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Tapped-In: Exploring an Online Community of Practice for Educators

Lesson Overview
This lesson will introduce educators to online communities of practice (COP) theoretically and virtually. Specifically educators will learn terminology relating to the community of practice, the role of the COP in education, and interact within the Tapped-In community of practice for educators.

Goals
The purpose of this lesson is to inform educators about alternative forms of professional development and networking. In doing so learners will gain first hand knowledge of a functional community of practice.

Objectives
Upon completion of this lesson students will be able to:

- Define community of practice
- Understand terminology related to community of practice
- Understand the use of online communities of practice in the world of education
- Recognize tools utilized by communities of practice
- Recognize the Tapped-In interface
- Navigate the Tapped-In interface
- Interact in the Tapped-In environment

Topics
Community of Practice Defined - In module one of the lesson students will be given a general overview of what a community of practice is. As part of this lesson students will also be introduced to common terminology.

Community of Practice in Education - Module two of the lesson will focus on how a community of practice can be used as an effective tool for distance educators.

Tools of the Trade - A basic overview of differing tools will be presented in module three. At this time, students will not interact with; however, will be given the ability to recognize such apparatus.

Tapped-In: Overview - Module four will focus on who, what, when, and where of Tapped-In.

Tapped-In: Create and Account - Students will create an account and become a member of the Tapped-In community of practice for educators in module five.

Tapped-In: Interface - Module five will give students an overview of the Tapped-In interface. This lesson will give students the ability to recognize and orient themselves within the Tapped-In environment.
Tapped-In: Interaction - Having registered for an account and been acclimated to the Tapped-In interface and services in module six, students will utilize tools and interact within the virtual confines of the environment.

Activities
1. Pre-learning via web-based lesson
   A text-based introduction to concepts, terminology and tools pertaining to community of practice will be presented via the World Wide Web. Students will read these pages to assist their understanding of community of practice and its role in education.

2. Overview of Tapped-In
   A text-based introduction of the Tapped-In website and environment presented via the World Wide Web. Students will read these pages to help their understanding of what Tapped-In is, what it does, and how it fits into the genre of community of practice for educators.

3. Create an account at Tapped-In
   Students will be given a brief lesson on how to register for an account on the Tapped-In community of practice for educators. While a brief overview outlining pertinent information will be presented via the World Wide Web, students will be expected to log on to http://www.tappedin.org and register an account.

4. Navigate the Tapped-In Interface
   Students will read and view screen captures about important aspects of the Tapped-In interface via the World Wide Web. As part of this lesson students will be asked to log into Tapped-In to familiarize and acclimate themselves with the community.

5. Interact in the Tapped-In environment
   In this activity learners will be given specific tasks to perform within the Tapped-In community. Particular focus will be paid to participation in chat, discussion boards, and the whiteboard. This exercise will be a group activity done synchronously in order to maximize the experience of all users.

6. Participate in the online quizzes about community of practice
   Learners will be expected to demonstrate understanding of concepts, terminology and tools pertaining to community of practice. Demonstration of understanding will be in the form of an online survey.

7. Participate in the online course evaluation
   Learners will be asked to participate in an online survey regarding the usefulness of the online lesson.
**Audience Description and Analysis**

In looking at the issues surrounding networking and professional development it is clear that there are a limited amount places those participating in online education can go. In understanding the concept of community of practice as well as interacting with one such entity, online educators can potentially fill this gap.

The intended audience of this lesson is educators and students of all levels. In particular Tapped-In caters to K-12 faculty and staff; as well as higher education faculty, staff and students.

**Evaluation and Assessment**

Learners have the capability to earn 100 points over the course of the lesson. Point structure is broken out as follows:

- Account creation: 25 points
- Quiz one - concepts, terminology, tools: 25 points
- Quiz two - Tapped-In overview & interface: 25 points
- Participation - Tapped-In environment: 25 points

Points will be given based on the following rubric:

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Mastery (25 points)           | The student demonstrates advanced understanding of relevant concepts and/or tasks.  
|                               | The student correctly answers all questions posed on quiz.  
|                               | The student fully participates in all elements required of Tapped-In environment exercise. |
| Above Average (15 points)     | The student demonstrates general understanding of relevant concepts and/or tasks.  
|                               | The student correctly answers 75% of questions posed on quiz.  
|                               | The student fully participates in 75% of the elements required of Tapped-In environment exercise. |
| Average  (10 points) | The student demonstrates limited understanding of relevant concepts and/or tasks.  
|                     | The student correctly answers 50% of questions posed on quiz.  
|                     | The student fully participates in 50% of the elements required of Tapped-In environment exercise. |
| Fair  (5 points) | The student demonstrates minimal understanding of relevant concepts and/or tasks.  
|                  | The student correctly answers 25% of questions posed on quiz.  
|                  | The student fully participates in 25% of the elements required of Tapped-In environment exercise. |
| Inadequate (0 point) | The student demonstrates no understanding of relevant concepts and/or tasks.  
|                    | The student correctly answers no questions posed on quiz.  
|                    | The student does not participate in the elements required of Tapped-In environment exercise. |

Students will also be asked to participate in a course evaluation survey. In this students will be asked to assess course content, design, and instruction.

**Proposed Media and Rationale**

The author of this lesson will be utilizing HTML and the World Wide Web in its creation. Students are asked to have access to an Internet connection, web browser and email client. Over the course of the web-based lesson students will navigate varying resources online. These resources include:

Course website - Here students will find all written material and links to outside resources required for learning course content on community of practice.

Tapped-In - http://www.tappedin.org is a virtual community of practice for educators in which students will register for an account and interact with their peers.

Survey Monkey - A web-based assessment tool used for quizzes and course evaluation.