

Project ID No.	CP 84 / 7 / 1 / 07
GOAL	4 SUB-PROGRAM

Effective Networking Communities of Practice

Action plans must be submitted online to www.reframingthefuture.net by COB Tuesday 5 June 2007.

Please select "Submit a Form" on the Home Page Menu and follow the prompts.

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 Details of participants in item 11 will be only be used in accordance with our privacy policy and will not be published on the website.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

Berry Street Victoria

1. Convenor's details

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3. Project overview (100 words maximum)

What outcomes do you hope to achieve in your project?

- Establish a community of practice of internal and external educators
- Members share knowledge about teaching and learning approaches that effectively engage and support disengaged and disadvantaged students of post-compulsory schooling age.
- Capability of educators is strengthened to respond to the learning needs of a challenging client group i.e. young people in protective care, young people with mild intellectual disability and young indigenous people
- Create knowledge and a shared understanding of how to “unbundled” Training Packages and develop learning and assessment approaches suitable for this client group
- Members develop greater resilience, self-care and capacity to seek and find relevant skills and knowledge within and beyond the community of practice

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)

- Promote the establishment and reinforcement of collaboration and strategic partnerships between education providers who work with young people who often are not able to make full use of the National Training System.
- Through an internal and external community of practice work on creating further opportunities for disengaged young people to access VET programs.
- Active contribution to establishing, building and maintaining the practice of the group to create knowledge and a shared understanding of how to unbundled Training Packages and develop learning and assessment approaches suitable for this client group.

5. 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*):

The initial facilitator will use an action learning model to facilitate the community within a process in line with Wenger’s typical work plans for conveners. The aim is to instil capacities in the community of practice to sustain and grow their community. Outlined are comments on Action Learning, followed by a work plan based on typical roles for conveners as described by Wenger.

Action Learning

1. An action learning model will be used as action learning promotes the knowledge and expertise within a group and seeks to encourage initiative and action determined by the learning group from their own experience. It works by group members asking new questions, rather than by an external expert teaching. The community of practice is likely to define knowledge gaps and seek additional knowledge.
2. A further assumption behind this approach is that the organisations and individuals and groups of staff within and across organisational boundaries – but linked by task – act as part of an interdependent system. There are significant opportunities in exploring and understanding links, and for links to be grown in the system to benefit young people who are disadvantaged and disengaged.
3. The third major assumption behind the approach is that the development of the community of practice should offer spaces and processes for participants both internal and external to come to their own realisations about the nature of their system and how they can act to create new ways of working that are collaborative, energized and innovative.

Work Plan**Potential Stage**

Currently underway:

- Determine the primary intent of the community
- Define the domain and identify engaging issues

Build a case for action

To be achieved in **June 2007**:

Identify potential coordinators and thought leaders

Interview potential members

Connect community members

Create a preliminary design for the community

Coalescing Stage

Facilitated workshop in **July 2007** to work on the following tasks:

Build a case for membership

Launch the community

Initiate community events and spaces

Legitimise community coordinators

Build connections between core members

Find the ideas, insights and practices that are worth sharing

Document judiciously

Identify opportunities to provide value

Engage managers

Maturing Stage

Facilitated community of practice activities potentially via electronic communication, phone hookups, video conferencing, blogs, chat, email discussion groups, begin a knowledge and skills web-based library.

These would be developed with the community of practice in line with their developing culture and identified requirements – expected timeline **July – October 2007**, recognising that not all members are at the same stage.

Tasks:

Identify gaps in knowledge and develop a learning agenda

Define the community's role in the organisation

Redefine community boundaries

Routinise entry requirements and processes

Maturing Stage continued

The facilitator will hand over to the community to create their own sustainable processes in **November 2007**.

A key task is to routinise entry requirements and processes.

Other tasks suggested by Wenger in the maturing stage may not be reached within the time frame of this project. These are:

Measure the value to the community

Maintain a cutting-edge focus

Build and organise a knowledge repository

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*):

As described by Wenger, the three structural elements of the domain of knowledge, community and practice will be developed together, with recognition that they interact.

Domain of knowledge – the facilitator will assist members through questionnaires and questioning to contribute and participate, and to explore and define the boundaries of this group.

Community – the facilitator will work toward inclusive interactions, and encourage both mutual respect and provide an environment for that encourages trust. The facilitator will follow up with individual contact to support members, and encourage both the difficult questions, and respectful listening skills.

Practice – the facilitator will encourage and support the articulation of frameworks, ideas, and information to begin building a web-based library that easily accessed by members.

The organisational change model which will underpin the development of the community of practice is the 'transitional approach to change management'. A principle feature of this model is "...the design and provision of conditions that enable the transition process to take place at both the psychological and social levels and facilitate its progress" (Amado and Ambrose 2001:15). In this model there are several types of conditions that assist with the transition each relevant to different aspects of the process:

- Open-system perspective
- A collaborative management style
- Providing a 'holding environment'
- Problem toleration
- Potential space and playing
- Facilitating transitional learning" project design and double task – looking at both the content of the discussion and the socio-emotional group process
- Developmental potential
- The role of 'transitional objects' or situations in facilitating transformation
- Transitional space and containment.

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

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

for participating individuals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase knowledge and capability in working with disadvantaged young people – access to new knowledge 2. Improve self-care 3. Ability to manage change improved 4. Build relationships and trust internally and externally
for participating organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through shared knowledge, increase innovation, responsiveness and flexibility in teaching approaches- improved productivity, and fostering innovation 2. Improve self-care in our teachers and trainers 3. Build relationships between participating organisations 4. Improve dissemination of valuable information across geographically dispersed locations

8. Promotion

Please outline how your project's processes and products will be promoted:

within your organisation(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through our intranet, with an email to all staff to alert them to new material on the intranet 2. Through information sharing in our fortnightly newsletter – printed and distributed with payslips, and also available on the intranet 3. Through our educators cross regional meetings 4. Through members of the informal networks of the Community of Practice
to industry and other relevant organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through other organisations having members of the Community of Practice, and sharing with both their own organisation and their own networks 2. Through our peak body, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Services 3. Through the Community Services & Health Industry Training Board
to the broader VET sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through our peak body, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Services 2. Through the Community Services & Health Industry Training Board 3. Through national forums of Reframing The Future as well as professional organisations such as VISTA.

9. Evaluation

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

From the national forum, we now expect that our Community of Practice will move through stages of development, coalescing and maturing, with members experiences differing. As an action learning group, the facilitator will support the group with the following self-evaluation strategies, which will in turn inform the group and project of the stages the members are in.

Self-evaluation strategies will include ongoing use of reflection and review as outlined in the change model to be used, 'The Transitional Approach to Change'. This model explicitly involves working with a group on the overt group task and evaluating how members see the group functioning, the learning occurring (or not) and whether the intended outcomes are being addressed. Other approaches to self-evaluation that will be explicitly used during the project include:

- Use of questionnaires to ascertain members' base level of knowledge around the discussion points outlined in our application.
- Articulation of intended outcomes in detail to use as a reference point for all self-evaluation activities
- Participants keeping personal learning and change reflection journals
- Employ an after action review with every member. The following questions will be asked:
What did we set out to do? Are we achieving this? What is going well? What needs improving?
- A baseline description from each participant on how they work as a VET practitioner at the beginning of the program and then at the end asking how they plan to work in the future
- The 'narrative' produced by the project will in itself involve self-evaluation and
- A follow-up interview twelve months after the program with each participant and their immediate supervisor will also be sought, to explore evidence and experience (or lack of) of the intended individual capacities and group and systemic outcomes (this is an organisational commitment beyond the length of this project).

10. Project timeframe

Please list project milestones and key dates

(Please add rows as required)

Milestone	Key date
Completion of Action Plan including appointment of a facilitator	5 June 2007
Facilitator to draft purpose and terms of reference for the CoP, invite external members and send questionnaires to ascertain base level of knowledge	30 June 2007
Facilitated first meeting of group (in school holidays to make attendance easier)	End July 2007
Discussion forum established and online discussions held supported by emails and telephone. Facilitator supports members and facilitates ongoing discussions.	August 2007
Mid Term Report	28 August 2007
Mid Term Forum	September 2007
Online discussions continued, supported by facilitator, and enhanced by email and phone calls	September – November 2007
Final report submitted	26 November 2007