# A community of practice: social networking or professional knowledge creation?

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# A community of practice – the focus of e-learning

- **The differences between web based communities**
    - created because a learning platform has been purchased
    - set-up as an element of a formal course
    - grown as an informal professional learning community

- **The growth of a web based professional community of practice,**
    - the MirandaNet Fellowship, founded in 1992

# www.mirandanet.ac.uk

**MIRANDANET** Sharing experience and expertise

## Events
**15th September 2012**
Online Learning Conference

Conference on online learning at St Hilda's, Oxford.

**15th October 2012**

London Company Networking Dinner

**Calendar**

## Research Exchange
The Future Learning research exchange aims to influence policy and practice in educational innovation.

**Research Exchange**

## MirandaMods
MirandaMods: using digital communication technologies join education professionals across institutional and national boundaries.

**MirandaMods**

## Archive
Resources from the old MirandaNet site.

## MirandaNet News

**19 June 2012**: A new-look MirandaNet

It's a while since we made any substantial changes to the layout of MirandaNet, and it's time we let some more air into the look. Added to which, the proliferation of Word Press installations on the...

**10 June 2012**: Is there an alternative to PowerPoint?

MirandaNetters have had a good discussion on this topic. Interim summary published on the Research Exchange.

## Fellowship

**MIRANDA NET FELLOWSHIP** For 20 years more than 750 MirandaNet Fellowship members in 80 countries have committed to sharing their experience and expertise in educational innovation using digital technologies by publishing new professional knowledge in this fast moving field. Membership is free, and members ...

**Fellowship**

## iCatalyst

**CATALYST** The iCatalyst Educational Innovation Consultancy draws on a team of experienced MirandaNet Fellows to undertake international research, development and dissemination projects. A particular expertise is action research-based professional development programmes for schools, ...

**iCatalyst**

## World Ecitizens

MirandaNet Fellows built the World Ecitizens website after the events of 9/11 in New York to provide students from all nations and cultures with the opportunity to express how they will 'Create the World WE want'. One development in this area is the Peace Room where students can nominate the ...

**World Ecitizens**

# Some questions…

- What is the vision of this professional community of practice?

- What is the relationship between MirandaNet and World Ecitizens?

- What is the link with the Future Learning Research Centre, UoB?

- What can members do within the community?

- What is  the underpinning learning theory of the iCatalyst programme?

- What are the other research themes that MirandaNet Fellows promote?

- What is a MirandaMod? How does this support learning?

- What kinds of publications do the Fellows produce?

- What else interested you about MirandNet Fellowship?

- What would you suggest to improve the Fellowship benefits?

- Any suggestions for the web editor?

- Who is Miranda?

- Can MirandaNet be useful to you?

# § The MirandaNet Fellowship
### 'one day courses in computers are waste of time'.

- § founded in 1992 with x 5 members with Toshiba Laptops.

- § website and member profiles in 1994

- § International policy makers, teachers, teacher educators, researchers and commercial developers - over 600 members in over 50 countries worldwide

- § mission: passionate about using digital technologies to improve teaching and learning

- § Funding: non profit making

  the website, online forums, seminars, workshops and projects run by members are funded by international partner companies and government agencies.

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# Vision essential

§ *Sharing experience and expertise*

§ Passionate about digital technologies in teaching and learning and about using technologies to promote cultural understanding and democratic participation

§ 'Oh brave new world that has such people in IT'.

# How does professional learning work in an informal community of practice ?

# Why is a community online different from a course online?
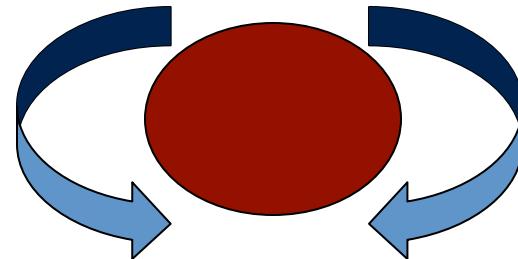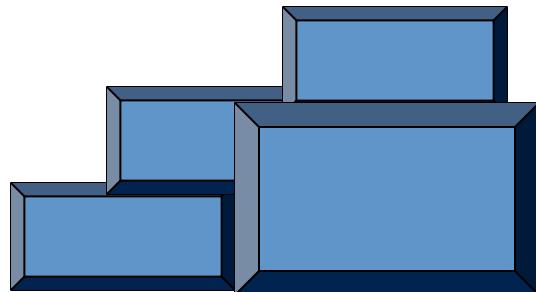
5 Step Theory (Salmon, 2000, 2002)

5    Development

4    Knowledge Construction

3    Information Exchange

2    Online Socialisation

1    Access & Motivation
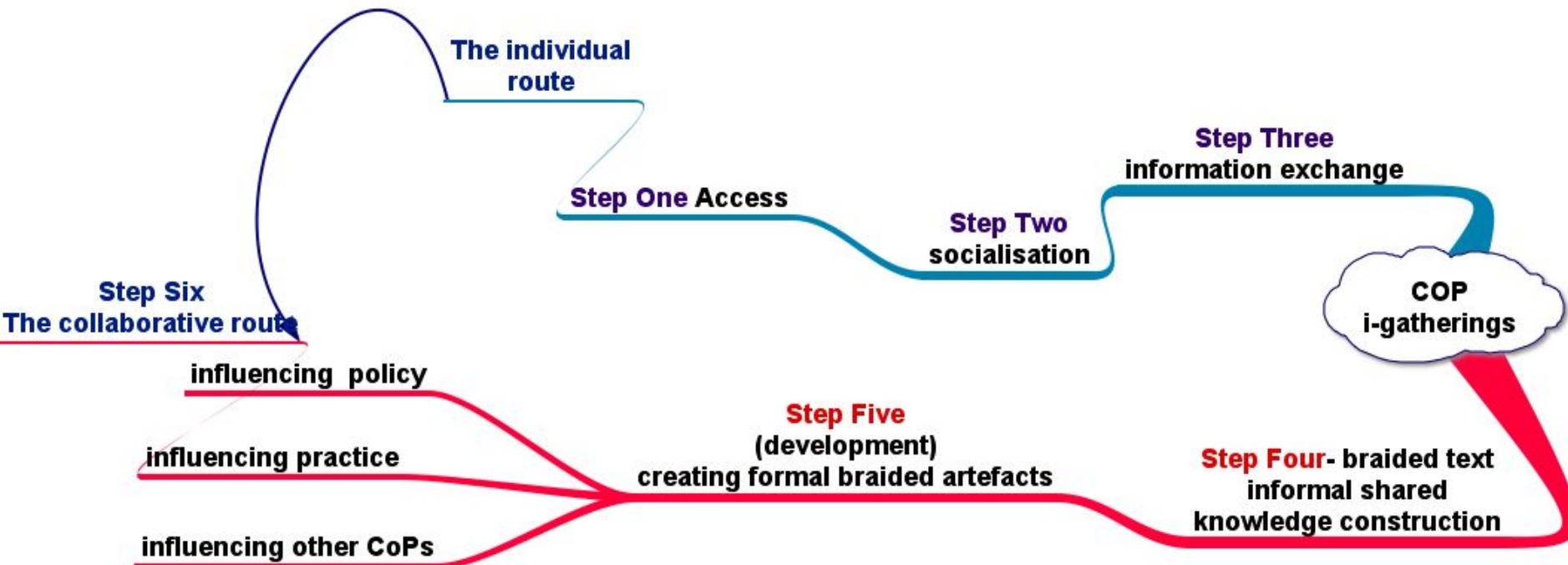
# Beyond Salmon's

# five steps

# Step Six –
# An emerging step?
# An iterative action research circle?

E-Moderators
E-Facilitators

The individual route

Step Three
information exchange

Step One Access

Step Two
socialisation

Step Six
The collaborative route

COP
i-gatherings

influencing policy

Step Five
(development)
creating formal braided artefacts

Step Four- braided text
informal shared
knowledge construction

influencing practice

influencing other CoPs
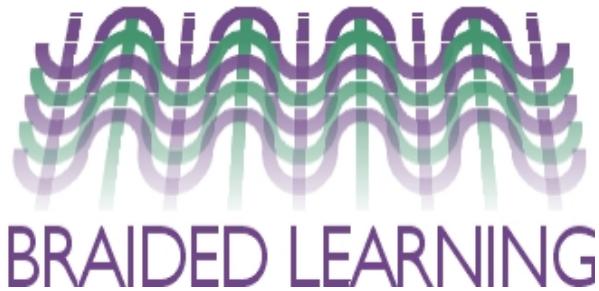
Ten years gestation for a CoP

The braided learning image:

weaving together individual evidence to create

professional   theory and practice

used to influence policy

Haythornthwaite, C. (2007)
'New International Theories and Models Of and For Online Learning.' Chicago IL, USA,
*First Monday*. http://firstmonday.org/ Last accessed 29th July 2009.

# The components

The braided text

The braiding process

The braiders

The learning spaces
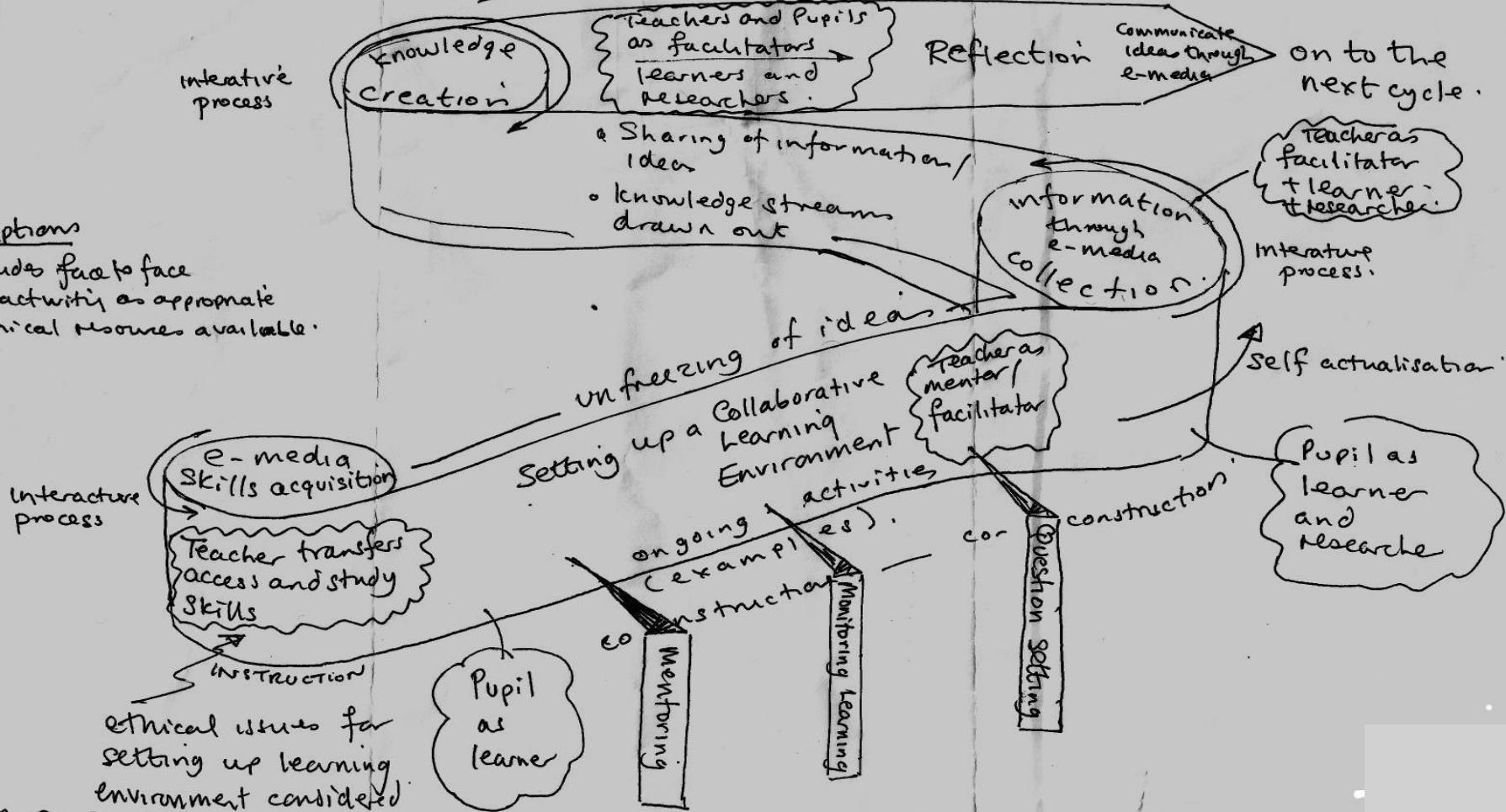
# Text: analysing written exchanges

| The analytical headings | Examples of comments made by group members comparing their maps |
|---|---|
| Knowledge construction | Because as a child you then throw things out the window you don't care, so you can draw anything you like. I mean I wouldn't draw smiles...but then it makes you think about what you've drawn and then you can say well that's good, so there has been a good aspect to that because it frees your mind a bit, but you guys have done ...look at that there's loads on there... |
| Community | ...a little picture of me looking at other people telling me things 'coz it allows me to listen to other people and learn from other people, which obviously didn't get a chance before because we've got all that information highway, dig things up on the internet that you never thought were there, broadens everything you know... |
| Metalearning | I thought it was all about, the teachers I was working with online, and I've realised that actually working through the process my own thinking process has deepened, which is interesting, er...it seems to me a lot of talk in education circles out there is about taking learners from where they are to where you want them to be and often doesn't reflect on the learners own position and make connections between those two, and I think, there's huge potential with this online medium |
| Autobiography | Now I'm very lucky, I spend large box of time at my desk or I go out to schools and I work with schools and teachers, so the separation is easy for me, if I was back working in school again it would be much more fragmented and difficult and I would find myself in your position, at 10 pm at night, thinking well I can't be bothered reading that and switching off and watching Newsnight or something for a bit of light relief. So yeah...what's interesting is the progression through to the place where you are now where all of those initial concerns and worries have just kind of dissipated because people are in control of things. |
| Cognition | yeah things have moved on for me its developed and I think the links have become much more complex. |

# E LEARNING MODEL FOR SCHOOLS

Refreezing perceptions →

Knowledge Creation

Interative process

Teachers and Pupils as facilitators, learners and researchers.

Reflection

Communicate ideas through e-media → on to the next cycle.

- Sharing of information/ idea
- knowledge streams drawn out

information through e-media collection.

Teacher as facilitator + learner + researcher.

Interative process.

**Assumptions**
- includes face to face interact with as appropriate
- technical resources available.

unfreezing of ideas →

Self actualisation.

Setting up a Collaborative Learning Environment

Teacher as mentor/ facilitator

Pupil as learner and research

e-media Skills acquisition

Interactive process

activities

ongoing (examples).

co-construction

Teacher transfers access and study Skills

construction

Monitoring Learning

Question setting

INSTRUCTION

Monitoring.

ethical issues for setting up learning environment considered.

Pupil as learner
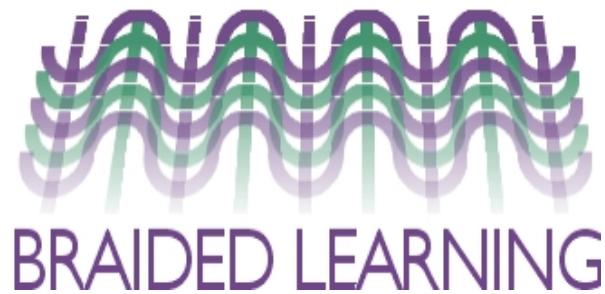
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**e-learning** is a philosophy of learning which has the following elements
- emancipatory knowledge creation process
- teacher and pupil as learner, facilitator + researcher
- empowerment of pupil to own the process.
- creating a collaborative learning environment.
- unfreezing (reframing) perceptions
- self actualisation
- use of e-media to facilitate the learning process.
- use of e-media to communicate knowledge

A braided text: a scholarly contribution to e-learning theory

# Text:
# remotely authored multidimensional concept maps

# Dramatic roles of participant braiders

Who creates
a democratic
debate?

Debate provokers
Conciliators
Bullies
Respectful posters
Disrespectful posters
Contemptious posters
Women
Lurkers
Stream of consciousness
Minimalists
Generous posters

# Dramatic roles for official braiders

## Policing the anti – social

The trained e-facilitator hosting a party in the dark

Making people feel welcome

Diplomatic interventions

Encouraging the extrapolation of points

Interim and final summaries

**BRAIDED LEARNING**

# The three stage process

One: the CoP engages in creating a braided text online that supports diversity and change of opinions

Two: braiders demonstrate meta–learning by constructing braided artefacts, which re–interpret the online debate in different styles for different audiences.

Three: accomplished fellows take the initiative to set up working parties to explore a subject in more depth- building new theories and policies - moving towards publication

# The braiding process

What do we want to learn from each other?

What are the cycles of learning?     What are the benefits?

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Creating a context

Welcomes

Encouragements

Diplomacy

A deadline for input

Interim summaries

Collaborative theory and policy

Closure

Summaries

Immediate information

Speed and currency

Time for extrapolation

Understanding diverse perspectives

Community building

Identifying expertise

Identifying issues

Identifying challenges

Local, regional, national, international purposes

A dramatic story

More……

# Step Seven:
# Beyond written text

The Professional Learning Spaces

[www.mirandanet.ac.uk/mirandamods](www.mirandanet.ac.uk/mirandamods)

**MirandaMod - an 'unconference'**

**a new learning paradigm**

Wikis, Blogs, Listserv, Forum, Flash meeting,

Skype, Twitter Backchannel

# The liminal spaces?

# What is liminality?

Liminality is one of the three cultural manifestations of communitas—it is one of the most visible expressions of anti-structure in society.

Yet even as it is the antithesis of structure, dissolving structure and being perceived as dangerous by those in charge of maintaining structure, it is also the source of structure. Just as chaos is the source of order, liminality represents the unlimited possibilities from which social structure emerges (Turner, V W 1974).

# Cultures of learning, the digital age, diverse learning processes.....

▷ as mobile, wearable technology advances there will be increasing opportunities to engage in the physical world while coexisting in other times and places..... **communication, information, entertainment & creative expression can be always with us and always on**

▷ technologies enabling **new kinds of individual bonds and communities** that were not possible before but **may be beneficial or fun**

▷ **much is learned quickly and effectively when a human being is immersed in a virtual environment** ....the learning of skills in the virtual world that are useful back in the real world

▷ every meaningful relationship, communication or interaction requires **trust.** Our dependence on digital technology makes it the necessary partner in trust - we are bound to trust technology

**Young people embrace new cultures of learning – what of teachers?**

# informal learning can look like  anarchy

▷ what is important ...... **is that the technology is sufficiently transparent to empower all members to set agenda at the grassroots.** This mirrors young peoples' mobile learning activity outside school in easy to use virtual environments ...

▷ significantly MirandaMods encourage **democratic debate** rather than promoting socialisation.

▷ in the MirandaMod professionals have **equal input regardless of their differing status in the world of education**.

**Cultures of learning, the digital age, diverse learning processes…..**

"just when you think you have it all figured out . . . along comes a penguin

young people embrace new cultures of learning – what of teachers?

# Who is Miranda?

# image credits

Penguin:  faffyman http://www.flickr.com/photos/faffyman  CC

Bett Teachmeet: Mr Ush http://www.flickr.com/photos/ush/  CC

iPhone: neodelphi  http://www.flickr.com/photos/neodelphi CC