Virtual Engagement Strategies to Extend Outreach to Locals

2018 IDIO CONFERENCE

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Early Childhood National Centers

NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning

Session Objectives

At the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Identify the benefits for using virtual Communities of Practice (CoPs) as part a way to extend TA outreach to state and local-levels
- Understand research-based best practices for how to initiate virtual CoPs, engage members, and sustain participation
- Explore innovative strategies for virtual CoPs

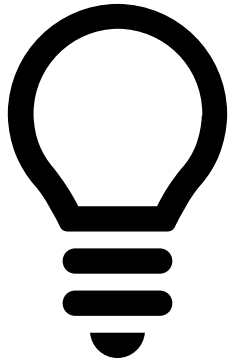
Session Agenda

Here's what we're doing today:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. The What and Why of Virtual CoPs
3. Discussion: What is currently happening in the field?
4. Activity: Mini-CoPs
5. Initiating Virtual CoPs, Engaging Members, and Sustaining Participation
6. Innovative Strategies for Virtual CoPs
7. Closing and Wrap-Up

The What and Why of Virtual CoPs

What are virtual Communities of Practice (CoP)?



Why should I use them?

Key Definitions

Traditional CoPs are 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 ongoing basis.

Virtual CoPs are “online social networks in which people with common interests, goals, or practices interact to share information and knowledge, and engage in social interactions.” They are like traditional CoPs in that both are made up of members who mutually engage in a shared practice to facilitate learning.

(Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002)

Purposes of Traditional and Virtual CoPs

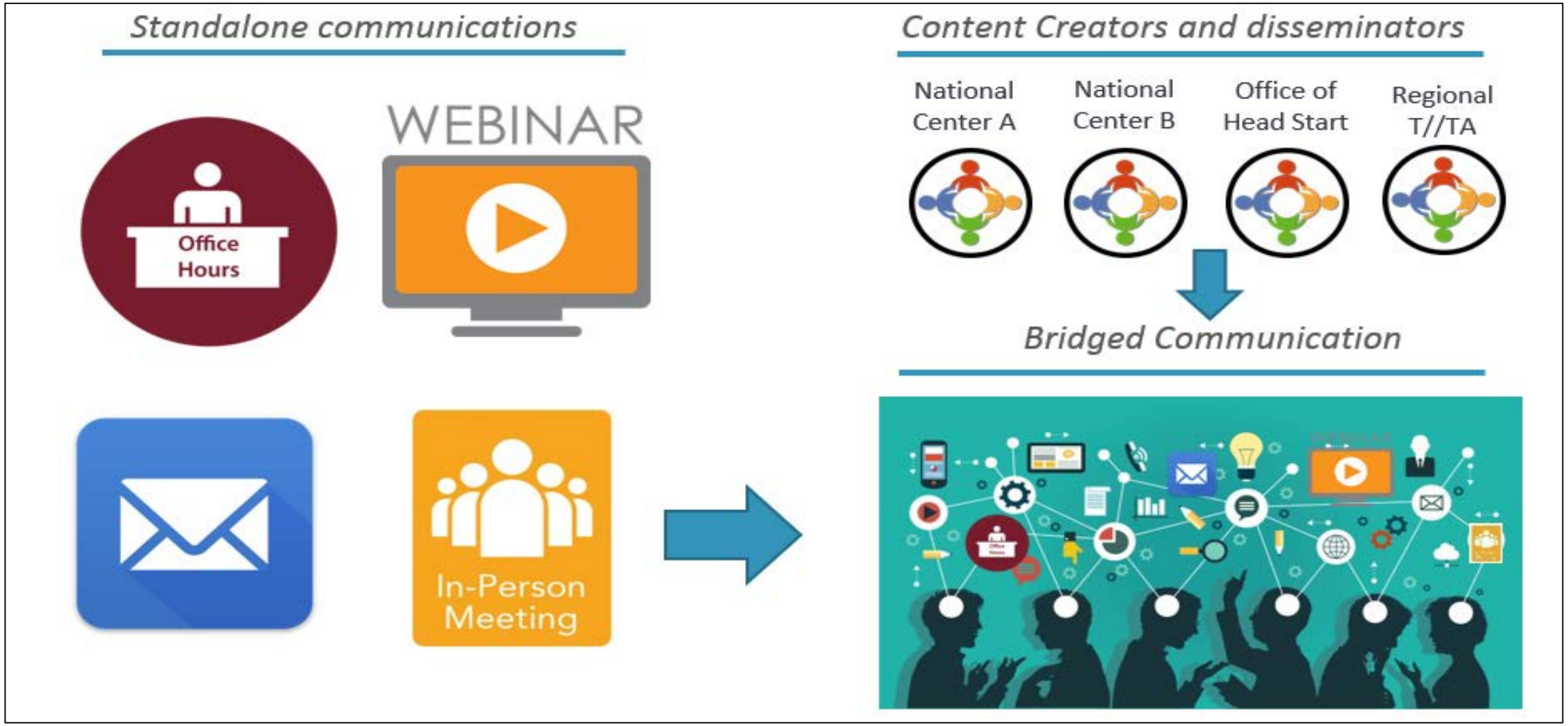
- Connect people
- Provide a shared context
- Enable dialogue
- Stimulate learning
- Introduce collaborative processes
- Help people organize
- Capture and diffuse existing knowledge
- Generate new knowledge

National Learning Infrastructure Initiative. *Step-by-Step Guide for Designing and Cultivating Communities of Practice.* 2012
http://www.educause.edu/nlii

Benefits of Traditional and Virtual CoPs

- Decreased feelings of isolation
- Reduced staff turnover
- Strengthened consistency with guiding frameworks, documents, and policy information
- Increased awareness of resources
- Improved services to children and families

Benefits of Virtual CoPs: The MyPeers Approach



TA Centers' Current Approaches

- Online Workshops
- Learning Communities
- Learning and Targeted TA
- Targeted TA
- Community of Practice
- Learning Collaboratives

- https://dasycenter.org/resources/dasy-technical-assistance/learning-groups/

TA Centers' Current Approaches

- Peer Learning Groups
- Interactive Peer to Peer Exchanges
- Learning Communities
- Virtual Interactive Meetings
- https://www.ideadata.org/resources

TA Centers' Current Approaches

- BDI User Group
- Community of Practice
- Topical Learning Communities

- http://ectacenter.org/events/communities.asp

Discussion: Experiences with Virtual CoPs

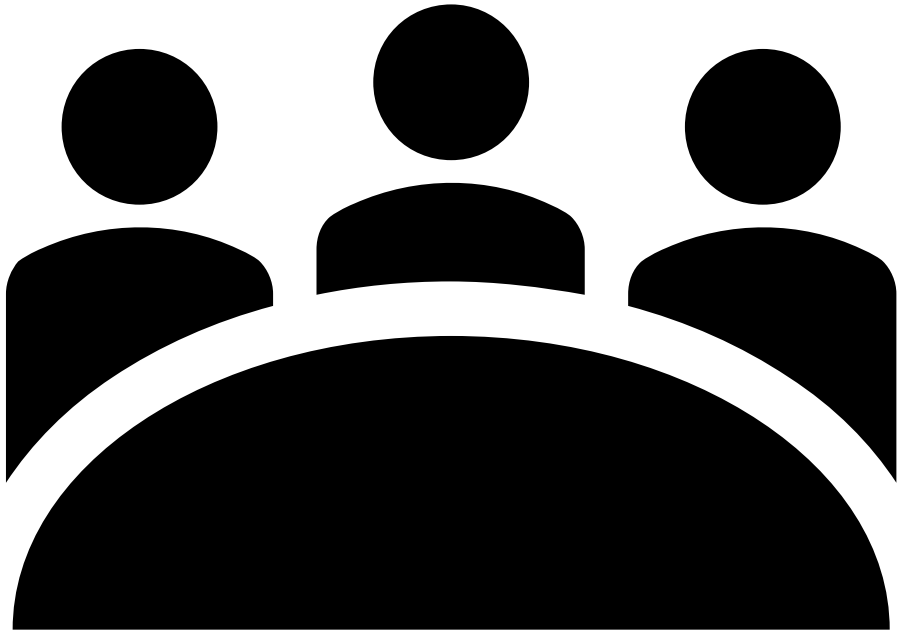
- What virtual CoPs are you involved with?
- What is your role?
- Has your experience been totally virtual or a combination of face-to-face/virtual?
- What are the benefits of each?
- What is a challenge that you could use support with?
- What have you done so far at the state to local-level?

Activity: Build your own CoP!

In a small group, you are going to start your own mini-CoP.

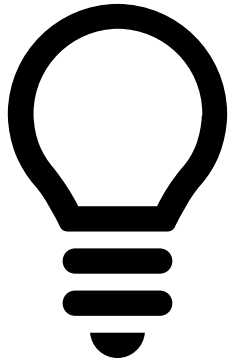
Things to consider:

1. What topic is your CoP focused on?
2. What is the purpose of your CoP?
3. What are the goals of your CoP?
4. You just found out that your CoP will be entirely virtual, what strategies will you use to recruit and engage members?



Initiating Virtual CoPs, Engaging Members and Sustaining Participation

What do virtual CoPs need?

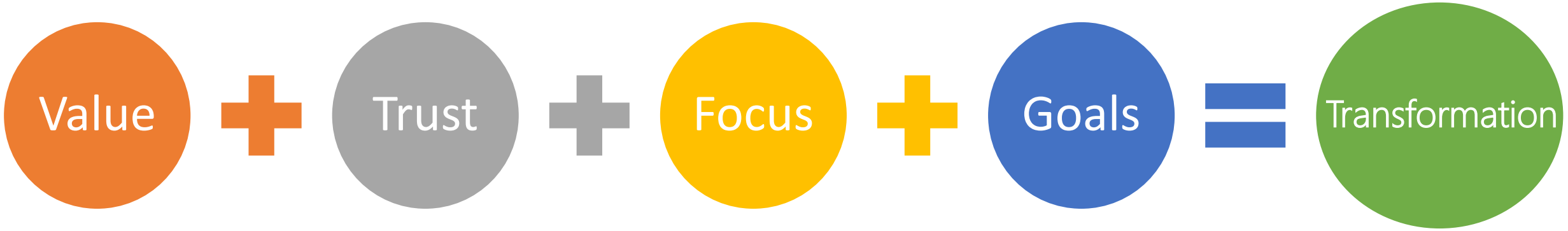


Why do members participate?

Launching YOUR Virtual CoP

"The First Follower is What Transforms a Lone Nut into a Leader"

(Derek Sivers, 2010)



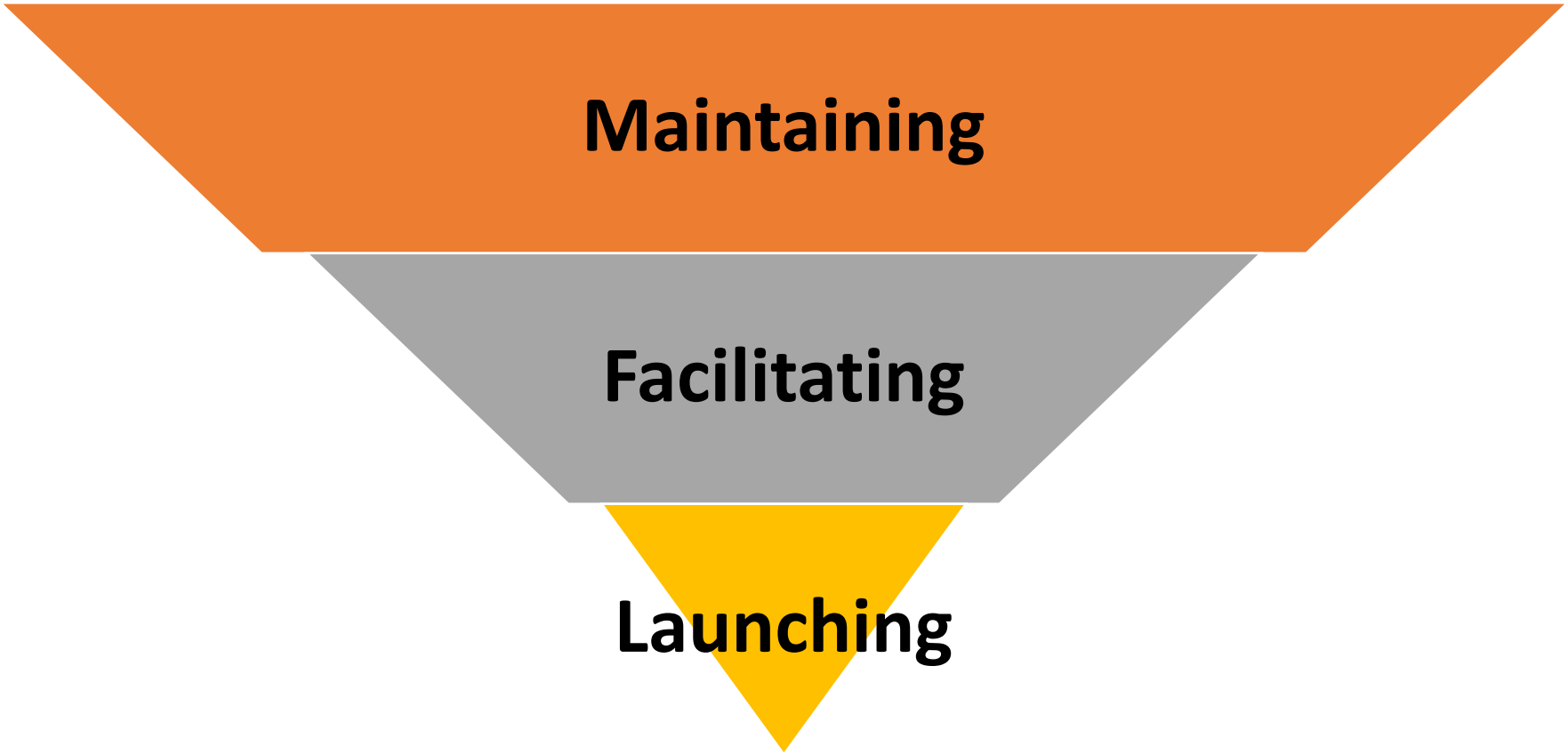
Facilitating YOUR Virtual CoP

"Three is a Crowd and a Crowd is News"

(Derek Sivers, 2010)

Maintaining YOUR Virtual CoP

"Now, we've got momentum. This is the tipping point. Now, we've got a movement." (Derek Sivers, 2010)



If you build it, will they come?

Purposeful Planning

August Focus: Data Systems - Record Keeping and Reporting					
1.01	Post message re: upcoming Live Chat (What is one feature of your current MIS that supports your work in disabilities services? How is this helpful?)	Rebecca	7/31	8/1	Complete
1.02	Post message re: upcoming Live Chat (Do you collect any data outside of your management information system? What do you do with it?)	Sarah	8/8	8/13	Complete
1.03	Share link to new disability newsletter	Sarah	8/8	8/14	Complete
1.04	Poll members re: most popular MIS system for disabilities-related data, and why	Sarah	7/31	7/18	Complete
1.05	Post registration information for 8/15 Live Chat on Recordkeeping & Reporting	Sarah	7/20	8/1	Complete
1.06	Post reminder for 8/15 Live Chat	Sarah	8/14	8/14	Complete

Data Collection for Continuous Improvement

Successful management of online Communities of Practice can be greatly informed by strategic and ongoing evaluation practices.

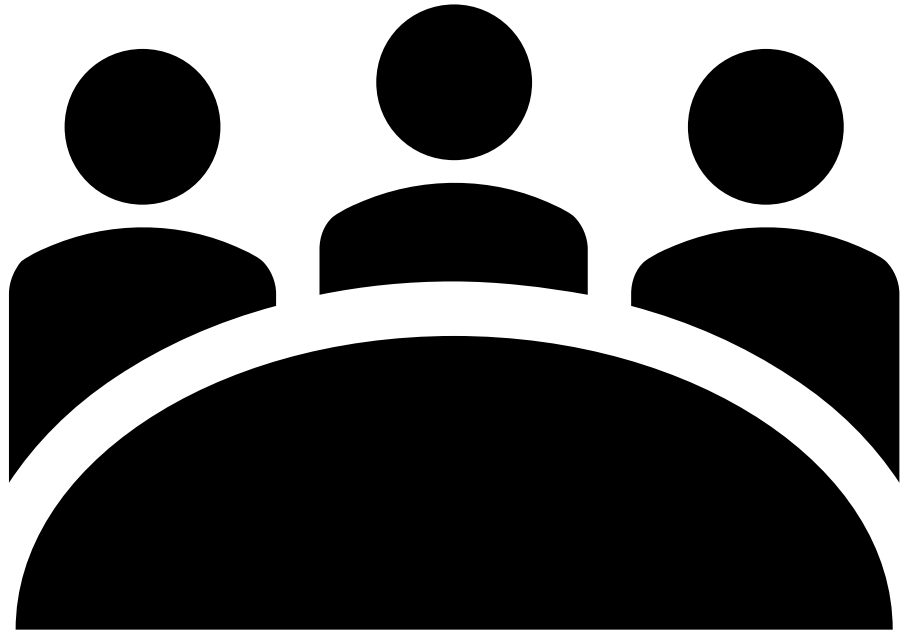
- Data Sources
  1. Site Analytics
  2. Surveys
  3. Focus Groups

(Cambridge, Booth, Kellogg, & Perez-Lopez, 2017)

Activity: Build your own CoP!

After hearing the research:

1. Would you change your strategies or goals?
2. Are there any additional strategies you might try or things to think about?



Innovative Strategies for Virtual CoPs

What innovative strategies have been used to extend TA outreach?

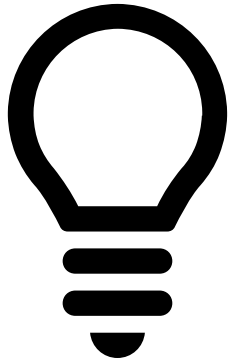
Let's Talk About: Innovations!

- Examples of innovative ways virtual CoPs are used to extend outreach efforts and support professional development at the state and local levels

- Discussion:
  - Do you have additional examples of innovative ways virtual CoPs are being used to extend TA outreach or support PD?
  - What do you want to do with virtual CoPs, that you haven't been able to?

Closing and Wrap-Up

Questions



Helpful Resources!

FREE Resources for YOUR Virtual CoPs

Wrap-Up

- Any questions?

Links to helpful resources:

- Designing Online Communities of Practice for Educators to Create Value, Office of Educational Technology:

https://tech.ed.gov/designing-online-communities-of-practice/

- Upcoming white paper series from AEM

Stay in Touch!

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