

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONCERNS WHEN BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Scientific Software and the People Who Make It Happen:
Building Communities of Practice

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COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE BRING TOGETHER PEOPLE
WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE ...

... BUT DIVERSE TEAMS LEAD TO HIGHER QUALITY
SCIENCE AND IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY PERFORMANCE

The “safety in similarity” challenge

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BE INTENTIONAL IN YOUR INTERVENTIONS

- Psychological safety
 - Be aware of power differentials
 - A code of conduct is more than a checkbox exercise
- Leadership and infrastructure
 - Have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for DEI and engagement
 - Use infrastructure to provide multiple ways to access the CoP and its resources
- Everyone isn't the same as you
 - Embrace the different ways and amounts of time participants have to engage with your Community of Practice



THE GARDEN METAPHOR



- Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement. (2024) The garden metaphor for community management: Essays and reflection questions to unlock your community programming through metaphor. Katie Pratt and Lou Woodley doi: [10.5281/zenodo.10849575](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10849575)



THE GARDEN METAPHOR

- The garden is your community of practice and the plants are your members
 - Different types of plants in different abundance, flowering at different times of the year
 - Plants may require support at different stages of their lifecycle
- The vegetable plot is how you produce your outputs
 - Needs to be well fertilised and watered – production is resource intensive
 - Seasonal – do you have recurring outputs? Are there fallow periods to rest?
 - Flourishes when plant species are rotated – can you encourage new / quiet members?
- The wildflower bed encourages pollination – networking / social aspects of your CoP
 - Self-seeds – lower effort but still of value
 - Attracts life from outside of the garden



THE GARDEN METAPHOR

- The tool shed are the tools, infrastructure and resources used to maintain your CoP
 - Unobtrusive and out of view from visitors to the garden – which means its value can be missed
 - Needs to be secured – not everyone has access
 - Needs to be kept stocked – how can you ensure it's supplied and tidied?
- Planting a garden is both inclusive and generously exclusive
 - Understanding who are the right type of members for your CoP is like choosing the right plants for your soil type and your location
 - Good preparation can help allow more plant species to grow in your garden
- Gardens thrive when the different plants support each other well, rather than being monocultures



RESOURCES

- Academy of Social Science – [EDI within research groups and networking communities](#)
- Aleksandra Thomson and Rachael Gooberman-Hill - [How can EDI be nurtured through communities and individuals?](#)
- Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement – [Community Participation Model](#)
- Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement – [DEI resources](#)

