members have different areas of expertise which serve as a resource and contribute to their collective professional learning and productivity. As noted earlier, professional capital is made up of three types of capital that include: (a) human capital, the talent of the individual, (b) social capital, the collaborative power of the group, and (c) decisional capital, the wisdom and expertise to make wise judgments about students that are developed over years.

Therefore, professional capital is a useful construct to understand the professional learning of the teacher educators in a CoP. When teacher educators work together in a CoP, conditions for ongoing, collaborative development and professional learning can be created. A common challenge for CoPs is sustainability, and guideposts identified in this study may provide insight for other higher education faculty involved in CoPs.

Authors' Closings Thoughts

As our CoP continually evolves, the members evolve as professionals; individually and as one unified CoP. We are better professionals and people because of our CoP. One interviewer summarized the essence of our CoP by stating, "It [teaching, research, service] goes everywhere," to further her quote, "*'goes everywhere' within us.*"

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