Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership

The Communities of Practice Self-Assessment Tool

Overview

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

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The CoP Self-Assessment Tool Overview

There are four components of the Communities of Practice (CoP) Self-Assessment Tool (the Tool) including the:

- **Domains**
  The CoP Self-Assessment Tool sets out the five domains of leadership development which should be supported and enabled by the CoP Approach. There are 18 sub-domains which specify how each domain should look in practice. This information can be used to guide planning and delivery of the CoP Approach within each network.

- **Survey**
  The CoP Self-Assessment tool is an online survey that will be distributed on an annual basis. Click here to access the survey, or copy and paste the link into your browser https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7379163/CoP-SELF-ASSESSMENT-TOOL
  Please do not exit your browser part way through completion. If you do want to save your progress hit 'save and continue later' in the top right corner and enter your email address.

- **Guidance for Progression**
  After you have completed the survey, the guidance for progression provide tips and advice on how to improve the network's rating against the domains.

- **Working documents for network discussion**
  This is a separate document that can be printed or used electronically to facilitate a discussion in your network to prepare for the survey. It contains all of the survey questions with space to consider evidence and next steps. Download the working documents from the AcademyOnline space.

Background

The evaluation of the CoP approach identified that the Tool needed updating to go beyond measuring maturity to being able to support Network's to reflect and grow with their CoPs.

Updates include:

- simplified questionnaire to define success, encourage self-reflection and provide Networks and The Academy with ongoing performance (monitoring) data to track growth
- redeveloped guidance that can be reviewed in tandem or separately to completing the questionnaire
- embedded case studies of CoPs demonstrating leading practice to share key learnings.

Domains

The following domains of leadership development should be supported and enabled by the CoP Approach

Domain 1 – Community: How we work together

Sub-domain	CoP approach standard
System Leadership Exercising systemic leadership enables systemic improvement.	We collaborate with the education system leaders, and with leaders in adjacent systems such as health and human services, the community sector and private enterprise.
Accountability Collective and individual accountability maintains focus and purpose	We hold ourselves and each other accountable for the commitments we make.
Diversity Diversity of CoP membership enriches connections and learning.	We invite diverse perspectives from the range of schools within and outside our Network and involve teacher and student voice in our decisions.

Domain 2 – Professional practice: How we learn together

Sub-domain	CoP approach standard
Joint problem solving Solving problems together leads to better outcomes	We work as a group to solve systemic problems, capitalise on opportunities, and develop better practices for improving student outcomes.
Peer challenge Peer-to-peer learning is enabled by inviting critical perspectives	We respectfully challenge each other to strengthen our leadership, practices and student outcomes
Trust Reciprocal trust is foundation of effective peer-to-peer learning and network improvement	We trust each other enough to share and interrogate data and information about ourselves- and from our schools
Transparency Effective monitoring assists improvement of practice and systems	We monitor, document and share progress against our CoPs goals.

Domain 3 – Professional knowledge: What we learn together

Sub-domain	CoP approach standard
Vision Long term vision enables strategic improvements	Our learning aspirations are guided by a longer-term vision for improving student outcomes.
Strategic focus A strategic rather than operational focus is required for system leadership	We focus on systemic and strategic leadership, rather than on operational matters.
Personal leadership Effective leaders are critical to an effective system	Our CoP members are improving their personal, organisational and systemic leadership.
Leadership enablement Enabling others to lead strengthens networked, systemic leadership	CoP members actively enable professional growth in other leaders in our schools and our network

Domain 4 – Professional ethics: Why we learn together

Sub-domain	CoP approach standard
Moral purpose A shared moral purpose is a powerful enabler of collective change	We share a sense of moral purpose and responsibility for all students across our network
Outcome-driven The CoP's goal is to improve student and school outcomes	Our learning is ultimately focused on advancing educational outcomes within our network.
Partnership Valuing collaboration and the insights others bring motivates shared learning	We operate with a strong sense of partnership, not competition.

Domain 5 – Endorsed and enabled: What helps us learn together

Sub-domain	CoP approach standard
Social capital Strong relationships and social capital within the network are enabling of shared learning	Our peer relationships are characterised by reciprocal trust, respect and generosity.
Resources Using data, evidence and tools strengthens decision-making and learning activities	We make effective use of data, evidence and tools to support how we learn.
Self-improvement A self-improving network creates a reinforcing cycle of positive change	We reflect on and improve how we operate as a Community of Practice.
Resilience A resilient network can drive system outcomes even when under pressure	We continue working well as a network even when resources are under pressure.

The Survey

The CoP Self-Assessment Tool can be accessed via this survey link. The self-assessment tool is to be completed once for each network.

The Survey is designed to help you reflect on how your network is applying the CoP approach by answering questions about your practices across the five domains.

Each domain has three or four statements that are rated on a ten-point scale from Never – Always

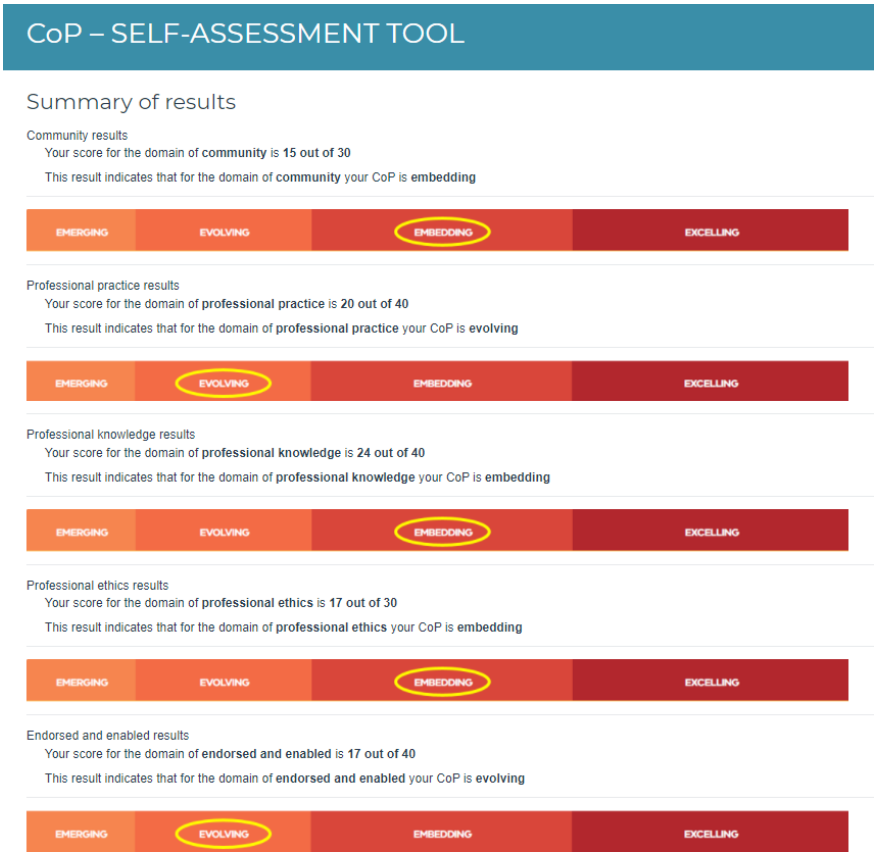
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Never	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	**Always**

The preferred method is for you to complete the tool collectively as a Network Executive team and use the tool to facilitate reflection to help you decide how your CoP scores in each category. However, it can also be completed just by the Network Chair and/or SEIL.

Working documents are available in Appendix 1 to guide your conversation within your network.

At the end of each domain, you will receive a rating indicating if your Network is Emerging, Evolving, Embedding or Excelling. **You can keep track of your results in the working documents, by taking a screen shot or printing directly from your internet browser.**

Example results page:



Self-Assessment Tool: Guidance for progression

Components of the Self-Assessment Tool:

- **Domains:** The CoP Self-Assessment Tool sets out the five domains of leadership development which should be supported and enabled by the CoP Approach. There are 18 sub-domains which specify how each domain should look in practice.
- **Survey:** The online survey asks you to rate each of the sub-domains on a ten-point scale from Never to Always. You will receive a total score for the domain which will place your network as Emerging, Evolving, Embedding or Excelling.
- **Guidance for Progression:** After completing the survey, these provide Networks with tips and advice improve and evolve their application of the Communities of Practice Approach against each domain.
- **Working documents for network discussion:** A separate document that can be printed or used electronically to facilitate a discussion in your network to prepare for the survey.

Domains and sub-domains	Guidance for progression – how networks can improve and evolve their application of the Communities of Practice Approach		
Community – How we work Together **System Leadership** We collaborate with the education system leaders, and with leaders in adjacent systems such as health and human services, the community sector and private enterprise. **Accountability** We hold ourselves and each other accountable for the commitments we make. **Diversity** We invite diverse perspectives from the range of schools within and outside our Network and involve teacher and student voice in our decisions.	Progressing from Emerging to Evolving > Actively strengthen connections between individual school leaders, strengthening our network's functioning and laying the foundation for great professional collaboration > Use common data structures to share data on all schools across our network > Agree on well-defined roles and accountabilities > Hold joint accountability for outcomes, backed up by peer scrutiny and review > Acknowledge and celebrate achievements within our network > Proactively encourage new members to join by extending our network membership to all schools in the area	Progressing from Evolving to Embedding > Foster and maintain strong relationships between our network and the different institutions through which students' progress, from preschool to tertiary study > Collaborate with other networks and external agencies such as health and human services, community organisations, tertiary institutions, and private enterprises > Build and sustain an active commitment to continuous improvement within our network > Build members' capability for system leadership > Proactively extend our network membership to Assistant Principals and Leading Teachers for priority projects	Progressing from Embedding to Excelling > Proactively identify and consciously plan for policy and practice reforms that are on the horizon > Maintain dialogue, debate and resolve issues > Encourage increased commitment to our network > Actively encourage / continue encouraging self-selected leadership to all members

Professional Practice – How we learn together	Progressing from Emerging to Evolving	Progressing from Evolving to Embedding	Progressing from Embedding to Excelling
Joint problem solving We work as a group to solve systemic problems, capitalise on opportunities, and develop better practices for improving student outcomes. **Peer challenge** We respectfully challenge each other to strengthen our leadership, practices and student outcomes. **Trust** We trust each other enough to share and interrogate data and information about ourselves- and from our schools. **Transparency** We monitor, document and share against our CoPs goals.	> Communicate the benefits of working together > Bring leaders together to solve problems as they emerge > Provide collegial support to all members > Reciprocal challenging on specific, evidence-based outcomes is a key feature of our self-improving network and is embedded in all of our development activities > Prioritise acceleration of improved student learning outcomes by focusing on our own learning, knowledge and understanding of student learning growth and apply this to our school contexts > Ensure a good balance of formal and informal monitoring structures	> Ensure the right people are in the room to answer problems > Discuss network improvements and reflect upon problem solving techniques at regular intervals > Arrange professional development from experts in relevant fields > Give and receive feedback about each other's performance data, with a focus on improving teaching practices > Systematically give and receive feedback about each other's performance data, with a focus on improving teaching practices > Evaluate progress annually	> Proactively seek out ways to improve the network through collaborative problem solving > Maintain ongoing relationships with professional experts in relevant fields > Trust, value and invite critical perspectives from CoP members > Hold one another accountable for maintaining focus on progressing towards goals > Persist in pursuing improvement goals despite setbacks and difficulties

Professional Knowledge – What we learn together	Progressing from Emerging to Evolving	Progressing from Evolving to Embedding	Progressing from Embedding to Excelling
Vision Our learning aspirations are guided by a longer-term vision for improving student outcomes. **Strategic focus** We focus on systemic and strategic leadership, rather than on operational matters. **Personal leadership** Our CoP members are improving their personal, organisational and systemic leadership. **Leadership enablement** CoP members actively enable professional growth in other leaders in our schools and our network.	> Discuss and share good practice amongst members > Address learning / curriculum areas that are relevant to all members > Reduce focus on operational matters > Plan activities that address the needs of all members > Arrange expert speakers to present at network meetings > Discuss and agree with members on the FISO priorities for our network > Develop clear learning goals for our network which support agreed FISO priorities > Plan activities that support the agreed FISO priorities	> Our network is an important enabler of long-term improvement across our education system > Cultivate multiple dynamic interlinked relationships across schools at all levels > Reference research and utilise leadership theory to improve our leadership practice > Ensure scheduled activities support joint practice development (not just transfer of professional knowledge) > Communicate a clear and shared focus for improvement in student outcomes > Identify and nurture leadership talent > Develop a clear strategic plan that supports the achievement of agreed FISO priorities and regularly review the priorities	> Agree on a long-term vision for improving student outcomes that extends for five or more years, and apply this to plan and monitor CoP activities > Actively share agreed network purpose with wider networks in our communities, including external agencies such as community organisations and tertiary institutions > Actively improve our data knowledge and use of data to inform practice change and improvement. > Actively develop leadership through mentoring and coaching > Foster leadership development and actively encourage professional learning

Professional ethics – Why we learn together	Progressing from Emerging to Evolving	Progressing from Evolving to Embedding	Progressing from Embedding to Excelling
Moral purpose We share a sense of moral purpose and responsibility for all students across our network. **Outcome-driven** Our learning is ultimately focused on advancing educational outcomes within our network. **Partnership** We operate with a strong sense of partnership, not competition.	> Have purposeful meetings, sending agendas prior to meetings, and meeting reminders > Participate in classroom visits and seek learner feedback regularly > Ensure members are personally benefiting from their participation in the network by checking in with members regularly > Get together and share experiences and ideas from our individual schools > Acknowledge and value everyone's input	> Agree on a shared purpose as a network > Establish processes to allow students to have a voice in decision-making > Focus on fostering genuine, mutual partnerships and work towards overcoming competitiveness between individual schools > Engage in thinking about and supporting a local network of schools not just individual schools > Encourage broad community partnerships and to strengthen stakeholder relationships and pride in our schools > Actively strengthen connections between individual school leaders, strengthening our network's functioning and laying the foundation for great professional collaboration	> Ensure the educational outcomes and wellbeing of children informs everything that we do as > A network, for our individual schools and across the network > Treat teachers and students as part of the solution by including their views in decision making as much as possible > Demonstrate to members that all students and teachers can learn if they are provided with the right support, such as formal training, coaching, or evidence through case studies or examples > Document and share case studies of how the CoP has contributed to positive educational outcomes in schools > Encourage high-performing schools to collaborate with lower-performing schools

Endorsed and enabled – What helps us learn together	Progressing from Emerging to Evolving	Progressing from Evolving to Embedding	Progressing from Embedding to Excelling
Social capital Our peer relationships are characterised by reciprocal trust, respect and generosity. **Resources** We make effective use of data, evidence and tools to support how we learn. **Self-improvement** We make effective use of data, evidence and tools to support how we learn. **Resilience** We continue working well as a network even when resources are under pressure.	> Proactively involve regional and area support teams in the network > Proactively involve schools in the area to participate in our network > Ensure members of our network have access to resources to function well > Share data and resources openly > Commit to and have the capacity for effective peer review of resources > Agree on systems for peer review that involve sharing data and resources > Acknowledge and share the results and achievements of our network to members	> Actively encourage members to participate in our network > Ensure systems and standards enable easy transfer of records as students move from preschool to primary, primary to secondary and beyond > Interact with all relevant resources available within DET > Engage in research and 'joint practice development', with structured peer learning focused on improvement > Think outside our own school's needs, and actively share resources / tools with peers who will benefit > Ensure members have sufficient data literacy to make the most of shared data > Utilise tools that are available to analyse and communicate data > Have a purpose and structure in place e.g. a clear agenda focused on teaching and learning goals	> Encourage and support teachers to experience other school settings as part of their career development, including sharing their learnings with our network > Seek out relevant resources outside of DET > Actively explore promising approaches used by other education systems > Commit to continuous improvement of peer review practice and systems through cycles of collaborative enquiry to improve network resources > Adopt a self-improving school system through ongoing monitoring for continuous improvement > Establish short- and long-term goals and build in achievement milestones ensuring momentum for collaboration is sustained over time