

# Interprofessional Community of Practice (IPCoP)

## Practical learning



We complement one another; each from our own perspective”

### Introduction

Interprofessional education and collaborative practice (IECP) is a process of interaction between two or more students from different study programmes and involves learning through practical social participation. It is impossible for one to acquire collaborative competences without the other.

### What is an Interprofessional Community of Practice (IPCoP)?

Etienne Wenger<sup>1</sup> describes CoPs as follows: 'Communities of Practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.'

It is a meeting place where people share analyses, inform and advise one another, and develop new working methods. They build on existing knowledge and apply this to their own specific situation in order to pass this newly developed knowledge on to a larger circle.<sup>2</sup>

### Interprofessional education working group and collaboration in the Faculty of Health

Lecturers from all study programmes within the Faculty of Health are working together to design and implement an integral Interprofessional educational objective. Relevant stakeholders are involved in this process and sustainable collaborative networks are created.



### What is the essence of an IPCoP?

The IPCoP enables us to shape a learning process in a natural and informal context. The interprofessional learning process forms the core which is supported by the connection to everyday practice. IPCoP can be achieved by coherently developing three core-characteristics and continuing to be aware of them:<sup>1</sup>

#### 1 The domain: a demarcated theme

This encompasses all the themes that are important to practice and especially for the improvement of a practice. The questions are interesting and cannot be easily solved. They generate the impetus to tackle them, as they are directly connected to practice. For the IPCoP this means that a shared theme is essential.

#### 2 The community

The community is a group of people that are prepared to interact with one another and work together, to explore each other's contexts, and that can create a safe space for learning together on the condition that they maintain an open attitude and willingness to learn and that they are able to ask pertinent and critical questions. In other words, it involves critical reflection and the ability to consider diverging learning formats in a creative way.

#### 3 Practice

This is about the practices that people share. Practice does not necessarily fall into the same category as discipline. The care and welfare sector combines many different disciplines that sees paramedics, doctors, nurses, care-givers, assistants, educators, researchers, and others are working together in a practical environment. For the IPCoP this means sharing these experiences in education and practical care.



I'd never have thought that we could learn so much from one another."



### Learning in an IPCoP

Learning in an IPCoP engages three different levels:

- Individual: participating in and contributing to an IPCoP
- Community: redesigning the own practice to produce a new generation of professionals
- Organization: maintaining IPCoPs through the existing body of knowledge within the organization, so making the organization itself a valuable asset for the IPCoP

IECP working group  
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### References

- 1 Wenger, E (1998). *Communities of practice. Learning, meaning and identity.* Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- 2 Andringa, J. & Reyn, L. (2014) *Tien stappen tot een succesvolle community of practice.* Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland – programma Duurzaam Door. Den Haag.

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## Interprofessional Community of Practice

A group of people with the same interests sharing experiences with the same goal of improving quality.

