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Workshop: structural components of running networks

Yvonne Hengst-Ehrhart
Forest Research Institute of Baden-Wuerttemberg
Department of Forest Economics

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The importance social learning

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What makes the difference?

Learning is more than accumulating knowledge

1. Own Experience
2. Observation and adaptation
3. Development of shared meanings and practices

"Adults learn through everyday social practices rather than focusing on environments that are intentionally designed to support learning". (Gray 2004)

Adults learn in social groups via

Conversation
Storytelling
Mentorship
Lessons learned through experience

Sources: Gray 2004, Pahl-Wostl et al. 2007, Blackmore 2010

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Communities of Practice

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The concept

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Differences from other communities

Domain
First, they focus on a domain of shared interest

Community
Second, they interact and learn together

Practice
Third, they develop a shared collection of experiences, stories, best practices etc.

Sources: Lave and Wenger 1991, http://wenger-trayner.com

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Communities of Practice

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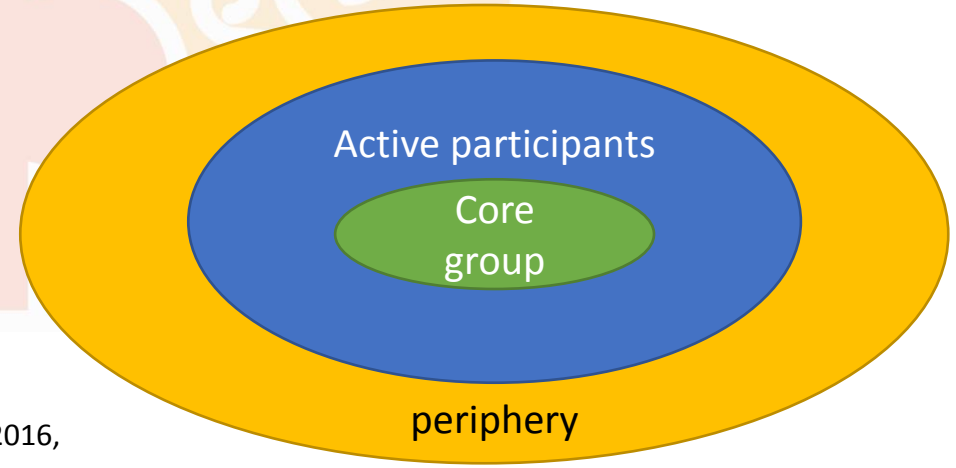
A social learning concept

Differences from other communities
First, they focus on a domain of shared interest
Second, they interact and learn together
Third, they develop a shared collection of experiences, stories, best practices etc.

CoPs
Often develop own their own (sports clubs, local interest groups etc.)
Often are composed of members from different agencies, corporations, professions…

Basic requirements
Trusting relations in a voluntary network
Interplay between experienced members (and newcomers)
central participants maintaining the interaction with peripheral participants



Sources: Gray 2004, Pahl-Wostl et al. 2007, Blackmore 2010, Benson et al. 2016,

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How do they work?

Activities

Horizontal structure

‘Paternalistic’ agency structures can inhibit social learning (top-down approach)

→ Informal communities establish horizontal links with other regions, experts, sectors, communities…

Sources: Blackmore 2010, Benson et al. 2016

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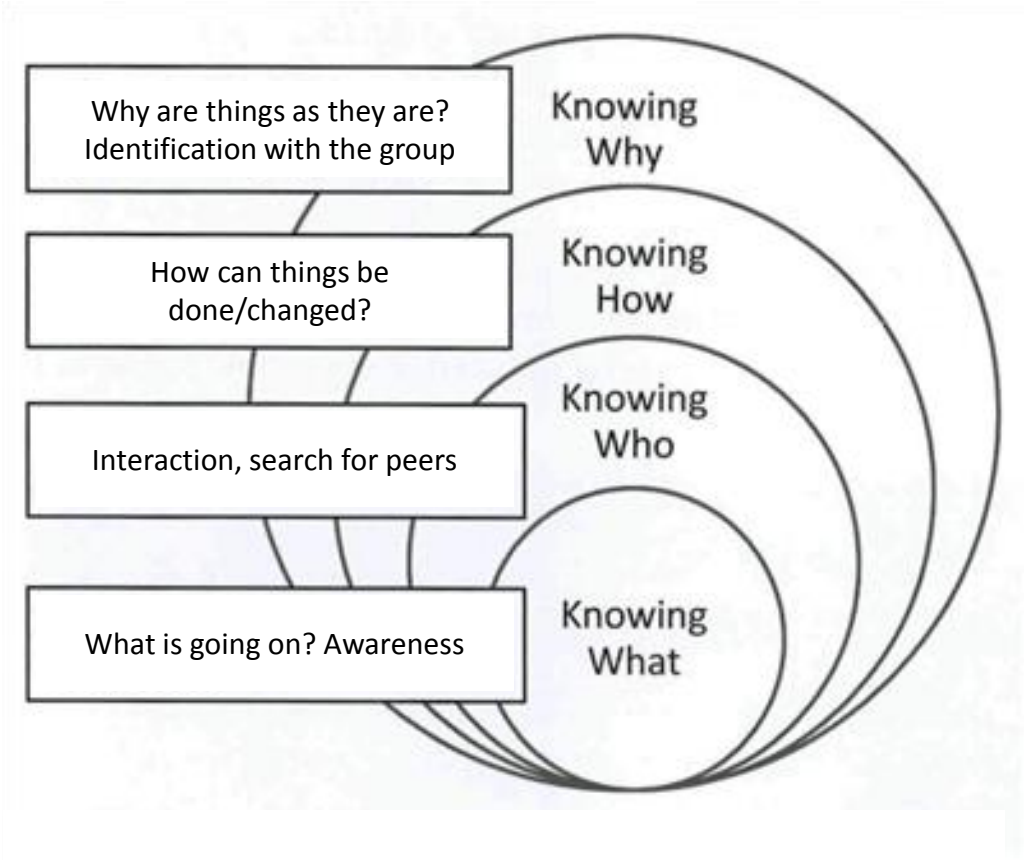
How do they evolve?

Development over time - levels of knowledge exchange



Sources: Lee-Kelley et al. 2014 (modified)

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Workshop / Discussion

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Question

What are the indicators of running networks?

Sources: Wenger 1998, Lee-Kelley et al. 2014

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Thank you

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