

Project ID No.	CP 349 / 7 / 1 / 3 5
GOAL	4 SUB-PROGRAM

Effective Networking Communities of Practice

Action plans must be submitted online to www.reframingthefuture.net by COB Tuesday 20 June 2006.

Please refer to 'How to submit an action plan online' in the Reframing the Future handout or on the website.

All sections must be completed.

Please note: sections 1 – 9 of this document will be uploaded onto the Reframing the Future website. Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.

Name of organisation funded by Reframing the Future

Gordon Institute of TAFE

1. Convenor's details

Name: Kate Trewhella		
Position: Teacher		
Organisation: Gordon Institute of TAFE		
Address: Fenwick Street		
City/Suburb: Geelong	Postcode: 3221	
Ph: 03 52 466 128	Fax: 03 52 250 0480	Mobile:
Email: Ktrewhel@gordontafe.edu.au		

2. Facilitators' details

Name: John Mitchell		
Address: Post Office Box 252		
City/Suburb: Pyremont, NSW	Postcode: 2009	
Ph: 02 9660 0255	Fax:	Mobile:
Email:		

3. Project overview (100 words maximum)

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

- ❖ To provide flexible, innovative and creative approaches in the provision of training to meet the needs of the Fashion, Textiles and Apparel sector.
- ❖ To nurture development of the collective knowledge and skills of a growing network of individuals and organisations.
- ❖ To build a community that can respond to the challenges of rapid globalisation and advances in technology.

4. Domain of knowledge

What aspects of the national training system will be addressed by your project?

(e.g. establishing relationships with industry clients; improving workplace assessment or delivery; implementing new Training Packages) (Please add rows as required)

The Community of Practice will lead to the establishment and reinforcement of collaborative arrangements for the implementation of the National Training System in a number of ways:

- ❖ Through implementation and delivery strategies for the new TCF Training Package will be developed and enhanced through the combined input of members, who will bring their skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to, and achieve, quality outputs.
- ❖ By bringing together public and private RTOs, issues relating to delivery, assessment, moderation, validation and evaluation will be addressed and solutions identified and implemented. Private RTOs will also be supported through the Community of Practice.
- ❖ By addressing industry training issues and provision, including identification of emerging industry training needs; understanding of the National Training System; familiarisation with Training Package content and benefits; AQTF compliance, and industry acceptance of qualifications.
- ❖ By developing and nurturing relationships with other Victorian RTOs and industry practitioners to support TCF Training Package implementation.
- ❖ By creating and sharing new knowledge.
- ❖ Through the incorporation of industry input so that outcomes represent a high level of awareness of current industry needs.

1. Facilitating your community of practice

Please describe how you propose to facilitate your group progressing through the stages of growth of a Community of Practice (see Table 4.1 in the report: *The Potential for Communities of Practice to underpin the National Training Framework*):

In adopting the work of Wenger (1998), the following stages of development will be employed to facilitate the stages of growth of a Community of Practice:

- ❖ *Potential* – Identifying and confirming community membership through informal networking arrangements, professional conversations, Internship liaison and industry partnerships.

To develop our Community of Practice we will be drawing together key stakeholders from our currently dispersed network of training providers and industry partners across the state of Victoria. Particular expertise will be sought in the areas of curriculum through VET practitioners and industry practitioners. A mentor system is in place to provide expert advice on methodology relating to Communities of Practice, documentation development and maintenance, and curriculum. An external expert facilitator has been selected to conduct the face-to-face forums.

Initially, an invitation to become a member of the TCF Community of Practice will be sent to potential members. All known Textile, Clothing and Footwear providers in Victoria will be invited to have representation in the Community of Practice. A pre-forum response sheet will be the instrument used to ask individual participants to consider a name for the forming Community, and to ensure the provision of initial information about the forum, including its purpose and content, in preparation for the event.

- ❖ *Coalescing* – Communicating with community members to confirm commitment and connectedness; bringing members together to identify and discuss issues surrounding course implementation and delivery, quality and consistency of assessment, moderation, validation and evaluation.

All members of the Community of Practice will be invited to attend a one day forum on August 1st, 2006. Some of the planned activities include; Introduction to definitions, concepts and benefits of Communities of Practice; naming of the Community of Practice; allocation of key roles within the Community, and work group activities centring on industry input into the core units of the Training Package. Keynote guest speakers will be asked to highlight the topic areas of the AQTF and Training Packages, current industry needs and, building Communities of Practice. At the outset, a set of goals and key objectives will be determined by the Community members.

This forum will also mark the commencement of the process of gathering, creating and sharing knowledge and resources in preparedness for the dedicated website and newsletter.

- ❖ *Active* – Creating a social framework and encouraging members to participate in the incubation and generation of solutions through the sharing of ideas and experiences; problem-solving; decision-making; formalising strategies; the improvement of practice, and the nurturing of ongoing relationships.

Members communicate via dedicated website and email. Teleconferencing and a face-to-face forum in late October will be some of the methods used to bring the group together at intervals. Through participation in the forums, teleconferencing and other communication strategies, learning resources, assessment guides and developmental tools will be created and shared within the Community.

- ❖ *Dispersed* – Communication strategies developed for the above stages will continue to be employed. These include: email, telephone, face-to-face meetings, dedicated website, bulletin board, newsletters and web forum. Members will be encouraged to continue their contributions to the Community of Practice. It is envisaged that the Community of Practice will both encourage and facilitate active involvement for some years.

Members of the Community maintain contact and contribute to the community through the various communication strategies that are in place. Participants are part of a professional group that has established trust and developed connections between participants. Creating and sharing knowledge; increases the capacity for developing solutions, responding to change, increases training consistency and value, and promotes innovation in teaching practice.

- ❖ *Memorable* – As this will be the first Community of Practice to be developed by the Gordon Institute of TAFE for the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear Industry, it will have significantly impacted on both the educational and Textiles, Clothing and Footwear industries.

Community members need to exercise judgement as to when and how to either transform the Community or allow it to end. (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002).

6. Structuring your community

Please describe how you propose to support the development of the three components of your community: its domain of knowledge, community and practice (see *Effectively Structuring Communities of Practice in VET*):

The project will employ a three-part structure, incorporating the structural elements described in Wenger et al (2002) namely:

- ❖ Domain of knowledge – this will create common ground and a sense of common knowledge in the community.
- ❖ Community – this will create the social fabric of learning
- ❖ Practice – this will develop a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language, stories and documents that community members share (pp 27-29).

Domain of Knowledge

The domain of knowledge will evolve from a need to understand and address industry training issues and provision, including identification of emerging industry training needs; understanding of the National Training System; familiarisation of new Training Package content and benefits; AQTF compliance, and industry acceptance of qualifications. The domain will provide the purpose for developing effective collaborative relationships to support the implementation and delivery of the TCF Training Package.

Community

The Community of Practice will use various strategies in order to develop its community. It is anticipated that these will include the following:

- Enable different levels of participation depending on participants' needs, availability, time and experience.
- Foster relationships between private and public RTOs and industry practitioners.
- Encourage interaction at regular intervals to discuss issues critical to the evolving domain. This will involve conducting two state-wide forums focussing on issues surrounding the implementation and delivery of the TCF Training Package and the use of teleconferencing as necessary.
- Develop a communications hub through a dedicated website, for participants to share resources and knowledge; to seek and provide support to others, and to share stories and experiences.
- At the outset, engender a feeling of belonging by involving members in the naming the Community of Practice and setting goals and objectives.
- Encourage collaboration towards increasing consistency and value of training.

Practice

The practice will grow from the need to develop strategies to implement and deliver the TCF Training Package. A number of keynote speakers and structured workshop activities will support this at planned events. Practice will be enhanced through the combined input of members, who will bring their skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to, and achieve, quality outputs.

- An expert, external facilitator will be utilised at the forum days to help create forums for thinking as well as systems for sharing. Methodologies for achieving this will include: whole group discussions and smaller group, ie 'round table', structured activities.
- Prior to attendance at events, members will be encouraged to consider responses and input to some pre-set topics.
- An A4 folder will be distributed to each member at the first forum. Initially, this folder will contain information about the project, building of a Community of Practice and the domain of knowledge of the Community. Members will be encouraged to utilise the folder as an information repository.

- Extensive use of email for: contact lists, exchange of ideas between individuals and groups, tracking of proceedings, distribution of developed documents and tools, measuring value.
- Construction of deliberate discussion centring on the critical issues of the domain.
- Use of dedicated website as a tool for sharing, creating and enhancing knowledge. Use of website for promotion of the Community within the Community. Use of website as a repository for collective information.

7. Anticipated outcomes (see Chapters 6-7 of *The Potential*)

Please describe the outcomes anticipated as a result of your project:

It is anticipated that the project will be of considerable benefit to both individuals and organisations. In accordance with Mitchell (2003):

- ❖ Communities of practice enable practitioners to develop sophisticated skills and knowledge to function effectively in the changing VET arena.
- ❖ Communities of practice create value in multiple ways and hence deserve ongoing systemic and organisational support in VET.
- ❖ Communities of practice have a three part structure that needs to be understood and managed if the full benefits of communities are to be felt within VET. (p 32)

for participating individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To increase the professional competence and personal confidence of individual participants. ❖ To provide access to new knowledge. ❖ To build a new social learning system in which individuals are empowered to flourish. ❖ To help individuals to manage and facilitate change. ❖ To achieve a sense of community with others bound by common purpose and a sense of trust. ❖ To value and nurture in self and other: trust, goodwill, passion and commitment.
for participating organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establishment of a state-wide network of Textile, Clothing and Footwear VET practitioners and industry practitioners working with common purpose. ❖ To increase the capacity and productivity of VET practitioners. ❖ To decrease duplication of resources. ❖ To increase the capacity of VET practitioners to provide flexible, innovative and creative approaches in the provision of training to meet the needs of the Fashion, Textiles and Apparel sector. ❖ To nurture development of the collective knowledge and skills of a growing network of individuals and organisations. ❖ To build a community that can respond to the challenges of rapid globalisation and advances in technology. ❖ To provide increasing consistency and value of education and training for the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Industry.

8. Evaluation

Please provide an outline of the methods you will use to evaluate the participants’ learning and your project’s efficiency and effectiveness.

The Community of Practice will be in continuous self-evaluative mode throughout the project. Members will evaluate their own achievements and activities, and will be encouraged to share their reflections in line with the six stage model based on Brinkerhof (1987) below, through a developed communications hub.

An open-ended survey will be the instrument for formal evaluation of how well the challenges have been met at milestone achievements throughout the project.

1. Goal Setting Stage

Evaluation Strategy – Open discussion

A prediction of the likely outcomes and limitations of the project is formed through formal and informal discussion processes with curriculum managers, educational managers, colleagues and industry practitioners.

2. Project Design Stage

Evaluation Strategy – Pre-Forum Response Sheet

Expert advice is sought on project methodology.

A pre-forum response sheet is developed and circulated to invitation respondents to seek consideration of the Community of Practice name and to increase understanding of the content and purpose of the August Forum.

Mentors are in place as support mechanisms to managers/ convenors.

Preparation of the Reframing the Future Action Plan is completed by June 20th.

Tools to measure the success of the projects performance through its various stages is in the development process.

3. Program Implementation Stage

Evaluation Strategy – Ongoing checking

Progress is continuously checked against original schedules and goals.

4. Immediate Outcomes Stage

Evaluation Strategy – Reflection, Skills Audit and informal observation

Reflective activities and a Skills Audit will be the methods used at the August and October Forums to measure the level of development of new skills, knowledge and attitudes. In addition, informal observations will monitor participant learning.

5. Outcomes Usage Stage

Evaluation Strategy – Questionnaire, and discussion

To measure contributions and usage of shared resources we will employ the use of questionnaires, a website counter, discussions at forums and informal discussions.

6. Impacts and Worth Stage

Evaluation Strategy – interview and general feedback

It anticipated that Interviews, Feedback sessions and preparation of the Reframing the Future Final Report will be the mechanisms used to measure the impact and worth of the project for individuals and organisations respectively.

9. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Project Action Plan Due	Tuesday, 20 June 2006
Evaluation of preparedness for first 1 day forum	Thursday, 20 July 2006
1 Day Forum	Tuesday, 1 August 2006
Project Mid-Term report Due	Tuesday, 5 September 2006
First Newsletter issued to Community Members	September 2006
Teleconference as deemed necessary by Community Members	September 2006
Website launch	Late October 2006
2 nd 1 Day Forum	Late October 2006
Teleconference as deemed necessary by Community Members	Late November 2006
Final Report	Tuesday, 5 December 2006

Monday, 29 January	All aspects of the project submitted: signed financial statement and final invoice
--------------------	--