Building a University Network of Communities of Practice for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

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11th September 2015 - HEIR 2015

Learning and Teaching at Hope

✤ We are a University that takes pride in its Learning and Teaching.

✤ Community is at the heart of what we do. We believe in the collegium; an academic community, which students are an intrinsic part of.

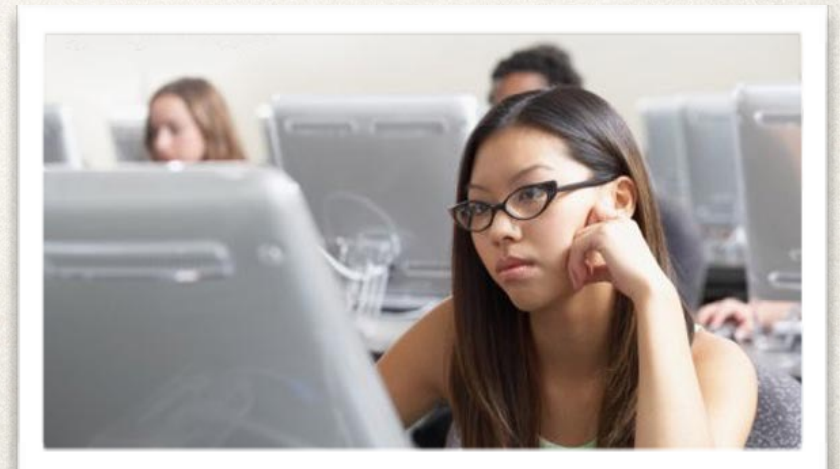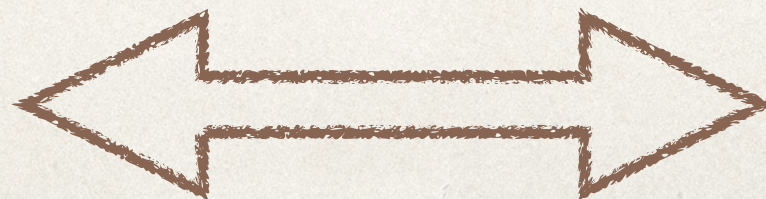✤ We believe that enhancement in Learning and Teaching is the responsibility of all academic members of staff.

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The Birth of Policy

University Committee Structure

+ Student representation (sometimes)

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A University Conversation

A participatory approach to University Policy Creation
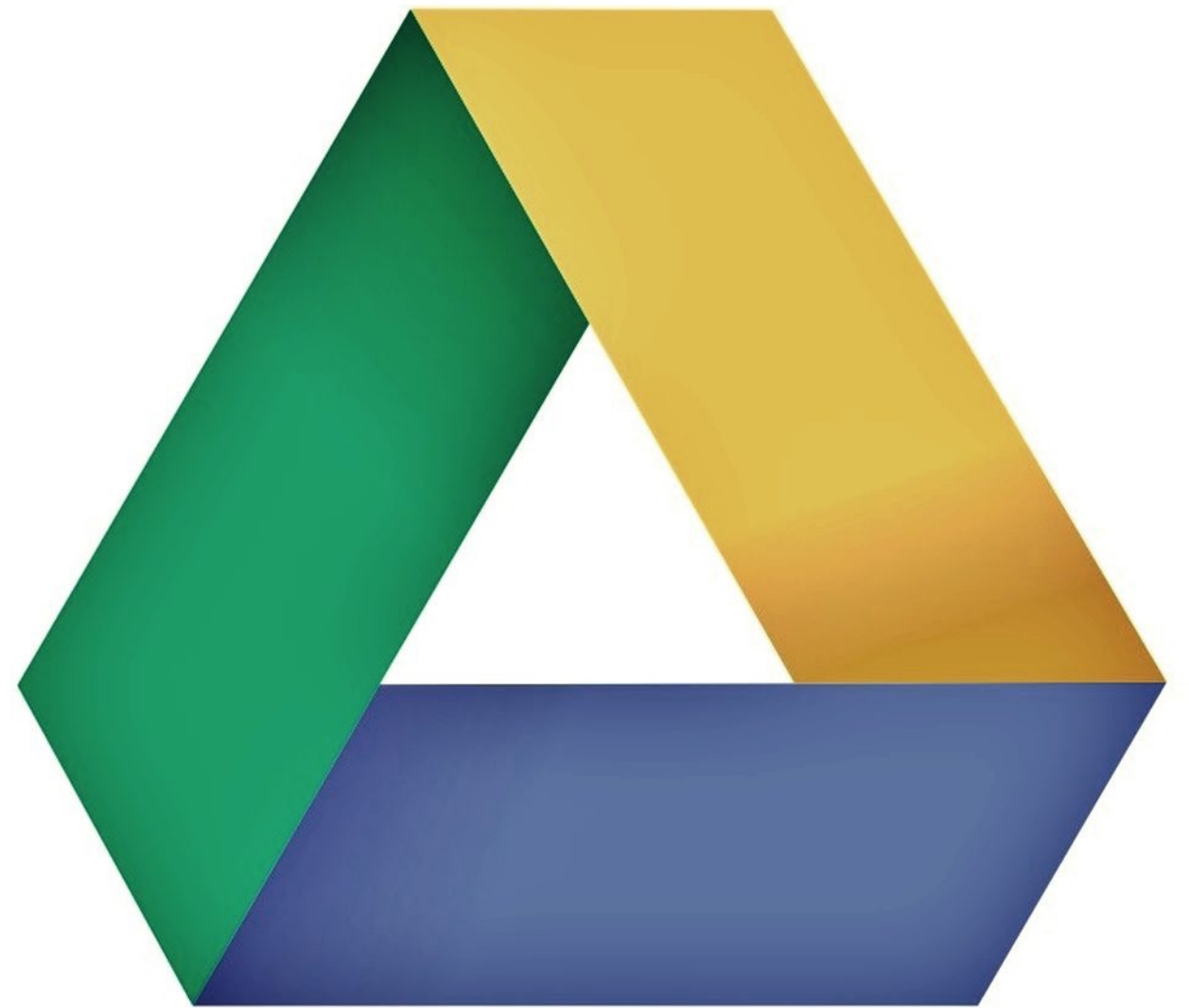

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The University Conversation - Methodology

✤ Using one of our University Learning and Teaching Days *(mandatory attendance for all)*, we decided to consult all members of staff on what they felt were the most important features of University teaching.

✤ This conversation would be used to build our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

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The University Conversation - Methodology

✤ Using a combination of Cloud Technology (GoogleDrive) and our groups of ten tutorial format, we gathered all staff in small groups to discuss throughout the course of the day.

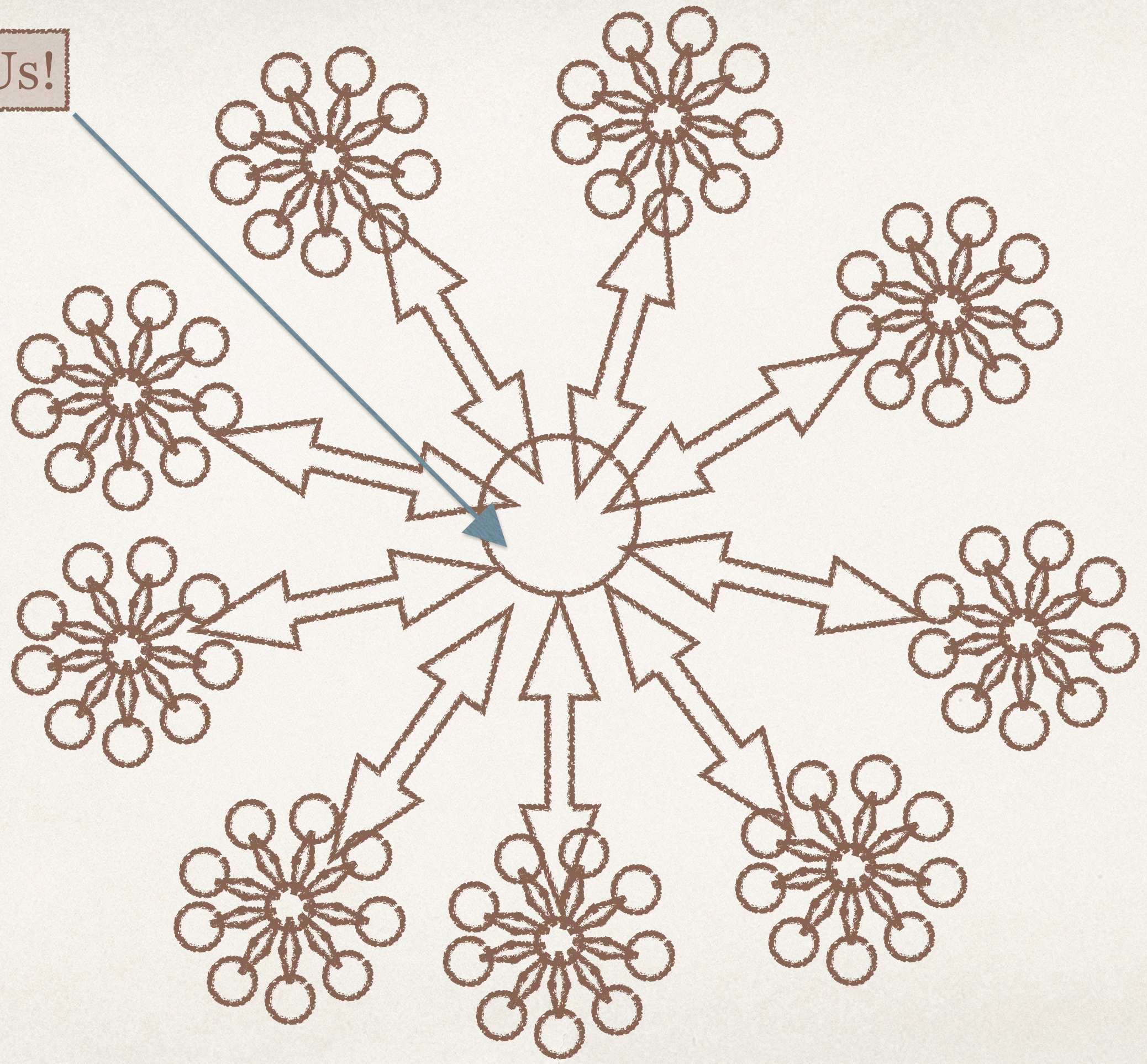✤ We generated over 20,000 words of dialogue related to Learning and Teaching at Hope.
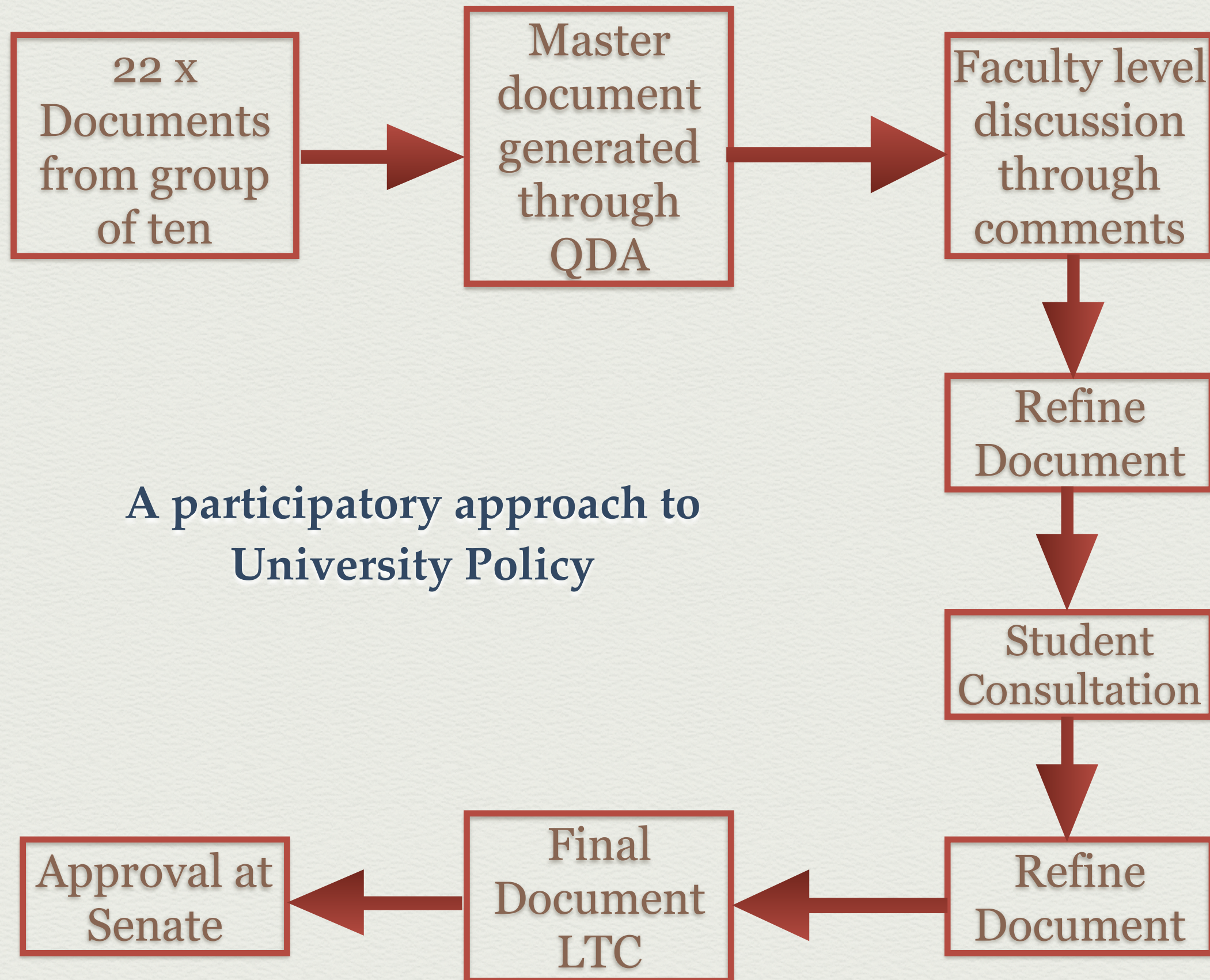
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Why GoogleDrive Works

* Anyone with a device can use it.

* No software to install.

* It can be used for asynchronous and synchronous discussion.

* If you know how to use MS Word you can use it.

Us!

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A participatory approach to University Policy

Flow chart:
- 22 x Documents from group of ten → Master document generated through QDA → Faculty level discussion through comments → Refine Document → Student Consultation → Refine Document → Final Document LTC → Approval at Senate

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The Principles of Learning, Teaching and Enhancement at Liverpool Hope University:

All students at Liverpool Hope University will experience:

1. Learning in small groups which allows the development of academic potential and fosters relationships with members of staff
2. A coherent curriculum supported by well-designed assessments and appropriate feedback
3. Signposting of a clear route for personal development and employability
4. A curriculum informed and influenced by current research
5. Well organised learning opportunities underpinned by a network of pastoral and academic support
6. Developments and changes to Learning and Teaching made after listening to the student body
7. Teaching delivered by staff using good and innovative practice informed by a range of development opportunities
8. Learning opportunities developed through regular reflection by subject and support teams
9. Learning opportunities developed with recognition of diversity within the student body
10. Learning opportunities delivered in a high quality physical, virtual and social learning environment

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These Principles are underpinned by the following expectations generated from staff and students which should be used to guide practice in the departments and support units:

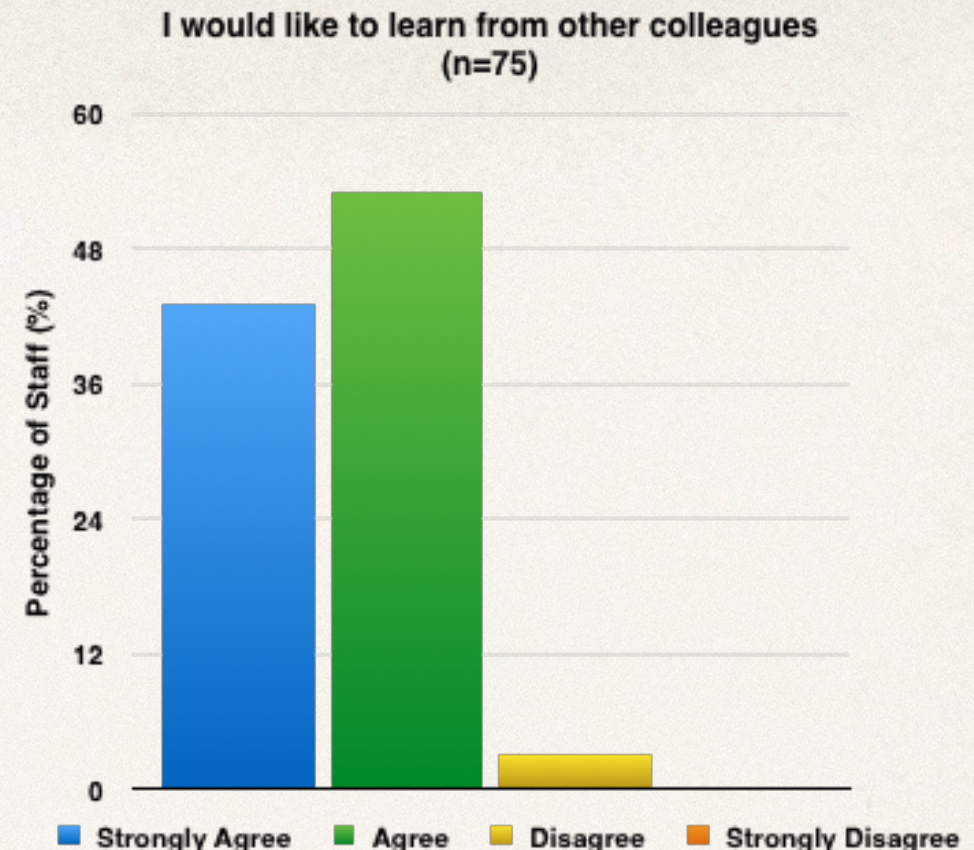|	Principle	Underpinning expectations
1	Learning in small groups which allows the development of relationships with members of staff	Students will be provided with the space to discuss and reflect on new knowledge in small groups of ten.
		Tutors will recognise that students are in the early stages of their academic career and both parties will work together to understand the distance between their own knowledge.
		Student confidence will be nurtured through reassurance and encouragement, with the goal of creating high quality scholars.
		Students should feel empowered by their learning experience.
		Students will be encouraged to take ownership of their own learning and will aim to be confident autonomous learners.
		Students should feel connected to tutors and other students through their groups of ten and other communities.
		Tutors and students will endeavour to get to know and understand one another, using their relationship to create a personalised learning experience.
		Students will be encouraged to develop resilience to academic challenge.
2	A coherent curriculum supported by well-designed assessments	Students will be introduced to new knowledge through a coherent and integrated curriculum.
		The curriculum will be high quality, adhering to national subject benchmarks as appropriate.
		Assessment should support and develop rather than merely measure student learning.
		Students will be introduced to, and encouraged to produce academically rigorous work.
		Tutors will be passionate about their subject and will encourage the same in their students.

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Enhancement of Learning and Teaching

- We now had a collective and shared goal.

- The challenge was now how to put this into practice.

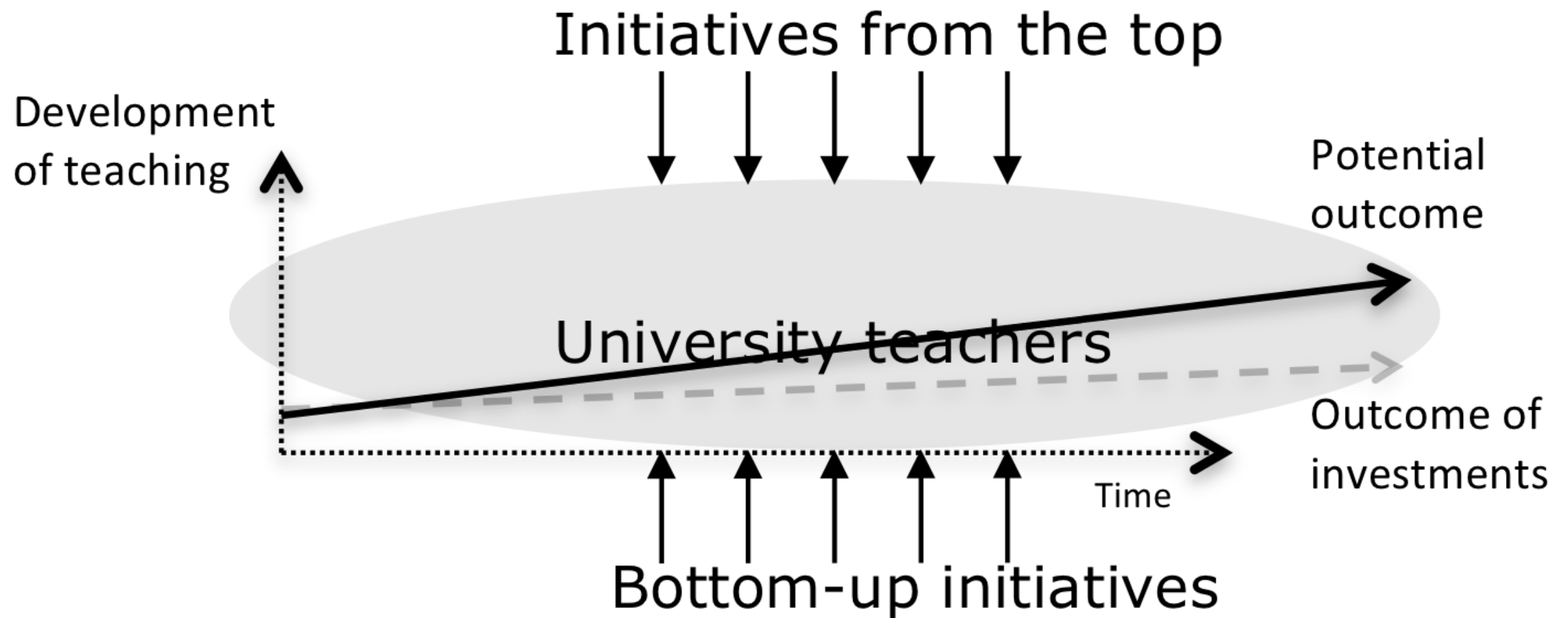- Previously top down CPD activity had little impact and staff were resistant.

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Key Messages from the University Conversation

- Opportunities for group discussion on Learning and Teaching.

- Learn from each other rather than be told how to teach.

I would like to learn from other colleagues (n=75)

Percentage of Staff (%)

- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

I would like to share my ideas on Learning and Teaching (n=75)

Percentage of Staff (%)

- ■ Strongly Agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree

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Efficacy of Learning and Teaching Initiatives

Roxa & Martensson, 2008

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Significant Networks

- How do we make academics learn from one another?

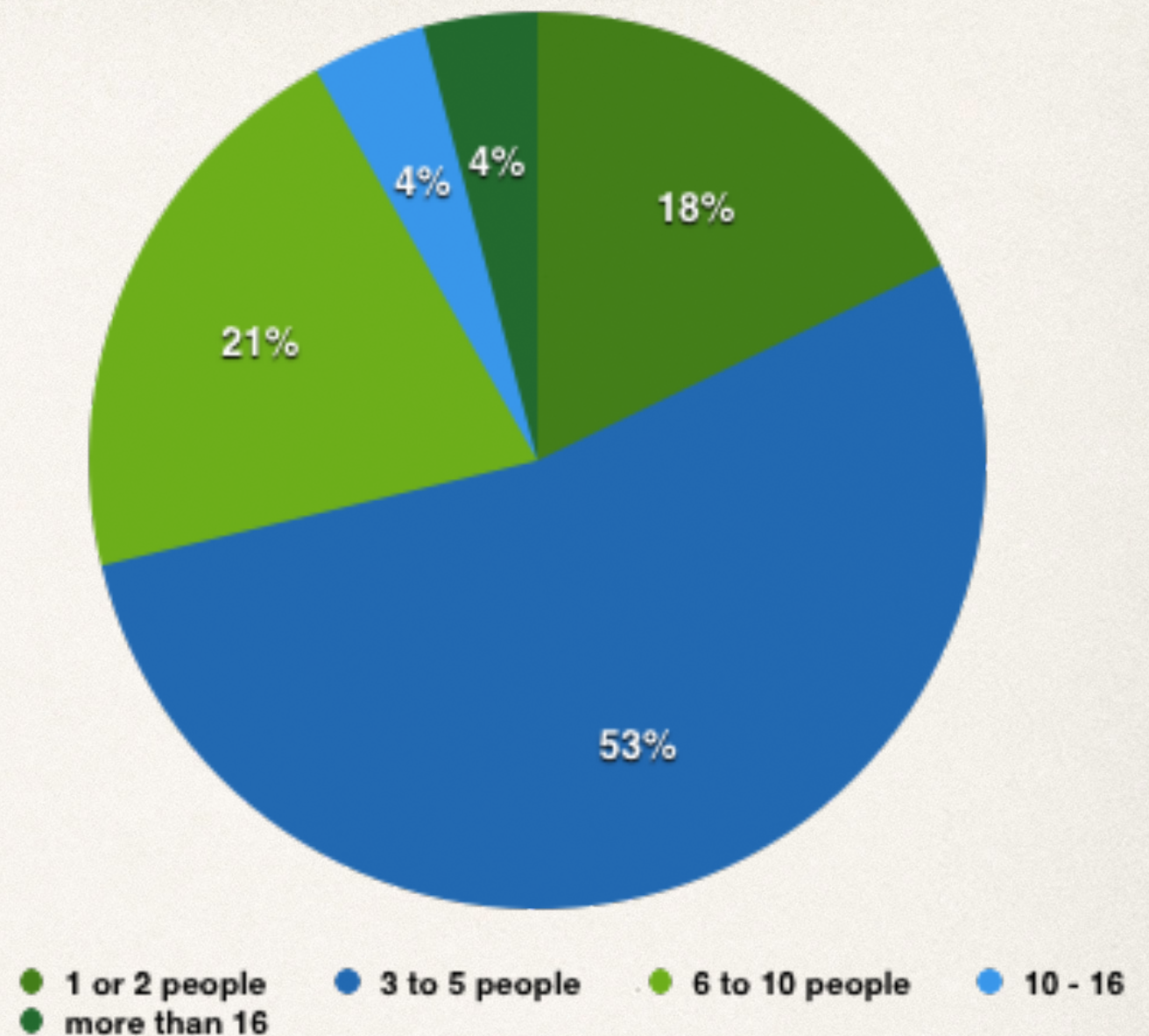- Teachers learns from each other in 'significant networks'

Number of conversational partners. Learning and Teaching dialogue. (Roxa & Martensson, 2008)

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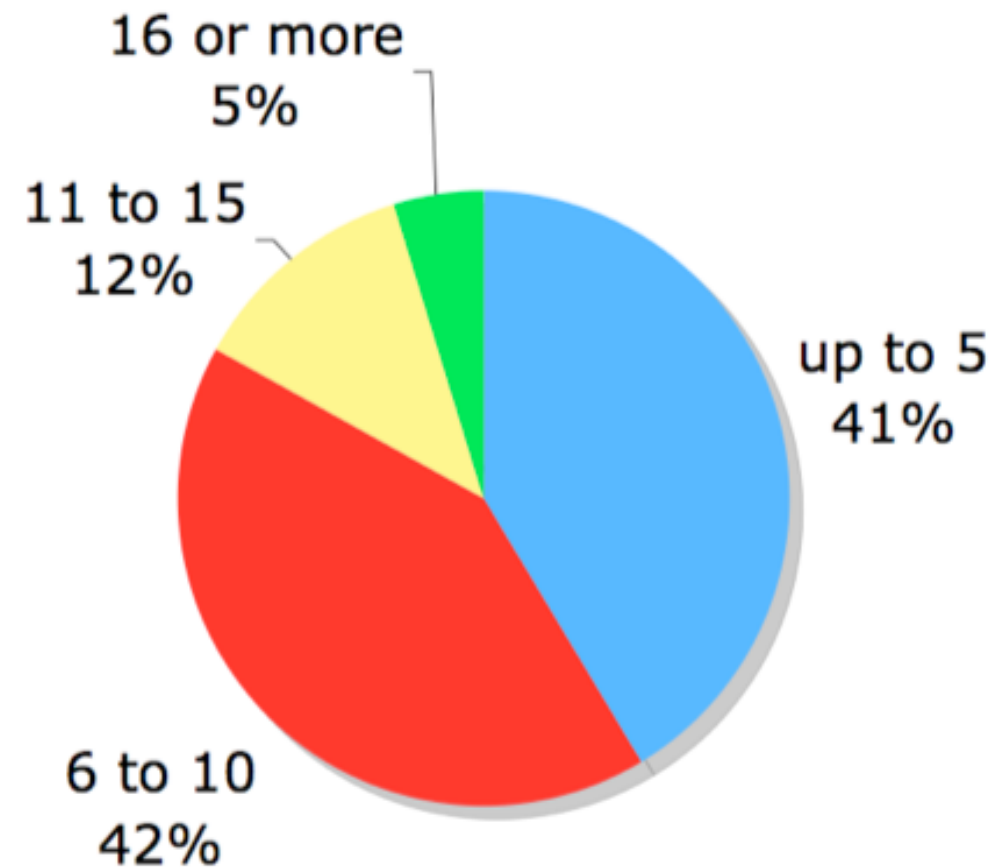
Significant Networks

- How do we make academics learn from one another?

- Teachers learns from each other in 'significant networks'

I have frequent dialogue abour Learning and Teaching with:

- 1 or 2 people
- 3 to 5 people
- 6 to 10 people
- 10 - 16
- more than 16

18%
53%
21%
4%
4%

Number of conversational partners. Learning and Teaching dialogue. (Roxa & Martensson, 2008)

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"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis"

–Wenger, McDermott et al, 2002
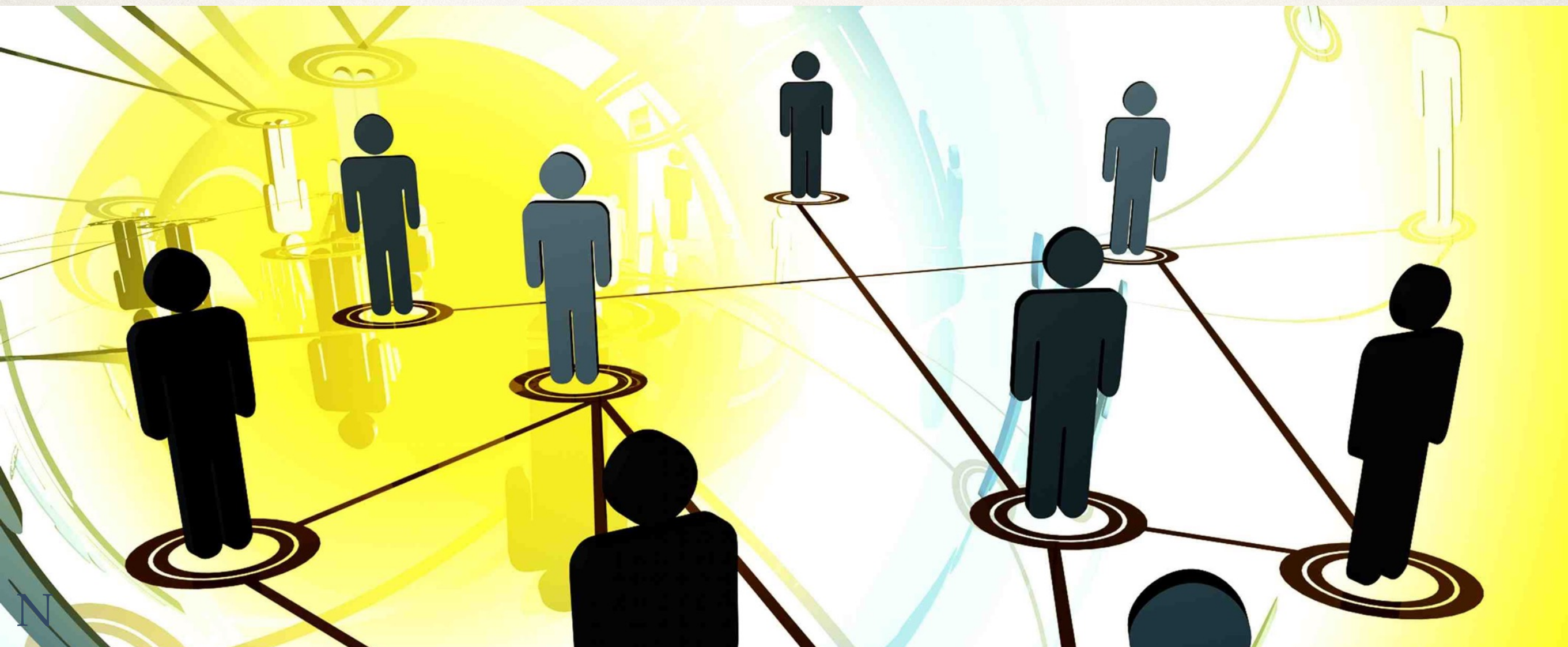
Communities of Practice
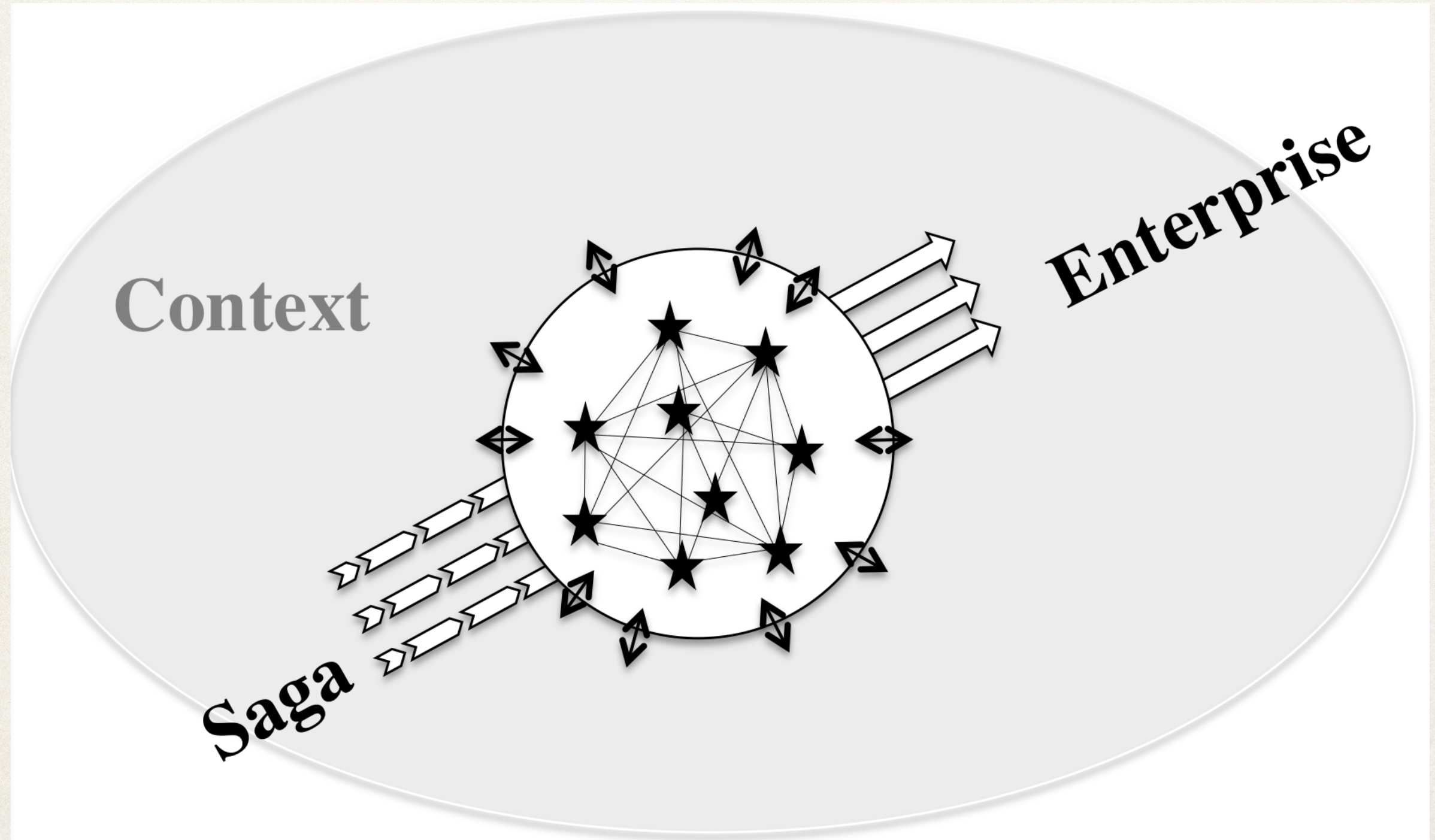
Sharing Practice

- Brown and Duguid (1998, 2001) use Orr's (1996) ethnographic study of technicians at Xerox to explain innovation in communities of practice.

- Solutions to problems were solved by telling stories, which acted as 'repositories for shared wisdom'. (Osterlund, 2005)

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What now?

* Academics don't like being told how to teach and they want to learn from one another.

* Academics are more interested in some of the sub-domains of Learning and Teaching than others.

* Learning and Teaching is a vast multifaceted 'wicked problem' (Conklin, 2006) and our existing whole University approach needed refining.

* We've had communities of practice before, and they didn't stick, so we need something that won't disappear.

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Networking Practice

Learning and Teaching CoP
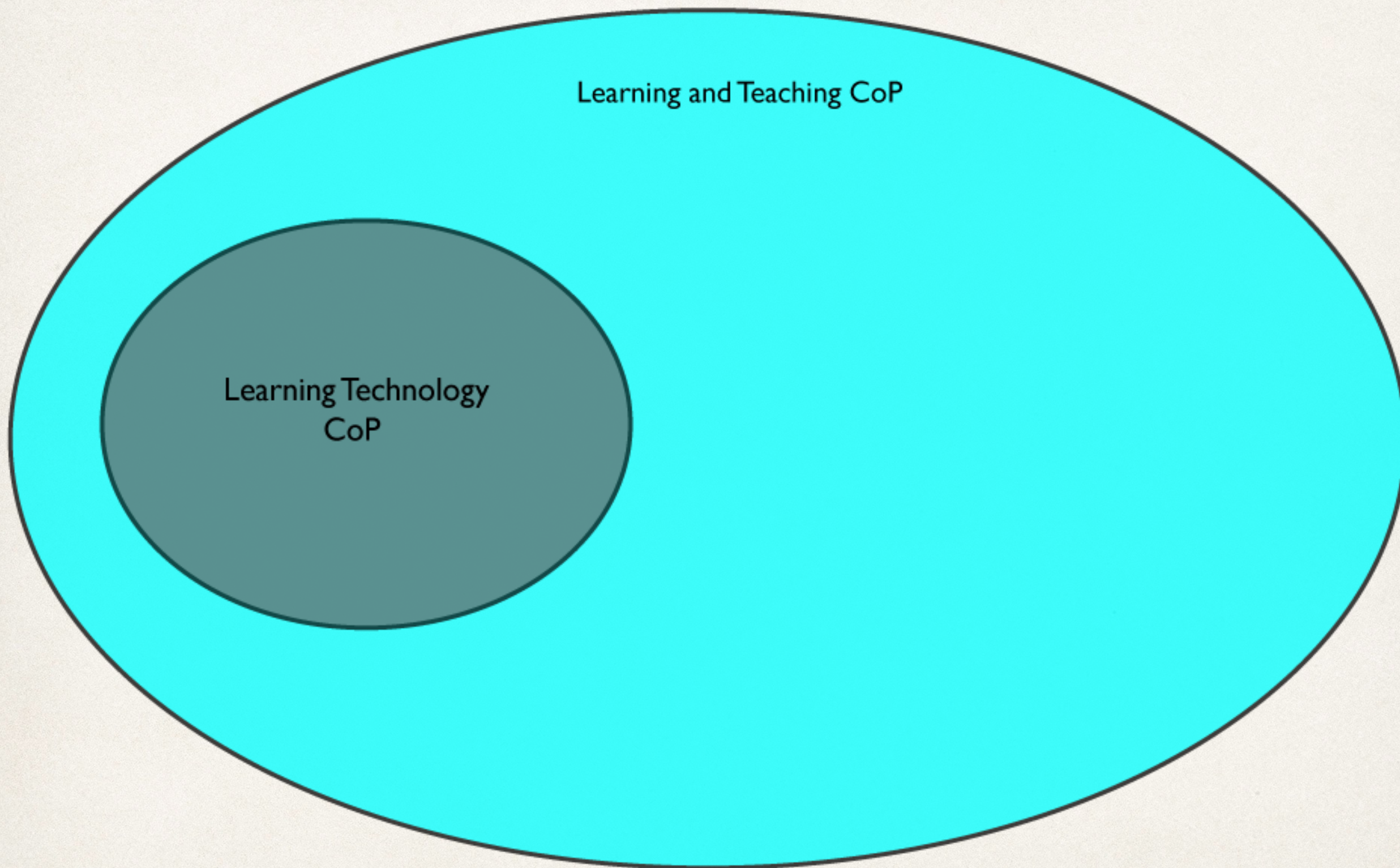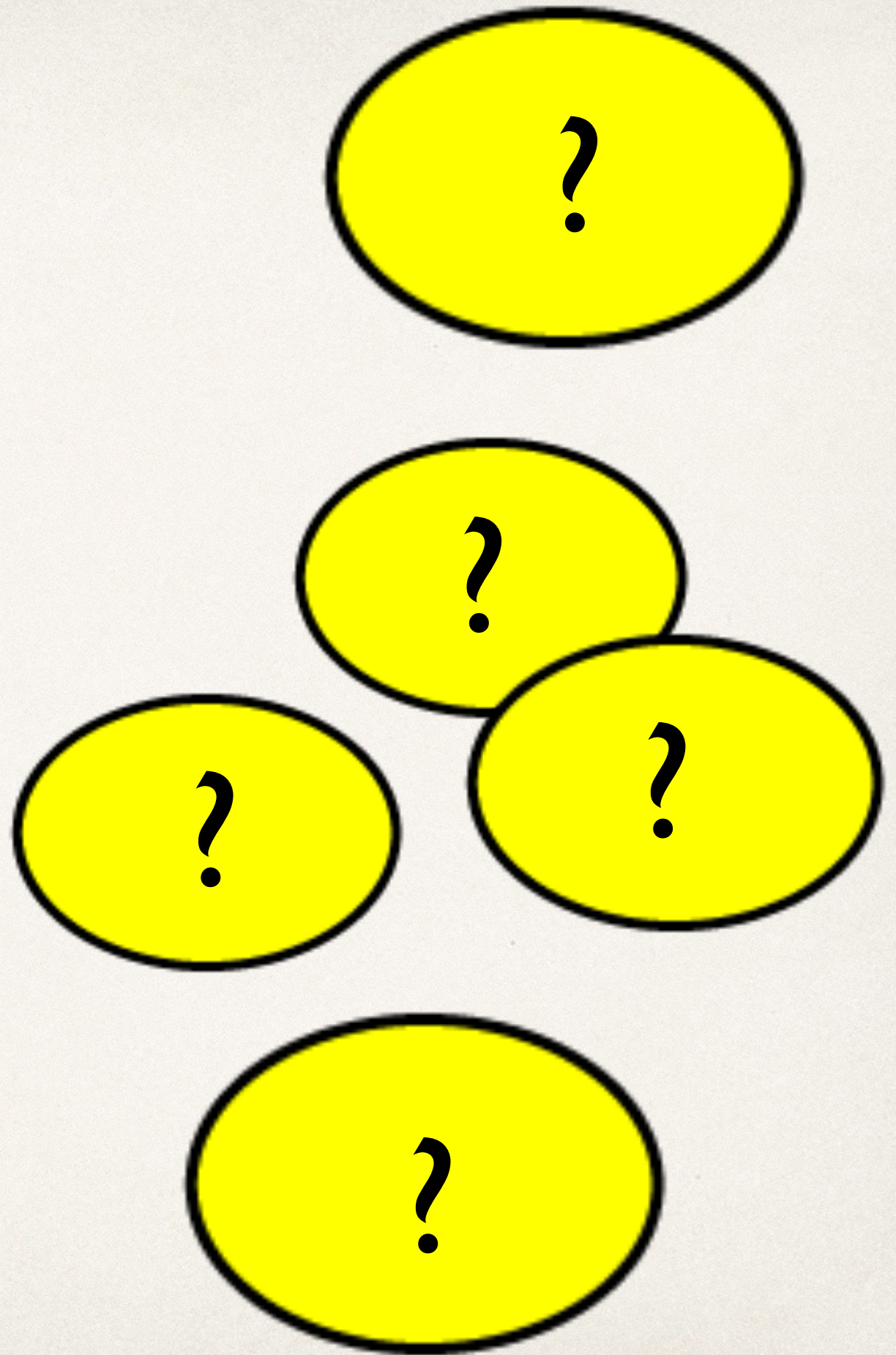
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Learning and Teaching CoP
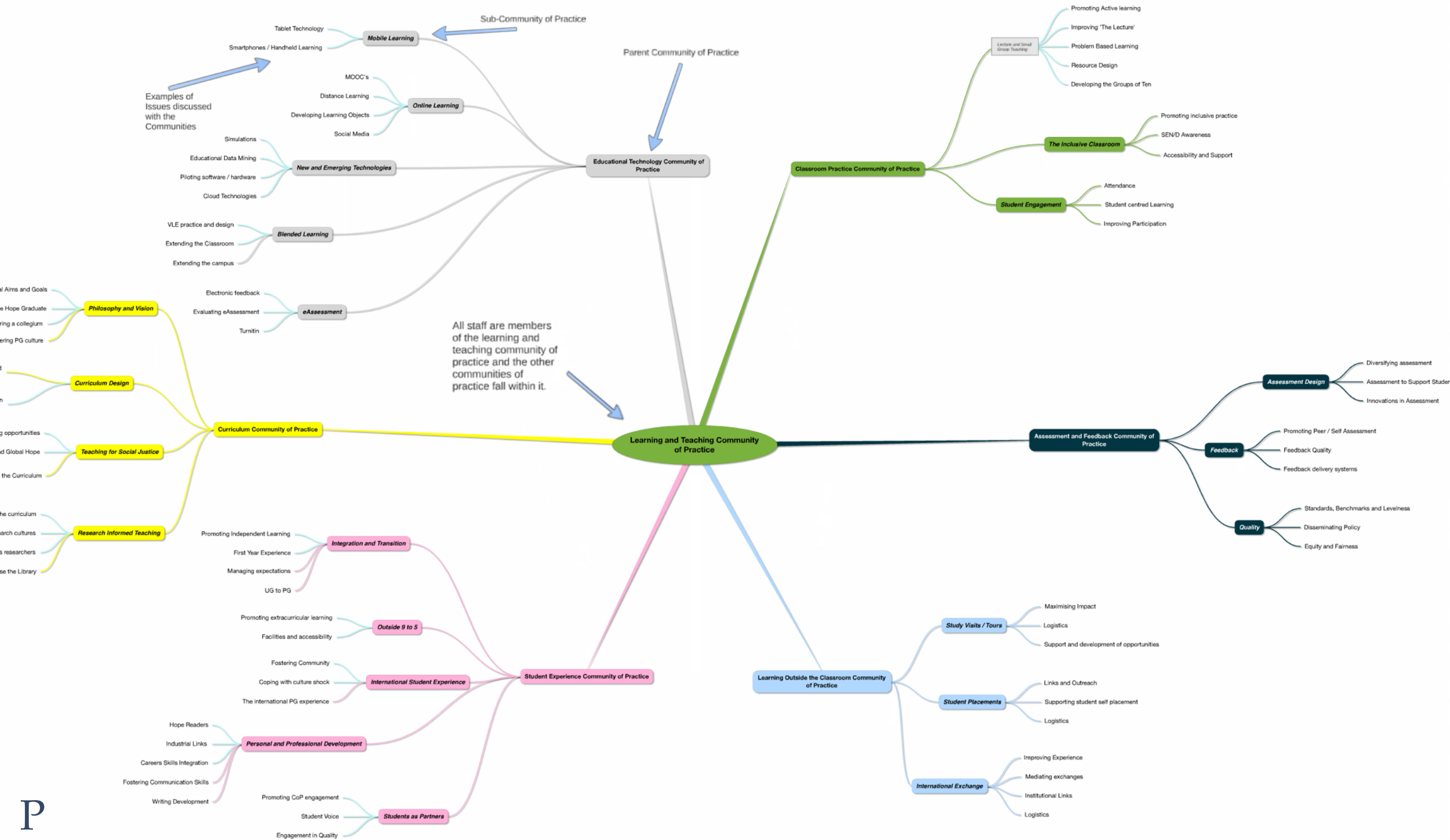
Learning Technology CoP
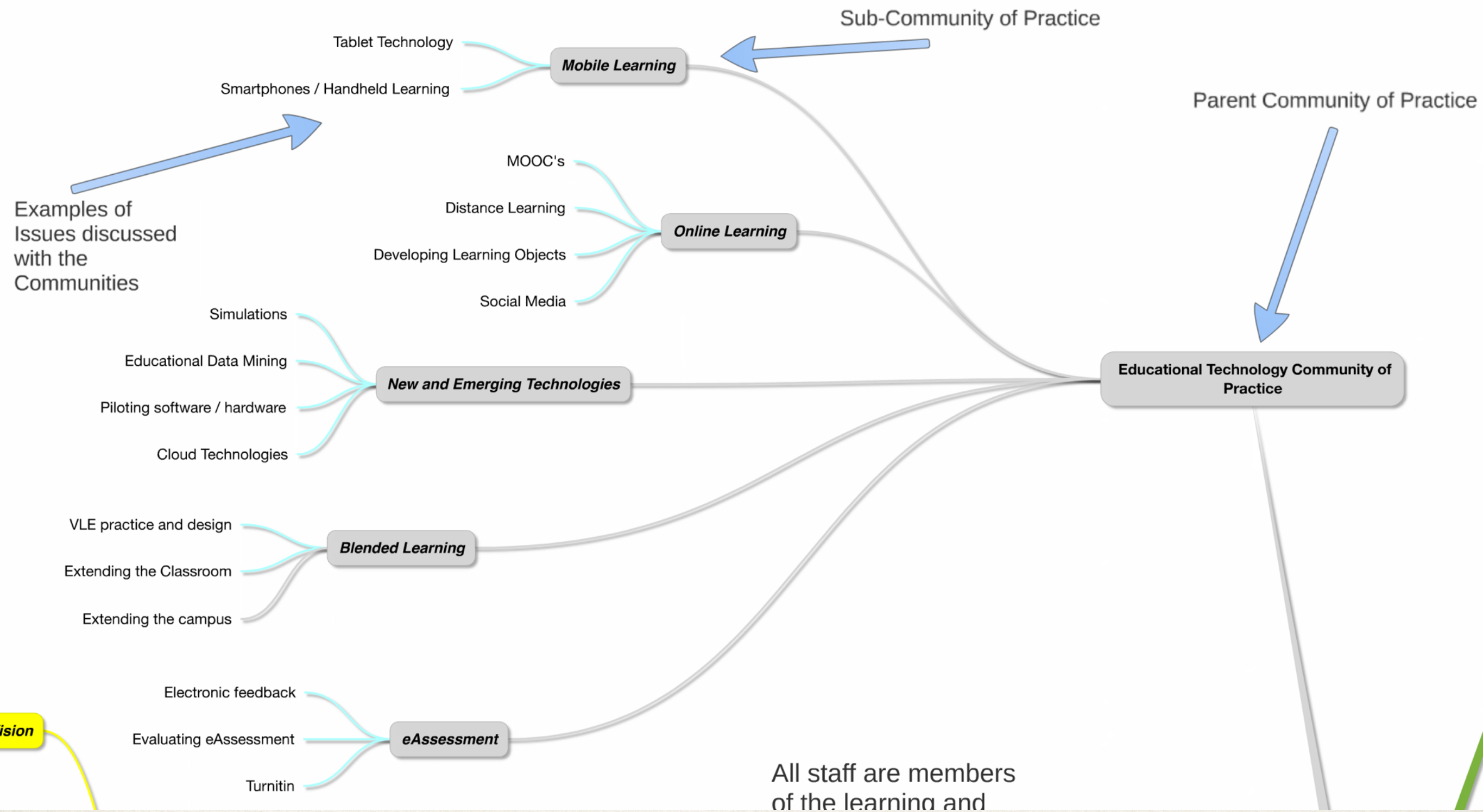
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Generated Through Participation

- We asked the staff:

- What CoP's should exist in the Learning and Teaching CoP?

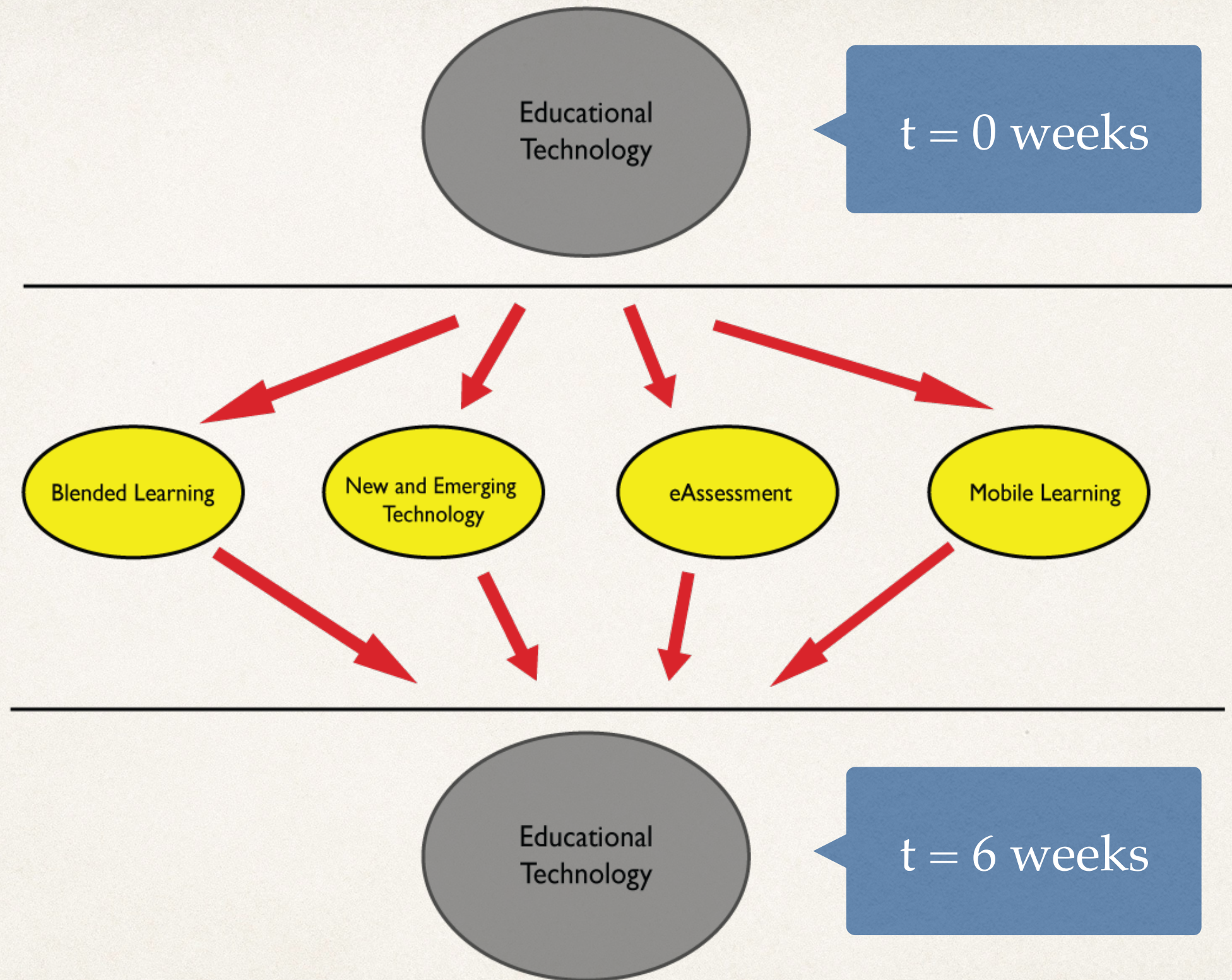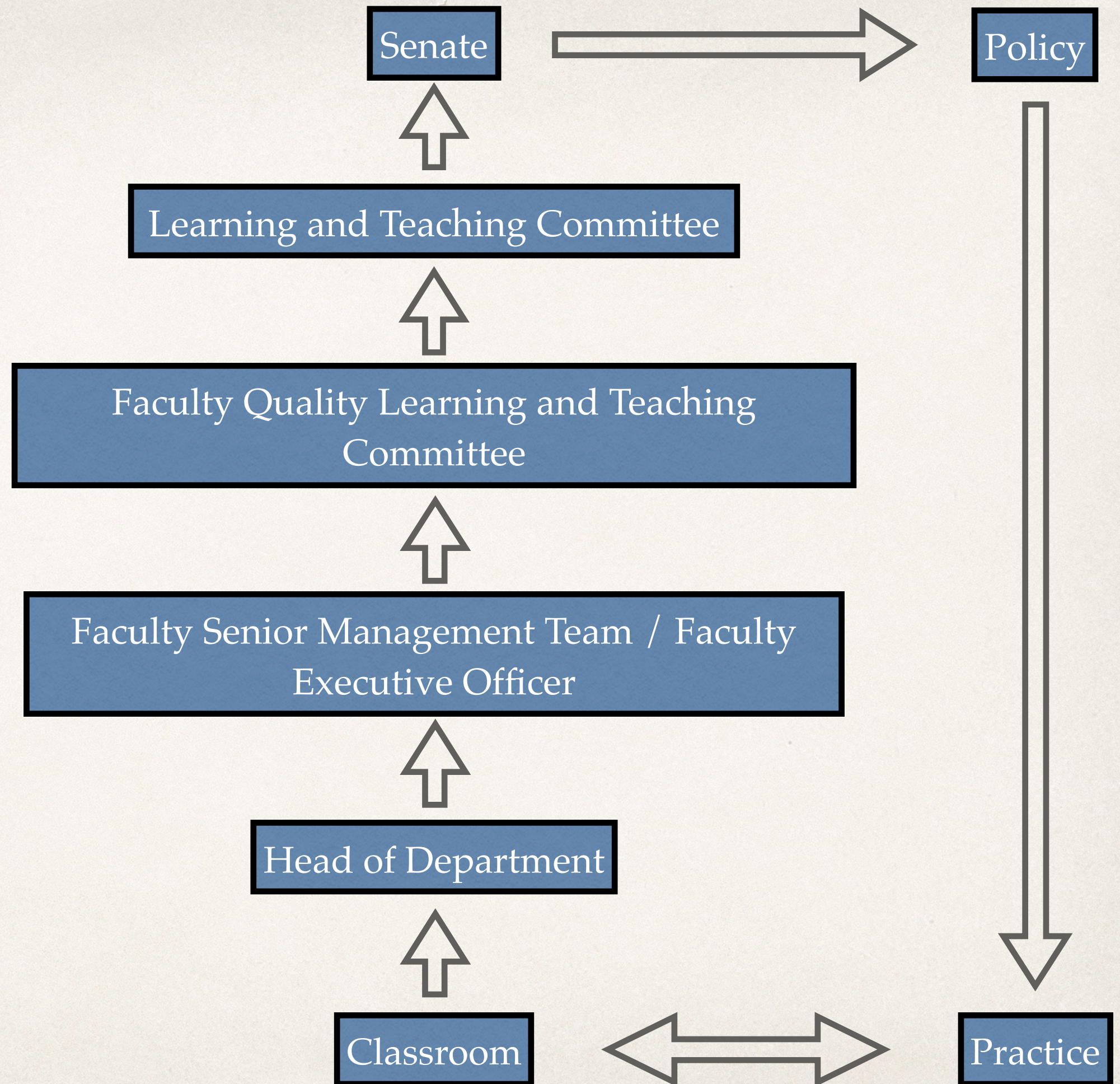- What should be the 'enterprise' of those CoP's

- Which ones do you want to be a part of?
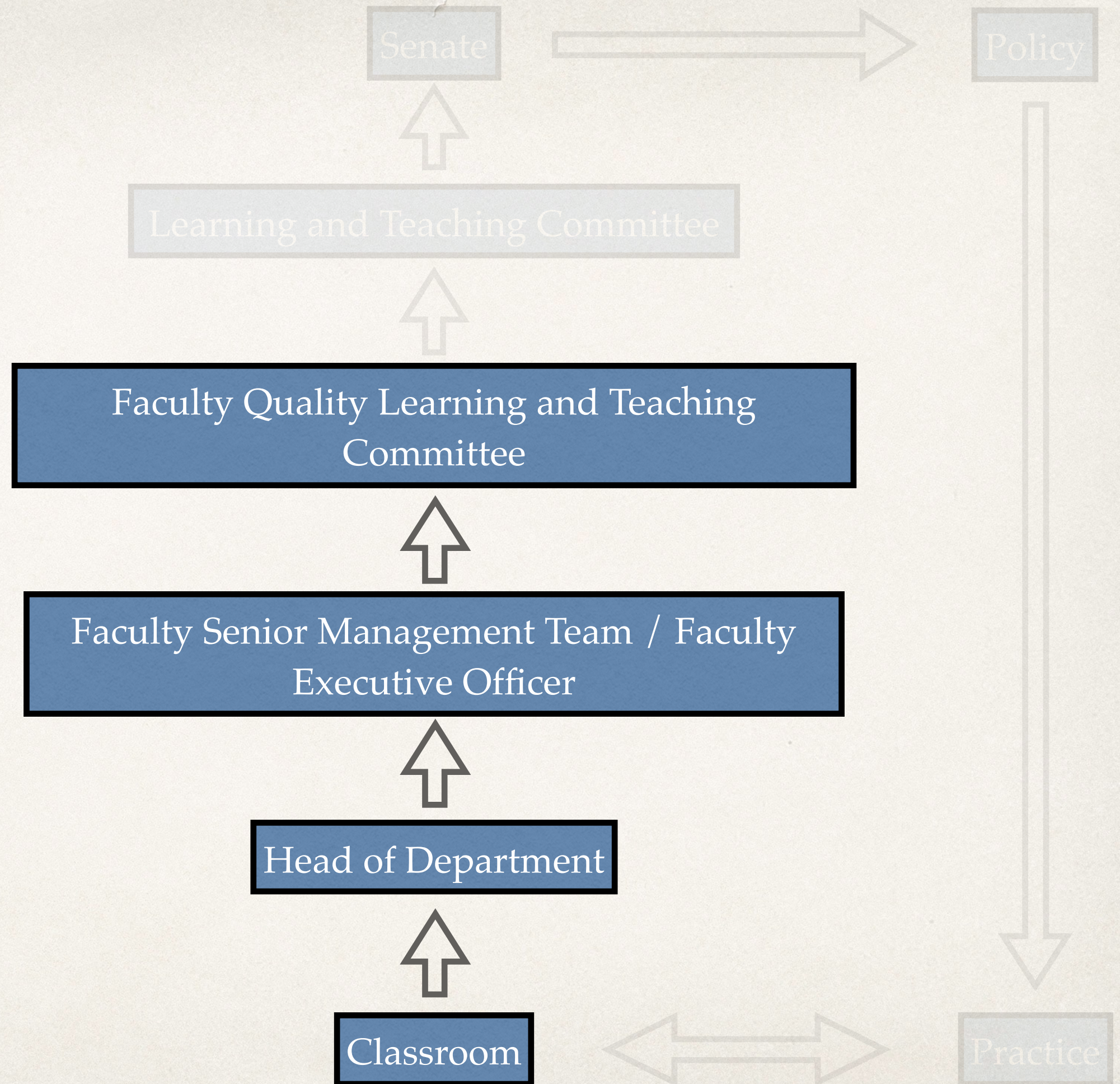
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What the Network Looks Like Now
http://tiny.cc/copnetwork

Sub-Community of Practice

Parent Community of Practice

Tablet Technology

Smartphones / Handheld Learning

Mobile Learning

Examples of
Issues discussed
with the
Communities

MOOC's

Distance Learning

Developing Learning Objects

Online Learning

Social Media

Simulations

Educational Data Mining

Piloting software / hardware

New and Emerging Technologies

Cloud Technologies

**Educational Technology Community of
Practice**

VLE practice and design

Extending the Classroom

Blended Learning

Extending the campus

Electronic feedback

ision

Evaluating eAssessment

eAssessment

Turnitin

All staff are members
of the learning and

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Senate → Policy

Learning and Teaching Committee

Faculty Quality Learning and Teaching Committee

Faculty Senior Management Team / Faculty Executive Officer

Head of Department

Localised Significant Network ↔ Classroom ↔ Practice

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Senate → Policy

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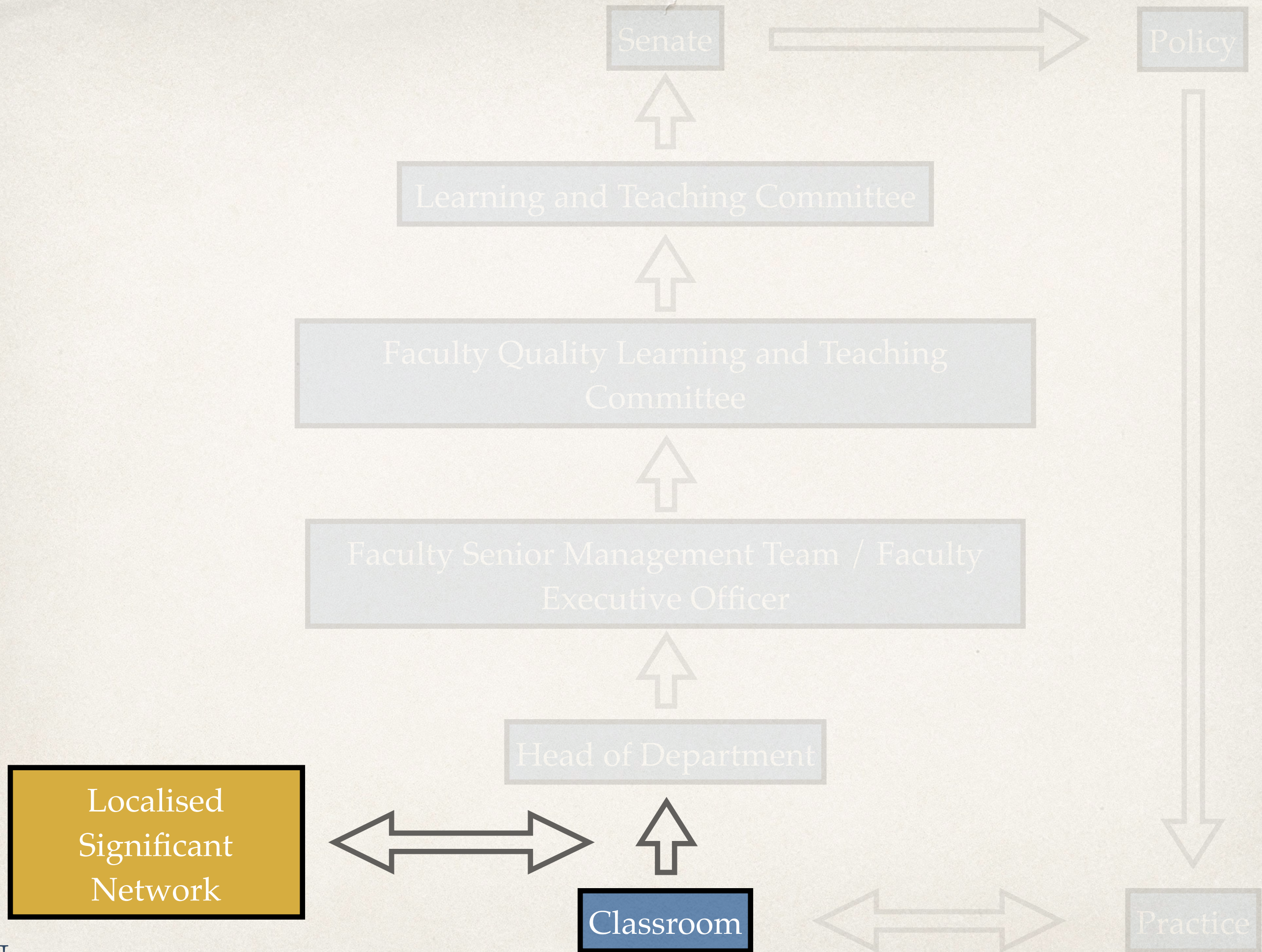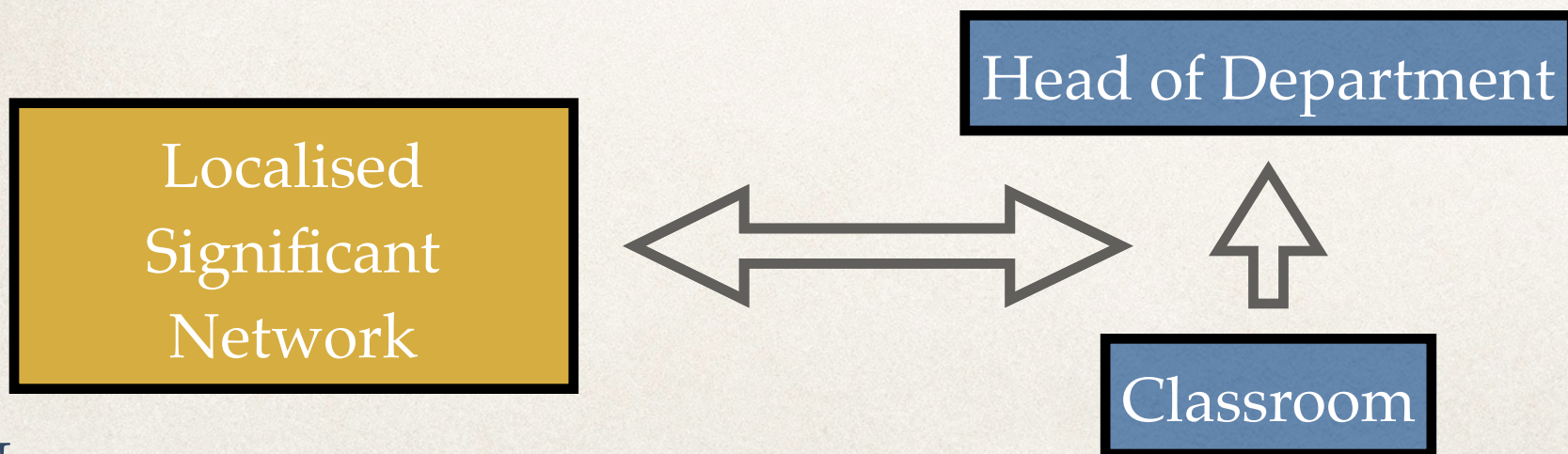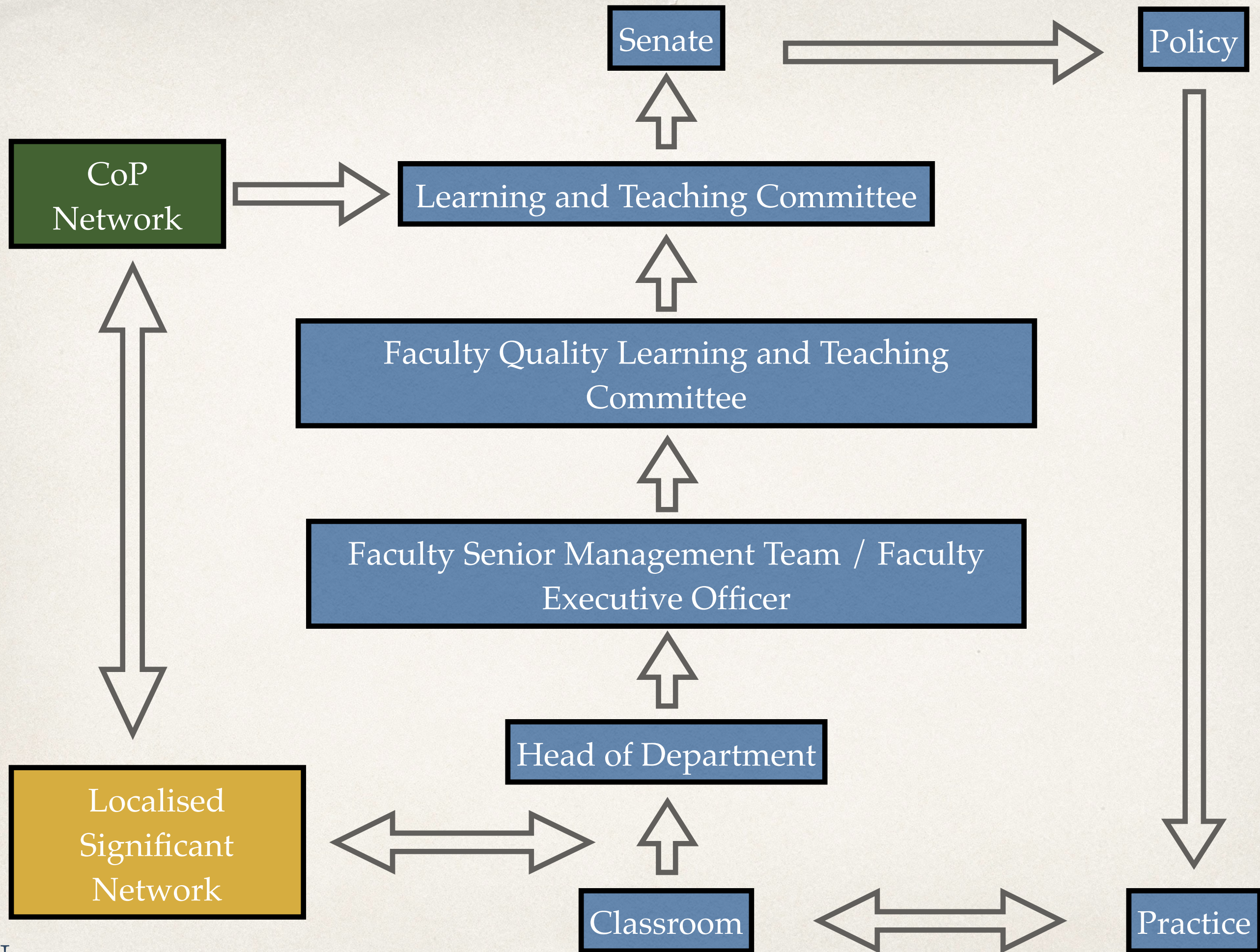Localised Significant Network ↔ Classroom ↔ Practice

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Fast Track to the Top

* The nested structure promotes rapid and direct access to the top level committees in University

* All outputs from the communities are discussed on a standing item at Learning and Teaching Committee.

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The Impact (Educational Technology CoP)

✤ Several Educational Technology Trials have been suggested and initiated by the Communities

✤ Classroom Response and Student Attendance (tophat)

✤ eAssessment (Grademark and iAnnotate)

✤ A new app created by the CoP - LecFeed

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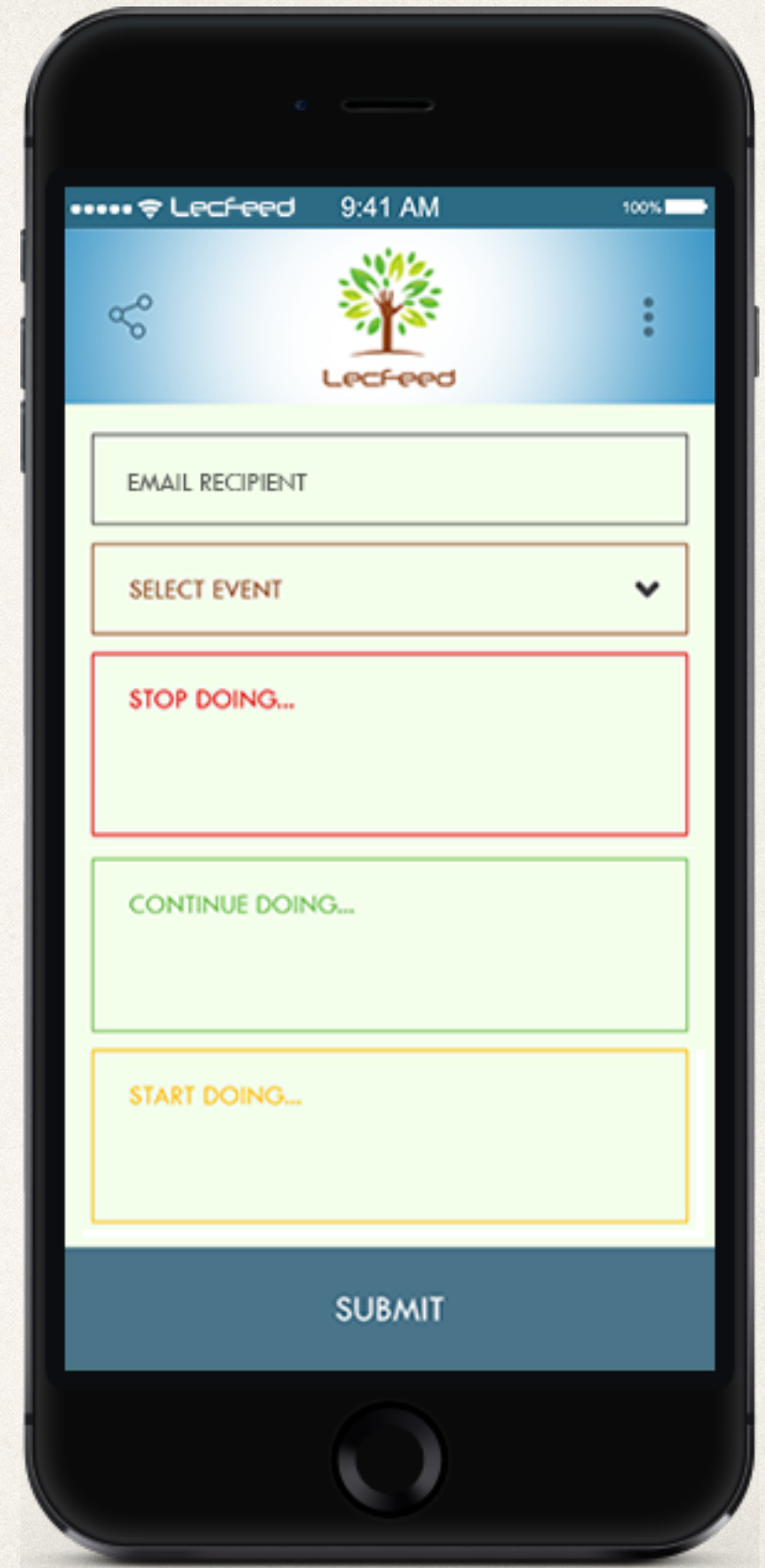
The Impact (All main CoP's)

* An 'Assessment Enhancement Strategy', was created by all main communities of practice, focusing on areas such as eAssessment (Educational Technology CoP), Formative Feedback (Classroom Practice CoP) and examination design (Assessment CoP).

* This is now used as our University Quality model for the enhancement of Assessment. *Now University Policy.*

* There is real evidence of participatory policy creation.

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"There should be no one standard (prescribed) template of exam structure stated in university policy."

Assessment Enhancement Strategy - Examination Design

The Impact (Classroom Practice CoP)

✤ A set of principles was generated by the classroom practice CoP to guide our teaching practice in tutorials - *Now University Policy.*

✤ The Inclusive Practice CoP has generated a suggested template for accessible lecture slides and suggested a 'conversion service' (over 2,000 PPT's converted), which was funded by the university. *Now University Policy.*

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Going Forward

✤ Each major community of practice will run in 6 week cycles throughout the year. With the sub communities running in between.

✤ There is an expectation from the University that staff attend 5 meetings per year.

✤ We are exploring new technologies to maximise the efficacy of the meetings and extend the conversation between meeting events.

✤ We want to **mirror the network for students**. Starting with Ed Tech!

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Lessons Learned

✤ Community of Practice approaches work.

✤ If you want to engage lecturers:

  ✤ Capture them!

  ✤ Show them that their contributions will have an impact.

  ✤ Find the right balance of structure and emergence.

  ✤ Use the cloud.