



GLIS 664: Knowledge Networks
(Formally Communities of Practice)

Course Syllabus

Fall 2014

[Prof. M. Max Evans](#)

Objectives

- Describe the key components of a knowledge network (Community of Practice) and how they are evolving
- Explore the fundamental principles of social networks – different structural forms, how they develop, what benefits are associated with each, and the social dynamics upon which they are based (e.g. reciprocity, trust, norms, reputation)
- Understand how networks (communities) may be visualized and how their value may be measured
- Examine the various ways in which networks may be leveraged for widespread use within corporations, institutions, and society
- Analyze the tools, workflow techniques, and social factors that enable knowledge sharing
- Discuss how networks (communities) can be built and cultivated to foster organizational learning and innovation
- Demonstrate the different techniques facilitators use to manage communities of practice to encourage effective knowledge management practices

Recommended Readings: No textbook is required. Recommended readings are available in electronic format on the web or from the McGill Library. Hardcopies will be placed on reserve where available. Additional case studies and readings will be placed on the course site during the term.

Method: Based on the course readings, sessions will include instructor-led lectures, seminars, group discussions, in-class activities, case studies, and guest lectures.

Office Hours: Wednesday from 2:30-3:30PM at SIS (Professor Evans' office is Room 202A at SIS - 3661 Peel St.)

Contact: The best way to reach Professor Evans is by e-mail at max.evans@mcgill.ca. He will endeavour to answer your questions within 24 hours. If you wish to see him outside of office hours, please contact him for an appointment (phone: 514-398-3398).

Grades and Evaluation:

<u>Deliverable</u>	<u>Proportion of Grade</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Class Participation	10%	Ongoing
Critical Article Review: Critique Handout and Presentation Response	15% 5%	Ongoing
Knowledge Sharing Literature Review Paper	30%	Part 1: Oct. 1 Part 2: Oct. 22
CoP Group Design Project	40%	Nov. 26

Assignments:Class Participation:

Participation in class discussions (as opposed to simply attending class) is an essential part of this course. The ability to clearly articulate your own ideas, constructively explore the implications of others' ideas, and present well-reasoned arguments in favour of a position are critical professional and academic skills. This course will provide you with ample opportunity to practice and hone these capabilities. In-class activities, cases, and seminars will provide the impetus for discussions. The expectation is that you come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and are ready to contribute. Keep in mind that a high quality discussion is the goal, not high quantity airtime. It's not how much you talk, but what you say and how you say it that is important.

Seminar Discussion and Response Leaders: Critical Article Review, Presentation, and Response:

A substantial part of this class is seminar-based, which means that we will jointly share the responsibility for uncovering the key concepts and ideas in the reading materials. For many of the topics (see class schedule below), one or more students will be assigned the role of "seminar discussion leader" and "seminar response leader", which involves laying the groundwork for the article you have selected and guiding the class discussion. Discussion leaders will give a brief (8-10 minute) presentation describing their reading (e.g. identifying the core ideas in the paper and relating these to other class material/readings). An additional student will be assigned to prepare a critical response, for each seminar article. The response should contain questions and comments, which prompt further discussion on key issues in each paper. Typically, this discussion will then prompt the class with other questions designed to encourage discussion on key issues in each paper, and on the relationships between the papers. A high quality discussion should offer a balanced critique of the paper (i.e. surfacing limitations and contributions), but also go beyond the paper by integrating other course material and identifying applications of the readings to relevant business examples. Ultimately, the goal is to surface assumptions, contradictions, consistencies, and points of integration.

Critical Review Handout: In addition to a presentation, each discussion leader will write a critical review of the article they selected. The review should address the following questions:

1. What are the main points of the paper?
2. What are the main strengths and shortcomings of the paper?
3. What assumptions or implications are made?
4. Who is quoted and what points of view do they represent?
5. Are sources based on anecdotal evidence, on research studies; on the writer's own experience?
6. Does the author succeed in achieving his/her purpose?
7. Who is the audience for this paper?
8. What kind of language is used?
9. How useful (or not) is this paper for the students in this course?

Think of the readership of this review as your classmates—they will have read the article but are looking for assistance in understanding it better and how it fits within the course material.

The review should be NO LONGER THAN TWO pages printed. You may use single or double spacing and include lists, bullets, tables, figures and pictures. In addition, there should be a title page (including article name, author, your name and student number). You may also include one extra page for references, if needed. Pay close attention to the clarity, correctness and succinctness of your writing!

The goal of the critical review handouts is to provide each student with a summary of all the articles covered in the seminars. To make this possible, handouts are due (electronically) no later than 9:00 pm on the day before you are scheduled to be the seminar discussion leader (i.e. the day of your presentation). You are welcome and encouraged to submit them earlier. Seminar response leaders need not submit their questions beforehand but are encouraged to submit them the day of.

Knowledge Sharing Motivators and Inhibitors Literature Review:

Knowledge sharing motivators and inhibitors tend to be separated in two main categories: *Social / Human Factors* (e.g. trust, shared perspective, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, etc.) and *Technological Factors* (e.g. technological infrastructure, IT Tools, Web2.0, portals, social media, etc.). For this assignment you will be asked to select just one factor and write a short literature review (approx. 10-12 double-spaced pages) on what the academic research says the relationship is between that factor and knowledge sharing or, more generally, knowledge management.

A literature review is an evaluative account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. A literature review will not look like a typical research paper assignment that asks you to create an original argument and support your position with scholarly research. Instead, you will be asked to summarize and synthesize the available research in the field, to assess the value of the research already done by others, identify prevalent trends, and discover what research remains to be done. A literature review is also

not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries (that is an annotated bibliography).

To get you thinking here is a short list of some possible factors that may influence knowledge sharing:

Social and Human Factors:

- Network Structure (i.e. closure or bonding capital; brokerage or bridging capital)
- Homophily – The similarity principle (birds of a feather)
- Reciprocity
- Tie Strength (interaction frequency, communication frequency, closeness)
- Relationship length
- Trust (interpersonal, organizational, or of technology)
- Domain/context
- “Not invented here” Syndrome
- Recognition, Reward, or Incentive (intrinsic and/or extrinsic)
- Power
- Organizational Status (e.g. manager – subordinate, doctor – nurse, etc.)
- Ego
- Motivation
- Fear of information misuse
- Mentoring / Apprenticeship (as a means to transfer knowledge)
- Metaphors, Model, Analogies, Anecdotes, or Stories (as a means to transfer knowledge)
- Management Support or buy-in
- Leadership
- Shared Language
- Shared Vision

Organizational Factors

- Organizational Processes
- Organizational Structure
- Organizational Culture
- Organizational Memory

Technological Factors:

- Technological infrastructure
- IT Tools
- Web 2.0

However, you are welcome to review factors not listed, as long as the professor approves them. Once you have selected a factor, begin the literature review process by familiarizing yourself with the available research on this topic. Do not try to read everything, but do consider articles that are recent and research that forms the foundations of this knowledge base. Narrow your topic area appropriately to make the task of writing your literature review more manageable. Once you have narrowed your topic sufficiently, you will want to locate a range of materials published by experts or scholars in this particular area. Examining bibliographies to locate reoccurring names can lead you to the works of key researchers in the field. Scanning for titles of studies that are cited repeatedly can also lead you to influential

texts in the area. At this point, you will want to gather more materials than you plan to include in your literature review, to allow for the winnowing out of substandard or poorly related materials. Make sure to focus your attention on relevant scholarly journals (e.g. KM, Info Studies, Management, etc.) as they will have the most to offer.

When you are reading the materials you have collected, do so with an eye toward writing your literature review. All good literature reviews accomplish the following tasks:

- Provide an organized investigation of a single thesis or research question by identifying key research on the topic area. This can simply be “what is the influence of X on Y?” (e.g. What is the influence of trust on knowledge sharing?);
- Synthesize the results of previous research into a summary of (1) what is understood to be historically accurate or accepted, (2) what is still under question or investigation, (3) what has not been well addressed by existing research and (4) what areas of the topic still require investigation;
- Identify distinct areas of controversy among previous researchers/research results;
- Devise questions that need further research.

(These areas could provide good headings to organize your notes and, later, your writing.)

Students will be expected to incorporate reviews of 10-15 closely related sources. Although there is no hard length requirement, a fair estimate of length, not including bibliography and appendix, would be approximately 10-12 double-spaced pages. General topic selection and a tentative reference list are due Oct. 1. Final papers are due on Oct. 22.

Papers that are poorly written, edited, or proofread may be penalized a full letter grade. If you are concerned about your writing proficiency, please make use of the Writing Center resources. Also, consider exchanging completed papers with classmates to facilitate editing and proofreading. Papers should comply with the APA citation style throughout. Be consistent with the citation style (i.e. do not mix them). Citation resources are readily available on-line or through the Writing Center.

CoP Group Design Project: A local organization has begun to implement a knowledge management strategy, in which Communities of Practice have been identified as an area to be explored through a pilot project. Your role is that of a team of KM professionals, who has been asked to write a business plan for the design of a pilot community of practice to support an existing group of individuals within the organization. The CoP must bring some strategic value to the organization in order for the plan to be accepted. You may choose the field of practice, as well as the domain and setting of the organization.

The design project consists of two deliverables: a presentation and a written report. The objective of both is to communicate the team’s design for their CoP. More detailed information and instructions about the CoP design project can be found below.

General Information:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). Instructors who may adopt the

use of text-matching software to verify the originality of students' written course work must register for use of the software with Educational Technologies and must inform their students before the add/drop deadline, in writing, of the use of text-matching software in a course.

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

If you have a disability please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would also be helpful if you contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 398-6009 before you do this.

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights: <http://ww2.mcgill.ca/students-handbook/chapter1.html>

No extension, delay, or late assignments will be accepted. The only acceptable circumstances for an extension or a delay is personal illness and illness of an immediate family member (physician's certificate required).

Weekly Schedule

Week and Topic	Readings, Assignments, and Seminars
Week 1 – September 3, 2014 Introduction and Course Overview; Historical Context; Social Learning	
Week 2 – September 10, 2014 Knowledge Networks and Communities of Practice: Intro	<p><u>Week 2 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2: Community in Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning and Identity (Wenger, E., 1998) • Chapter 1: Communities of Practice and Their Value to Organizations in Cultivating Communities of Practice (Wenger, E. McDermott, R., & Snyder, W., 2002) • Chapter 3: Networks and Communities in In Good Company (Cohen, D. & Prusak, L., 2001) <p><u>Optional Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Networks and Communities of Practice in OD Practitioner (Allee, V., 2000)
Week 3 – September 17, 2014 Communities of Practice: Typology and Evolution	<p><u>Week 3 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2: Communities of Practice and Their Structural Elements in Cultivating Communities of Practice (Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W., 2002) • Chapter 10: Learning Architectures in Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity (Wenger, E., 1998) • Informal Networks: The Company Behind the Chart in Harvard Business Review (Krackhardt & Hansen, 1993)

<p>Week 4 – September 24, 2014 Social Capital and Network Fundamentals</p>	<p><u>Week 4 Required Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Social Capital and Why Should You Care About it? in Achieving Success Through Social Capital (Baker, W.E., 2000) <p><u>Week 4 Additional Seminar Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Capital and Capital Gains in Silicon Valley in California Management Review (Cohen & Fields, 1999) • "The art of knowing": Social and Tacit Dimensions of Knowledge and the Limits of the Community of Practice in The Information Society (Duguid, P., 2005)
<p>Week 5 – October 1, 2014 Building and Cultivating Communities of Practice (Knowledge Networks)</p>	<p>Assignment 1 Due - Topic and Tentative References List for Literature Review</p> <p><u>Week 5 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowing What We Know: Supporting Knowledge Creation and Sharing in Social Networks in Organizational Dynamics (Cross, R., Parker, A., Prusak, L., & Borgatti, S.P., 2001) • Chapter 20: Creating and Facilitating Communities of Practice in Handbook on Knowledge Management (Smith, H.A. & McKeen, J.D., 2002) • Chapter 3: Building a Knowledge Sharing Culture in The New Edge in Knowledge (Odell, C. & Hubert C., 2011) <p><u>Additional Seminar Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6: Build Nimble Networks in Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground (Hansen, M.T., 2009)
<p>Week 6 – October 8, 2014 Managing Knowledge in Communities</p>	<p><u>Week 6 Required Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 15: Knowledge-enabled High Performing Teams of Leaders in Knowledge Management Handbook: Collaboration and Social Networking (Hilton, B. & Prevou, M., 2012) <p><u>Additional Week 6 Seminar Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Organizational Knowledge? in Journal of Management Studies (Tsoukas, H. & Vladimirou, E., 2001) • Chapter 5: Social Talk and Storytelling in In Good Company: How Social Capital Makes Organizations work (Cohen, D. & Prusak, L., 2001) • Chapter 4: Unify People in Collaboration: How Leaders Avoid the Traps, Build Common Ground (Hansen, M.T., 2009)
<p>Week 7 – October 15, 2014</p>	<p>– Study Break</p>

<p>Week 8 – October 22, 2014 The Principles of Network Closure and Homophily</p>	<p>Assignment 2 Due - Knowledge Sharing Motivators and Inhibitors Literature Review</p> <p><u>Week 8 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital in The American Journal of Sociology, (Coleman, J.S., 1988) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Pay special attention to the sections on “Forms of Social Capital” and “Social Structures that Facilitate Social Capital” (pp. S101 – S109)</i> • Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks in Annual Review of Sociology (McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J.M., 2001) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Pay special attention to the introduction (pp. 415-419), the summary of evidence (p. 429), and the section on “The Causes of Homophily” (pp. 429-437)</i> <p><u>Week 8 Additional Seminar Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent Jerks, Lovable Fools, and the Formation of Social Networks in Harvard Business Review (Casciaro, T. & Sousa Lobo, M., 2005) • Trust and the Virtual Organization in Harvard Business Review (Handy, C., 1995) • Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage in Academy of Management Review (Nahapiet, J. & Ghoshal, S., 1998)
<p>Week 9 – October 29, 2014 The Principle of Brokerage</p>	<p><u>Week 9 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Social Structure of Competition in Structural Holes (Burt, R., 1992) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Pay special attention to the sections on “Information” and “Structural Holes” (pp. 13-25), and the sections on “Control and the Tertius Gaudens” and “Entrepreneurs” (pp. 30-36)</i> <p><u>Week 9 Additional Seminar Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Networks, the Tertius Iungens Orientation, and Involvement in Innovation in Administrative Science Quarterly (Obstfeld, D., 2005) • The Strength of Weak Ties in American Journal of Sociology (Granovetter, M., 1973) • The Strength of Strong Ties: The Importance of Philos in Organizations in Networks & Organizations (Krackhardt, D., 1992) • Structural Holes Versus Network Closure as Social Capital in Social Capital: Theory and Research (Burt, R., 2005)

<p>Week 10 – November 5, 2014 The Principle of Six Degrees of Separation</p>	<p><u>Week 10 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Six Degrees of Separation”; “Small Worlds”; and “Hubs and Connectors” in <i>Linked: The New Science of Networks</i> (Barabasi, A-L., 2002) <p><u>Week 10 Additional Seminar Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Experimental Study of the Small World Problem in <i>Sociometry</i> (Travers, J. & Milgram, S., 1969) • Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg: She’s a Grandmother, She Lives in a Big House in Chicago, and You’ve Never Heard of Her. Does She Run the World? in <i>New Yorker</i> (Gladwell, M., 1999)
<p>Week 11 – November 12, 2014 Measuring and Visualizing Networks</p>	<p><u>Week 11 Required Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Invisible Work Visible: Using Social Network Analysis to Support Strategic Collaboration in <i>California Management Review</i> (Cross, R., Borgatti, S., & Parker, A., 2002) • Ethical and Strategic Issues in Organizational Social Network Analysis in <i>Journal of Applied Behavioral Science</i> (Borgatti, S.P. & Molina, J.L., 2003) <p><u>Additional Week 11 Seminar Readings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The People Who Make Organizations Go – or Stop in <i>Harvard Business Review</i> (Cross, R., Borgatti, S., & Parker, A., 2002) • Visualizing Social Networks in <i>Journal of Social Structure</i> (Freeman, L., 2000)
<p>Week 12 – November 19, 2014 Social Media and Knowledge Media</p>	<p>Required Readings TBA</p>
<p>Week 13 – November 26, 2014 Group Student Presentations</p>	<p>Assignment 3 Due - CoP Group Design Project Presentations and Final Written Projects</p>

CoP Group Design Project

Scenario: A local organization has begun to implement a knowledge management strategy, in which Communities of Practice have been identified as an area to be explored through a pilot project. Your role is that of a team of KM professionals, who have been asked to write a business plan for the design of a pilot Community of Practice to support an existing group of individuals within the organization. The CoP must bring strategic value to the organization in order for the plan to be accepted. You may choose the field of practice, as well as the domain and setting of the organization.

The design project consists of two deliverables: a presentation and a written report. The objective of both is to communicate the team’s design for their CoP.

CoP Design Project Presentation: (10%) Each group will present their CoP design to the class in Week 13

The presentations must meet the following criteria:

- The objective of the presentation is to communicate the team's design for their CoP. To achieve this, the presentation should provide a summary of the main points covered in the written report (see below).
- The presentation will be held in class.
- The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length.
- Everyone on the design team must present.

Each team should also be prepared to lead a short discussion after their presentation. This can include answering questions and responding to comments from the class. Teams are also encouraged to have questions of their own that they would like to put to the class, to get additional feedback for them to incorporate into their final report.

Peer feedback: Students are encouraged to take notes during each presentation and provide feedback to each group in class during the discussion period. *Presenting teams are encouraged to integrate any or all feedback into their final written report.

Submitting your work: Any presentation decks and handouts that will be used in the presentation must be submitted to the instructor in electronic format by 9 pm November 25, 2014. Group's presentation should also be uploaded to the appropriate folder on the myCourses site.

CoP Design Project - Written Report: (30%)

The written report is a business plan that describes the opportunity, rationale, and initial design of your Community of Practice. The objective of this report is to make a case for the Community of Practice and show how you would design an environment for the CoP to flourish, as well as how you would go about implementing and sustaining the CoP. Your report also needs to show how the CoP would benefit the organization, and why it would be worthwhile for the organization to invest in such initiative.

Specifically, and at a minimum, your report needs to address the following points:

1. Describe the group of individuals who will make up the Community of Practice. Explain what the objectives are in supporting this community and articulate what benefits it will bring to the organization.
2. Provide examples of what the Community of Practice will look like if the project is successful. Groups may choose to create low to mid fidelity mock-up designs.
3. Describe the human resources involved in the Community of Practice. Who will need to be recruited and how will this be accomplished? What roles need to be filled in the CoP initially? Who will fill these roles, and for how long? What incentives will need to be provided for people to participate?
4. Describe the design of the environment in which the Community of Practice will be launched. The environment must include both physical and virtual spaces, tools, and

artifacts. The design should also address intangible but important elements that make up the organizational context of the CoP (i.e. policies, procedures, incentives, etc.).

- a. See Dalkir, 2003 as adapted from Kim (2000) and Groff and Jones (2003) to help you understand common design elements
5. Provide an outline describing the approach you would use in order to implement such a Community of Practice (i.e. from project start to the launch of the CoP). Include the activities that need to be completed, as well as the resources (i.e. people or roles) involved.
6. Provide a high-level description of what will need to be done to support, grow, and sustain the Community of Practice over time. This should include both activities that will need to be carried out, as well as changes that may need to be made to the CoP's environment.
 - a. For example, how would you recruit members? What activities would be initiated to encourage interaction between members? How would interactions be moderated to ensure that the CoP continues to stay on track? What features are the community likely to want added to their physical and or virtual spaces? How would you address the issue of community sustainability in the long-term?
7. Describe how you would assess the value created by the CoP for both its members and the organization.
8. Recommend evaluation metrics that you can implement in order to assess the progress towards the stated goals of the Community of Practice. Provide at least five critical criteria for your assessment. You may select these from Dalkir's Suggested Criteria and Assessment Framework (2003). Be sure to justify why you have selected the measures you did (i.e. describe each criterion and why you feel it is an important metric used to assess the Community of Practice).
9. Describe the major challenges that will be faced in implementing this CoP, and indicate how you would address each of these challenges.

OPTIONAL: Provide an estimate of the total cost of implementing the CoP. Your estimate should include a breakdown of the major cost elements EXCLUDING the salaries of organizational staff.

Structure, Content and Length

- Your paper must demonstrate a clear understanding of the key concepts relating to CoP and the issues involved in their implementation and ongoing support.
- Your design and implementation plan must be both logical and feasible within a typical organizational context. In addition, it must be clear how your design supports the CoP and facilitates or supports the outcomes stated as objectives.
- You should provide supporting references for statements made in your report, just as you would in an academic paper. You should provide support for statements made about the organization, the individuals making up the Community of Practice, etc., to show that your scenario is grounded in reality (as opposed to being entirely fictional and made-up to fit the terms of this assignment). You should also provide supporting references for statements you make justifying your design decisions, etc., again to provide authoritative support for your ideas.
- The written report must be formatted using the APA formatting and citation styles. However, the writing style and presentation of the report should be oriented to a

business context (as opposed to an academic context). For example, you should make good use of headings, lists, tables, and diagrams to present your information. Also, your text **should not** be double-spaced.

- Marks will be deducted from papers that are poorly formatted, organized, presented and/or written.
- The report should be approximately 10-15 pages in length, not including the title page and the list of references.

Submitting your assignment

- Your assignment must be submitted electronically. Please use the filename *GLIS664_Project-Teamname.doc* (or.docx or .rtf or .pdf, depending on the format you choose).
- Please note that all diagrams, tables, etc. must be inserted in your document: they should not be submitted as separate files (xls, pdf, etc.).
- Your assignment will be submitted using the Assignments tool on myCourses.
- Late assignments will be subject to penalty. Any assignment more than 7 days late will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of zero (0). Extensions are only granted in the most exceptional of circumstances, and even then they must be requested at least one week before the assignment is due.

Measuring the Success of Online Communities

Dalkir's (2003) Suggested Criteria and Assessment Framework:

1. Content management (how well is the generated social capital organized? E.g. archived?)
2. Connection and presence (how much social presence is possible? Demonstrated? Do members have sufficient "bandwidth" to communicate social contexts?)
3. Accommodation of heterogeneity (how diverse is the membership? Are different points of view well accommodated? Is there fruitful debate and synergy or is it more conformity-driven?)
4. What has been the impact on practice? (How has the community improved the methods, techniques and overall excellence of the practice/profession in question?)
5. Longevity/sustainability – is the community set up to be a short or long-term endeavor? How long has it been around? What stage of lifecycle would you place this community in and why?
6. How well is the interaction and exchange working? (Quantity, quality, frequency, critical mass?)
7. What is your assessment of collaborative problem solving in this community?
8. What sorts of knowledge are being generated? How would you assess their value? (Back this up with key outcomes, key questions posed, or other indicators).
9. How cohesive is the community? How easy is it to connect to expertise? To experts or other experienced members?
10. How useful and focused is the community? (Reasonable scope? Number of members? Any indication of how community needs were assessed and subsequently met? E.g. mission statement, any personalization of content presentation?)

Dalkir's (2003) Examples of Design Elements/Features of a CoP¹

The following are a few examples of design elements/features of a CoP. You are encouraged to NOT limit yourselves to just these examples.

1. **Purpose:** identify your group's purpose using a mission statement that explains what the group is all about, a distinct visual design/logo that sets a mood and sets the group apart from others, a backstory that tells the history of the group, how it came to exist and the major types of content, tools and links that are relevant to explaining the group's purpose.
2. **Places:** identify gathering places (mailing lists, message boards, chat room, virtual buildings) group members can connect to, communication tools (instant messaging, buddy list, email newsletter) that will enable leaders or members to address this group (synchronously or asynchronously) and a news page (web log) where members can view and post group information
3. **Identity:** a member directory along with evolving and meaningful information about each member, tribal markers (visual indicators) of group membership, integrated into each members id and/or profile, membership criteria
4. **Roles and responsibilities:** a way to indicate the length of membership, leadership and moderator roles, which features are available to which types of members, welcome package for new members, advanced features available to regular members.
5. **Leadership:** a list of leadership roles within the CoP along with their powers and responsibilities, a way to provide training and instruction for group leaders, leader tools (e.g. content filtering, controlling access, communicating with the group)
6. **Etiquette:** a place to announce the group's membership requirements, a code of conduct, privacy policy, and reinforcement tools (ability to ban members, remove content)
7. **Events:** a group calendar for planning and promoting events, a meeting place to hold group events, publishing tools for posting meeting notes, interview transcripts, or contest results and access to a community events
8. **Rituals:** a way to create group-specific welcome rituals, a way to place seasonal and holiday notices, tools to support rites of passage (e.g. change in membership level?), birthday announcements, important group events, other activities to reduce social distance and increase social presence.
9. **Subgroups:** are there subgroups within this community? How would you identify them? Mechanisms for creating subdivisions within the community without losing linkages
10. **Ethics:** are ethics important for communities of practice? How can you ensure privacy and an open dialogue at the same time? Would you have members sign some type of agreement (e.g. non-disclosure forms)? What techniques could you use to enhance the ethical use of the CoP (e.g. storytelling)? What measures would you undertake to ensure that different worldviews are respected?

¹ Adapted from A. Kim (2000) Community Building on the Web. Secret Strategies for Successful Online Communities. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press. Addison-Wesley. And T. Groff and T. Jones (2003) Introduction to Knowledge Management. Burlington, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.