Leadership within an International CoP for PhD Students: Person-centred Practice Research

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Trying to do everything during a PhD can be a bit tricky.
Wenger’s Community of Practice

- Learning as doing
- Practice
- Learning as experiences
- Community
- Learning as belonging
- Identity
- Learning as becoming
- Meaning
- Rarification
- Social theory of learning
- Learning as social participation

Legitimate participation
Domain, Community & Practice

Types of Participation in Communities of Practice

- outsiders
- peripheral
- episodic
- regular
- leaders
- core
- experts
- beginners

adapted from Wenger, 2002
Our History

• 2010 Initial PhD Student CoP set up at Ulster University Northern Ireland
• 2013 CoP moved academic homes and expanded and became part of a larger International Community of Practice
• 2017 20 members from different countries
• Mix of face to face and virtual sessions and connections
• focus is on person-centred participatory research
**SICoP and the Four Elements**

*Fire* is the passion at the hearth of the SICoP
Keeping true creativity alight
Diversity is honoured, inclusive interaction occurs
And warmth & acceptance burn bright

*Water* is our source, the stream of consciousness
That enables action research to flow
It invites wonderful imagination into our minds
And allows our knowledge to grow

*Air* is the element of energising space
Empowering SICoP members over time
The colours of their intellectual wisdom come together
To blend and to merge and to shine

*Earth* is the platform on which the SICoP stands
Spanning our research time and beyond
It honours the different constellations of its participants
And nourishes a life-long bond

*By B.M. Lynch*
Foundations: values and beliefs

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‘Passion relates to the palpable feeling that I experience when the students in the SICoP share both the positive aspects and the challenges they are facing during the course of their PhD study and/or their present life experience.’

(Brighide)
Foundations: values and beliefs

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‘The SICoP offers an atmosphere without competition. There are no wrong questions. [...] That was my experience at the first meeting I attended and I already had the feeling of being an accepted member of the group.’

(Francis)
Foundations: values and beliefs

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‘Sharing our stories, struggles and triumphs, has sometimes felt like stepping into a green restful glade, becoming refreshed, re-energised and supported, better able to continue on my PhD journey.[…] Now, as I move closer to the end of my PhD journey, the SICoP feels more like a garden than a glade; a garden which we have tended and nourished and which holds new surprises for us every time we return.’

(Donna)
Foundations: values and beliefs

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‘Spending the evening together was just as important for learning and bonding as the structured daytime activities. We started to “live” person-centredness, getting to know each other as individual persons, not just PhD students’

(Shaun)