PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AS A KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE STRATEGY IN RESEARCH

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Open Science in the South. Management and openness of research data : panorama and perspectives in Africa"

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INTRODUCTION

- THERE EXIST SIGNIFICANT GAP BETWEEN EVIDENCE DERIVED THROUGH RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THE USE OF THESE FINDINGS IN VARIOUS DISCIPLINES BUT THIS EVIDENCE IS UNDER-UTILIZED.

- HOWEVER, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS MAY NOT ALWAYS BE EFFECTIVE IN BRIDGING THIS GAP. THIS KNOWLEDGE-TO-ACTION (KTA) GAP MAY BE BRIDGED THROUGH EMPLOYING KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION (KT) INITIATIVES AND STRATEGIES.

- CIHR DEFINES KT AS A "**DYNAMIC AND ITERATIVE PROCESS THAT INCLUDES SYNTHESIS, DISSEMINATION, EXCHANGE AND ETHICALLY SOUND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE…**"

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

- A DYNAMIC AND ITERATIVE PROCESS

- SYNTHESIS

- DISSEMINATION

- EXCHANGE

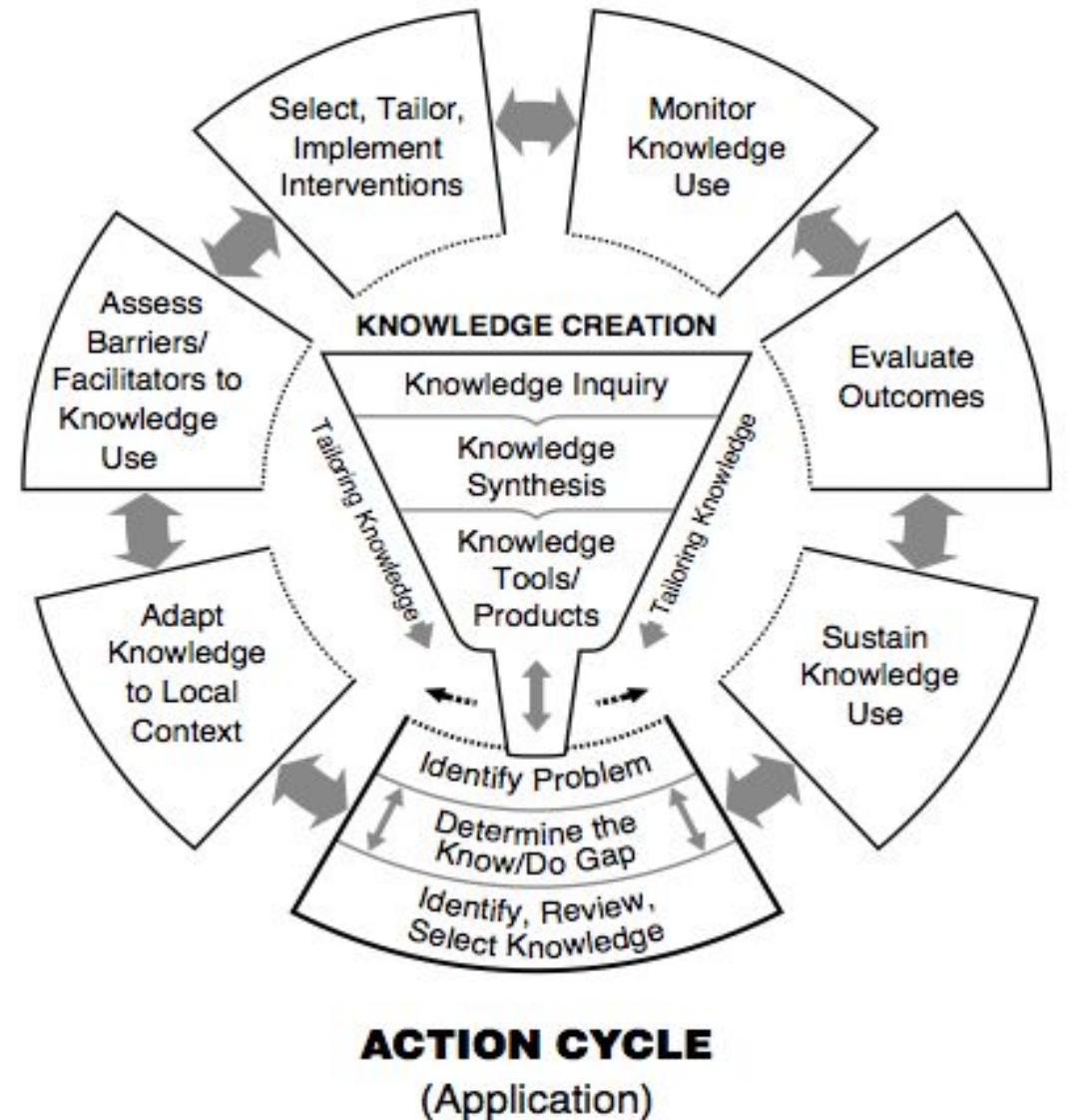- ETHICALLY-SOUND APPLICATION

Knowledge

Implication:

KT is about engaging and sharing research findings with those individuals who can use them.
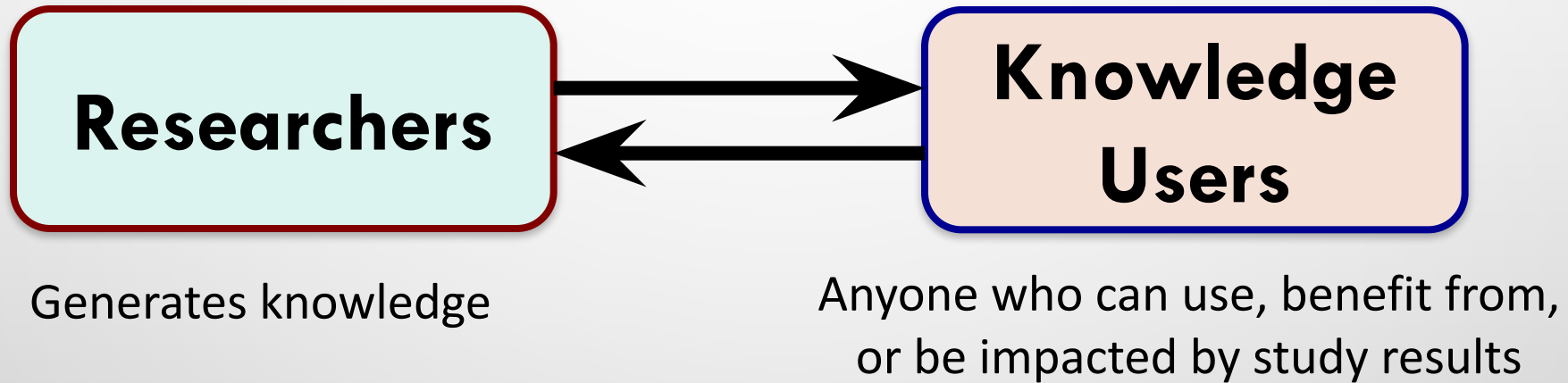
KNOWLEDGE-TO-ACTION CYCLE

Knowledge Creation

Knowledge Application

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

Level of engagement vary in intensity, complexity
Depends on nature of research and information needs

Researchers

Knowledge Users

Generates knowledge

Anyone who can use, benefit from, or be impacted by study results

Knowledge
1. **Synthesis**
2. **Dissemination**
3. **Exchange**
4. **Ethically-sound application**

Graham ID, et al. J Contin Educ Health Prof 2006;26:13-24

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP)

The idea of communities of practice has informed many learning and knowledge management practices across the globe and remains an influential theory that helps us to understand practice-based learning.

Wenger et al. (2002) define communities of practice as: '…groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis'.

Wenger (2004) names three constitutive characteristics of a CoP: 'The 'domain' is the shared area of interest that acts as a focus around which a 'community' of concerned people form bonds in the process of their shared learning activities; while 'practice' anchors the learning in what people do'

For example, if a group of practitioners in an organisation voluntarily initiate a series of regular meetings to learn about a specific area of practice and exchange and share their knowledge, they start to develop a shared understanding of the issues they investigate **(domain)** and at the same time develop certain ways of interacting **(community)** and identities that are grounded in their regular exchanges **(practice).** Such collaborative learning can take place within an organisation or even across organisations.

DOMAIN
Area of shared interest & key issues

COMMUNITY
Relationships built through discussion, activities & learning

PRACTICE
Body of knowledge, methods, stories, tools developed

COP STRUCTURE

Typical CoP structure encompasses:

i.Core leadership, typically domain experts ("champions"), who lead/guide inquiry;

ii.Core members who purposefully sustain management/administration of the CoP – (may include core leadership); and,

iii.Members with varying affinity to and engagement with the CoP. These may be individuals at the periphery of the CoP, who engage either to gain expertise in the domain, or to gain limited skills and knowledge for use elsewhere.

Nine CoP design principles that act as success factors for communities of practice

Organic evolution

Internal & External dialogue

Public and Private meeting spaces

Sponsorship

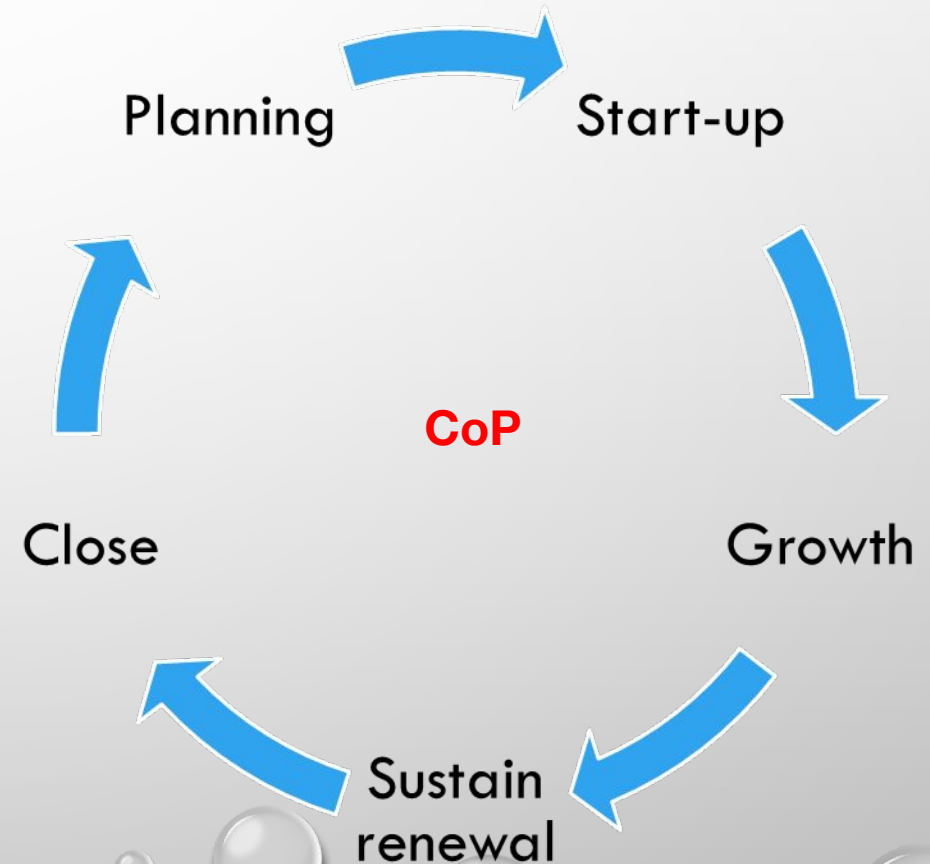**Focus & stimulating activities**
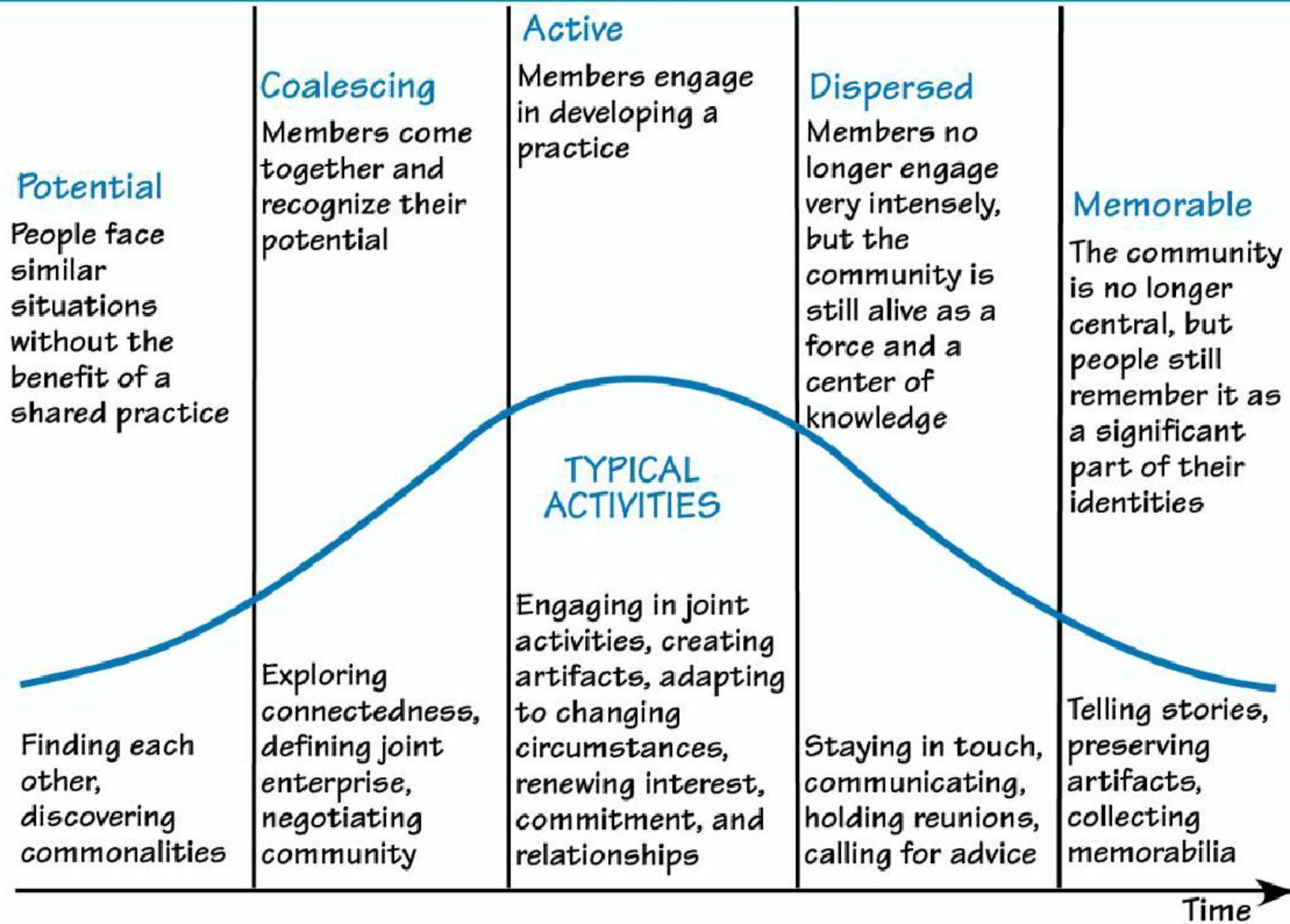
Focus on benefits and domain

A Rhythm

Community gardener

Participation at various levels

LIFE CYCLE OF THE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Active
Members engage in developing a practice

Coalescing
Members come together and recognize their potential

Potential
People face similar situations without the benefit of a shared practice

Dispersed
Members no longer engage very intensely, but the community is still alive as a force and a center of knowledge

Memorable
The community is no longer central, but people still remember it as a significant part of their identities

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

Finding each other, discovering commonalities

Exploring connectedness, defining joint enterprise, negotiating community

Engaging in joint activities, creating artifacts, adapting to changing circumstances, renewing interest, commitment, and relationships

Staying in touch, communicating, holding reunions, calling for advice

Telling stories, preserving artifacts, collecting memorabilia

Time

Life cycle of Communities of Practice Wenger (1998)

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Education – collection and sharing the information about different practices;

Support – improvement of members' interaction and collaboration
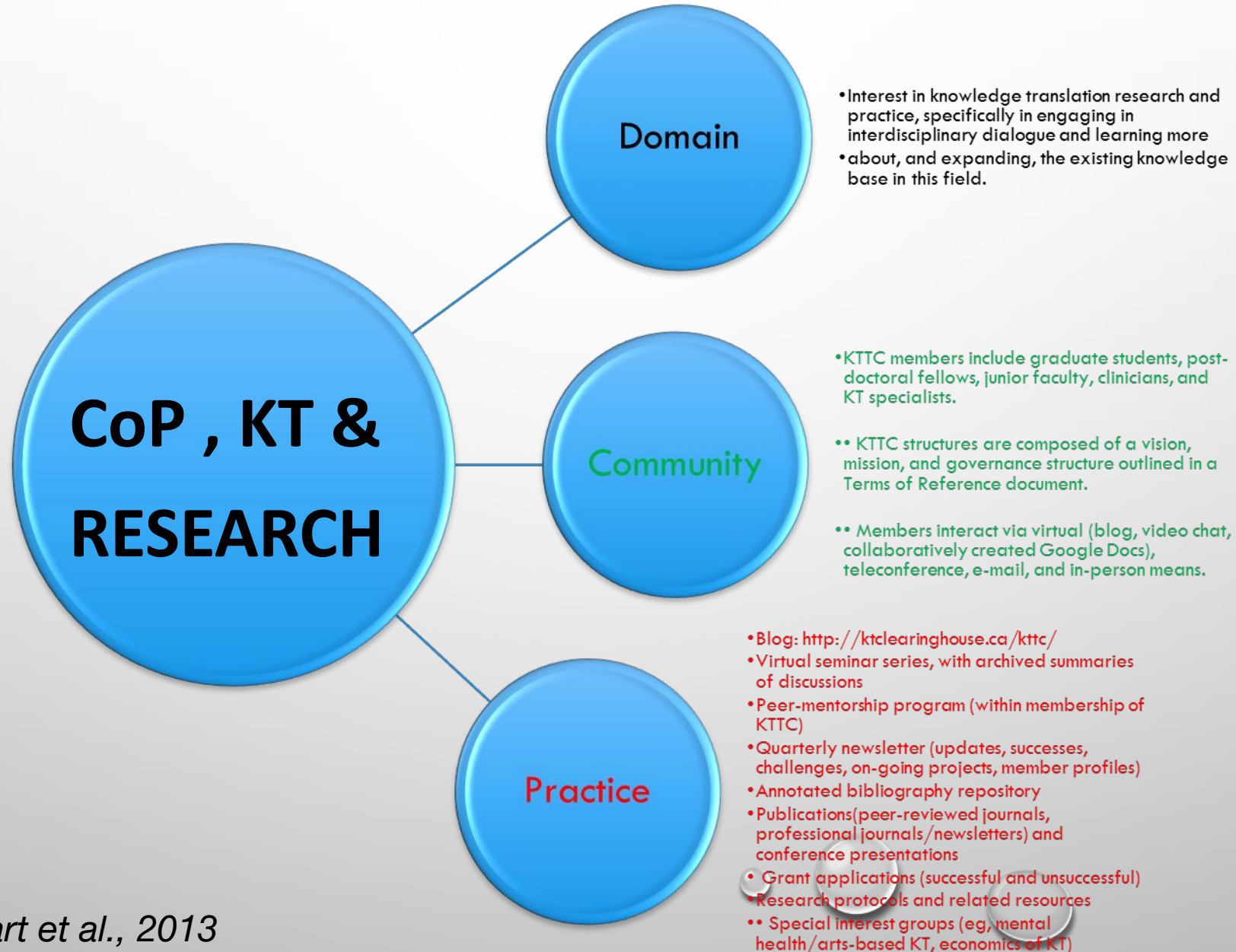
Cultivate – make the learning as lifestyle

Integrate – transfer new knowledge in practice

Encourage – use discussion and sharing method for promotion of members' work

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION IN RESEARCH

- KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER (KT) RESEARCHERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE MOVEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE (LARGELY DEFINED AS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE) INTO PRACTICE IS A SLOW AND OFTEN INDISCRIMINATE PROCESS

- THE PAST DECADE OF KT RESEARCH HAS HIGHLIGHTED LIMITATIONS IN TRADITIONAL METHODS OF KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND APPLICATION (E.G DISSEMINATION THROUGH DIDACTIC PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES). RESULTING IN TREMENDOUS GROWTH IN BOTH KT RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

- THE KT TRAINEE COLLABORATIVE (KTTC) IS A UNIQUE TRAINEE-INITIATED AND TRAINEE-LED NATIONAL COP. IT WAS ESTABLISHED BY KT RESEARCHERS AND KT PRACTITIONERS (E.G. GRADUATE STUDENTS, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS, JUNIOR FACULTY, CLINICIANS, AND KNOWLEDGE BROKERS) TO EXAMINE THE DIVERSITY OF KT RESEARCH AND PRACTICE, BUILD NETWORKS WITH OTHER KT TRAINEES, AND ADVANCE THE FIELD THROUGH

KTTC AS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Domain

- Interest in knowledge translation research and practice, specifically in engaging in interdisciplinary dialogue and learning more
- about, and expanding, the existing knowledge base in this field.

CoP , KT & RESEARCH

Community

- KTTC members include graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, junior faculty, clinicians, and KT specialists.
- • KTTC structures are composed of a vision, mission, and governance structure outlined in a Terms of Reference document.
- • Members interact via virtual (blog, video chat, collaboratively created Google Docs), teleconference, e-mail, and in-person means.

Practice

- Blog: http://ktclearinghouse.ca/kttc/
- Virtual seminar series, with archived summaries of discussions
- Peer-mentorship program (within membership of KTTC)
- Quarterly newsletter (updates, successes, challenges, on-going projects, member profiles)
- Annotated bibliography repository
- Publications(peer-reviewed journals, professional journals/newsletters) and conference presentations
- • Grant applications (successful and unsuccessful)
- Research protocols and related resources
- • Special interest groups (eg, mental health/arts-based KT, economics of KT)

Urquhart et al., 2013

APPLICATION OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Application

Communities of practice to explain gender constructs
(Paechter, 2003)

Aviation
(Bates & O'Brien, 2013)

Teaching
(American Institutes for Research, 2014)

Development
(Hearn & White, 2009)

Common disease
(Wenger, White, & Smith, Digital Habitats: Stewarding Technology for Communities, 2009)

Music
(Gau, 2016)

Agriculture
(Adamashvili et al., 2020)

APPLICATION OF COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

MOTIVATIONS FOR JOINING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN RESEARCH

Motivator

Personal development

(Ardichvili et al. 2003)

Status and career advancement, professional identity, capacity development

(Mahar, 2007)

Networking

(Zarb, 2006)

Moral obligation to share knowledge

(Ardichvili A. , 2008)

Emotional benefits, feeling of attachment to community

(Zarb, 2006)

Shared values and vision

(Kimble, Hildreth, & Wright, 2001)

FOUR COPS IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

	Description	Domain	Community	Practice
Digital Frontiers Institute (DFI) (2016)	Regional communities tied to online course on FinTech	Financial Technology	Online class with short videos and tests Community interaction through calls and in-person	Best implementation of financial technology
Outcome Mapping (2005)	Global community on method of evaluation	Project implementation and measurement	Discussion forums, webinars, face to face meetings	Implementation of outcome mapping methods in various scenarios
Gender and Evaluation (2012)	Global community on method of evaluation	Evaluation methods	Discussion fora, webinars, face to face meetings, digests	Integrating gender aspects into evaluation methods
SEA Change (2010)	Regional community on climate change and evaluation methods. This community will not request further funding.	Climate change	Discussion forums, face to face, workshops, developing tools	Publications, conference engagements, knowledge product

Sethi, 2017

Lessons for Practice for CoP as mechanism for KT

- Communities of practice enable learning, facilitate collaboration, and provide a mechanism to achieve collaborative advantage, wherein members co-create knowledge that is greater than what any one individual can create on his/her own.

- Early researcher in their careers can benefit from communities of practice, specifically in terms of sharing knowledge and developing networks and relationships, in a positive peer environment, which contribute to their academic and career pursuits.

- Communities of practice require periodic evaluation to ensure they achieve their collective goals, meet members' individual and collective needs and expectations, and support their growth and sustainability.

Thank you for your time and attention