



Uses of Communities in the Education Communities

A pilot study carried out in November 2012 into the use of the Education Communities revealed a total of 97 communities of which 85 were being actively used. There were over 100 institutions represented in more than 20 countries. Containing 887 members across the platform, some community spaces were public (anyone can join, who has already registered on the platform) others were private (registered users on the platform need to apply to the community facilitators). Communities could be broken down into several categories, based on their purpose statement. These categories are as follows:

Categories of communities

Books

A private workspace for those working on a collaborative book. They tend to include updates from people working on chapters, author guidelines, contact details, deadlines and drafts of work etc.

Example 1: Learning to Teach in the Secondary School 6th edition - BOOK

Articles

A private workspace for those working on a collaborative article – including many of the features listed above in 'Books'.

Example 2: Education in a Changing Environment In this particular community, papers and abstracts were sought that offer insights into creative ways of facilitating learning, teaching and assessment and enabling engagement with students

Bids

In this community, people can come together across organizations and create joint bids. Typical content includes, letters of support, minutes of meetings, drafts of different sections with lines of responsibilities and deadlines, call information, supporting data, literature reviews, FAQs, guidance

Example 3: ESRC Knowledge exchange bid deadline 2 Nov 12- BID

Community

These can vary considerably, depending on why they have been set up.

Public Communities tend to be general interest areas

Private Communities tend to have a tighter focus

They tend to include the following sorts of things – a welcome discussion area, a general discussion area, useful papers, reports etc in the library, invitations for collaborations, support and links to relevant events. They will also have very clear purpose and audience statements so that everyone joining is clear what the community is about.



Some example communities and their purpose statements:

Example 4: Education Futures Collaboration

There are pockets of innovation, evidence-based practice and excellence in teaching and learning, all over the country, but if we are to succeed in a time of financial uncertainty and educational change, then we must act together to join these pockets up within a specialist environment, free from government financial control, which connects us and our ideas and aggregates our networks for the betterment of our profession and the learners. **AUDIENCE STATEMENT:** this is a public community, we welcome anyone who is interested in helping us reach our aim.

Example 5: Facilitators Forum

The purpose of this community is to support online facilitators across the Education Communities. We encourage you as facilitators to share tips on how you successfully engage your community members in dialogue. In this space, you'll be able to:

- find out about online facilitation
- engage with experts in facilitation of online communities
- network with colleagues to enhance your knowledge and experience of online facilitation
- share your top tips and help others who are less experienced at online facilitation than yourself

AUDIENCE STATEMENT: This community is open to any members of the Education Communities collaborative platform, who have an interest in online facilitation.

Project

This is a community set up to help staff work effectively and efficiently to run a project. Common features will be project working logs, steering groups meeting agendas and minutes, drafts of work, data analysis, financial reports and budget documents etc. if groups are working across different institutions, and meetings are difficult to co-ordinate, it is a very efficient way to work, so that work is not duplicated, everyone knows what is going on at any moment in time and project leads can monitor workflow.

Example 6: HEA/ITTE: Digital Literacy and Creativity for University Tutors

Network

This is very similar to a community, except the focus is on connecting people and supporting meetings

Example 7: UCET Collaborative Research Network