

“This is not a learning centre that is about making 20 little business leaders. This is a learning centre about creating well-rounded students who know their strengths and unleash their potential to influence others.”

Michael Armstrong – A.B. Combs School.

We grow and become who we are in and through our human connections. Wenger believes that learning is central to human identity (CoP).

CoP: learning is a process that is dynamic, on-going and engaging of one’s whole being.

Lave and Wenger state that rather than defining learning as the acquisition of knowledge, they situated learning in certain forms of social co-operation termed Communities of Practice (Lave, J & Wenger, E. 1991. Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation. Cambridge University Press: NY.)

Greatness to Match Today’s Realities.

Young people need to be equipped with a type of ‘greatness’ and the skills they will need not just to *survive* but to *thrive* in the 21st century.

Until recently, we were living in an era known as the information age. In that era, individuals who had the most information – the most ‘facts’ in their heads – were the ones who became the fortunate few to ascend to the tops of their professions. During that era, it only made sense that the primary focus of parents and schools was on pumping as many facts into students’ brain cells as possible.

Factual knowledge alone is no longer the great differentiator between those who succeed and those who do not.

Instead the individuals who are emerging as the new ‘winners’ – *the new thrivers* – possess:

- Above average creativity,
- Strong analytical skills,
- A knack for foresight and
- Good people skills.

So often employers say that well educated people with university degrees don’t know how to take responsibility for their actions, to vocalize their thoughts, to treat people with respect, to analyse a decision, to empathise, to prioritise, to solve conflicts maturely, or to plan.

Greatness:

Greatness is a term that can be intimidating to others. To some it is even arrogant or a negative term. This may be because many people equate it only with what could be called *Secondary greatness*. Secondary greatness has to do with positions and titles, awards, wealth, fame, rankings or rare accomplishment. Almost by definition, secondary greatness can only be attained by a select few. Secondary greatness is largely determined by comparing one person with another.

Primary greatness, on the other hand, is open to everyone. Primary greatness has to do with a person's integrity, work ethic, treatment of others, motives and level of initiative. Primary greatness is measured not by comparisons with other people, but by adhering to timeless, universal principles. It is humble.

THREE THEMES TO LOOK FOR:

Observe the universal nature of the leadership principles that are being taught in schools. The principles will enable young people to make better choices today and improve their tomorrows. Need to keep the keenest eye of the principles not the practice.

Observes the universal nature and unique potential of young people - young people are born global. *The Leader in Me* assumes that all young people are good and that within every young person are gifts to be unleashed. *The Leader in Me* assumes that within every child there are to be found leadership qualities.

Observe the same principles and approach being taught at the school can also be taught at home.

What do parents, business leaders and teachers want from a school:

They want children to grow up to be responsible, caring compassionate human beings who respected diversity and who knew how to do the right thing when faced with difficult decisions.

Our educational program will revolve around *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

	<i>Aboriginal learning perspective</i>
<p>Habit 1: Be Pro-active: I am a responsible person. I take initiative. I choose my actions, attitudes and moods. I do not blame others for my wrong actions. I do the right thing without being asked.</p>	<p>Self sufficient learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are responsible for their own choices • Students do the right thing because it is the right thing to do • Students learn through observation and minimal instructions <p>Being responsible and accountable</p>
<p>Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind: I plan ahead and set goals. I do things that have meaning and make a difference. I am an important part of my group and contribute to my group's mission and vision, and look for ways to be a good citizen.</p>	<p>Group learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students visualise the whole picture so they can break down what needs to be done into required tasks • Students acknowledge everyone has an important role • Students work together for the benefit of the group <p>Understanding roles and responsibilities, sharing, teamwork and your place in society</p>
<p>Habit 3: Put First things first: I spend my time on things that are important. This means I say no to the things I know I should not do. I set priorities, make a schedule, and follow my plan. I am disciplined and organised.</p>	<p>Real life learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students understand the reasons for learning • Students link learning to how they live <p>Understanding priorities, responsibilities, problem solving, effective communication and balance</p>

<p>Habit 4: Think Win-Win: I balance courage for getting what I want with consideration for what others want. I make depositions in others' emotional bank accounts. When conflict arises, I look for third alternatives.</p>	<p>Group learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work as a group for the benefit of the individual and the group • Students respect self and others <p>Teamwork, sharing, respect for self and others, problem solving, communication.</p>
<p>Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood. I listen to other people's ideas and feelings. I try to see things from their viewpoints. I listen to others without interrupting. I am confident in voicing my ideas.</p>	<p>Real life learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn that learning comes from others and in a variety of ways • Students learn by doing and trial and error • Students learn through people rather than systems • Students learn from real life experiences <p>Respect for self and others, effective communication, problem solving, self awareness.</p>
<p>Habit 6: Synergize: I value other people's strengths and learn from them. I get along well with others, even people who are different from me. I work well in groups. I seek out other people's ideas to solve problems because I know that by teaming with others we can create a better solution than anyone of us alone. I am humble.</p>	<p>Real life learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn by acknowledging and understanding diversity, differences with life experiences, assumptions and aspirations <p>Sharing knowledge and information, teamwork, problem identification and problem solving, respect for self and others.</p>

<p>Habit 7: Sharpen the saw. I take care of my body by eating right, exercising and getting sleep. I spend time with my family and friends. I learn in lots of ways and lots of places, not just at school. I take time to find meaningful ways to help others.</p>	<p>Self sufficient learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn through meaningful tasks • Students learn to take care of themselves and others • Students learn they are responsible for their own choices <p>Responsibilities, respect for self and others, sharing, supporting others, accepting guidance, teamwork.</p>
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The world is very complicated and changing. The challenges we face today are not the same challenges young people face tomorrow. So we felt the best way to anchor our students was through teaching timeless principles.

Francis Foo Principal of school in Singapore.

Connected (reciprocity):

A critical factor in student achievement is what educators call **connectedness**. Without this connectedness chances of them doing well in school diminish rapidly and the likelihood of delinquent behaviour increases. To help this we need to focus on the spiritual need. Spirit includes disposition, courage, determination, vigour, will, moral fibre, heart, enthusiasm, inner self, fortitude and strength.

Leadership is communicating people’s worth and potential so clearly that they are inspired to see it in themselves.

Developing leaders one student at a time.

Theme of centre: leadership.

Mission statement: To develop Leaders one young person at a time.

Vision: To Live, to Love, to Learn, to Leave a Legacy. Or Learn Before, Learn During, Learn After (CoP: as described by BHP).

A 7 Habits Fit?

The habits are organized into a sequential, progressive model. The first three habits – Be pro-active, begin with the end in Mind and Put first things first – combine to help a person become more *independent*. This could be called the **Private victory**. When put into practice, these three habits enable a person to be more responsible, to take control of their life, to map out their future, to establish priorities and to execute a plan by staying disciplined and focused. Embedded in the three habits are time management skills, planning skills, goal-setting skills, and other basic organising skills that are foundational to independence or *self leadership*.

Independence is not the ultimate “end in mind” for either children or employees. That is why habit 4 – 6 – Think: Win-Win; Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood; and Synergize – are so vital. These three habits lead a person toward becoming *more interdependent*. They entail insights into how to communicate effectively and how to balance courage with consideration and how to problem solve with others. Combined, they encompass conflict resolution skills, listening skills, creativity skills and team work skills, and lead to what is called **Public Victory**.

Finally, Habit 7, Sharpen the Saw, wraps around all the other habits by embracing the principle of renewal. It is the habit that enables people to stay for today’s world in four critical areas – physical, socio-emotional, mental and spiritual.

What parents, businesses and teachers want for students?	The 7 Habits of highly effective people.
Independence.	
Initiative, self motivation. Self confidence. Planning skills. Goal setting skills. Organisation/time management.	<i>Habits 1-3.</i> Be pro-active. Begin with the end in mind. Put first things first.
Interdependence.	
Conflict management skills Communication skills (both listening and presentation skills).	<i>Habits 4 – 6.</i> Think Win-Win (balancing courage with consideration for others).

Honesty Fairness Openness to suggestions Team work Problem solving Decision making Creativity. Renewal.	Seek First to Understand, then to be understood. Synergise
Technical skills Good health and hygiene Emotional stability Analytical skills Involvement in meaningful work.	<i>Habit 7</i> Sharpen the saw: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, • Emotional, • Mental, • Spiritual.

Messages to be displayed:

Leader wall of fame.

Learn about great learners.

We honour the greatness in you.

Win-Win way.

Unleashing a culture of leadership.

Behaviours:

Clearly, the 7 Habits are not the only behaviours taught and emphasised at the school during that first week. Basic manners and etiquette are big. They are taught of the wisdom of going in pairs. They are taught that good hygiene and grooming are part of being a leader. They are encouraged to greet visitors and to welcome them to the program. They also determine ways that good behaviour will be rewarded. As a result, polite and mature behaviours have become ‘a way of doing things’ – part of their everyday culture.

Language:

Language spoken in the hallways says volumes about the culture. On a regular basis we need to hear phrases such as:

“We dwell in possibilities here.”

“We tell them we value them every day.”

“We focus on what they can do, not what they can’t do.”

“Every student is important.”

If the students do something good, they should hear: “Yesterday you did such a wonderful job with doing your responsibilities.”

When entering the classroom in the morning, both the teacher and an assigned greeter – Leader of the Day – are there to meet them at the door.

FET 8605: Building Communities of Practice.

Semester 3, 2009.

Assignment 1.

Taking one of the key drivers that impact on the (re)emergence of CoP, explore some of the prominent literature and select a useful article or develop a useful resource that you will make available to the course participants. You should annotate the resource you develop or publish, providing a critique on the relevance and contribution to the central or foundational dimensions of Communities of Practice.

Submitted by:

Fr. Chris Riley

Student identification:

Masters of Education – Southern Queensland University.

Facilitator: Debbie Blencove.

Communities of practice is a relatively recent innovation, although the model has been used over many centuries and while the term may not be known most of us are involved in CoP in reality. The concept of knowledge and its management, harnessing and articulation is one of the driving forces for the (re)emergence and interest in CoP.

There are several issues that are driving this (re)emergence. Firstly, globalisation and the rise of community and information technology is a significant driving force requiring organisations to redefine knowledge management and a knowledge of workers who are the most important resource to organisations (Mitchell). Secondly, work and learning has been seen as a social practice as organisations develop through strategic planning, creating values-driven organisations and encouraging innovation is another driving force. Thirdly, the development of globalised technologies.

The work of Lave and Wenger focussed on knowledge itself and how we learn; this can also be seen as one of the key driving forces for the (re) emergence of CoP. We grow and become who we are in and through our human connections. Wenger believes that learning is central to the human identity (2006).¹

In selecting one driver for this assignment, I will use the driver of an interest in knowledge and how we learn. The document I will put forward is a reflection on developing an education program for Aboriginal students as an example of the search to understand how we learn and develop knowledge. The search is dynamic and on-going. When I wrote this program up, I had not heard of CoP; however, there are many points of intersection between CoP and my document. I will refine this document as I go through the course to further develop this overview and will be enriched by CoP material and understanding. The model I have developed is based on the work of Stephen Covey (2004).

Communities of Practice (CoP) is a fascinating concept and I feel it relates well and gives the tools to be able to transform the way we organise classrooms as well as organisations. It challenges traditional and hierarchical structures that underpin so many organisations, including schools. The ways schools operate and the learning theory that drives them has been subject of challenges for centuries as we get a better understanding of the learning process. There has been robust advocating for schools to change around a variety of

¹ Page 3 of document: ways of learning: students visualize the whole picture so they can break down what needs to be done into required tasks, students acknowledge everyone has an important role, students work together for the benefit of the group, understanding roles and responsibility, sharing, teamwork and your place in society.

assumptions. Vygotsky advocated that a teacher was a facilitator and a guide who should establish learning opportunities for children to learn with the teacher and more skilled peers. Piaget, for example, believed that teachers provide support for children to explore their world and discover knowledge (Santrock 2007).

CoP also challenge the role of the hierarchical model, which sees children as sponges that soak up information that is fed to them. Until recently we were living in an era known as the information age. In that era, individuals who had the most information, the most facts in their heads would be the ones offered the top jobs.² Lave and Wenger also challenge the issues of the problems in traditional schools: “within system oriented to individual accreditation, and have lost any significant focus on relationships through pressures on them to meet centrally-determined targets, this approach to learning is challenging and profoundly problematic.” (Smith, M. 2003, 2009).³

The talk of primary and secondary ‘greatness’ in the article highlights that real greatness is about living their lives aligned to the values they believe in. Primary greatness values everyone’s contribution and does not compare one to the other. This document was prepared to work with Aboriginal students in a remote community, where traditional learning strategies were not engaging the students.

The Covey model fits well with the CoP model as learning is a joint enterprise where all students give significant input and functions with mutual engagement that binds members together in a social entity (Wenger, 1998). The learning environment stimulates the learning process as a shared repertoire of common resources that the members have developed and learnt over time (Wenger 1998).

CoP presents us with a model that sees the whole of one’s life as the milieu of learning. Learning is a process that is dynamic, on-going and engaging of one’s whole being. Learning is seen as an interactive, social process rather than something an individual achieves in a time framed structure (Mitchell, Wood & Young 2001). These ideas are picked up in the document when looking at the *7 Habits* and in particular with my translation of the habit (relating the language to the Aboriginal community) with concepts such as: self-sufficient learning, students learn through observation and minimal instruction, being responsible and

² Page one of the document.

³ Focus on relationships: students learn that learning comes from others and in a variety of ways, student learning through people rather than systems, students learn from real life experiences, respect for self and others, effective communication, problem solving and self awareness.

accountable, group learning, and real life learning. McDermott (1999) argues that people learn more effectively through the experience, or the tacit knowledge of their peers rather than relying on databases or documentation. Taken in the prepared document aligning with *Habit 3* which talks about real life learning, students link learning to how they live and *Habit 5*.⁴ The experiential aspect outlined in the document is aligned with the CoP concept of ‘situated learn’ which involved people being full participants in the world by generating mean (Smith 2003, 2009). Learning is located in certain forms of “social co-participation” (Mitchell et al page 2).

Factual knowledge alone is no longer the great differentiator between those who succeed and those who do not. The document highlights that there are different guidelines that employers are looking for that differs from the age-old qualities.⁵ Good people skills are one of the outcomes of CoP.

Barrett (1999) analysed the world-wide market forces and what is driving change. He maintains that the world is searching for a new type of corporate leadership; one that is able to operationalise the win-win⁶ opportunities inherent in a corporate culture that support social responsibility, environment, stewardship and employee fulfilment.

Barrett (1999) also highlights that there is an increasing emphasis on values and the values that under-pin a CoP.⁷

⁴ Page 4.

⁵ Individuals who are emerging as the new winners are those who possess: creativity, strong analytical skills, a knack for foresight and good people skills.

⁶ Habit 4-6: Habit 4: Think Win-Win, Habit 5; Seek First to understand, then to be understood, Habit 6: Synergize.

⁷ Page 2 of the document talks about values: to be responsible, a caring, compassion human beings who respect diversity and who know how to do the right thing when faced with difficult situations.

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