

Mission Not-So-Impossible

- Your challenge/assignment/“mission” between today and our next webinar:
 1. Implement one 4-H activity that uses guided inquiry and is embedded in the EL cycle. **Note:** This may be from a specific curriculum that was developed using these pedagogical strategies, or it may be an activity you choose to adapt to use guided inquiry and EL.
 2. Reflect on that experience. Collect reflection data from the youth; use a plus/delta sheet or some other form of self reflection (e.g., journal) to collect your own reflection data.
 3. Make revisions to the activity.
 4. Be prepared to share this experience with the group during the next webinar. **Note:** This is referred to as ***making your practice public***, a key step in improving teaching and learning.

Mission Not-So-Impossible

- Making Your Practice Public:
 - Describe your experience. What activity did you implement/observe? Audience? Venue/Delivery mode?
 - Describe the types of formative data that you collected (e.g., observations; written reflections).
 - Explain how, if at all, the activity you implemented/observed characterized the EL cycle.
 - Based on your formative data/reflections, describe any modifications you would recommend to the activity you implemented/observed.

Making Practice Public

Martin H. Smith

Specialist in CE

UC-Davis

Why Make Practice Public?

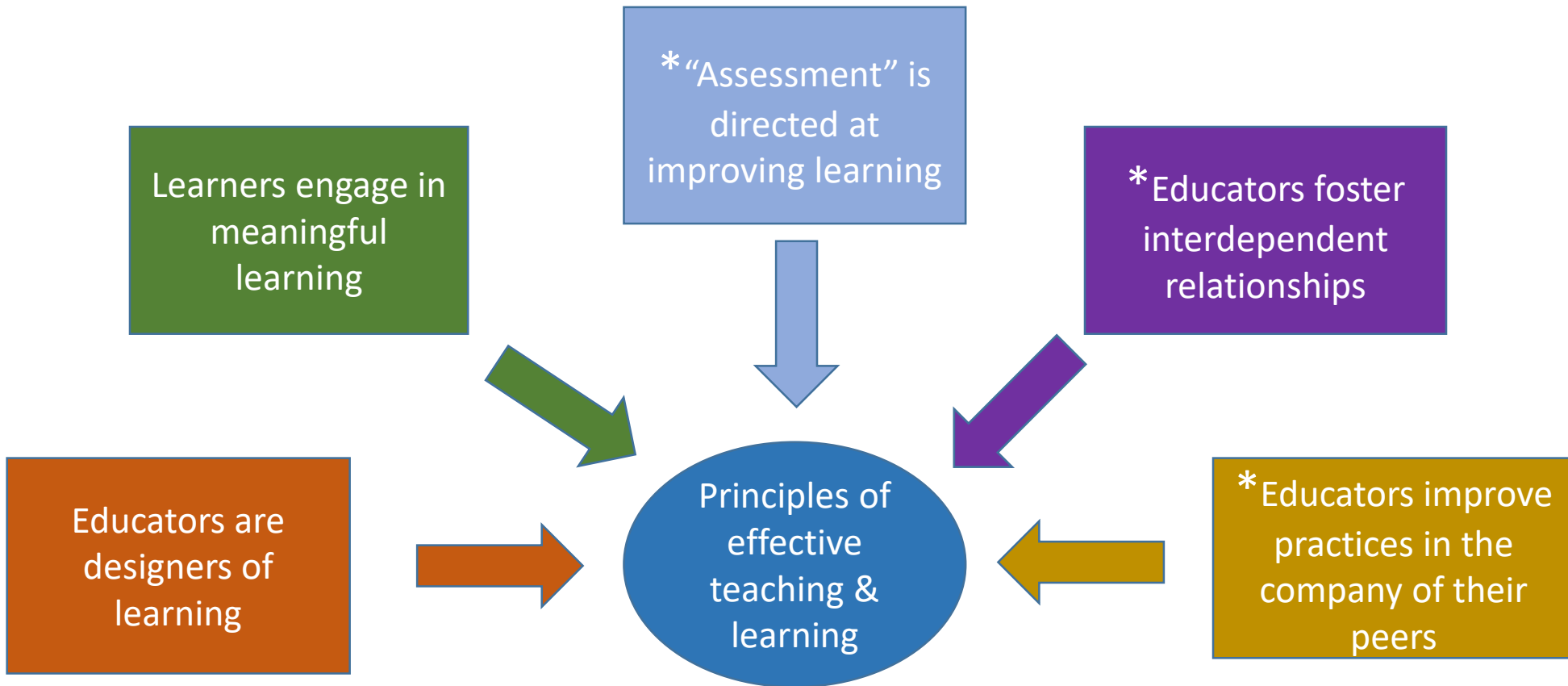
Educators Shape Practice

- As educators, we are decision-makers who shape practice.
 - Practice at the level of program development.
 - Practice at the level of staff and volunteer development.
 - Practice at the level of program/project implementation with youth.
- However, isolation of educators is a common issue; it is detrimental to their continued learning and development (Lieberman, 2010).
- Key Questions:
 1. How can we reduce educators' isolation?
 2. How can we help prepare educators to make informed and systematic decisions that shape practice effectively?

Inquiry into Practice

- We engage our 4-H youth in inquiry-based activities and curricula. How can we engage 4-H educators in inquiry?
- Inquiry into practice:
 - Educators develop a habit of mind that focuses on transforming their teaching through data-based decision making.
 - Practitioners are engaged in looking systematically and intentionally at their practice. (*I've asked you to look at how you use the EL cycle.)
- Inquiry into practice is not something one starts and stops; it becomes part of who we are and what we do as educators.

Teaching for Engagement



Adapted from Friesen, 2009

Assessment; Interdependent Relationships; and the Company of our Peers

- Systematic Reflection on our Practice(s): Be intentional; record your reflections.
- Relations that promote a culture of learning – educators/learners; learners/learners; educators/administrators.
- In the “Company of our Peers”: Communities of Practice (CoPs) – This is where practice is made public and educators can shape practice and learning.

Communities of Practice (CoP)

- “...groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4).”
- Theoretical underpinnings: **constructivism; situated learning; and reflective practice.**

Communities of Practice (CoP)

- Participants **co-construct knowledge** through social interactions that are **situated in real-world contexts** (Chan & Pang, 2006).
- **Individuals enter into CoPs on the periphery**; through time, the level and complexity of their interactions increases. Referred to as **legitimate peripheral participation** (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Developing a Community of Practice

- Domain
 - What topics and issues are we going to address?
 - Connection to the organization's strategy?
- Community
 - Who are members? What roles will they play?
 - How and how often will we meet?
 - Community norms and ground rules?
- Practice
 - How will the CoP be proactive in taking charge of the development of its practice?

(Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)

Benefits of Communities of Practice

- CoPs offer educators continued **motivation, acknowledgment, and support** of self-development efforts (Mycue 2000).
- Participation in CoPs often **saves time later**; increases participants' **confidence**; and advances **knowledge and skills of participants and organization** (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).
- CoPs provide a forum to **mentor novices** (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Benefits of Communities of Practice

Looking beyond the obvious...

- Some of the greatest value of CoPs “lies in the **intangible outcomes**, such as the relationships they build among people, the sense of belonging they create, the spirit of inquiry they generate, and the professional confidence and identity they confer to their members (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 15).”

Using CoPs (Lesson Study) in 4-H: *Educators Shaping Practice!*

- Improved Lesson Planning: Use of formative data (from youth; from educators) to make **data-driven decisions regarding lessons**.
- Enhanced Social Connections: Built relationships; **reduced feeling of isolation**; improved motivation; increased collaboration.
- Improved Teaching Practice: **Continued growth and development**. Reflecting on implementations guided by formative data **improved teaching practice** – *Data-Driven Decision Making*
- Advanced Content Knowledge of Educators: **Continued growth and development**. Less-experienced educators **advanced content knowledge** the most.
- Role of Content Experts: Beneficial to CoPs.

○ See: Schmitt-McQuitty, L., Worker, S. M., & Smith, M. H. (2019). Lesson study model of 4-H professional development: Data-driven improvements to educator practice. *Journal of Youth Development*, 14(1), 126-138. Available at <https://jyd.pitt.edu/ojs/jyd/article/view/19-14-01-PA-01>

Challenges of Communities of Practice

- Shifting our perspective: Moving from the idea that mastery resides with the experts to mastery residing within the members of a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991).
- Making a longer-term commitment to a form of open-ended professional development (Buysee, Sparkman & Wesley, 2003).
- Sustaining the CoP over time.

Forums for CoPs

- In-person
- Online (synchronous; asynchronous)
- Blended learning opportunities

Intentionality of CoPs

- Be systematic; set a meeting schedule
- Shared governance; develop set of group norms and expectations
- Rotate leadership
- Identify individual and CoP group goals
- Set a time limit; honor time commitments
- Focused, egalitarian discussions driven by data

Next Steps

▪ Domain

- What topics and issues are we going to address? **Experiential Learning in 4-H projects/activities.**
- Connection to the organization's strategy?

▪ Community

- Who are members? **Current group.** What roles will they play?
- How and how often will we meet? **One more scheduled meeting (20 February @ 10:00 a.m.). After that...?**
- Community norms and ground rules? **Need a chair for the next meeting; need someone to volunteer to take notes and distribute them.**

▪ Practice

- How will the CoP be proactive in taking charge of the development of its practice? **What does the group want/need to do between now and the next meeting to be proactive in advancing the use of EL within their programs/activities?**