Communities of Practice at UTAS

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Today

1. Chance to find out more about this *important initiative* for UTAS:
   - Some CoPs of explicit strategic importance to UTAS
   - CoP Café
   - Some existing communities

2. Opportunity to:
   - Reflect on whether this is valid for you
   - Participate in an existing community
   - Consider new areas
   - Be part of the critical gaze we need
   - Contribute research and scholarship into CoPs
Contexts of CoPs

Conceptual base:
- Etienne Wenger (with Jean Lave)
- Social and situated theory of learning
- Domain, Community and Practice
- Communities of practice/communities of learning

Institutional change management strategy (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002)
- Some international and Australian examples

Sector change level
- Explicitly used in UK Open Educational Resources project – subject communities

UTAS
- In new L&T Strategic Plan
- Established as key part of TILT (CALT) focus and see http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/awards-and-grants/national-and-other-awards/communities-of-practice-cop
- Many existing forms of community: not an attempt to control these
- Support some grass-roots CoPs in L&T
- And also some Strategic CoPs
CoPs at UTAS: Why?

1. A time of discussion about new directions in L&T

2. Way of releasing potential across university:
   - Not just same old faces or the converted
   - “validation” of innovatory ideas
   - “Informal” networks and groups

3. Ways of addressing issues that are relevant to specific contexts (situated)

4. Way of generating new ideas that may then become mainstreamed: a middle level change theory

5. Way of promoting cooperation across boundaries:
   - Schools/faculties (academic)
   - Academic/Professional
   - Academic/management
   - University/Community
Some issues for future consideration

1. Sustainability beyond the funding

2. What we can learn re the importance to the communities of
   1. Location/spatiality (multi-campus context)
   2. Technology
   3. Leadership and coordination
   4. Disciplinary/multidisciplinary issues
   5. Needs for further support

3. Development of the Initiative