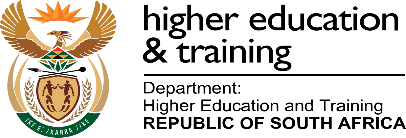
**Advanced Diploma**

**Technical and Vocational Teaching**

**Collaboration in Teaching and Learning**

Department of Higher Education and Training





**Department of Higher Education and Training**

Advanced Diploma: Technical and Vocational Teaching

Module: Collaboration in teaching and learning

Author: Neil Avery

© Department of Higher Education and Training 2020

Department of Higher Education and Training

123 Francis Baard Street

Pretoria

0001

Website: [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

This Module of the Advanced Diploma: Technical and Vocational Teaching (Adv. Dip TVT) was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Department of Higher Education and Training, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



Creative Commons LicenseThis work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

# 

# Contents

[Contents i](#_Toc59634691)

[Acknowledgements iii](#_Toc59634692)

[Acronyms and Abbreviations v](#_Toc59634693)

[Programme introduction vii](#_Toc59634694)

[Approach to learning vii](#_Toc59634695)

[Module overview 1](#_Toc59634696)

[Purpose 1](#_Toc59634697)

[Outcomes 1](#_Toc59634698)

[Structure 1](#_Toc59634699)

[Credits and learning time 2](#_Toc59634700)

[Unit 1: Understanding collaboration 3](#_Toc59634701)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc59634702)

[Unit 1 outcomes 4](#_Toc59634703)

[Learning and teaching – what works best? 5](#_Toc59634704)

[When and how to work collaboratively 8](#_Toc59634705)

[Sustaining collaborative practices 11](#_Toc59634706)

[Unit 2: Knowing yourself and understanding others 15](#_Toc59634707)

[Introduction 15](#_Toc59634708)

[Unit 2 outcomes 15](#_Toc59634709)

[Hard skills or soft skills? 17](#_Toc59634710)

[Personal characteristics that strengthen collaboration 18](#_Toc59634711)

[Unit 3: Co-operative learning 33](#_Toc59634712)

[Introduction 33](#_Toc59634713)

[Unit 3 outcome 33](#_Toc59634714)

[Jigsaw: A well-known co-operative learning strategy 48](#_Toc59634715)

[Unit 4: Communities of practice (CoP) 51](#_Toc59634716)

[Introduction 51](#_Toc59634717)

[Unit 4 Outcomes: 51](#_Toc59634718)

[Summative Assessment: Reflection on using the Collaboration Action Plan 67](#_Toc59634719)

[Conclusion 69](#_Toc59634720)

[References 71](#_Toc59634721)

[Appendix 1: EQ Exercise 73](#_Toc59634722)

[Appendix 2: Co-operative learning example 79](#_Toc59634723)

# Acknowledgements

The Open Learning Directorate of the Department of Higher Education and Training would like to acknowledge:

The European Union for funding the Capacity Building for TVET College Lecturers through Open Learning Programme (Sub-Programme 2 of the Teaching and Learning Development Sector Support Programme). The production of open learning courses for the Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching (Adv Dip TVT) is a project of that programme.

The following universities, for making lecturing staff available to contribute to the project as subject matter experts, writers or critical reviewers:

* Cape Peninsula University of Technology
* Central University of Technology
* Durban University of Technology
* Nelson Mandela University
* Tshwane University of Technology
* University of Fort Hare
* University of the Free State
* University of Johannesburg
* University of Pretoria
* University of KwaZulu Natal
* Vaal University of Technology
* University of the Witwatersrand

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Branch of the Department of Higher Education and Training for providing information whenever it was requested.

The following TVET Colleges for making lecturing staff available to contribute to the project as subject matter experts, writers or critical reviewers:

* False Bay TVET College
* Majuba TVET College
* South-West Gauteng TVET College
* West Coast TVET College, and
* Motheo TVET College for developmental testing of materials.

The University of the Free State South Campus for overall project management, and the Ideas Lab on the South Campus for producing multi-media materials, resources and the e-learning (SCORM) versions of the courses, as well as uploading the materials on the National Open Learning System (NOLS).

The South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide) for their expertise in co-ordinating production and in ensuring that the developed material is made available for use as Open Education Resources (OER), thereby contributing to the implementation of open learning in post-school education and training (PSET).

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adv Dip TVT | Advanced Diploma: Technical and Vocational Teaching |
| CAP | Collaboration Action Plan |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| EBM | Entrepreneurship and Business Management |
| EQ | Emotional Intelligence |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| HIT framework | Know how, know it, know that framework |
| IQ | Intelligence Quotient |
| NOLS | National Open Learning System |
| OBE | Outcomes Based Education |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Training |
| WIL | Work Integrated Learning |
| ZPD | Zone of Proximal Development |

# Programme introduction

The Advanced Diploma in Technical and Vocational Teaching (Adv Dip TVT) programme seeks to provide a structured professional learning pathway for current and aspirant technical and vocational lecturers/teachers. The Diploma will equip them with the knowledge and competences to implement and manage teaching and learning in their TVET colleges effectively and in alignment with national goals.

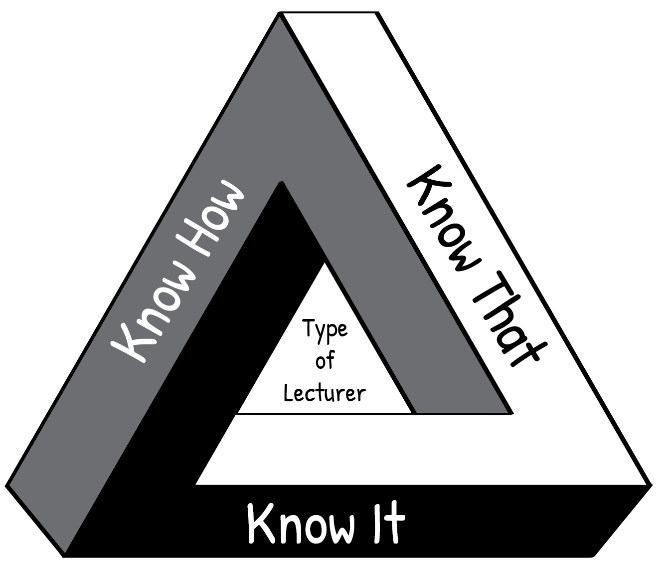
This module is one of a set of modules that contribute to the Advanced Diploma programme. The overall purpose of the Advanced Diploma is to engage lecturers working in the TVET sector in conversations about what it means to be a quality teacher in a TVET college. Each Module in the programme explores this from a different angle, but for every module the foundational concept is about the type of teacher you want to be. We all know that the relationship between teaching and learning is interrelated. So in order to understand the type of teacher you want to be you will need to engage with what learning means in a TVET context.

We often think about vocational and technical or craft knowledge as different from theoretical knowledge. However, there is increasing recognition of the power of vocational and theoretical knowledge coming together to develop the skilled craftsperson whether it is in plumbing, baking, even mathematics and physics. This integration of theory and vocational knowledge is equally important in teaching as well. Teachers are constantly needing to make informed decisions and judgements as they make a selection of what to teach and how best to teach the specific content, concept or skill.

This leads to a question about how different forms of knowledge and skill are brought together and balanced in the curriculum and in teaching and learning.

## Approach to learning

To answer the question above in this diploma programme, a framework has been developed which is referred to as *know how*, *know it* and *know that*, or the HIT framework. This framework is introduced, referred to and deepened in different ways all the way through the programme.



**“Know How”** is *procedural knowledge*, “in our bodies” or *embodied knowledge*.

For example, following a bread recipe.

“**Know It**” is *recognition*, the knowledge of what counts as good; wisdom; technical and theoretical judgments.

For example, is this sourdough good quality bread?

**“Know That”** is *propositional knowledge* or

*theoretical knowledge*, the knowledge of how and why, *cognitive knowledge*.

For example, the science of bread baking.

**Figure 1: The HIT framework**

Think about your own craft of teaching. The kind of teacher you want to be, is one who knows how (the techniques of teaching), knows that (the science and theory behind teaching AND learning) and knows it (knowing and reflecting on what makes a quality teacher). Such a teacher enables students to actively engage with their learning and to develop their full potential.

If you are interested, click on the link provided to watch a short [video](https://youtu.be/9GD-DgNLaxw) in which Wayne Hugo discusses the “HIT model” of TVET knowledge and learning.

### 

### Relating theory to practice

In this module new concepts are often introduced by developing them from a practical situation with which you are probably familiar. This process, which moves from your experience towards a more abstract level of theory is known as inductive learning. It makes learning easier and is very different from deductive learning, which starts by presenting abstract theories and principles, then requires you to “deduce” practical conclusions and concrete examples. You are encouraged to relate the ideas you learn from the Adv Dip programme to your own context and to try to think theoretically about your practice. In other words, to think about the rationale for your practice.

### 

### Reflective practice and the use of a learning journal

One of the Adv Dip TVT modules is called Reflective Practice, and covers the concept of reflection in the life of a TVET lecturer. Of particular importance is unit 2, which describes various models which facilitate reflection. The simplest reflective model that is discussed in this unit, is that of Terry Borton (1970). It consists of three steps as follows:

**Figure 2: Reflective model (after Borton, 1970)**

The three questions to prompt reflection leading to action:

1. What?

**What** happened? In this step you remember or describe the situation or event you have experienced.

1. So what?

**So,** if that happened**, what** does this show you or teach me?In this step you explore what new insights or knowledge the situation gives you.

1. Now what?

**Now** that I have learnt something new by reflecting on the situation, **what** should I do about it? In this step you think about what to do with the new awareness you have gained – i.e. how to make use of it to act more effectively in future situations.

Throughout the Adv Dip TVT programme, you are encouraged to use a model to reflect on your practices at work in the college so that you can improve how teaching and learning takes place. We have embedded reflective practice throughout the programme, and at the end of most units in the modules you will find a reflective activity to complete. The reflective activity will enable you to make the most of what you have learnt throughout the unit, as well as assisting you to apply your learning in your workplace. Throughout the Advanced Diploma modules, we encourage you to use a learning journal. Keep a file (paper- based or electronic). You will use it to write notes and reflections and complete activities. Start your learning journal at the beginning of the programme, and keep it regularly updated throughout.

### Active learning

Most learning theorists tell us that new understandings and learning depend on, and arise out of action. All the modules in the Adv Dip TVT programme include activities. Your learning will be more fruitful if you engage systematically with the activities. If you do not do the activities, you will miss out on the most important part of the programme learning pathway.

### 

### Thinking activities

At various points in the module you are asked to *stop and think* and to take some time to reflect on a particular issue. These *thought pauses* are designed to help you consolidate your understanding of a specific point *before* tackling the next section of the module. One of the habits many of us develop through a rote kind of learning is to rush through things. Work though each module slowly and thoughtfully. Read and think. This is how we develop a depth of understanding and become able to use the ideas we learn. Try to link the issues raised in each thought pause with what you have read, with what you have already learnt about learning, with your own previous experience, and so on. Think about the questions or problems raised in the module. Jot down your ideas in your learning journal so that you can be reminded of them at a later stage.

### 

### Linkages across modules

As you work through this and other modules, you will notice that topics or issues raised in one module may cross refer to the same issue or topic in another module, possibly in more detail. So for example, while there is an entire module dedicated to the investigation of *curriculum,* key issues related to curriculum will also be highlighted and discussed in the modules dealing with pedagogy, psychology in TVET as well as in the assessment module.

### Access to readings

There are links to readings throughout the activities. We have tried as far as possible to provide links to Open Educational Resources (OER). In cases where this was not possible you will be directed in the activity to access these through your university library. The website link is shown in the reference list.

### Assessment

The activities contained in this module and the Adv Dip TVT programme as a whole, promote a continuous and formative assessment process. This approach is intended to support your ability to relate ideas to practice and to contribute to your development as you work through the various modules of the programme.

You will also notice that each module includes a summative assessment task with the assessment criteria set out in an accompanying rubric. This summative assessment task is a model only, intended to illustrate the kind of assessment tasks that may be set by the university providing this programme.

# Module overview

## Purpose

This Module aims to enable the TVET lecturer to engage collaboratively and maturely in building relationships with peers, business, industry, and students through the facilitation of a range of communities of practice, and to develop a co-operative learning environment designed to enhance knowledge development, teaching, and professionalism.

## Outcomes

By the end of this module you will have:

1. A basic grasp of the meaning and value of collaboration in teaching and learning.
2. Knowledge of the characteristics that contribute to, and are strengthened by, collaboration, such as the ability to listen well, the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to embrace and resolve differences, the ability to build agreement that honours voices in a group, the ability to manage emotions, and the ability to embrace multiple perspectives.
3. An ability to organise a range of different co-operative learning activities for technical and vocational students.
4. An understanding of the value of professional collaboration and communities of practice, and a knowledge of avenues for pursuing these.
5. An ability to facilitate and/or contribute to discipline-specific communities of practice, including online communities.

## Structure

Collaboration in teaching and learning

**Unit 1**

Understanding collaboration

**Unit 2**

Knowing yourself and understanding others

**Unit 3**

Co-operative learning

**Unit 4**

Communities ofpractice

## Credits and learning time

This module carries 5 credits. This is equivalent to 50 notional learning hours. It is anticipated that you will take approximately 50 hours to complete the module successfully. The 50 hours will include contact time with your Higher Education Institution (HEI), reading time, research time and time required to write assignments. It is also expected that at least half of your learning time will be spent completing practice-based activities in your TVET College. This will involve your individual work on the activity, and may also require you to discuss these college-focused activities with your colleagues. Each activity in this module indicates the suggested time for completion.

# Unit 1: Understanding collaboration

## Introduction

On your way to work in the morning, as you think about the day ahead at your TVET college, are you looking forward to engaging with your colleagues, or speaking to industry people working in your field? Do you have a sense of sharing your knowledge and ideas with others that makes you feel part of an organisation that supports and values creative or stimulating learning opportunities?

Or, do you feel that it’s going to be another long day, working on your own in your classroom or workshop, delivering the same lectures you did last year to a disinterested and bored group of students?

Believe it or not, you have a choice!

The module aims to enable TVET lecturers to engage collaboratively and maturely in building relationships with peers, business, industry, and students through the facilitation of a range of communities of practice, and to develop a co-operative learning environment designed to enhance knowledge development, teaching and professionalism.

To achieve this, you will explore what collaboration means in the context of your work, considering how best to engage with colleagues in your own subject discipline, other lecturers in your college and people who work in similar areas, but in other colleges. The concept of collaboration also extends to your relationship with the people who work in business and industry who have a vested interest in the successful training of your students as future employees. These communities of people will only be able to communicate effectively if there is a deliberate effort to make and sustain regular and constructive contact through what are widely known as communities of practice. Your role in taking responsibility for leading and guiding this process of communicating will serve as a model for others to follow.

The fundamental idea behind working together is just as important for your TVET students, as they study under your guidance and teaching. By getting your students to work co-operatively in teams and groups, you can open up very creative and exciting learning opportunities as they share their knowledge and skills with each other. Your task in this module will be to discover how to facilitate this co-operative learning within the scope of your subject specialisation, as you focus on what you want your students to master, and how they can work in ways that will maximise their future opportunities.

If you really want to make the most of the opportunity to become a lecturer who is remembered with much respect and fondness by the TVET students who pass through your classes, you need to spend time thinking about why you have chosen to work in this context, and why you want your students to succeed. A very important module runs alongside this one, and it deals with the process of *reflection*. You are strongly urged to spend time working through it. Nevertheless, in this module on collaboration in teaching and learning, you will also come across activities that encourage you to get to know yourself better and explore how you respond to and manage other people. It should be fairly obvious that if you master these important elements of teaching and learning, you will be well positioned to be a strong leader in collaborative learning.

## Unit 1 outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic grasp of the meaning and value of collaboration in teaching and learning.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the value of professional collaboration and communities of practice, and a knowledge of avenues for pursuing these.

## Learning and teaching – what works best?

### Why should we collaborate?

Have you ever wondered about the way you prefer to learn? Perhaps you like sitting alone, working on a task until you feel you have ‘got it’; maybe you like being part of a team, sharing thoughts and ideas about a challenge you share, or sometimes you might look for advice from experienced colleagues when planning how to tackle a challenge.

It’s quite likely that you have some experience of all these different ways of learning because the way you learn best often depends on the nature of the task or the complexity of doing something new. For example, if you want to learn about a new technology (such as using a document camera for your lectures), a good starting point might be to read on your own about how it has been used and what advantages it can offer. If you share a common interest in the technology with friends or colleagues, you might also consider sitting down together and sharing your questions and ideas for using it. When you know that colleagues elsewhere have already started using it, it would make sense to contact them to see what they have discovered.

Clearly, you will make choices about your own learning that will vary from time to time, depending on *why* you want to learn, *what* you want to learn and *how* you can do this most effectively. Have you asked the same questions about the way your students might experience learning with you? As a TVET lecturer you should be equally thoughtful about learning *and* teaching.

Activity 1: Working together or collaborating

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Read through the following brief stories and respond to the questions that follow. Write down your answers in your Learning Journal so that you can refer to them again later in this module.

Story 1: Football failures

A local football club recently won promotion to the Premier League and players have been hailed as heroes and role models. Their great team effort the previous year featured in local and national media and expectation has been high for the new season and possible trophies. However, results from the early season games have been disappointing to say the least, with three losses and one lucky draw. Their team coach is confused, embarrassed and somewhat angry. He feels that the players have got ‘too big for their boots’ and see themselves as individual stars, each wanting to grab glory. The team spirit of the previous season seems to have deserted the club and spectators are not filling the stands as they did last year. The club management wants to meet the coach to discuss what he needs to do to turn things around.

Story 2: A heart attack

My elderly father was taken to hospital by ambulance this morning and was examined by a heart specialist. I have just met with the specialist and he told me that he’s not quite sure what’s wrong with my father. It appears as though he has had a heart attack, but the doctor is not sure what caused it because the tests he has done are inconclusive. When I asked what the next step was, the doctor said he was going to ‘open him up’ tomorrow to have a look and see what he could find. When I asked if it would help to have a second opinion, or do more tests, the doctor asked quite abruptly if I thought he was not well enough qualified to make a decision himself. He claimed he had completed his specialisation some years ago and was more experienced than other doctors in the hospital. Furthermore, he said that he was always being consulted by other medical practitioners so there was nothing to worry about.

Story 3: An inexperienced lecturer

Nonhlanhla trained as a Hospitality Services/Home Economics teacher at a Teacher’s Training College, just before the College was closed. She was not able to get a job teaching in a school because she could not find a high school that offered the subjects she was trained for. After some years not working, she applied for a post at a TVET college and was appointed as a lecturer in the School of Hospitality and Tourism, to lecture on the National Certificate in Hospitality. She has been at the college for 2 months and is feeling quite desperate because she knows she is supposed to liaise with local hotels and guest houses to arrange for her students to get work-integrated-learning opportunities soon. She has largely been left to fend for herself since starting at the college and she is not even sure about what she is supposed to do in her lectures.

Story 1

1. What kind of reflection should the football coach in Story 1 be doing before he meets with the club management? What should he be evaluating during this reflection?
2. What do you think he could offer as suggestions to turn around the players’ performance?

Story 2.

1. Medical specialists (Story 2) are supposed to be people we place a lot of trust in. Would you trust this doctor’s diagnosis? Why?
2. What informs this doctor’s view on consulting other medical practitioners as part of his professional practice?

Story 3.

1. From Story 3 would you say Nonhlanhla is fully qualified and well prepared for the post she has been appointed to? What gaps could you identify in her knowledge and practice?
2. What help might she have expected on her arrival at the college?
3. As an experienced colleague in this college, what support or advice could you offer her?

Drawing on the three stories, try to write a brief statement about each of the following: Don’t search for definitions on the web or elsewhere, but rather see if you can construct your own meaning. Don’t worry if your definitions are basic at this stage. In your explanations, don’t use the words *individual, co-operative or collaborative!*

* 1. Individual learning
  2. Co-operative learning
  3. Collaborative learning

It’s very important that you write your own answers first, *before* reading through the discussion of the activity that follows. In this way you get to develop and deepen your own knowledge rather than simply accepting what someone else has written.

Discussion of the activity

You might be wondering what the three stories have to do with teaching and learning because they don’t all refer to the formal notion of education, however, if you examine the answers you gave to the questions, there are likely to be a number of links that you have started to make to your work environment.

The football coach, in preparing to face the club management, will probably anticipate that they will ask him about his role in the team’s poor performance. He is, after all, appointed into a role that should: bring out the best in the players; teach them skills and tactics; help them to work together as a team, and encourage an attitude of support and growth. He should possibly also ask himself if the players are too wrapped up in their own dreams to focus clearly on being team members – should he be getting them together to reflect on what they are trying to do collectively, and play as a team? He might even think of working more closely with other members of the coaching staff rather than taking it all on his own shoulders. He could also spend time reflecting on what he might need to learn about motivating the players to step up to the challenges of the Premier League.

The specialist in Story 2 seems to fall short of the expectations most of you would consider acceptable for someone you hope you can trust. Is it possible that someone can become so sure of their own knowledge and position that they neglect to listen to the voices of those who depend on them for reassurance and hope? It’s possible that he has become insensitive to the anxieties and fears experienced by concerned relatives. You would very likely worry about his failure to ask colleagues for their opinions or ideas, or to draw on the expertise and experience of fellow specialists who may have come across similar symptoms. The idea of a specialist doctor believing he has nothing more to learn is almost unthinkable. Should this be different in any other profession? Is this how some lecturers you know might think?

Nonhlanhla, from Story 3, is facing a series of very stressful challenges and it seems she believes she is on her own. She may well be academically qualified and have sufficient subject knowledge, but her training as a teacher almost certainly didn’t prepare her for the practice of being a successful TVET lecturer. Her restricted teaching experience doesn’t help either, as she lacks a mental model of what it means to be either a teacher or a lecturer. Whether she really has been left to cope for herself in the college isn’t clear but what you do know is that she hasn’t taken the initiative to seek the advice of colleagues or to ask for guidance from her leaders and managers. Is this her fault, or a weakness of the systems and practices in the college? While you can’t be sure about this, you should be able to recognise that unless both Nonhlanhla and colleagues around her start to talk to each other and be supportive, there will be no good end to this story. With the knowledge and experience you already have gained in your own college, you have a moral and professional obligation to share this with others who are in need so that the mutual benefit is passed on to all those who want to learn from you and with you.

Finally, in thinking about these stories, you have had to grapple with different ideas about learning. You know very well that you have to take some responsibility for your own learning and put in the hours, sitting on your own until you master the knowledge and skills of your chosen field. It should also be clear that you can learn with and from other people. When you spend time with close colleagues or friends, working on common challenges and sharing ideas and insights about a particular problem, you are working co-operatively, drawing on each other’s individual strengths. There will also be times when you need to look beyond your own discipline or subject, or when you need to work across campuses and colleges, and engage with industry and business managers to share knowledge and pedagogies that are breaking new ground or improving the students’ learning experiences. This is what we refer to as collaborative learning. If your answers to the questions in Task 4 are in any way similar to this, you have already grasped some essential principles about sharing professional practice through co-operation and collaboration.

### Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| The first activity in this module asked you to reflect on different examples of people making decisions about when it is acceptable to work on their own, and to recognise when they need to seek guidance, opinions, or help from others. As a TVET lecturer, it’s likely that other people turn to you for guidance, an opinion, or direct help. Have you stopped to consider how you respond to them, and even more importantly why you behave as you do? These are questions you will have to consider closely as you work through this module on collaboration in teaching and learning. |

The next activity is designed to explore some of your actual experiences of working collaboratively in your professional life.

## When and how to work collaboratively

Working collaboratively is widely acknowledged to have value when it is used:

1. At the right time;
2. With appropriate people;
3. For a good reason;

Keep this in mind as you now read through pages 12, 14 and 15 in *Partnering with Employers and Other**s* taken from the *Demand-driven Training for Youth Employment – Toolkit*, accessed [here](https://youtheconomicopportunities.org/DDTtoolkit), before attempting the next activity. The DHET has been given permission to host this reading on the NOLS.

Activity 2: Collaboration in practice

Suggested time: 60 minutes

Use your current TVET workplace, or refer to a TVET college where you might have worked previously, to construct examples of collaboration you have been involved in, or which you have observed. Write down your examples in your Learning Journal for further reference.

1. Write down an example of working collaboratively with colleagues **in your subject discipline**, using the following headings:

(NB! If you *don’t* have examples to use, write about how you might do this in future)

1. When do you have discussions with your colleagues?
2. Who do you communicate with?
3. Why do you think it is important to talk to these people, and what do you discuss?
4. Who leads the collaboration and how is it maintained?

2. Write an example of working collaboratively with other colleagues who:

1. Work in the same college as you but are in other subject disciplines.
2. Are in another college but find it useful to share ideas and practices with you.

3. Explain how lecturers in your college communicate with relevant people in business and industry when planning for work-based practical experience for your TVET students.

1. Who takes responsibility for setting up work-based practical experience?
2. What kind of discussions take place in this process?
3. What benefits are there for: lecturers, TVET students and business and industry?

Discussion of the activity

When you read the extract called *Partnering with Employers and Others* you would have seen that it started with an explanation or definition*:* ***Partnering (collaborating, cooperating)*** *is a process of working together for a common purpose or benefit*.

This is consistent with the way this module understands collaboration. The common purpose or benefit should apply to the whole process of teaching and learning, with TVET students being the ultimate beneficiaries.

If you found it difficult to think of clear examples from your own practice while attempting to write responses to the questions, you might have something in common with Nonhlanhla (from Story 3 in Activity 1)! If collaborative learning or partnering with a range of different people is not part of your own experience, then you need to give serious attention to becoming a leader of change yourself, (sometimes called an *agent of change*) rather than waiting and hoping that someone else will take responsibility for you.

### Collaboration within the College

Here is an example taken from a lecturer at a college who responded to the same questions in the following way:

When I was lecturing Entrepreneurship and Business Management (EBM) I used to work with the Management Communication lecturers as the students do advertisements in Management Communication.  The lecturers would teach the students about advertising when we were about to do the market days at the college. The market days were held for all the EBM students and they had to set up and run small market stalls to test their skills. All lecturers used to have the market day on the same day, and we used to get other lecturers to mark the students’ stalls as we as EBM lecturers had taught them and would be biased.

We had to get the permission of the management at the campus to have the market day as it disrupted classes.  We would also get special permission to submit our final assessment marks a little later so that we could ensure that the syllabus was complete before doing the market day.  Guardians and the local community were invited to the market day to support the students as well.

The practical example in the text box shows strong levels of horizontal *co-operation* between the EBM lecturers (planning the market day schedule) and *collaboration* with lecturers in other disciplines (Management Communication for advertising, and other disciplines for assessment). It also highlights the importance of vertical communication, which leads to successful collaboration with campus management. Do your examples show similar ways of collaborating?

### Collaboration outside the boundaries of the College

Did you find that you were easily able to reflect on the experience of engaging with people working in your field, but outside the college, in business or industry? Perhaps it’s something you have thought about but haven’t really started to explore because you don’t know where to start? If you have managed to do this successfully, have you thought about sharing your ideas and practices with your colleagues?

The issue of how lecturers in your college manage the process of communicating and collaborating with stakeholders *outside* the boundaries of the college was probably more difficult to respond to because the complexity of these relationships and partnerships is greater and more demanding. The reading you did in preparation to answer the questions earlier (*Partnering with Employers and Others*) provides a lot to think about. Go back to it and re-read the sections on *What is partnering* and, *The benefits of partnering*. Although this is an example of a specific, well organised programme (The Demand-Driven Training Toolkit for Youth Employment), it should certainly get you thinking about what you can and should be doing in your own workplace. While you are reading, think about who you might need as partners in your field of teaching and learning, and what the nature of the partnerships might be. What would you hope the partners could provide to give your students an authentic experience? How could you convince them of the benefits of working collaboratively? The reading provides some excellent examples that you might be able to use or build on and you will soon be working on a plan to take the process forward.

It's very clear that forming partnerships aimed at sustainable collaboration is not simply an *option* for TVET lecturers. Without a focussed, well-managed process, excellent teaching and learning simply won’t happen. Here are some examples of what the law and relevant policies have to say about collaboration in practice. As you read through the examples, consider how your college translates policy into practice. For example, does the college have a policy on Work Integrated Learning (WIL)? Try to locate a copy and use it as you continue thinking about the questions in activity 2.

|  |
| --- |
| The **Continuing Education and Training Act, No. 16 of 2006**, states that TVET  college training should enable students to acquire:   1. The necessary knowledge; 2. Practical skills; and 3. Applied vocational and occupational competence.   It must also provide students with the necessary attributes required for:   1. Employment; 2. Entry into a higher education institution; and 3. Self-employment.   The 2013 ‘**White Paper for Post-School Education and Training**’ emphasises  that:  “Since the main purpose of the TVET colleges is to prepare students for the workplace, it is essential that they develop and maintain close working relationships with employers in their areas. Close partnerships between colleges and employers can assist colleges in locating workplace opportunities for students who need practical experience.”  **The Skills Development Act, 1998** describes Work Integrated Learning as an umbrella term to describe curricular, pedagogic and assessment practices across a range of academic disciplines that integrate formal learning and workplace concerns. |

Activity 3: A simple plan for collaboration

Suggested time: 60 minutes

You have started thinking about collaborating with people from within your college as well as those who work outside its boundaries, and it will be easy to lose focus and forget some of the good ideas you have had unless you start to record your thoughts in a practical, action-oriented way. A very useful tool to help you start the process in an organised and structured way is a simple *Action Plan*. Table 1 is a basic template that you can modify, adapt or use as it stands. You can copy the template and paste it in your Learning Journal, or you can construct an electronic version that will allow you to modify and add to the content as you work further in this module.

Now that you have re-read the section on partnering in your first reading, try to consolidate your thinking by filling in a few lines of your action plan. Don’t worry if the plan looks a bit incomplete or uncertain at this point because you will come back and refine it a number of times during this module.

Table 1: Collaboration Action Plan (CAP)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **WHO**  **Who do you want to collaborate with?** | **WHAT**  **What is the purpose of the collaboration?** | **HOW**  **How should the collaboration happen?** | **WHEN**  **When will the collaboration happen** | **BENEFIT**  **What are the benefits of collaboration?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

## Sustaining collaborative practices

When you read through the collaboration examples provided, they might either have presented a new way of thinking about how you collaborate with others, or perhaps some parts of the examples were very familiar to you and it was easy to write meaningful examples of the *how, what, when* and *why* parts of the questions in Activity 2. Whatever your current level of experience is, it’s important for you to consider how you can ensure that ways of working together are not simply haphazard, occasional, or unsustainable. How can you assist yourself first and then other colleagues to adopt planned and constructive ways of working together as a regular practice? These questions will be closely considered in Unit 4 of this module. The simple plan that you have started to construct is a very practical way of structuring and organising collaborative activities. Make sure you keep this copy with you because you will refer to it again in Units 2, 3 and 4.

Activity 4: A reading on collaborative teaching

Suggested time: 45 minutes

Read page 123 to 127 from: Zhou, G., Kim, J & Kerekes, J. (2011). Collaborative teaching of an integrated methods course. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 3(2), 124-138.

You will need to access this journal article online; arrange this via your institutional library service.

The purpose of doing this reading is to get an academic perspective on what collaboration can mean for teaching and learning. While the study was conducted in an American University and the teaching was done with pre-service school teachers (student teachers), it provides a perspective on what collaboration means for both those doing the teaching and those who are learning. While you are reading, think about the following questions to help you relate the content to what you have already understood about teaching and learning, and make notes in your Learning Journal.

1. Do the authors believe that collaborative skills are a natural part of teaching and learning?
2. Is there only one way of organising collaborative learning?
3. What are the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning for both lecturers and students?
4. What arguments do the writers make for curriculum integration and the nature of knowledge?

Discussion of the activity

The first thing you might have noticed about the reading is that it was written for a context that is different from yours. You might ask what the relevance is for a TVET lecturer of a reading based on American teacher training models? While the context of teaching and learning might be different, the knowledge and opportunities for development are not. In fact, this is an example of collaborative learning, where you are able to draw ideas and experiences from people who are situated outside your current context and practice.

The authors believe that collaborative skills are not simply intuitive (part of our usual thinking) and they need to be learned and practised. Similarly, there are always different routes to the same result, and your application of collaborative teaching and learning will depend on a range of factors that include: your teaching discipline; the prior experience of the students; the knowledge and skills you are aiming at; the availability of other people with relevant knowledge in your discipline, and your own creativity and passion.

From what you have read, it’s clear that the literature on collaborative learning shows many benefits for students, from achieving better marks, to working well in teams. Lecturers who work collaboratively create opportunities for their own deep learning, and a wider base of experiences. The exposure to new ideas is a great source of motivation and innovation because when you share what someone else has done, you start to believe in your own *agency,* or ability to act for the benefit of others.

Perhaps the most powerful message that you can take from this reading is that knowledge does not exist in isolation or belong to discreet (separate) disciplines or areas of learning. Teachers everywhere have heard their students ask what the point is of learning maths, or why they should read literature written hundreds of years ago. The context of a TVET lecturer makes it so important to link the world of study with the workplace – which is what the writers mean when they speak of a holistic view of knowledge and an integrated curriculum. Collaboration between lecturers, TVET students, practitioners from business and industry, and an eagerness to learn, can help to create a learning environment that makes the links between the theoretical knowledge students must acquire, the practical experience they must gain, and the ability to reflect and grow as individuals and professionals.

Activity 5: Reflection on the Unit

Suggested time: 30 minutes

Figure 1 attempts to capture various levels and directions of collaboration one might expect to find in a well-functioning TVET college. Using this model as a stimulus:

* + - 1. Write a few sentences in your Learning Journal that capture your reflections about your own experience of collaboration in your working environment.
      2. Make a note of anything you want to change or modify in your Collaboration Action Plan.
      3. Write a concluding sentence that expresses the personal changes you would like to make as a result of completing this Unit successfully.



Figure 1: Levels of collaboration in a TVET college, and with industry

Discussion of the activity

Unit 1 of the Module *Collaboration in teaching and learning* started by asking you to reflect on how your own learning happens individually, co-operatively, and collaboratively at different times and for different reasons. You have also been expected to examine your practice as a TVET lecturer and to consider when it is appropriate to work with colleagues both within and beyond your own place of work, and with future employers of your TVET students. This is particularly important in technical and vocational education, where theoretical knowledge must be thoroughly integrated with the practical skills and abilities needed in the workplace, and where the collective mastery and craftsmanship of a range of practitioners can contribute to student learning and development.

By doing the activities in this Unit you have engaged with ideas about different ways of learning and when they might be appropriate. By reading the content of this Unit and completing the activities you have been learning *individually*.

You have also possibly noticed that the main focus of this Unit has been about exploring opportunities for *collaborative* learning, which requires you to work closely and regularly with colleagues within your college and beyond its boundaries, with the purpose of organising and structuring meaningful learning opportunities for your TVET students. This is not something that a single individual can always provide, hence the focus of this module on collaborative teaching and learning.

You might still be a bit confused about *co-operative* learning, which has been described as working closely with others in tackling a particular problem. Don’t be too concerned, because you will focus clearly on this way of learning in Unit 3, when you explore different ways to get your TVET students working and learning together.

The next Unit in this Module will take you through a process of recognising and acknowledging your own, and others’, emotional strengths and areas of vulnerability, and exploring how you manage yourself as a professional whose work is strongly linked to building the competencies of novices in your field. Knowing and managing yourself is only one part of what any effective educator masters – recognising the emotional tensions and empathising with the learning challenges of your colleagues and TVET students is just as important.

# Unit 2: Knowing yourself and understanding others

## Introduction

If you think about your place of work and the people around you, how well do you know them? Have you thought about how they see you as a colleague and a person? Are there people you try to avoid because of the way they make you feel? Do your students really look forward to coming to your lectures or practical sessions? You can’t avoid experiencing these feelings, so it’s helpful to understand what they mean and how you can manage them.

As you have worked through the content and activities of Unit 1 (Understanding Collaboration), the importance of professional relationships with a range of different people will hopefully have become clear. Teaching and learning are essentially social activities which rely on skills that can be learned and developed, so it follows that if you want to be an effective lecturer who works collaboratively with students, peers, college managers, and professionals in the workplace, you should be open to possibilities for personal growth and development.

This Unit will provide you with an opportunity to reflect quite deeply on your social skills and how you manage working relationships. This kind of *reflection* is something you can learn to use to your advantage, and it is appropriate that there is a separate Module in the Advanced Diploma called Reflective Practice dedicated to this important life skill, which you are encouraged to work through as soon as possible.

The multiple benefits of collaboration were highlighted in both the readings in Unit 1, and you will build on this understanding as you start to reflect upon your own skills, abilities, strengths, and areas for growth. To do this, you will explore the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) through a self-assessment exercise. Once you have evaluated what the exercise can help you to understand about human interaction, you will need to consider what you ought to do to build on your strengths and develop areas in need of development. This Unit will also provide ideas about how you can engage with this process as part of your ongoing personal and professional development.

## Unit 2 outcomes

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a working knowledge of the personal characteristics that contribute to and are strengthened by collaboration.
2. Reflect on the ability to listen well, the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to embrace and resolve differences, the ability to build agreement that honours voices in a group, the ability to manage emotions, and the ability to embrace multiple perspectives.
3. Understand the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and collaboration.

## Hard skills or soft skills?

The introduction to this Unit referred to a set of skills that you can relate to your practice and behaviour as a TVET lecturer, with the purpose of strengthening your ability to work collaboratively with a range of other people. So, what kind of skills are they and what can you do about developing them?

Activity 6: Hard skills or soft skills?

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

1. Watch the short [video](https://youtu.be/8pfQq2Rehy4).
2. Go back to the reading shown just before Activity 2: *Demand-driven Training for Youth Employment – Toolkit* and read the section on *Developing Soft Skills* (pages 25 and 26 only).
3. In your Learning Journal, write down your responses to the questions that follow, under a heading “Hard and soft skills”:
   1. What are the *hard skills* that you have mastered and are trying to teach to your TVET students?
   2. What are some of the *soft skills* that you need to be a motivated and successful lecturer?
   3. Will you need to strengthen your *hard skills* or *soft skills* to develop and maintain effective collaborative learning with colleagues, partners from business and industry and your TVET students?

Discussion of the activity

The *hard skills* you wrote about probably included the skills and competencies related to your subject discipline. For example, if you teach accounting to TVET students you might want them to be able to use Microsoft Excel, or if your work includes food service or retail you probably need the students to work with a point-of-sale system. Engineering students need to master quite complex mathematics, and electricians ought to know how to use multi-meters and other testing equipment. Hard skills are gained through education or specific training, and are largely about technical knowledge which is job-related in the TVET sector. These *hard skills* are critically important to your work as a lecturer, but they are not the focus of this Module in general, and this Unit specifically. Other modules in the Advanced Diploma cover these skills quite comprehensively, for example Subject specialisation: Mathematics; Subject specialisation: Engineering.

The second question you wrote a response to might have been a bit more challenging to think about because *soft skills* are quite difficult to describe. It’s very possible that you included *communication skills* and *teamwork* or *good listening* or maybe even *empathy* in your list, because they are all examples of *soft skills*. If you included things like *creativity* or *critical thinking* or *problem solving,* you really have a good idea about what it takes to be a great lecturer! All good teachers also need a good measure of *patience* and *kindness,* don’t they?

The third question should have prompted a bit more reflection and consideration, because the nature of your collaboration and sharing might require both sets of skills. For instance, if you are working with an employer who specialises in a particular field of expertise, you need the technical or content knowledge and experience to plan and structure an appropriate work experience for your students. You also need to be able to communicate clearly, and be prepared to listen to others and work together in teams, and to be creative in solving problems. These are the *soft skills* you were asked about in question one.

## Personal characteristics that strengthen collaboration

This Advanced Diploma is not designed to develop your *hard skills* or your technical, content knowledge of your discipline (although it’s critically important). You already have qualifications that have prepared you to be a lecturer and even though you might feel there is a need to study further, this should be done through a directed and focussed subject/discipline programme.

The stated outcomes for this Unit referred to personal characteristics and abilities that are particularly relevant for setting up, organising, and sustaining effective professional collaboration. The abilities identified in the outcomes are:

* The ability to listen well.
* The ability to communicate effectively.
* The ability to embrace and resolve differences.
* The ability to build agreement that honours voices in a group.
* The ability to manage emotions.
* The ability to embrace multiple perspectives.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and it’s very likely that while you are working through this Unit you might come up with other abilities or characteristics that go beyond those mentioned in the list. That would be a very strong indicator that you are well on the way to developing powerful self-reflective insights about the way you understand yourself in relation to those whom you interact with.

As a mature person who has worked hard to achieve some of your life goals, you might believe you know yourself very well and you don’t need anyone else to start telling you what your strengths and weaknesses are, but how well do you really know yourself?

### A story to make you think

The story you will read in the text box is a true story of an event that happened to a university lecturer who was travelling between two cities in KwaZulu-Natal with his wife a few years ago.

|  |
| --- |
| We were on the freeway, half-way to our destination when I moved into the right-hand lane to pass a heavy transport vehicle. There were three cars ahead of me, all with the same intention. I glanced into the rear-view mirror and saw with some alarm that a small red car was approaching very fast in the same lane. I watched in disbelief as it pulled up directly behind me, no more than a metre from my back bumper, flashing its light and weaving around as though the driver wanted to pass me. As I was now alongside the heavy vehicle, with three cars ahead of me, I clearly had nowhere else to go. The driver of the car behind was dangerously close, especially as we were all travelling at the speed limit, so I touched the brake pedal with my left foot to activate the brake light as a warning and waved my hand at him in a gesture meant to tell him to pull back. With that the driver of the pursuing vehicle must have thought I was about to stop because he braked hard and nearly lost control of his vehicle, swerving dangerously. As I passed the heavy vehicle, I moved into the left lane to let the car behind go through but instead, it drew alongside me and the passenger in the front seat opened the window and drew from the cubby hole a 9mm pistol which he cocked and pointed directly between my eyes. He held the gun there for some seconds then suddenly drew the weapon inside the window and appeared to try to load the gun again. Some seconds later the small car accelerated away down the road then pulled over as the passenger leapt out, again waving the gun in my direction.  Severely shaken, my wife and I continued our journey, thankfully not seeing the same small red car again. I could only think that the passenger had tried to fire his weapon, but it had jammed. I also reflected on what I should have done – perhaps I should have swerved to avoid being hit, but maybe my wife would have taken the bullet instead of me? In a turmoil of emotion and anger we travelled on… |

This is a dramatic story which could have ended tragically, but you might be asking what it has to do with the issue of how well you know yourself? You will all recognise the symptoms of road rage in the story and in this case, the two drivers had never met before, had never spoken a word to each other but both communicated powerful emotions such as anger, annoyance, frustration, and fear, expressed through actions showing surprise, defiance, domination, and violent intent.

The driver who was threatened in this frightening incident, later reflected that his emotional reaction to the event contributed to the way things happened. His anger at the driver behind him led him to show his brake lights and his gesture (with one finger of the hand more prominent than the others!), resulted in an even more extreme reaction from the passenger of the other car, and one can only imagine what words passed between that passenger and his driver. He has also realised that while he believes himself to be a level-headed, rational, and peace-loving person, there are times when a lack of control over his emotions can trigger quite unexpected, and impossible-to-manage consequences. He has made a decision to be much more cautious in unexpected situations and not to make hasty, emotional responses.

Stop and Think

|  |
| --- |
| What do you imagine your own reaction might have been in a similar situation? Are you always aware of the effect of your emotional reaction to events? There are probably many South Africans who have had bad experiences like this, however, the example used in the story was set in a very different context from the TVET colleges you are working in. The next activity asks you to reflect on your own working environment and personal experiences that might indicate how well you know and manage yourself professionally. |

For the next activity, read the questions and write your responses in your Learning Journal.

Activity 7: Emotional reactions in a professional setting

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

1. Spend some time thinking about an event in your recent professional life where you might have responded emotionally to a challenge, or too quickly, or without careful thought. The example can be in relation to a professional colleague, or a TVET student in your college. In your Learning Journal, record what the event was and what outcome it led to.
2. Now think about a time when you believe you responded to someone else who was angry or upset in a way that helped that person to deal more successfully with the situation. Again, briefly record the situation in your Learning Journal and write something about how it might have helped your professional relationship.

Discussion of the activity

Whatever the events were that you have described, your responses were probably linked to your own emotional state at the time. Being angry or upset or frustrated is something everyone experiences at work from time to time. You can probably remember an occasion when the college Management made a decision that was unpopular, or when a new policy was introduced and most people felt it was simply a waste of time or was forcing changes to something that was already familiar and working well. The value of this kind of reflection is when it makes you ask questions about whether your reaction was something you were in control of, or whether you said or did things that you later regretted. Perhaps you are a colleague who is well known and admired for being balanced and calm? Are you in the habit of consciously assessing your emotional state before reacting or making decisions? What could you do to become better at this kind of social skill?

We have listed a few questions to test yourself. As you read through them reflect on whether you actually asked yourself these searching questions when you responded to the two questions in the activity. Do the questions make you think any differently about the responses you made? You will have noticed that all the questions make links between emotions and feelings, and working together (or collaborating) with other people. You will come back to these questions soon when you do a self-assessment exercise.

* How aware are you of your own feelings when you work with other people?
* Can you usually recognise what other people are feeling, even if they don’t say so?
* Does being aware of other peoples’ feelings help you understand their needs?
* Can you manage difficult or distressing circumstances without letting them control your life?
* When you are angry, can you still communicate in a way that helps resolve tensions rather than making matters worse?
* Can you maintain your focus on long-term goals and avoid always wanting quick results?
* Do you keep trying to achieve your goals, even when it seems impossible and you are tempted to give up?
* Can you manage your feelings to help you reach good decisions in your professional life?

The responses you made and the questions listed don’t only focus on an awareness or control of your own feelings, but also test whether you are aware of how others might be feeling at the same time, and how you can use this perception to maximise the effectiveness of working collaboratively. You might recognise these social skills as *Emotional Intelligence,* often known by the acronym EQ.

### EQ or IQ?

At this point it would not be surprising if you are wondering what the link is between EQ and Intelligence Quotient (IQ), or if indeed there is a link at all? That’s a good question! Firstly, they are *not* just different names for the same thing. IQ as a concept has been around for more than a century and emerged from an interest in measuring human intellectual capacity, or general intelligence. Traditionally, IQ was considered to be an innate (born with) intellectual ability which was not likely to change throughout a person’s life. More recently this notion of a fixed intelligence has been challenged. EQ, on the other hand goes beyond measuring logical reasoning and processing information to solve problem, to using knowledge about human emotions to guide actions and behaviours. The notes in the text box give a brief summary of the history of these concepts.

|  |
| --- |
| **A brief history of EQ**   * In the early years of the 20th century, Frenchman Alfred Binet constructed the first *Intelligence test,* known as the Binet-Simon scale, which was later developed into the Stanford-Binet scale by Lewis Terman. This form of intelligence testing compared children’s *chronological* age and *mental* age, giving rise to the term *Intelligence Quotient* or as we know it, IQ. * In the 1930s, Edward Thorndike began to describe the concept of *social intelligence* as the ability to get on with other people. * In the 1940s, David Wechsler proposed that the affective or emotional aspects of intelligence could be essential to later success in life. * In a movement away from the widely held perception that *intelligence* was innate and could not be changed, Abraham Maslow described how people can build emotional strength. * Howard Gardner, in 1975 published *The Shattered Mind*, which introduced the controversial concept of *multiple intelligences,* and changed the way we think about developing our strengths. * The term *emotional intelligence* was introduced to scientific language by Wayne Payne in 1985 in his doctoral thesis. * In 1990, psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer published the landmark article *Emotional Intelligence* in the journal *Imagination, Cognition and Personality.* * Daniel Goleman, a psychologist, and New York Times writer published in 1996 his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ.* – a book which hugely popularised the concept. |

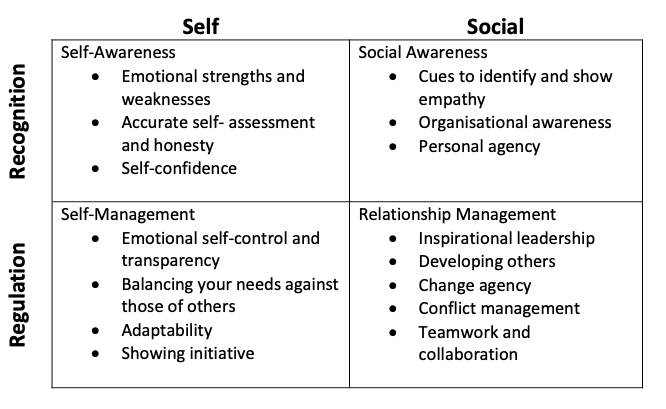
### Emotional Intelligence in the workplace

Activity 7 should have given you a sense of *why* Emotional Intelligence is important and *what* it is, but it doesn’t say very much about *how* you can develop your own EQ, so this an opportunity to explore all three of these issues.

So far, you should have understood that Emotional Intelligence is about:

* Self-awareness of your own emotions and how your strengths and weaknesses might impact on your working relationships.
* Exercising control over your emotions means sometimes delaying your needs and balancing them against the needs of others.
* Being socially aware and picking up the cues (signs) that tell you about other peoples’ emotions and concerns.
* Managing relationships with others, communicating effectively, and inspiring and influencing working relationships.

Figure 2 illustrates these four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence. The two dimensions heading the columns of the table refer to you as an individual **(self),** and the work context with others **(social)**. The two dimensions heading the rows of the table refer to awareness **(recognition)** and management **(regulation)**.



**Figure 2: The four elements of emotional intelligence (Redrawn:** [**Source**](https://www.educational-business-articles.com/emotional-intelligence-theory/)**)**

Activity 8: Emotional Intelligence in practice

**Suggested time: 30 minutes**

It can be quite difficult to make the links between what EQ is and how it can be useful in a work environment, so pause for a moment to watch the short [video](https://youtu.be/LLVoudEipc4) that will help you get a deeper understanding of how it works in practice.

While you are watching the video, think about the following questions. You can jot down answers in your Learning Journal.

1. Do you think it might be possible to learn and develop your emotional intelligence? What does the video suggest is possible?
2. What does emotional intelligence have to do with collaboration? What specific skills could help to develop strong professional relationships?

Discussion of the activity

Did you notice that the video focussed both on what Emotional Intelligence is *and* what value it has for the workplace? It also makes the point that you can learn and develop your emotional skills and abilities. The idea that *knowing yourself* is an important starting point is neither radical nor new, but the way in which you can use this knowledge might be something you can learn about as you develop in your competencies and understand what’s driving you as a TVET lecturer. The kinds of skills, attitudes, and knowledge you might need to develop good relationships with people you need to collaborate with, depend on making some conscious choices, because you are constantly sending and receiving emotional messages. So, making *choices* about who you want to be is important. Are you happy with who you are and the way you manage emotions, or do you see a need to change some things? Real change only happens when you decide to *give* yourself (as explained in the video) or make conscious decisions about where you want to go. The actions you take and the attitude you adopt must ensure that you are working towards a vision that you share with others.

Perhaps the most exciting message from the video is that the change or development you want can be learned. It’s also clear that strengthening EQ can be applied to ordinary day to day activities, leadership, team building, collaboration, professional performance, and change management - if you are committed to moving towards some place worth going to.

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| In this Unit, the importance of developing personal relationships to underpin collaborative practices has been deepened by focussing on the personal characteristics that are associated with Emotional Intelligence (EQ). You have worked through a process to gain a conceptual understanding of EQ and the value it holds for your personal and professional development as a TVET lecturer. You have:   * Begun to explore an application of EQ to professional practice. * Learned that the skills and competencies can be mastered and improved. * Understood that you need to know yourself, be prepared to make choices to change and develop and act in ways that show strong personal agency. |

Now it is time to put some of this into practice and get to know yourself a bit better!

### Measuring Emotional Intelligence

This Unit has focussed on the value and use of EQ in developing collaborative learning practices for TVET lecturers, consequently you are likely to be interested in how you can become aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Can you accurately and reliably measure your own, or somebody else’s EQ? What would such a score mean and how could it be usefully interpreted?

The literature on EQ (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003) suggests that emotional intelligence is a skill or ability and, like other skills and abilities, it can be measured through validated tests such as the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS™) which consists of seven subtests that have been standardised for reliability and validity. However, there are critics who suggest that there are too many variables, such as culture or socialisation, which can result in controversial scores. This Unit will consequently *not* expect you to undergo any formal ability testing to establish your EQ score.

Nevertheless, it is important for you to have a way of exploring your own emotional competencies and responses, so we will provide you with an opportunity to do a self-evaluation activity to keep you thinking constructively about how an awareness of emotional intelligence can make you a better TVET lecturer. Please note that this activity is *not* a validated or scientific measure of EQ, and the score it produces should *only* be used to help you think about your strengths or areas that might need development.

Activity 9: Self-evaluation

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

To do this self-analysis activity, turn to Appendix 1 and complete the self-assessment exercise according to the instructions you will find there. Once you have completed the evaluation and have scored your responses, remember they are only useful to yourself, so you are advised to keep them confidential while you reflect on what you might have learned about yourself along the way. The way you can get the most out of this activity is by being completely honest in your responses. Nobody else will get to see your self-assessment so why not make as true a reflection of yourself as possible?

An important part of completing the self-assessment of your own emotional intelligence competencies is to reflect on what you have learned, and then use this knowledge to develop yourself personally and professionally. You can achieve this by completing the EQ Personal Development Plan at the end of the appendix and striving to work on the areas for growth while building on your strengths. Don’t move on to the next section until you have filled in at least part of this plan.

Discussion of the activity

How difficult was it to remain honest and objective in making your responses? Were you able to make quick and clear choices from the options provided or did you spend time trying to work out what the statement was probing before choosing your response? It’s usually best not to ponder over the statements for too long and rather go with your initial ‘gut feel’ because in this way you get an authentic picture about what your strengths are, and which areas you might need to work on. You will have noticed that the scores you transferred from the self-assessment sheet to the Personal Development Plan are a useful way to map your emotional intelligence competencies as you compare the scores in the five identified categories. It really doesn’t matter what the actual scores were, but the gaps between the higher and lower scores will help point out the areas that might need some special attention as you continue to work through the modules in this Advanced Diploma.

You probably also identified that in the earlier model of emotional intelligence (Table 1.) there were four quadrants, while in the self-assessment exercise (Appendix 1) there are five dimensions. This is not a contradiction, but simply a different way to indicate that emotional intelligence is not indicated by rigid, clearly distinguishable measures. A response to any particular emotional situation will always be influenced by a number of related factors that will differ from person to person. The dimensions named in the self-assessment activity are simply a useful way to help you understand yourself better.

### Emotional Intelligence and change

Now that you have completed a self-assessment of your EQ competencies, it is important to extend and include what you have learned into your practice as a TVET lecturer, especially with regard to collaboration with a range of other stakeholders. For many of you this will be a process of change, for which it’s likely you will be required to provide a sense of leadership. You will want to demonstrate your agency to initiate, manage, and sustain the changes necessary to ensure effective collaboration, as you have come to understand it.

To help you understand how theory and practice work well together, complete Activity 10.

Activity 10: Bringing theory and practice closer together

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

The reading is taken from a Journal article called: *Change Leadership: The Role of Emotional Intelligence* by Mohammed Issah*,* and you are encouraged to read through the whole article, because it closes with a specific reference to collaboration that will be very useful as you start thinking about what you might do, and how you are going to demonstrate your agency at your college. You can access the article [here](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244018800910).

While you read, keep a pen or pencil handy to make notes in the margin about some of the links the writer makes to the content you have already covered in this Module (Unit 1 and Unit 2), and make sure that you understand what the significance is for your particular field of work in a TVET college. Make notes in your Learning Journal that explain what the significance is.

To give you a few clues, look for the following while you are reading:

* Change and empathy.
* Perceiving, using, and managing emotions.
* Clear communication.
* Co-operation, teamwork, and motivation.
* Coalitions.
* Knowledge of others’ attitudes.
* Being judgemental.
* Patience.
* Reciprocal trust and respect.
* Self-awareness.
* Credibility.
* Collaboration.

Discussion of the activity

The article you have read through might not be specific to the TVET college sector, but its focus is very directly on change in educational organisations, and the personal characteristics of people who lead change successfully. Even if your college already uses a model of collaboration that brings together a full range of stakeholders, it’s more than likely there are some people who are not convinced about the value or effectiveness of what’s already happening, and this is an opportunity for you to be an effective agent of change. If, however, your experience of working in colleges tells you that collaboration, as you now understand it, is *not* being practiced at all levels, then you have an ideal opportunity to share your knowledge and lead a process of change, even if it is only within your own subject discipline to start with. It will be by your example and initiative that other colleagues and even college managers might come to see this development as valuable and worthwhile.

The extent to which you are able to demonstrate a change in your own practice and influence others will depend upon what you have learned about emotional intelligence. Reflect for a moment on the second outcome that was listed at the beginning of this Unit:

Reflect on the ability to listen well, the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to embrace and resolve differences, the ability to build agreement that honours voices in a group, the ability to manage emotions, and the ability to embrace multiple perspectives.

Stop and Think

|  |
| --- |
| Can you see the links between the theory, the self-assessment you did, the article you have read, and your position as a lecturer in a TVET college, particularly as someone who will take responsibility for building relationships that are important for effective collaboration? Go back to the notes you made while reading the article to make sure you understood how the ‘clues’ you were given (before reading) align with the unit outcomes. |

### Some practical EQ skills

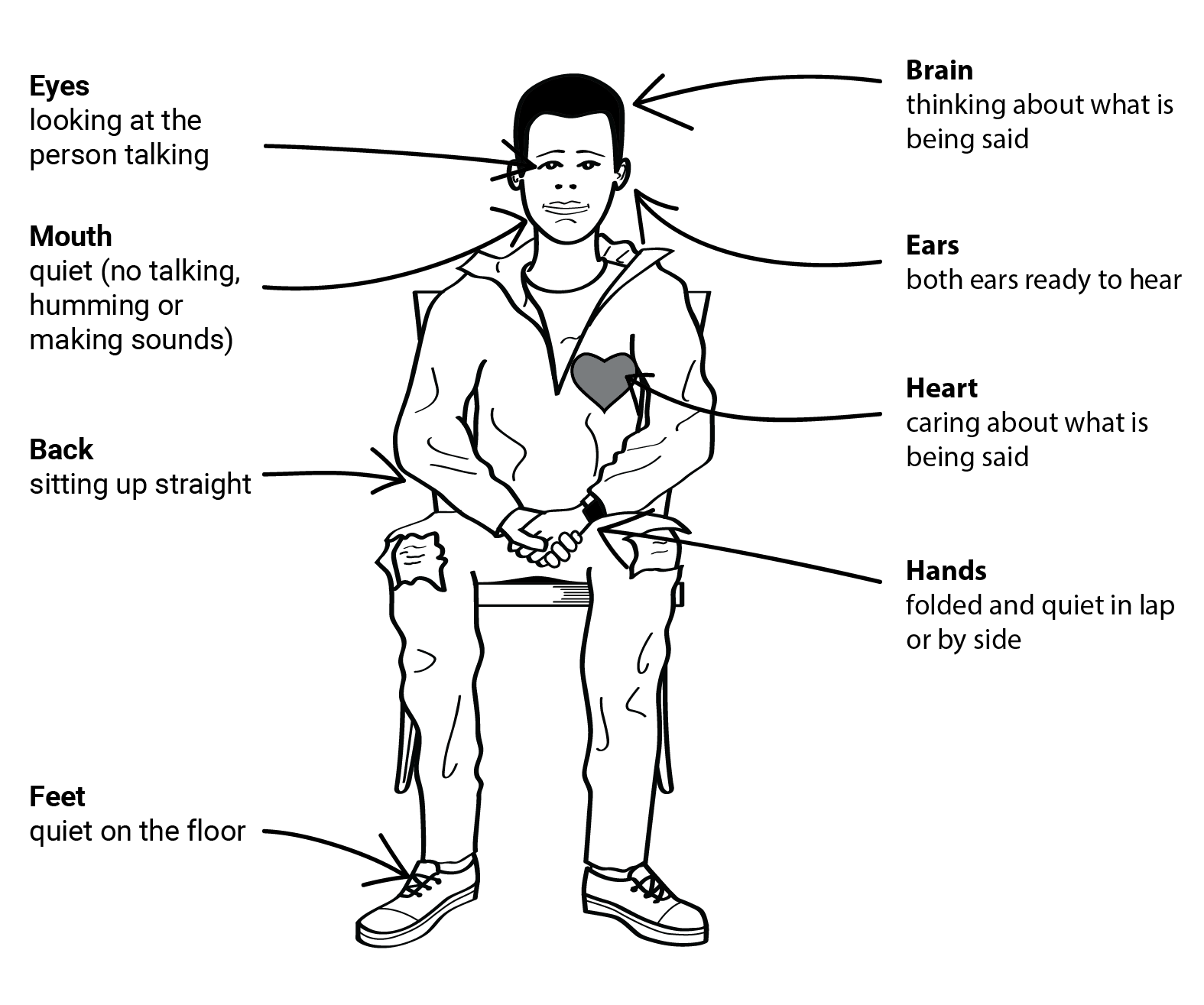
Your experience as a lecturer will tell you that however well you have mastered your subject (knowing it), and its application (knowing that), the art of facilitating similar learning with your TVET students (knowing how), is a very important measure of how effective you are in your work. Some of the skills that can be learned have already emerged in the previous sections and you will now focus on a few of them. It should be clear that skills and abilities don’t exist in isolation and so can’t be practiced on their own. For example, good listening skills go hand in hand with effective communication; embracing and resolving differences and showing empathy work together; and they are all strengthened by well managed emotions.

The following activities are designed to get you to *reflect* on your current practice and contemplate making positive changes, so it’s important that you make a conscious decision to implement what you are learning.

Activity 11: Listening and communicating

**Suggested time: 30 minutes**

Use Figure 3 as a stimulus and frame your answers to the questions that follow from what the picture, and your own knowledge tell you:



**Figure 3: Whole body listening (Redrawn:** [**Source**](https://www.clipart.email/download/1212168.html)**)**

Use your Learning Journal to make notes in response to the following questions, based on the picture.

1. Why do you think the picture has a caption called *Whole body listening*?
2. What is the relationship between listening and communicating that the picture is suggesting?
3. Body language is an important part of effective communication. What does this picture suggest about appropriate body language?

Discussion of the Activity

When you are teaching or lecturing a group of students you are usually very aware of whether they are listening or not, simply by observing certain behaviours they display. In a similar way, you are also able to tell if your husband or wife or partner is paying attention to what you are saying! Perhaps you can recall having to listen to a very boring person who just kept talking even though you were trying to get the message across that you were not really interested in what they were saying. The message is clear that listening is not only about keeping your ears open, but is also about responding to the speaker in a variety of ways, and this two-way contact is a fundamental part of communication.

The picture tells a story about listening as an *active* process that involves visual contact (eyes), physical response (body position and posture), cognitive connection (thinking) and affective connection (emotions), and together, these form the cues that tell us if someone is listening fully to what we are trying to convey. In the case of the boring speaker, the messages that you send are designed to end the communication or redirect it away from yourself. To do this you might break eye contact or turn slightly away from the speaker – or in an extreme way, ignore the speaker entirely and turn away to speak to someone else.

Of course, what underpins all our reactions and responses to listening and communicating is the extent to which we are aware of the way we are feeling at the time. If you are bored, frustrated, angry or intimidated by someone who is speaking, the quality of the communication will inevitably be affected. The reverse situation is equally true – if you are boring, frustrating, angry, or intimidating, people will not be listening to you very effectively! The big question that the picture poses is about your awareness of your own, and the other person’s feelings about the communication, and how well you can manage *both* sets of feelings. By understanding the importance of emotional intelligence, and consciously learning to listen actively and with concern for the speaker, you will be able to listen and communicate more effectively.

Active listening, or whole-body listening is fundamental to establishing and maintaining healthy personal and professional relationships, so it’s not surprising that effective collaboration depends heavily on this key emotional intelligence skill. From the first moment of contact with a colleague or manager or industry-based associate, the quality of the relationship is established through excellent communication skills, always underpinned by the ability to listen closely, attentively, and with purpose.

Activity 12: Establishing rapport and showing empathy

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

Effective listening and communication skills are closely related to the skills covered in the next activity. The activity title might introduce you to a new word, *rapport*, a word originally from French, which means establishing a good two-way connection with someone, and it’s linked to the concept of *empathy,* which means the ability to share and understand the feeling of others. It’s not difficult to see these as important EQ skills.

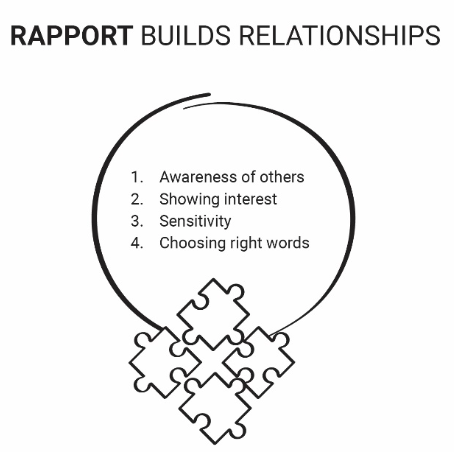
Your aim should be to build rapport and show empathy with colleagues, both in your own discipline and beyond, with college management and people working in business and industry. The better you get at doing this, the greater your chances are of establishing and maintaining strong relationships, and ensuring effective collaboration, because people respond well to someone who shows a willingness to listen carefully and acknowledge the other person. By showing that you are interested in and receptive to someone else’s ideas and suggestions, you are showing a strong capacity for collaboration.

Use the pictures in Figures 4 to 6 to test whether you have a good understanding of rapport and empathy as you answer the following questions:

1. Look at Figure 4, and specifically the words within the circle to think about setting up collaborative relationships in your working environment. For example, how might you *show an awareness* of the position of people senior to you, or who work in business or industry? What kind of *sensitivity* or *way of speaking* would encourage other people to want to work collaboratively with you?

Outline a process you might use to encourage a strong working relationship with either:

* 1. College management.
  2. People from business or industry.



**Figure 4: How rapport can build relationships**

Now look at Figures 5 and 6, and write a response to the following questions:

1. The two pictures are each expressing something about trying to put yourself in the place of others, to show an understanding of what they might be feeling or experiencing. The two pictures feature the same young woman, but in different contexts. The first shows a young boy trying to express his concern for her while the second picture shows her response to someone else who has made a judgement about her being pregnant. What do each of the two pictures tell you about different people’s reactions to the young woman?
2. Give an example of how showing empathy might convince a reluctant colleague to work more closely with you and others.



**Figure 5: Young boy trying to express concern**



**Figure 6: Woman reacting to perceived judgement**

Discussion of the Activity

We have all come across people who make us feel at ease and important, and who seem to show a real interest in who we are and what we are doing. You will also be able to remember interacting with certain people who show no personal interest in you at all, and brush you off as unimportant or insignificant, or who simply ignore your presence altogether. This kind of human interaction happens in both social and professional environments. Have you reflected on your own reactions to other people recently? Can you recognise yourself in either of these two groups of people – those who connect easily and warmly, or those who seem cold and removed?

Sometimes you might misread a person you meet for the first time and make a particular judgement about them. For example, a newly appointed Head of Department might come across as unfriendly and cold to you and your colleagues, yet what they are really feeling is anxiety, uncertainty, and vulnerability. This reminds you that communications between people can frequently ‘go wrong’ if you are not consciously aware of the emotions and feelings that are playing out below the surface.

Now reflect on the example you wrote down about setting up a collaborative working relationship in response to Question 1. Did your answer reveal a knowledge of emotional intelligence, starting with recognising your own feelings? How did you plan to understand the needs and concerns of someone else? How did you think about managing differences of opinion, or diverse ideas? What were the benefits of the collaboration that you thought would be valuable to both of you and your college? If your answers began to address these issues, you are well on the way to using a knowledge of EQ to shape your professional development.

One of the dangers of exploring emotional intelligence is over-enthusiasm! Sometimes you might get caught up in the excitement of new learning and try too hard to ‘practise’ new skills. When this happens the authenticity (or honesty) of a moment is lost. This might be illustrated in the picture of the person saying, ‘I know how you feel’. How else might the young man have tried to show empathy or concern for the young lady, because he simply can’t know how she feels? Perhaps he could have said. ‘Tell me how you feel, I just can’t imagine…’, or else, ‘You really are amazing, help me understand…’.

Perhaps part of showing genuine empathy lies in the story behind the picture of the woman asking someone to ‘take a walk in my shoes before judging me’? Most of you will have heard of the saying that refers to ‘walking in someone else’s shoes’, as a way of expressing a deep understanding of their circumstances (showing empathy). This idea aligns very well with the emotionally intelligent notion of recognising other people’s feelings and actions before making judgements about them, but it’s not always a simple thing to do. You first have to recognise your own emotional response, then suspend judgement while you find out more, perhaps through active listening or showing empathy. Developing emotional intelligence doesn’t just happen, it is a gradual process of developing and practicing patience, wisdom, reflection, and Ubuntu.

Activity 13: From understanding theory to collaborating in practice

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

You may still be a bit unclear about what the link is between *understanding yourself* and the *practice of professional collaboration,* because it is a significant step from knowing the theory of something, to knowing how to put it into practice, and why it’s important to do so.

The following reading has been included to help you get further insight into how you might make this shift. Cox, J. (2011). Emotional intelligence and its role in collaboration. *Proceedings of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences (ASBBS)*. 18(1): 435-445. Take note: you may need to access the online version of this article via your institutional library. While the whole article is relevant to this Unit, **you must read closely pages 435 – 439**. You are strongly urged to read the rest of the article, however.

* Read pages 435 – 439 and see if you can extract at least *five ideas* from the reading that either confirm what you already know about emotional intelligence and collaboration or provide new insights for you as a TVET lecturer. List the five ideas in your Learning Journal before you read the discussion of the activity.

Discussion of the Activity

The complexity of modern organisations and especially TVET colleges demands high levels of technical knowledge as well as an understanding of the challenges faced by the students who enrol at these institutions. Lecturers also need to be reflective about what they know and can do to provide the best possible learning opportunities. To be very good at your job, you need self and social awareness, and you must be able to manage relationships that show consideration for the people you must engage with – students, colleagues, managers, and associates from business and industry. Change is a constant feature of complex organisations, and strong emotional connections have been shown to help overcome resistance to meaningful change.

The literature consulted by the writer of the article seems to use terms such as *trust, integrity,* and *empathy* widely in association with both emotional intelligence and collaboration, so it is reasonable to assume that these features are essential in any collaborative environment, especially with regard to the diversity of stakeholders. It seems clear that leaders of collaborative working environments model enthusiasm and inspiration through their genuine interest and concern for others.

The article presents an interesting view on organisational conflict, suggesting that it is beneficial in stimulating growth and change, and that it emerges out of people being emotionally activated. It stands to reason that people who recognise and manage emotions effectively are likely to manage conflict in a similarly mature way, helping to transform conflict into collaborative opportunities to innovate and meet challenges creatively.

Collaboration is more than teamwork, especially because each individual who works in this way contributes his or her unique skills and abilities in supporting a common goal and the whole group’s success, but only if trust, openness and adaptability (all closely linked to EQ) are well established.

A very interesting section of the reading refers to a *strong sense of community* within teams of collaborative participants, where important elements of emotional intelligence are needed to build and sustain these powerful relationships. This will be more fully explored in Unit 5 of this module.

You might have identified some of the ideas given, or you might have found others more interesting personally. The important learning to be gained from doing this reading is to reflect on what it has added both to your understanding of the concepts of emotional intelligence and collaboration, as well as providing ideas about how you might accept the challenges of introducing them into your practice as a TVET lecturer.

Activity 14: Your collaboration action plan revisited

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

This Unit has built on the understanding that collaboration is a critical feature of successful TVET education and that it requires personal agency and professional skill to plan, initiate, manage, and sustain. Your role as a TVET lecturer is central to meaningful and successful student learning and it should be in collaboration with college management that you engage as an active participant in the process. Consequently, this Unit was designed to provide you with an opportunity to explore and develop the personal characteristics necessary to be a leader in your field and an example to others. It’s now important that these personal characteristics find expression in your professional practice, and to do this you need a clear plan of action.

In Activity 3 of Unit 1, you were asked to start filling in sections of a Collaboration Action Plan(Table 1), based on what you had learned about establishing working relationships with people from within and beyond the boundaries of your college.

You now have an opportunity to work further on this plan and refine it in the light of new learning about understanding and managing emotions during a process of change and development. The two columns in the plan you ought to spend more time considering relate to what the purpose of the collaboration is intended to be, and how the collaboration should happen. Both of these need to take EQ into account if you really want the plan to succeed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Collaboration Action Plan** | | | | |
| **WHO**  **Who do you want to collaborate with?** | **WHAT**  **What is the purpose of the collaboration?** | **HOW**  **How should the collaboration happen?** | **WHEN**  **When will the collaboration happen** | **BENEFIT**  **What are the benefits of collaboration?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Discussion of the Activity

This plan is a *work in progress* and after each addition you make, or amendment that is necessary, you should spend a few minutes reflecting on what new learning is helping you to refine the process of including new skills and competencies into your practice as a TVET lecturer. One way to do this is to write your reflections down in your Learning Journal. When you read through the Journal at the end of your studies, you will be reminded that the journey of learning is a lifelong progression, sometimes marked by clear moments of excitement and enthusiasm.

The next Unit will focus more sharply on creating co-operative learning opportunities for your TVET students, using the knowledge and skills you have developed in the first two Units of this Module.

# Unit 3: Co-operative learning

## Introduction

What was your experience of learning at school, or during your academic and professional education? Did you feel that it was something you always had to do alone, learning from your mistakes as you grappled with problems? What do you think your TVET students think about the same question, especially in your classroom or workshop? Have you consciously thought about how to make learning a rich and varied set of experiences for your students?

This module is called *Collaboration in teaching and learning* and in Unit 1 you began by engaging with different ways of learning, asking yourself about your own preferences. Sometimes it’s rewarding to struggle through new ideas on your own and sometimes it’s really helpful to bounce ideas off someone else or even a group of people. Often, the nature of what you are doing plays a part in making choices about learning, for example, if you are trying your hand at bricklaying you might want to consult an expert to find out about techniques that will stop moisture from rising up the walls and creating damp problems, or how to ensure that your walls don’t crack after you have finished plastering and painting them. Perhaps you have tried baking fresh bread but for some reason the yeast did not seem to get the bread to rise as you thought it should? Asking experienced bakers about what went wrong is likely to help you avoid repeating mistakes that could easily be eliminated. So, Unit 3 is going to explore what it means to share learning experiences for the benefit of everyone involved in seeking new knowledge. The Unit will focus specifically on your role as a TVET lecturer in understanding and using co-operative learning strategies with your students.

## Unit 3 outcome

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

* Demonstrate an ability to organise a range of different co-operative learning activities for technical and vocational students.

Activity 15: A case study of co-operative learning

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

Read the following short case study and write your responses in your Learning Journal to the three questions that follow. While you read the extract, try to place yourself in the shoes of the characters in the story. At the same time, think about the emotional reactions they must have experienced during the events captured in the story. How might you have reacted in a similar situation?

|  |
| --- |
| A group of TVET students have an idea about making some extra money during their holidays by offering their services as a catering team for businesses who want to hold end-of-year functions for their staff. In the group there is a student studying Entrepreneurship and Business Management (N4), two students who are enrolled for a Hospitality module in Catering: Theory and Practical (N4) and the group leader is studying Food and Beverage Services (N5). They believe that they have the knowledge and skills to be able to offer an affordable and high-quality service, so they put together an advertising flyer and deliver it to a few small to medium sized companies in the town.  The response is encouraging, and they get enquiries from 4 companies, asking for quotes for a variety of services and menus. The four students get together for a few quick meetings between studying and writing their exams and each one takes a company and prepares a quotation for the event. Surprisingly, three companies accept the quotes and they believe they are in business! The first event happens less than two weeks later and is something of a disaster: They were asked to supply wine, and a variety of soft drinks (even though they don’t have a liquor licence!), however, most of the employees brought their own beer or spirits and simply added the soft drinks as mixers. They were left with a large quantity of wine which they had paid for but could not return. The snacks they provided were finished within minutes and the company manager complained angrily. Only a few guests ordered one of the two main dishes they prepared, and the other dish was finished before half the guests had eaten. Things got a bit out of hand later in the evening and a whole table, laden with glasses was knocked over and the glasses were smashed.  At the end of the evening, as party goers were leaving, they had to listen to numerous complaints and criticism of a very amateur attempt at catering, as well as counting the cost of unused wine, broken glasses and plates of uneaten food. A few days later, when they had paid the bills, replaced the broken glasses, and discarded the uneaten food, they discovered they had lost R300 on the evening, instead of making their estimated profit of R1000! They also had some angry words for each other about whose fault it was and why the quote had been so hopelessly inaccurate. They also had to contemplate facing two more end-of year-parties in the following two weeks…  What were they going to do? In desperation they approached their favourite lecturer at the College for advice and even though catering was not her subject, what she shared with them made an enormous difference to the remaining two events, where compliments replaced complaints, wastage was minimised and a small profit was realised. |

1. Based on the brief information you can gather from the case, what do you think might have gone wrong in the way the students managed the first catering event?
2. How could they go about learning from the experience and what lessons can they take from it?
3. What do you imagine their lecturer was able to share with them that might have made such a difference?

Discussion of the Activity

Of course, there are many different things you might have thought about as you read through this case study, but it’s most likely that the issue of ‘working together’ was one of them. Perhaps you referred to the way they *collaborated* in the venture or how they *co-operated* with each other in preparing for their first venture into a business enterprise? The students initiated the idea and tried to self-manage it. They were all actively engaged in trying to use the knowledge and skills they are learning, rather than being satisfied with the theory they might have studied. They certainly attempted to work as a group towards a common goal and they all took responsibility for trying to be successful, but their efforts still fell short of their expectations.

Perhaps what they can take from the experience is a deeper understanding of co-operation as a way of learning to be more professional and effective. Co-operative learning is widely considered to be most effective when each student is assigned a specific role, based on the knowledge and abilities they already have (and sometimes it takes the wisdom and experience of a lecturer or teacher to manage this). The students in our case simply shared out the task of constructing quotes without considering if they had agreed on a set of principles. While they all tried their best at the time, it seems clear that they were not fully *inter*dependent, possibly because they had not spent enough time in face-to-face discussion, working out who would be best suited for each task and checking with someone more knowledgeable if there was something they were missing. At the end, there was inevitably some conflict, anger, and fear, brought about by a feeling of insecurity in having to do this again quite soon. This was a particular challenge for their developing emotional intelligence, as revealed by the immediate need to blame someone. They might also have paused before launching into their first catering attempt, to reflect and give each other feedback, or ask for an experienced person to help them do this.

What they did correctly was to identify they needed someone – a kind of expert – to help them work out some of the steps and principles of co-operative learning. It’s wonderful when students feel challenged to take on a co-operative venture like this, but they also need to feel safe, and this is very important for TVET lecturers to acknowledge if they are serious about organising co-operative learning experiences for their students. Perhaps it was this sense of understanding and security that the lecturer in the case study brought to the four young students?

As you become more experienced as a TVET lecturer, you become the ‘expert’ that your TVET students look to for guidance and support, so a knowledge of how co-operative learning works best, and when it is appropriate, will add great value to the work you do. The best lecturers recognise the importance of lifelong learning and continue to collaborate with colleagues and other professionals in their quest for the excellence they can share with their students. This kind of working together or collaboration was the focus of Unit 1.

Unit 2 asked you to introspect or think closely about yourself and the way emotions impact on both personal and professional relationships that underpin the kind of collaboration and co-operation you should be trying to develop in you working life. The concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) reminds you that it’s just as important to understand how other people might be feeling as well, so that you don’t only focus on managing your own emotions, especially in situations where conflict might be present.

You might remember reading the following paragraph at the very beginning of this module:

The fundamental idea behind working together is just as important for your TVET students, as they study under your guidance and teaching. By getting your students to work co-operatively in teams and groups you can open up very creative and exciting learning opportunities as they share their knowledge and skills with each other. Your task in this module will be to discover how to facilitate this co-operative learning within the scope of your subject specialisation as you focus on what you want your students to master, and how they can work in ways that will maximise their future opportunities.

Hopefully, it now makes more sense to you! Having understood the importance of collaboration and the value you can add to professional relationships through a mature understanding of emotional intelligence and well-developed social skills, you should be looking forward to extending this knowledge into your practice as a TVET lecturer, as you work with your students.

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| Do you remember trying to write working definitions of *collaborative learning* and *co-operative learning* in Activity 1 of Unit 1? Go back to your Learning Journal and reflect on what you wrote then. |

If you wrote down something about *collaborative learning* that refers to working with people more widely, for example, colleagues from different disciplines or colleges, or college management, or associates from business and industry, then you have understood how the term is used in this module. Similarly, if your definition of *co-operative learning* focussed more on working closely with people (especially TVET students) on a structured task, and where interdependence is vital and social interaction is important, then you are closer to understanding the different way these terms are used in this module.

### Collaboration or Co-operation?

Much of the literature on collaborative and co-operative learning tends to use the two terms interchangeably because they both refer to working in groups, or actively together with others on common issues, sharing ideas, and developing cognitive skills, while remaining accountable to one another. This is consistent with what this module is attempting to do, however, a significant feature of it is that it expects you to engage with two distinct groups of people:

* Professional colleagues and associates from business and industry.
* TVET students.

Consequently, the module distinguishes between the two groups and the processes and methods of actively working together by using the term *collaboration* when referring to colleagues and professional associates, and *co-operation* when referring to TVET students. There are few hard and fast rules that separate the two terms otherwise, and it’s largely a matter of choosing a convenient and easy-to-remember way of separating discussions about the two groups that you interact with regularly.

Because the relationship that necessarily exists between lecturers and students is different to the relationships that exist between professional colleagues, you will be able to explore them separately, without the confusion of terminology and language. However, don’t be surprised if some of the readings you will do use the terms interchangeably!

The text box shows a useful summary of co-operative learning that will help you distinguish between the way this module uses the two terms.

|  |
| --- |
| What is Co-operative Learning?  Co-operative learning is a teaching method where small groups of learners work collaboratively towards a goal. It can be a very effective teaching model that allows students to interact with each other, and be an active participant in their learning. Not all situations warrant a co-operative learning model though, so we’ll explore the advantages and disadvantages of this teaching method.  Advantages of Co-operative Learning:   * Students actively participate in their education by exploring and learning from each other. They are able to experience a wide range of thoughts and opinions on a subject from working with their peers. More importantly, they arrive at their own conclusions after having done research or exploring a topic thoroughly. * Students are able to practice and hone social skills such as working in a group, resolving conflict, problem solving, and taking directions from a peer leader, to name a few. These important, life-long skills are needed in the workplace but are rarely practiced in a typical lecture-style classroom. * Co-operative learning is a teaching model that is heavily supported by research as being very effective. It can be used along with a variety of other teaching strategies, which we’ll address later. * The teacher becomes a facilitator instead of a lecturer. Teachers can work with the small groups individually, assisting and intervening when needed. * A deeper level of understanding can take place within groups as students delve into subjects they are interested in. * Groups can be assigned topics based on skill level or difficulty. This form of differentiation enables students of all abilities to be successful, even if their subjects or products may be different from their peers’.   Disadvantages of Co-operative Learning:   * Not all students work well with others, and may cause conflict within a group. This can potentially sabotage a co-operative learning environment. * Not all lessons are ideal for group work. Easy or straightforward concepts may not be as interesting or successful in a co-operative learning assignment. * Groups will finish at different times. This can add a layer of classroom management complexity for the instructor. * Co-operative learning groups can create a level of noise within the classroom that the teacher might not be comfortable with, or know how to manage well. * Some students may not do their fair share of work, or certain students may monopolise the task. This can lead to challenging grading situations for the teacher.   Adapted: [Source](https://www.getadministrate.com/blog/cooperative-learning-primer/) |

### Co-operative learning with TVET students

From this point onwards, whenever you read about co-operative learning in this module it will refer to a teaching and learning relationship that exists between TVET lecturers and TVET students.

So, why not simply refer to *group work*, because this is a term used widely in education to refer to students or learners working together? Perhaps it’s because the term *group work* has been around for so long and has been generally poorly understood and practised that it’s a good idea to reconceptualise the principles of working co-operatively.

Group work is a generic term that broadly means that students or learners are placed together for some educational purpose – it might be to produce an output or simply discuss a topic and can either be lecturer-led or student-led. If any assessment is attached to group work, it is usually done on the basis of the collective efforts of the group rather than individual effort or achievement.

Co-operative learning, on the other hand, is about a more specific and deliberate grouping of students put together for a defined task. This is different from group learning because each member is held accountable for their specific responsibility and all members rely on each other (they are interdependent) for the successful overall completion of the task. The responsibility for defining tasks, grouping students, holding them accountable, and supporting their interdependence belongs to the TVET lecturer – you!

Activity 16: Co-operative learning explained further

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

Reading about a concept such as co-operative learning is always important, but sometimes it helps to visualise it in another format. Visual learning has been reported to improve the retention (memory) of new knowledge, improve higher order cognitive skills and assist visual communication. As a lecturer, you will be aware that among a diversity of learners, different people learn effectively in a variety of ways and from different voices. In the same way, co-operative opportunities should be designed to get students more involved in active participation than most typical lectures might.

Here is a short [video](https://youtu.be/SroWqDgwZw4) that presents an animated look at how co-operative learning might work in a classroom environment. While you watch it, reflect on how you are processing similar knowledge about a topic you have only been reading about so far.

While you watch the video, keep a pen and paper available so that you can make notes about the following questions. Once you have completed watching the video, use the notes you have made to write fuller answers to the questions in your Learning Journal.

1. Why is it important that the video suggests that students should be at the centre of the learning, yet you have read that it’s the lecturers’ responsibility to be in control of co-operative learning opportunities?
2. The video uses examples of a history class to demonstrate how co-operative learning works. Think of an example of something from your subject specialisation, or from a practical lesson, to show how you could structure a co-operative learning opportunity.

Discussion of the Activity

Is it a contradiction for you that while learners (your TVET students) need to be at the centre of a co-operative learning process, the responsibility for constructing and managing the process sits firmly with the lecturer? It shouldn’t be, because co-operative learning activities will only work as intended if lecturers are meticulous about their planning and organising – and this means making sure that students are well prepared and have the necessary resources and instructions to guide them through the process. The summary you read through earlier, wisely pointed out some of the limitations or disadvantages of co-operative learning which you need to be aware of. You will explore this in the next section of this Unit.

### Limitations and disadvantages of co-operative learning

Anyone who was involved with education in the late 1990s, when Outcomes Based Education (OBE) was introduced as the national curriculum, will probably remember the effects that it had, one of which was to favour group work. The idea was to demonstrate a move away from the restricted apartheid system of education and especially the rote learning that was often characteristic of disadvantaged school classrooms. A lot has been written about why OBE failed in South Africa but there has been fairly wide agreement that some of the key reasons were: *a lack of resources, poorly trained teachers, large classes, and poor learner discipline*. If you consider the challenges in the education system, do you imagine that most forms of group work were likely to have been successful? History reminds us that, ironically, OBE (and hence group work) seemed to be most effective in the formerly advantaged sector which had good resources, well trained teachers, smaller classes, and disciplined learners. The lesson you might need to take from this is that good ideas don’t always translate into perfect practice, because the context often demands a different approach to new ideas.

It’s important, therefore, to make it very clear that this unit is not expecting you to throw out everything you currently do or know and fundamentally change your lecturing approach or style. The purpose behind using co-operative learning is to strengthen the range of teaching and learning opportunities available to lecturers and students, and not to make changes for the sake of change.

Activity 17: Co-operative learning: Your experiences?

**Suggested time: 90 minutes**

As you do this activity, remember that in this Unit there is a distinction drawn between the more generic term ‘group work’, and co-operative learning, which is viewed as an important part of collaboration in teaching and learning. Nevertheless, you can draw examples from any form of group work you have knowledge of in doing the following task, spending about 30 minutes on each question.

Your task is to reflect on your own experience of lecturers’ or teachers’ use of group work and respond to the following questions. Write your response in your Learning Journal.

1. Write down an example of successful group work that you were part of. What was the activity and why did it work successfully?
2. Describe an example of group work that was not successful. Try to explain what happened during the exercise and why it was not successful.
3. What were the effects on learners/students after both successful and unsuccessful attempts at group work? What did this mean for future attempts at doing group work?

Discussion of the Activity

Were you able to think of an example of effective group work that wasn’t simply a teacher or lecturer’s way of keeping students busy? It would be difficult to think of good examples of group work that did not fit the description of co-operative learning, so compare your examples to the ideas suggested.

Co-operative learning must be structured and planned, groupings must be deliberate for a particular purpose (but can change for different purposes), resources must be provided, ground rules need to be spelled out, a disciplined learning environment must be maintained, and students must recognise the opportunity to be actively and constructively engaged in exploring and sharing new knowledge. *Only* when all of this is in place, can students take control of what they must do individually, so that they are empowered to share their knowledge with their peers – and with lecturers. When co-operative learning is understood and practiced in this way, you will begin to observe moments when teachers or lecturers become students, and when students become teachers. This is what *inter*dependence for deep learning really means.

The range of reasons for group work *not* being successful can vary widely, but generally they would reflect situations quite different from those described. Because co-operative learning is a dynamic process, it can’t always replace other important forms of teaching and learning, so it demands that a lecturer is able to distinguish when it is appropriate or not. If it is used because the lecturer is not well organised and thinks putting students into groups will cover up the lack of preparation, failure is almost guaranteed because students are quick to recognise these signs.

Perhaps the most significant reasons that group activities don’t work well are closely linked to the students’ own expectations of teaching and learning. However well organised a lecturer might be, if the students’ feelings reflect any of the following, the chances of success are limited:

* Past bad experiences (poorly structured, planned, and executed activities).
* Overuse of group work (not enough information provided through direct instruction).
* High levels of difficulty of the expected tasks (not enough support or encouragement given).
* Being assessed as a group (and not individually).
* Belief that only some group members do any work (the rest do nothing).
* Not getting on with group members (always the same people).
* Inappropriate content or methodology (working individually would be more effective).
* The purpose of the exercise is not clear (why are we doing this?).

In summary, there is a lot to think about when considering how and when to use collaborative learning, but importantly, you should not try to make it fit situations that are not appropriate. Co-operative teaching and learning situations are part of the repertoire of excellent lecturers’ skills, not the only way to manage student learning.

The example of a co-operative learning opportunity you provided in Answer 2 should reflect most of the points made in the preceding paragraph.

Now consider the example of a collaborative learning task that you will find in Appendix 2. This is an actual task that has been used in a South African TVET college.

Activity 18: Co-operative learning: an example

**Suggested time: 20 minutes**

The example presented in Appendix 2 is not intended to reflect the *perfect* lesson, and you should not think of it as a template to copy. The purpose behind this activity is to allow you to make your own judgements about how a task like this might work in your own context.

Read through the task and respond to the questions that follow by writing notes in your Learning Journal.

1. How well do you think the task is structured and planned?
2. Students are asked to work in pairs. Is this a reasonable way to group students?
3. Do the students have enough information to successfully work through each stage of the task?
4. Does the task present opportunities for creative ideas to be displayed?
5. Does the task show a careful approach to appropriate assessment?

Discussion of the Activity

Of course, there is no ‘model answer’ for these questions because different people might have varying responses to the questions, based on a variety of contextual differences. The purpose was to get you to think critically about the process of constructing co-operative learning opportunities for your students, in your college.

As a general evaluation, you will probably agree that there is evidence of careful planning and organisation, with plenty of information available to the students. While the groups could be extended beyond pairs, this should always allow all members of the group to work creatively and take responsibility for the task. The assessment rubric is clear and purposeful. The example was provided by a highly skilled and experienced TVET lecturer who felt that task worked very well in her college!

### How co-operative learning works in practice

Do you find reading easy and pleasurable, even if it presents some challenges? If you are finding an academic text difficult to understand, what’s your usual reaction? Do you decide it’s too complex and just stop reading? Are you able to work slowly through it, making notes along the way to help make sense of it? Have you ever thought of asking a fellow student or a colleague to read it as well so that you can work through it collaboratively? Activity 19 demonstrates how a set of questions related to the reading can help provide guidance for the reader. Why not try this technique with your TVET students?

A search of the literature will tell you that a lot has been researched and written about co-operative learning, so it’s very important that you engage with some of these academic sources. Two readings are provided, and Activity 19 is structured around carefully going through these readings and extracting some of the key knowledge they present about co-operative learning.

The first reading is the following article Sambu, L. & Simiyu, J. (2016). Conceptualizing Collaborative Teaching and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions: A Psychological Science Perspective. *Africa Journal of Technical & Vocational Education & Training*, 1(1): 53-64.Take note: You may need to access the online version of this journal article via your institutional library service.

The second reading comes from an article titled: *Exploring a cooperative learning approach to improve self-directed learning in higher education* by B. Breed (2016), which can be accessed [here](https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-6ced2999f).

You need to devote dedicated time (about two hours) to these two readings. They are placed together in this Unit because while they both cover the same topic of co-operative learning, the first is an academic article that gives a perspective on the theory of co-operative learning and its application in practice, while the second reading is taken from a publication reporting on research into possible links between co-operative learning strategies and student preparation for self-directed learning. Together they will provide a substantial platform for you to develop your own knowledge and skill as a TVET lecturer who provides creative and innovative learning opportunities for students.

Activity 19: Co-operative learning: what does the literature tell us?

**Suggested time: 120 minutes**

To help you get the most out of doing the two readings, use the following list of focus points to help you make notes as you read. All of these focus points will be referred to later in this Unit, so you need to take particular notice of them as you read. These notes will help you prepare for the rest of the activity:

* The lecturer’s role in preparing resources.
* The lecturer’s role in preparing students.
* The basic elements of co-operative learning:
  + Interdependence.
  + Individual accountability.
  + Face-to-face interaction.
  + Communication skills.
  + Methods/intentions of grouping students.
* Scaffolding student learning.
* Assessment and rewards.

NB: This activity is designed to *start* you thinking about using co-operative learning with your students. It is not supposed to be a fully refined plan because you will learn more about using co-operative learning later in this Unit. Doing this activity now is a good way to test yourself. Keep a copy of this plan in your Learning Journal for later reference.

1. Once you have completed the readings and made your notes, use what you have learned to frame a plan designed to incorporate the basic elements of co-operative learning (described in both articles) into your lecturing programme. The plan might cover a series of lecture sessions.
2. Reflect on how you plan to support your students (scaffold their learning) during the activities they will engage in.
3. Show how you will include some element of assessment in this co-operative learning exercise.

Discussion of the Activity

You might have found the activity quite challenging, especially if you don’t have much experience of planning co-operative learning opportunities for your students. If you have, however, tried doing this before, you will be able to test your current knowledge and practice of co-operative learning against the theory explained in the two readings, as well as against the practical suggestions that will follow in the next section of this Unit. Make sure you keep the plan you have developed because you will be asked to refine it further in a later section of this Unit.

All five focus points in the bulleted list will be covered in the remaining sections of the Unit and you are advised to come back to these readings from time to time, to consolidate your knowledge and support your efforts to strengthen your skills as a TVET lecturer who understands and practices co-operative teaching and learning strategies.

### Putting co-operative learning into your teaching

After having read about co-operative learning, watching the video, and trying to frame a plan for using it, you should be aware that it will not happen with your TVET students simply because *you* now know something about it. Your students must be actively taught how to develop their own co-operative learning skills, otherwise trying to use it might simply result in the same old ineffective group work that was described earlier in this Unit.

You will now engage with a reading that provides some excellent practical suggestions about how to go about making co-operative learning a very real part of your TVET students’ learning experiences. Use this opportunity to test your own ideas, which you included in your collaborative action plan. After you have considered the ideas presented in the reading, you will be expected to go back to your plan and refine it further.

Activity 20: Co-operative learning: Some practical suggestions

**Suggested time: 90 minutes**

This very practical guide comes from a publication called: *Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Courses*, written and compiled by Alice Macpherson (2015), which can be accessed [here](https://kora.kpu.ca/islandora/object/kora%3A43/datastream/PDF/view).

You have two tasks to complete in this activity. Read only to the end of page 19 for question 1.

1. Make sure that before you start reading you have your collaborative action plan with you. Now read the first 19 pages of the article and compare the advice it contains with the content of your plan. What can you add to your plan?
2. Re-draft your plan, using what you have learned from the reading. Remember, it will still not be complete – the next section of the Unit will help you consider how to help your students develop the social skills that underpin co-operative learning.

Discussion of the Activity

The reading taken from *Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Courses* provides you with a very comprehensive overview of the basic elements of co-operative learning, and also offers many useful ideas about putting it into practice. In summary, here are the key things you need to consider carefully before finalising a plan to incorporate co-operative learning into your lecturing programme:

1. Planning: You need to recognise that the time you might have spent preparing specific lectures where *you* do the teaching can be spent collecting resources, preparing worksheets and organising groups so that the students are actively engaged in their own learning.
2. Choose appropriate content: It’s usually better not to *start* new work with co-operative learning. Some prior contact with the learning content helps to give them direction.
3. Dividing up the content: Is the content you have chosen suitable for dividing into several logical sub-topics?
4. Content knowledge: Do *you* have enough subject content knowledge to guide the students in their different groups? Make sure that you research the content thoroughly to ensure that your knowledge is up-to-date and relevant for the exercise.
5. Resources and materials: Have you prepared all the necessary resources and materials students will need? How will you make them available to the students?
6. Preparing your students: Do your students have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities before participating in a co-operative learning lesson?
7. Special instructions: Have you given the students a printed set of instructions outlining what they must do, how much time they have, what they are expected to produce, how they will be assessed?
8. Conducting the lesson: You will not be teaching content directly but executing your plan. Have you prepared the venue, formed appropriate groups, outlined your expectations, provided resources, kept circulating among groups to monitor, reflected on the exercise?

What your students need to know about co-operative learning

Your students need to understand what it means to be *positively interdependent*. Your responsibility as a lecturer is to ensure they each carry a responsibility for contributing to achieving the lesson objectives. It’s about understanding that unless they are all successful, none of them will be successful, because each member of the group will have a portion of the information needed to complete the task, and as a group, they will have to put it all together.

Because co-operative learning is a *social* activity, you also need to help your students develop the social skills required to function effectively in groups. If you reflect on what you learned in Unit 2, your knowledge of emotional intelligence, and the associated listening and communicating skills of *rapport* and *empathy,* will be very valuable. The following activity will help you think about how you can successfully prepare your TVET students for co-operative learning. This is an important part of the plan that forms a solid foundation for their group interactions and responsibilities.

Activity 21: Teaching students co-operative learning skills

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

Read the extract in the text box, taken from a 2006 *Saide* publication: *Facilitating Outcomes Based Learning and Teaching. A Guide for Trainers and FET College Lecturers*. Even though we no longer follow an Outcomes Based curriculum, the extract provides very useful information on what skills you should be teaching to your students.

While you are reading the extract, make notes that will help you answer the four questions at the end of this paragraph. Use your notes to write full responses to the questions in your Learning Journal. Once you have done your reading and made the notes, you will use this new knowledge to develop your collaborative action plan more fully.

1. How can you use what you know about emotional intelligence to help your students develop good social skills?
2. How could you collaborate with other lecturers at your college to make co-operative learning an integral part of your teaching and learning strategies?
3. What kind of rewards (not marks) could you use to encourage participation and commitment to the process?
4. Use your responses to the previous two questions to refine your collaborative action plan further.

|  |
| --- |
| What co-operative learning skills do students have to be taught? There are four sets of skills that have to be taught:   * Forming skills. * Functioning skills. * Formulating skills. * Fermenting skills.   **Forming skills** are an initial set of management skills that help to get groups up and running smoothly and effectively. These skills include:   * Moving into groups quietly without fuss. * Staying with the group rather than moving around the room, * Using quiet voices that can be heard by members of the group, but not by others. * Encouraging all group members to participate.   **Functioning skills** are group management skills aimed at controlling the interactions that occur among group members. These include:   * Staying focused on the task. * Expressing support and acceptance of others. * Asking for help or clarification. * Offering to help or clarify. * Paraphrasing or summarising what others have said.   **Formulating skills** refer to a set of behaviours that help students to do a better job of processing material mentally. These skills include:   * Summarising and recording key points. * Connecting ideas to each other (mind mapping). * Seeking elaboration or expansion of ideas. * Finding ways to remember information. * Checking explanations and ideas.   **Fermenting skills** are a set of skills needed to resolve cognitive conflicts that arise within the group. These skills include:   * Critiquing ideas without criticising people. * Synthesising diverse ideas. * asking for justification or extending other people’s ideas. * Probing for more information.   Lecturers should teach these skills to students just as they teach subject content. Therefore, when lecturers plan a co-operative learning activity, they not only plan the teaching and learning outcomes, they also plan for the learning of social and group functioning skills. Before starting a co-operative learning activity, the lecturer should explain some of the skills, so that students will be able to recognise a skill when it is expressed in behaviour. Once the lecturer is convinced that the students understand and can recognise the skills, students practise them during the co-operative learning activity. While the students are practising a particular skill, the lecturer should move from group to group, monitoring the use of the skills. When the activity has been completed, the lecturer engages each group in reflecting on how successfully the skills were used, and setting goals for improving their use in future. |

Discussion of the Activity

Students always talk about their lecturers – whether you know about it or not! The reason they do so is because you practise your profession in a public space, and you leave a mark about who you are and how you behave. The example you set affects the way you will be remembered.

When students reflect on teachers or lecturers they really admire and respect, there will inevitably be two key things they remember. One is the lecturer’s command of their subject matter – their own personal and professional knowledge, and an ability to share it. The second thing, often not always clearly articulated, is the lecturer’s humanity, or personal engagement with, and respect for students. One way for you to understand what this personal quality might be and how it can be demonstrated is to go back to the EQ Personal Development Plan that you started to draw up during Unit 2 – do you remember it? It looks like Table 2.

**Table 2: EQ Personal Development Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Steps to stronger EQ** | **My score** | **My EQ Development Goals are:** | **How I aim to achieve my goals**  **(Development Actions)** | **What do I need to support me?**  **(Support/ Resources)** | **When am I going to start and when am I going to achieve my goals?** |
| SELF-AWARENESS |  |  |  |  |  |
| SELF-MANAGEMENT |  |  |  |  |  |
| SELF-MOTIVATION |  |  |  |  |  |
| SOCIAL AWARENESS |  |  |  |  |  |
| SOCIAL SKILLS |  |  |  |  |  |

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| You scored yourself, using the questions in the self-assessment activity, and hopefully you are still using this Plan to grow personally and professionally, but here’s an important question to consider:  *How do you think your TVET students would score you on the same five areas?* |

The purpose behind asking you this question is simply to remind you that whether you like it or not, students learn from the example their lecturers set! So, perhaps the best way to help them develop the social skills they need to benefit fully from co-operative learning is to consciously set the example you want them to follow, both personal and professional, as you work with them.

The second question you responded to asked about collaborating with colleagues to make co-operative learning an integral part of the teaching and learning strategies in your college. In much the same way, the example you set creates a platform for sharing creative and innovative ideas. By working co-operatively with your colleagues and others, you can demonstrate the effectiveness and value of exceptional and diverse professional practice. (You will cover this more fully in Unit 4 of this module).

Importantly, co-operative learning depends on careful attention to assessment and *reward*. There is a module on Assessment in this Advanced Diploma programme, and you are encouraged to refer closely to it when you consider a variety of different assessment strategies and techniques that will support co-operative learning. *Rewards*, however, refer to something different, not necessarily marks or scores, but ways of recognising and acknowledging individual student progress and development. Simply awarding all members of a group the same mark for an outcome is demotivating for those who put in most effort or who progress the most. Your readings mentioned rewards for average group improvement, designed as incentives for everyone to support everyone else. Rewards of this kind can often be creative, possibly including giving successful groups free time, or exemption from a class test or more access to complex equipment or other technology. Your challenge is to come up with a reward structure that best suits your learning environment.

This is also an opportunity for you to add to your Collaboration Action Plan that you started in Unit 1 (Table 1). Add a specific item about collaborating with colleagues with the purpose of making co-operative learning an integral part of your college teaching and learning strategy.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Collaboration Action Plan (CAP)** | | | | |
| **WHO**  **Who do you want to collaborate with?** | **WHAT**  **What is the purpose of the collaboration?** | **HOW**  **How should the collaboration happen?** | **WHEN**  **When will the collaboration happen** | **BENEFIT**  **What are the benefits of collaboration?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

### Models and strategies of co-operative learning

Knowing what co-operative learning means is important, as is knowing why you should consider using it for teaching and learning in a TVET college. You are now exploring how to make it work for you, so that it becomes part of your professional practice. A useful way to do this is to become familiar with some models or strategies of collaborative learning that have been developed, tried, and tested in similar settings to the one you are working in. By now, you should be ready to consider using or adapting an approach that has proved successful in the past. However, it’s important to recognise that you don’t need to classify co-operative learning into models just so that you can follow them rigidly, they simply serve as examples of how the fundamental elements of co-operative learning can be organised for the context in which you work. The following steps should help to clarify what this means.

Two co-operative learning examples to practise

In Activity 19 you were shown the very useful resource called [*Cooperative Learning: Group Activities for College Courses*](https://kora.kpu.ca/islandora/object/kora%3A43/datastream/PDF/view)*.* You have already read through the first 19 pages to understand what information it presents on the principles of co-operative learning. If you looked further in the reading you will have seen that it contains more than 164 pages of ideas and examples of group activities to help lecturers and students get to grips with simple exercises aimed at establishing a healthy learning environment and good group interactions. Some of these activities could be used to support the way you introduce co-operative learning to your students and how you make them familiar with the fundamental principles that underpin all co-operative learning strategies.

In Activity 22, you will take *two* of these group activities and use them with a cohort of TVET students that you lecture in your specialisation. This will serve a number of purposes:

* You will be teaching your students co-operative learning skills.
* They will be practising the skills themselves.
* You will be able to practise a planning exercise similar to the one you have been working on in this Unit (but at a simple, manageable level).
* You will be able to reflect on the effectiveness and challenges of using co-operative learning strategies in your lecturing context.

Activity 22: Getting started with co-operative learning

**Suggested time: 120 minutes**

This activity has three parts to it:

* The first is your planning and organising phase.
* The second is the implementation phases with your students.
* The third is the reflection phase.

Your task is the following:

1. Read through the two selected group activities and construct a simple but thorough plan to implement them with your students.
2. Choose two separate, appropriate opportunities and run these group activities with your students.
3. After each group activity, spend some time in personal reflection and use what you have already learned about co-operative learning to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the two group activities. Write these reflections in your Learning Journal.

Use the following two group activities from: *Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Courses:*

a. Quality Team Assessment (pp. 58 and 59).

b. Negotiating Compromise (p. 59).

Discussion of the Activity

The activity constitutes a very important step in your professional development and serves to consolidate three critical forms of knowledge you are expected to have mastered in the course of studying this Unit in *Collaboration in teaching and learning.* Firstly, you should have come to recognise *why* co-operative learning is an important education principle, secondly you should know *what* co-operative learning is, and thirdly you should have grasped *how* to use it in your context. Pause for a moment and write a reflection on how well you think you are doing!

## Jigsaw: A well-known co-operative learning strategy

Perhaps the most familiar approach to co-operative learning is called *Jigsaw,* which gets its name from the well-known puzzle that requires fitting together differently shaped pieces to construct a whole picture – so the name tells you a lot about how it might work. You might remember that this model or strategy has been mentioned in some of the readings you have done, so you probably already have an idea about how it works.

To get a fuller understanding of how the *Jigsaw* method works, watch the next video, again making notes to help you answer the questions that follow:

Activity 23: The Jigsaw model of co-operative learning

**Suggested time: 40 minutes**

Watch the short [video](https://youtu.be/0HIsAqvA7oE) and respond to the questions that follow by writing your answers in your Learning Journal.

1. How does the *jigsaw* method help to develop both student responsibility for learning and interdependence?
2. What are the key steps a lecturer would need to take to prepare for using the *jigsaw* method of co-operative learning with a group of students?

Discussion of the Activity

Can you remember feeling a bit intimidated by having to give a lecture on some part of the curriculum you were not entirely sure about? Didn’t you have to make a special effort to understand it as well as possible before standing in front of your students? Perhaps you also recall that the more you had to find ways to explain it to your students, the more you began to understand it yourself? It’s quite well known in the teaching or lecturing professions that the best way to understand something yourself is to teach it to someone else! Jigsaw uses this principle very effectively.

When students have to take responsibility for teaching someone else what they have learned, it adds an incentive, or pressure, to do it really well because they don’t want to be embarrassed in front of their fellow students. Thus, the *jigsaw* method encourages deep cognitive learning as well as the development of effective communication skills. It’s also fairly obvious that each member of the group has to do the very best they can because they are doing it for each other – a gap in the jigsaw (some knowledge that is missing) means the big picture is incomplete.

Preparing for a co-operative learning lesson or practical exercise using a jigsaw approach will follow the same basic steps that were outlined earlier in this Unit under the heading: *What your students need to know about co-operative learning.* Of course, a key organisational task that lecturers should spend time on is breaking the content or activity down into appropriate sections (or chunks) and creating matching groups, which is shown in the video “The Jigsaw Method”. The Jigsaw technique is also described on pages 70-73 in Reading 2 in Activity 19, and [here](https://www.jigsaw.org/).

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| All the focal points that were highlighted in the two key readings in Activity 19 have been covered in some way or other, but it might be useful to reflect further on a few of them. Firstly, there are often references to *grouping* students for co-operative learning activities. The emphasis has been on keeping small (4 -6 member) groups diverse rather than homogeneous (similar), particularly in the South African context. Diversity of ethnicity, culture, language, academic performance, or any other difference should be celebrated and seen as providing wider opportunities for multi-layered learning and sharing.  A second important focus has been on *scaffolding*, meaning providing the support students need to feel capable of making a leap between what they already know and understand, towards what they might not have thought they could do. This is particularly true of more complex content or skills. Scaffolding is probably most well-known through Vygotsky’s description of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) - the space between what students can already do and, with appropriate support, what they can learn and master. Everything the TVET lecturer does in preparing resources and materials, in teaching social skills, and offering encouragement, contributes to the scaffolding of learning. If you are not familiar with Vygotsky’s work or you need to remind yourself about the principles of scaffolding, watch the brief video using the link provided. |

### Vygotsky, ZPD and scaffolding

Watch the short [video](https://youtu.be/YGhUXq0AdYo) which explains the important principles of ZPD and scaffolding you read about in the previous paragraph.

Activity 24: Reflection on the Unit

**Suggested time: 20 minutes**

This Unit has helped you explore real possibilities for developing your knowledge and ability to work with a special group of people – your TVET students. There has been some criticism of the effectiveness of the TVET college sector in South Africa and you now have an opportunity to demonstrate your own agency for change, by providing an example to students and colleague of excellent professionalism and personal leadership.

One of the greatest disappointments of the South African Basic Education and TVET sectors since 1994 has been their perceived failure to translate theory, policy, and intention into practice and results. The question you need to ask yourself is whether you will take what you are learning here into your practice and the students’ lived experiences of their times in your classes?

Will you do this?

The final Unit in this module will focus on how you will be able to foster effective professional collaboration through the practice of establishing and maintaining appropriate communities of practice.

# Unit 4: Communities of practice (CoP)

## Introduction

When you started to engage with the content of this module, you began by reflecting on different ways of learning, sometimes on your own, sometimes together with peers in teams and at other times, by consulting experienced colleagues or experts in the field. You also reflected on the fact that these different ways of learning are usually closely linked to the nature, or complexity of what you wish to learn.

Has your thinking about the way you work as a TVET lecturer begun to change at all since starting to work through this module? Are you serious about using your Collaboration Action Plan to change your practice for the better?

This kind of personal reflection on learning is important for every individual, however, as a TVET lecturer, it’s particularly important because you are privileged to have a powerful influence on the learning experiences of the many students who will pass through your classes. In your case, what you know about learning has a direct bearing on how you should be teaching or facilitating learning opportunities for TVET students. At the end of Unit 3 you came across a critique of South African education for failing to effectively translate policy and theory by implementing it in practice. This Unit, therefore, challenges you to strengthen your own agency, or capacity, to set an example, and show leadership in establishing or building collaboration in teaching and learning in your TVET college.

To prepare you for this challenge, you have learned about what collaboration is, why it is important and how you can support it. You have also spent time learning about how emotional awareness of both yourself and others can influence learning experiences for the better. Extending the notion of collaboration to include co-operative learning opportunities for the students, ensures that the most important people in TVET colleges benefit from these collaborative efforts.

The focus of this Unit will be on your role in conceptualising, formalising, and sustaining appropriate communities of practice at a range of levels, both within and beyond the college boundaries, to support collaboration in teaching and learning.

## Unit 4 Outcomes:

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the value of professional collaboration and communities of practice, and a knowledge of avenues for pursuing these.
2. Facilitate and/or contribute to discipline-specific communities of practice, including online communities.

### What are communities of practice?

Are you a member of a group of lecturers who get together from time to time; do you meet or engage with industry people working in your field; are you a member of a WhatsApp or Facebook group around something you do, e.g. a hobby, a church group?

What happens there? How do these groups operate and why do you think you participate in them?

It will not be surprising if you have some knowledge of the term *community of practice* because it’s been referred to in the literature on learning and knowledge management since the early 1990’s, when a cognitive anthropologist, Jean Lave, and an educational theorist, Etienne Wenger, published a book called *Situated Learning* in 1991. While the terminology was largely established in academic writing at this time, the principles underpinning communities of practice have been around since people began learning and sharing their experiences. Any experience of co-operative learning or collaboration offers an opportunity for some form of community of practice to be established, whether it be formally named and structured, or is simply an informal way of communicating among colleagues.

Communities of practice (often referred to by the acronym CoP), are peer networks of practitioners, often within an organisation, who help each other perform better by sharing their knowledge. For example, a community of practice might be set up for a group of engineers, so that members can raise issues and problems, and see if anyone in the community (or group) can provide insights or solutions. You can see that the concept describes a way of learning that has a strong relationship to the social construction of knowledge. A community of practice consists of members who interact with each other in their pursuit of a common practice. So, it is a practice that links individuals together, sometimes across official organisational boundaries and departments.

Activity 25: What are communities of practice?

**Suggested time: 20 minutes**

Read through the groupings listed in Table 3 and use what you already know to decide whether they can legitimately be called communities of practice. You can provide your response in the block alongside the example. However, it is important that you spend time reflecting and justifying why you have chosen to say yes or no for each example. Use your Learning Journal to record the reasons behind making your choice for each example.

**Table 3: Classifying groupings**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Group of people** | **CoP – Yes?** | **CoP – No?** |
| A tribe in the Amazon jungle trying to survive |  |  |
| Artists experimenting with a new way of expressing themselves |  |  |
| Engineers working on similar projects |  |  |
| Newly appointed lecturers trying to help each other |  |  |
| A network of surgeons |  |  |
| The community of a small village |  |  |

Discussion of the Activity

Perhaps you think of communities of practice only in the professional world because you are exploring the concept in this Advanced Diploma, but they do exist elsewhere. Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour, and if we use this statement as a kind of working definition, the tribe trying to survive in the Amazon *can* be viewed as a community of practice because they work together and rely on each other to solve the challenges of surviving in a harsh environment. In the same way, the artists described in the table are engaging collectively within their artistic grouping as they seek new techniques and understanding, so they too have formed a community of practice.

The engineers and surgeons have very strong links through their specialised training, knowledge, and work practices, and they work together (in their disciplines) for specific purposes. There are many visible examples of such communities of practice in the world around you. Do the lecturers you are familiar with work in ways that might merit them being identified as a community of practice? There is every reason for them to do so because the benefits are clearly evident, but does your experience tell you if it actually happens or not?

The example of the community of a small town requires you to challenge the use of the word *community*. While people living in a town can correctly be called a community, their practice is usually not common and some might never interact with others at all, so this kind of grouping of people is not what we should see or describe as a community of practice.

Wenger (2004) described communities of practice in this way:

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 (Wenger 2004, p. 2).

How closely does this resemble what you covered in Unit 1 – Understanding collaboration? In that Unit you examined the importance and value of TVET lecturers working closely with colleagues, both in their own college and across colleges; with college managers; and with associates from business and industry. This suggests that effective collaboration can find a natural expression and continuity in communities of practice.

### Communities of practice more fully understood

Wenger’s (2004) definition allows for the intentional and formal structuring of a CoP, but it does not assume that all CoPs are formed in this formal way. Maybe a group of people is deliberately focussed on learning and this can be the reason the community comes together formally (such as the engineers you read about in earlier examples in this Unit). However, new learning can be an incidental (not intentional) outcome of individuals’ interactions. For example, a group of lecturers at a college might sit together during lunch breaks and, without intending to, discover that they all have similar concerns about managing students in the workshops. Together they might start working on common ideas and practices to help each other. In this way, they are sharing their knowledge and ideas about a common practice within the environment of the college they all work in, and if they continue to do this on a more or less regular basis, they can legitimately be called a *community of practice.*

Three characteristics are crucial for accurately identifying a community of practice:

**The domain**: A community of practice is not merely a group of friends or a set of connections between people. A group’s identity is determined by a shared domain (area of interest). Being part of a CoP implies being committed to the domain and having a shared set of practices that distinguish group members from other people. Their domain is not necessarily about expertise that is widely shared. A street gang might have developed various ways of dealing with their domain (living as a gang) to help their members survive on the street and maintain an identity. The members of the gang rely on and respect their unique competencies as they learn from each other, even though most people outside the gang would not value or even recognise their ‘skills’.

**The community**: Members of a CoP engage in shared activities and discussions, supporting each other and sharing information on issues within their domain. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. CoPs do not depend on status or job titles, but on the common desire for interaction and learning, whenever suitable opportunities might arise. The Impressionist artists (a 19th century group of artists based in Paris) used to meet in cafes and art studios, to talk creatively and freely about their unique art style, thus forming a community of practice that still allowed individuals to develop and grow their own skills and signature styles. TVET lecturers work largely in their own subject disciplines and colleges, however, they share common purposes and challenges, around which they might form a community of practice.

**The practice**: A community of practice is not formed only the basis of common interest such as following the same music or TV series. Members of CoPs share the *practice* of doing something. They develop a shared range of resources or tools, or strategies to manage the unique challenges of their practice. The difference between one-off conversations with knowledgeable people and sustained interactions between members of a CoP, is that the latter helps to build competence and skills, and this takes time and effort. In many TVET colleges (as well as schools and universities), teachers/lecturers seldom get together to share challenges and practices because their meetings are usually about compliance with instructions and policies, and administrative tasks. For lecturers to develop a community of practice, they must form and sustain it very consciously, and to achieve this, they must see its value.

In a particular grouping of people, it is the existence of these three characteristics that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three characteristics or elements in parallel that one cultivates or creates such a community.

Activity 26: Describe a community of practice

**Suggested time: 45 minutes**

Read the short paragraph in the text box which describes a TVET student’s exposure to the world of work, then respond to the questions that follow by writing notes in your Learning Journal:

A TVET student following a hospitality specialisation at a college has been assigned to the kitchen of a fast food outlet to gain industry-based experience. On a later occasion, the same student was assigned to the kitchen of a five-star hotel restaurant to extend her experience (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2018).

1. Do you think that the staff who work either in the kitchen of a fast-food outlet, or at a five-star hotel could be described as a *community of practice*? What informs your response to this question?
2. Do you think it is likely that the TVET student would have experienced the same or similar personal interactions with people working in the two different locations? Explain what differences you imagine there could be?
3. How could you, as a TVET lecturer, come to understand the different learning experiences the TVET student might have had in the two different settings?

Discussion of the Activity

Next time you order a take-away from a fast food outlet, take a look through the service area into the kitchen behind. You will probably see a number of people in a relatively small space, all completing part of the job of assembling your order. One person might be grilling chicken or frying burgers, while another is responsible for the deep fryer filled with chips. Someone else prepares the disposable container your meal will be served in and might assemble the meal before it is passed on to the cashier for delivery to you. Whatever the processes are and whoever is doing them, there is a shared domain (area of interest) in that kitchen, there is a shared practice of preparing food using the resources or tools available to them, and they have to share information and support each other to get the job done at the expected levels of competence, skill, and quality. A student fitting in to this busy environment, and who is trying to learn about how it works, will need to engage with everyone in the kitchen as well as the manager and people taking customer orders and passing them on to the rest of the team. This certainly could be described as a community of practice, provided it has the *intention* of building skills and competencies.

In a very similar way, the chefs working in a five-star hotel kitchen would be part of a community of practice as they strive to consistently produce high class cuisine and service, however, the TVET student would have lived through very different experiences in the two settings. For example, some people working in a fast food outlet might not have much, if any, formal training, such as from a college or other tertiary institution, but it’s almost impossible to hold down a position in a high-end restaurant or hotel without extensive and specialised training. In other words, the knowledge held by the hotel staff would be different from that of the fast food outlet employees. While the practice of each group might be similar (preparing food), the skills and customer expectations would not be similar. The domain, or area of interest, is also likely to differ and it’s quite possible that many people working in a fast food kitchen don’t see this as their future career, or might view the job as a necessary way to earn money. Aspiring to be a chef in a top restaurant is more likely to feature in the motivation of people who choose to follow a career path in the hotel or restaurant industry.

The third question in this activity focussed on how TVET lecturers could come to understand the different learning experiences that their students might have during practical learning opportunities in the real-world workplace. You might have had some exposure to the workplace, either through prior industry experience, or through work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities during your TVET qualification. If you find that you are beginning to question your own knowledge of current industry-based practices and experience, you are identifying an important gap that has been identified in the professional development of many TVET lecturers in South Africa (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2018).

Many lecturers in the country have entered the TVET sector from either the schooling environment or directly from university courses and thus have limited WIL exposure. A lack of direct knowledge of industry-based practice or limited exposure to the workplace inevitably means lecturers in this position will not be able to anticipate or integrate the range of learning their students bring from their own workplace-based experiences. If you go back to the example given in the text box about the TVET student who has been exposed to both a fast food outlet and a five star hotel kitchen, a lecturer without varied industry-based experience is probably at quite a serious disadvantage if s/he has not been part of a similar community of practice. So, what can a lecturer do to develop knowledge of student experiences in workplace-based placements?

Even if you were given opportunities to enter the workplace associated with your subject specialisation during your qualification, it was probably less divergent than the experiences your TVET students have been and will be exposed to over the years. There are two ways to address this apparent shortcoming:

* In-service industry-based WIL placements (lecturer professional development).
* Community of practice models.

The first bullet point refers to TVET lecturers actively taking opportunities to spend time in the workplace, with the intention of developing knowledge and expertise in both their own field, and for the benefit of their students, as they prepare for the world of work. This option is a systemic approach that requires both policy and implementation at a national and institutional level which, as the literature reports, is not currently well developed (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2018). While it remains a very important and relevant part of TVET lecturers’ professional development, it lies beyond the scope and intentions of this module in the Adv Dip TVET.

The second approach, using community of practice models is accessible at all levels, and is especially applicable to lecturers in your position. The focus of the remaining part of this Unit will be on developing appropriate communities of practice to address your unique challenges and needs.

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| Before you move on to the practicalities of building communities of practice, it will be useful to consolidate what you have already learned in this Unit about two ways of thinking about work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers. |

Activity 27: A reading activity

**Suggested time: 120 minutes**

The article called *Work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers: Articulating industry and college practices* by André van der Bijl and Vanessa Taylor can be accessed [here](http://digitalknowledge.cput.ac.za/handle/11189/7171). Read the whole article because it is very relevant to your role as a TVET lecturer, but pay particular attention to pages 127 – 132, and 137 – 140, and the references to *communities of practice*. The DHET has been given permission to host this reading on the NOLS. Note that the data for the study was drawn from a group of 400 lecturers (at 28 South African Colleges) who completed five days of industry exposure in an in-service WIL programme with the intention of incorporating their workplace learning into their teaching.

Once you have read through the article, respond to the following questions by writing notes in your Learning Journal.

1. What is your current experience of being personally involved in an industry placement? Have you done this, and what value has it added to your professional work? If you have not had any workplace-based practice – what value could it add to your work?
2. Are you part of any active communities of practice in your college or subject specialisation? What is the purpose behind this collaboration?
3. Are you part of any communities of practice that involve employers? How were these started and who keeps them going?
4. What are the challenges of initiating, running, and sustaining CoPs that you read about in the article?
5. In summary, what point do you think the article is making about both work-integrated learning (WIL) and communities of practice (CoPs), with regard to professional development?

Discussion of the Activity

The idea of understanding what goes on in a workplace associated with your subject is unlikely to be new to you and it’s not difficult to make a positive link between knowing the context and teaching the content during your lectures. Critically, there is an important difference between knowing *what* and knowing *how*! If you have spent time in the heart of your industry or business practice, getting your hands dirty with the actual work, you will naturally have a far better feel for what it means to be a practitioner, and how theory, practice, and reflection come together to support excellence. Everything you have learned thus far in this module about collaboration, co-operation, and emotional intelligence should support this notion.

If you have been professionally linked to employers or associates from the business or industrial sectors, it’s more likely that you will have had opportunities to collaborate on a regular and purposeful basis. However, the Van der Bijl and Taylor article suggests that sustaining the benefits of spending time in the workplace is seldom achieved, and things can slip back to the old routines fairly easily. It’s also more likely that maintaining collaborative practices and regular sharing will happen with people you interact with closely and frequently, and it’s much harder to establish and sustain contact with people outside the college or in industry, who have different cultural and ideological views on professional development.

You will remember reading earlier, that communities of practice may be deliberately planned, formally constructed, and carefully maintained, or else they may emerge out of a common need or interest in a much more organic way. Whichever CoP you get involved with, they *all* run the risk of disintegrating unless certain critical conditions are met. You will find out more about these conditions shortly.

The article seems to make the point that there is an acknowledged international imperative to improve vocational lecturers’ skills through developing their knowledge and experience of industry. The writers also suggest that literature surrounding this issue argues in favour of either work-integrated learning, or models of communities of practice (Van der Bijl & Taylor, 2018). However, a closer reading says that this is not a simple choice between two options, but rather that they can work in tandem, building on each other in a common pursuit. Put simply, it will be much easier to establish close collaboration with people you have met and worked with, or conversely, it’s likely to be easier engaging with employers in the workplace, if you have already established collaborative links with them. Essentially, TVET lecturers should be conscious of, and actively pursue both WIL and CoPs!

### Conceptualising, forming, and sustaining communities of practice

A lot has been written about how to form, run, and sustain communities of practice and it’s not difficult to find examples of these guidelines, which generally set out a number of formal steps and processes, and which identify specific roles for members of the CoP. A lot has also been written about why many formalised CoPs last only a short time before eventually fading away, as participants lose interest or energy or fail to make time to keep them going. The following quote tells this story:

The attempts to purposefully design CoPs face a critique for losing sight of the original emphasis placed on learning, entailing an investment of identity in the social context, as well as losing sight of the spontaneous nature of CoPs . As observed by [Waring et al. (2013)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5305036/#bibr55-0018726716661040), some attempted to ‘set up’ CoPs in order to obtain knowledge as an output, which is reflected in the interventions where ‘CoPs-to-be’ were expected to implement certain pre-specified strategies based on ‘evidence’.

(Pyrko, Dörfler, & Eden, 2017, citations omitted)

The key reasons given for many ‘purposefully designed CoPs’ failing include:

1. Failing to recognise *learning* as a common enterprise among practitioners.
2. Losing sight of the value of *identity* development in a social context.
3. High levels of organisation replacing *spontaneity.*
4. Specified *knowledge* becoming the driver of a CoP.

What this means, is that highly structured, carefully planned, and agenda-driven CoPs can become little more than ‘meetings’ where compliance with format replaces ideas, and outputs are more important than creative inputs. When the focus becomes an *output*, or the production of some form of measurable knowledge, the opportunities for spontaneous and creative new learning become secondary or disappear altogether. Supposedly knowledgeable individuals take over, and their voices start becoming dominant, while others, whose interest is in learning and exploring, begin to withdraw and become silent. This kind of exclusion from a community closes down opportunities for the growth associated with social identity development – a feeling of belonging in the learning process. It’s not unusual for members of CoPs like this to soon start questioning the personal value of belonging. A second quote from the same source explains further:

We demonstrate a similar skepticism towards the instrumental (organised and structured) use of the CoP idea, which is not to say that CoPs cannot be intentionally cultivated – indeed success stories do exist, as illustrated by [Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003)](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5305036/#bibr44-0018726716661040). We agree with authors who view CoPs and knowledge as a process rather than an entity that can be simply ‘set up’ (Pyrko, Dörfler, & Eden, 2017, citations omitted).

The authors’ view of a community of practice is that its value lies in being a more spontaneous *process* which like-minded practitioners engage in, to share their questions and ideas as they grow new knowledge *in* practice rather than seeking knowledge *of* practice. This means that instead of starting with theory, or what is already known (knowledge *of*), it becomes much more exciting to learn by doing or engaging with others who share the same desire to learn (knowledge *in*). This is how identity development happens, and thus CoPs come to life through individuals thinking together. CoPs that operate in this way find their energy through the power of human relationships, and what you learned in Unit 2 about emotional intelligence forms a very strong foundation for your future involvement in effective communities of practice. This is very different from joining a community structure that someone has ‘set up’ for some defined purpose. The model that this Unit favours, and will follow from now on, is what you might call a process-based community of practice. This means that the kind of communities of practice you could initiate or participate in will be exploring, with like-minded colleagues, what you do and how to do it better, rather than by studying what outsiders seem to think is the best practice for all contexts.

Your challenge as a TVET lecturer is to try to make sense of what would work best in your context, so that the strongest features of a valuable, process-based community of practice model emerge where you work.

According to a study conducted by Volker Wedekind and Zanele Buthelezi from Wits University, called *A climate for change? Vertical and horizontal collegial relations in TVET colleges,* the TVET sector in South Africa has been the focus of some of the most far reaching and sustained change in the South Africa education landscape since 1994 (Wedekind & Buthelezi, 2016) and this has brought with it restructuring, including reform of management and governance, different legislative control, new qualification requirements, and staff turnover. A period of prolonged and complex change will inevitably impact on the working relationships at colleges, both vertically (up and down the management hierarchy), and horizontally (between colleagues and between subjects / specialisations), as well as beyond the boundaries of college campuses, and this in turn affects the capacity and willingness of individuals to work collaboratively. You will probably be aware of difficulties lecturers in TVET colleges face in trying to establish a *process-*based model of community of practice collaboration. Activity 28 presents you with an opportunity to identify some of your own contextual challenges.

Activity 28: The challenges of setting up communities of practice

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

Reflect on your place of work, or a college you are very familiar with, and frame responses to the following questions. As usual, write down your responses in your Learning Journal.

1. Think about the people you know in your college. Who do you think would be willing and able to help you start growing simple but effective communities of practice? Explain who the people are, and why you have chosen them.
2. What tensions might exist between lecturers of different subjects/specialisations at the college. Are some specialisations considered to be more dominant than others?
3. What kind of relationships characterise the interactions between lecturers and college management? How might this affect your efforts at collaboration?
4. To what extent does diversity of age, gender, or race favour or disadvantage efforts to collaborate in your college? How might you overcome collaboration challenges?

Discussion of the Activity

These are challenging questions and they force you to look beyond a superficial snapshot of a college to reflect deeply on the potential for and challenges of forming and sustaining effective communities of practice.

Wedekind and Buthelezi’s (2016) study, which draws on biographical interview data, collected as part of a larger research project into the lives and careers of TVET teachers, suggests that horizontal collaboration – specifically within areas of specialisation, provides a good environment for collaboration. It makes fairly logical sense that people working closely together have a lot to talk about and have more opportunities to do so as they are able to share common problems, ideas, and innovations. The study, however, also points to tensions between specialisations that are considered to hold more or less dominant positions in the college. Some of the lecturers interviewed expressed the view that their specialisations were considered ‘second-rate’ and thus lecturers in their field tended to feel inferior or uncomfortable among colleagues who claimed the status of ‘more dominant’ specialisations. So, while collaboration within a specialisation is a good place to start, there could be more complex work to do on relationships to extend CoPs beyond single specialisations.

Collaboration on a vertical scale suggests at its simplest, a good working relationship between college management and lecturers. Again, Wedekind and Buthelezi’s (2016) study reports that lecturers expressed negative views about relations between lecturers, college management, and government, especially with regard to facility and resource management, management competence, power issues, and employment status. Perhaps experiences at your college are different? Communities of practice will be very sensitive to the complexity of interactions between layers or tiers of people which can make relationships more unpredictable.

Intergenerational (older and younger lecturers), gender, and race dynamics are present in most levels of South African society, and these will inevitably impact on both horizontal and vertical relationships in TVET colleges. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to break down existing stereotypes and prejudices, however, this can present a wonderful opportunity to lecturers who are technically knowledgeable and skilled in managing human relations. The opportunity to use diversity as a collaborative strength, instead of allowing it to degenerate into divisive conflict, will go a long way towards developing successful process-based communities of practice. This is a challenge or motivation for you to use your agency to bring about positive developments.

Much of what you read in this discussion also applies to lecturers’ relationships with associates from business and industry – the people you must engage with to help provide your students with the best opportunities to gain appropriate experience in the workplace. Wedekind and Buthelezi’s (2016) investigation confirms that employers do not necessarily share the same motivation or enthusiasm for placing TVET students in their organisations to gain experience. This was highlighted by some employees who felt threated by the possibility of TVET students being groomed to take over their jobs!

Stop and think

|  |
| --- |
| After having completed the last activity, you might be thinking that trying to foster effective communities of practice at any level in your college might be too much effort for too little reward, but that would be an unfortunate way of looking at *why* you are doing this advanced diploma! If individuals at every level of an organisation see opportunities for positive change and development as someone else’s responsibility, then nothing will ever happen to change the things that make them unhappy or demotivated. Throughout this module, you have been encouraged to develop a belief in your own knowledge, skills, and attitude so that you can make a difference through your own example. This is what you have come to know as your personal *agency* as a professional. |

What you have learned so far in the module should include the following:

* Collaboration at a number of cross cutting levels is both necessary and valuable in a TVET college.
* Recognising the impact of both your own and others’ emotional strengths, and learning how to manage them, is empowering.
* The strengthening of your knowledge, skills, and attitudes enables you to demonstrate your own agency for positive change in your working environment.
* Your identity as a TVET lecturer is demonstrated by self-motivation, self-reflection, and the pursuit of both personal and professional excellence, as you work collaboratively with others.
* You need to be committed to working for and alongside others and be prepared to take the lead when opportunities arise.

If we take all of these features together, a common thread might be that effective TVET colleges need lecturers who are knowledgeable, lifelong, reflective learners with well-developed emotional intelligence who encourage the principles of learning and developing collaboratively. An effective strategy for achieving this state is by fostering an understanding and use of communities of practice. The next activity starts you on the journey towards encouraging the growth of appropriate and successful communities of practice in your workplace.

Activity 29: Growing communities of practice

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

In this assignment, we would like you to consider the following questions: What makes communities of practice so valuable that they keep working? What needs to be done to start experiencing the benefits they can offer? Where does the energy come from to sustain them? What is your role as a TVET lecturer in making sure that communities of practice around you operate in the way they should? Essentially, how can you grow your community of practice?

Use your Learning Journal to write your notes or responses to the following questions:

1. What are you already doing, but would like to know more about, so that you can do it better?
2. What capabilities (skills or knowledge) might be needed to get better at what you do?
3. Who is your community, who shares a similar interest and practice?
4. How could you cultivate relationships with interested people, and can you create a sense of belonging for every member?
5. What stories, cases, tools, or examples would you be looking for in order to share within the community?
6. How could you make time for a community to meet and share?
7. Who in your organisation (college) can support you along the way?

Discussion of the Activity

You might remember reading the outcomes for this Unit in relation to CoPs. The first outcome referred to your gaining an understanding of the value of communities of practice and the avenues for pursuing them. The second outcome was the expectation that you would be prepared and able to facilitate and/or participate in discipline-based CoPs. This is important because you are not expected to become the ‘college expert’ on CoPs or to formally set-up complicated structures with people who don’t want to co-operate.

The metaphor of cultivating a garden is a way to think about your CoP, and your role is to be a kind of gardener. You might plant the seeds of an idea and water the ground by showing an excitement and enthusiasm for thinking together with others. Helping other people to share in your participation and get themselves energised to interact is like bringing sunshine into the garden – it is where the energy comes from. The value of approaching a community of practice in this way is that it soon becomes evident that it’s not about your needs, but rather the participants’ needs and what really matters to them – which is how they develop an identity within the group as they share in the fruits they can harvest along the way.

If a community of practice is going to work for those who share a common area of interest related to their practice, it will be based on strong interpersonal relationships and rich connections, supported by excitement, relevance, and real value – all of which are necessary to sustain voluntary participation in the community. You simply cannot *force* people to participate in CoPs.

In coming back to your role in helping communities of practice grow and sustain themselves, it is important point to note that they don’t always spontaneously appear like mushrooms do, overnight, all on their own. Sometimes they take a bit of prodding, or gentle pushing from someone who understands how they work best, and you should be starting to recognise yourself as a person with the skill, knowledge, and emotional strength to provide this impetus. In the next section of this Unit you will unpack what this means as you engage in an activity to consolidate what you have already learned about communities of practice.

### Online communities of practice

The remarkable impact of the world-wide Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 was felt by every one of us! What was your experience of being locked down at home? Were you encouraged to work online using platforms like Zoom, Teams, Skype, WhatsApp groups or other technologies? How difficult was it to embrace these opportunities when they presented us with the only feasible means of engaging with colleagues, friends, family, or students? Of course, they came with the challenges of connectivity, data costs, and new learning, and their shortcomings in the learning space were visible, but they also opened up new ways of conceptualising what might be possible, while raising some important questions.

Can communities of practice operate in a virtual space or do they have to be located in a physical space, like the corridors of a college? If you think about the way you communicate on a daily basis, the importance of e-mail, Skype, Instagram, Twitter, or whatever social media platforms are available is obvious. At the same time, you will also be aware that there are some types of communication that are neither effective nor appropriate in a virtual space or through electronic media. For example, you would be unlikely to propose marriage via an email, especially if you see the person face-to-face on a regular basis.

A community of practice depends very heavily on communication for growth and sustainability, and online communication is an accepted part of our daily lives, so it is certainly possible for it to be an important feature of many CoPs, however, facilitating the kind of community you have come to understand is not a ‘one-time’ event that you can turn on like a software platform. It can certainly support the social architecture of a community of practice, but it cannot replace it, because this is where a CoP gets its energy and life.

The following extract in the text box describes the role of technology in building and sustaining communities of practice. It is taken from: *Community of Practice Design Guide. A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing & Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education.*

|  |
| --- |
| The roles, processes, and approaches that engage people—whether face-to-face or online—are essential in relationship building, collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and action. Together, technical and social architectures create the container for the community. An effective approach to community facilitation involves creating a predictable “rhythm” that sets an expectation around how and when to participate in the community. A “sense of place” is created in the minds of community members through an integrated, thoughtful combination of face-to-face meetings, live online events, and collaboration over time within a persistent Web environment.  [Source](https://transitiepraktijk.nl/files/Community%20of%20practice%20guide.pdf) |

The extract seems to suggest that it is entirely possible to foster and sustain a community of practice online, but also warns that it won’t simply happen because you might like the convenience provided by new technologies. All the things that happen in a successful face-to-face CoP still need to be reflected in an online version, and this can only happen if the people involved take responsibility for the energy and commitment that is present in all effective CoPs. The ‘rhythm’ or pattern and timing of active participation needs to be discussed and agreed upon by all those involved in the CoP, so that the physical space and personal interaction of a face-to-face gathering is re-created in a virtual sense – what the extract calls a ‘sense of space’. A very useful suggestion in the extract is that a CoP can successfully use a combination of online, live interactions, and face-to-face engagements. The important point is, however, that these won’t happen without the actions of a person or people who are committed to the value and purpose that underpins any particular CoP.

Activity 30: Online communities of practice

**Suggested time: 30 minutes**

While it is not a requirement of the module that you set up an online CoP, it is important for you to give some consideration to the possibility, especially among people you interact with professionally already. If you use your experience of the enforced lockdown during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and what you experimented with during this time, the possibilities are brought into much sharper detail. This event was unexpected, but provided a remarkable learning opportunity.

Refer to the reading: *Community of Practice Design Guide. A Step-by-Step Guide for Designing & Cultivating Communities of Practice in Higher Education.*  Respond to the following questions by writing notes in your Learning Journal. Imagine you are thinking about fostering or growing an online CoP with colleagues in your discipline. Take note: You may need to access the online version of this article via your institutional library service.

1. The heading in the reading, *Why are Communities Important?* lists 8 bullet points that summarise CoP features you are already familiar with. Use at least 5 of these points to explain how an online version of a CoP could ensure that these important things happen effectively. Remember to make your suggestions relevant to an online CoP with your discipline colleagues.
2. What would you do to help establish a ‘sense of place’ in the minds of community participants, in other words, where and when would you meet online and what would you do during this time together?

Discussion of the Activity

You might have found that you were very enthusiastic about using an online platform of some sort to keep your community of practice alive and meaningful. This would not be surprising for people who are already familiar with and confident about the multitude of possibilities that social media provide. Others might have responded less enthusiastically because of the challenges they experienced in answering the two questions! The point of the exercise was not to test how much you already know, but to get you really thinking about a range of new possibilities and options as you prepare to go back to your college and put into practice some of the new ideas you have come across in this module.

### Being a champion for CoPs

Activities 29 and 30 helped bring together what you need to know about successful communities of practice and how they work. This is important knowledge and without it, not much collaboration is likely to happen around you. The message in this Unit should be clear now – you need to be one of the people doing this very important job. Sometimes the literature refers to this as being a *champion* for the CoP.

Activity 32 is designed to take your ongoing Collaboration Action Plan and use it purposefully in planning to facilitate and foster the growth of a community of practice within your discipline at the college you work in. Some of the key steps you might consider are presented in the following list:

* You are not creating or setting up a CoP, so don’t tell colleagues this is what you are doing.
* It’s not about your needs but those of the participants (what matters to them).
* Participation should be voluntary (so help generate excitement, relevance and value).
* Accept there will be different levels of participation (some will be more active than others).
* Embrace diversity (don’t pre-determine the outputs and consider all ideas).
* Start by organising activities in both public and private spaces to get people talking.
* Communication emerges through interaction rather than by design.
* Use the strength of human relations to support ‘events*’.*
* Use events to strengthen human relations.

Do you remember working on your Collaboration Action Plan (Table 1)? The last time you added to it was in Unit 3, when you were considering engaging with colleagues in your discipline about co-operative learning opportunities for your TVET students. Doesn’t this sound very similar to fostering a community of practice? Perhaps when you started the exercise in Unit 3 you didn’t have the knowledge and terminology to call it a CoP, but essentially it was part of the same process.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Collaboration Action Plan** | | | | |
| **WHO**  **Who do you want to collaborate with?** | **WHAT**  **What is the purpose of the collaboration?** | **HOW**  **How should the collaboration happen?** | **WHEN**  **When will the collaboration happen** | **BENEFIT**  **What are the benefits of collaboration?** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

You now have an opportunity to bring together everything you know about what a CoP is, how it works, and what you can do to make it function effectively.

Your task is to reflect on discussions you have had with colleagues in your discipline (the community), and think about common interests (the domain) that seem to affect a number of people in your discipline, and prepare the ground for thinking together about your work (the practice). Remember, it’s not necessarily about *you* identifying a problem and trying to get other people to buy in to your issues. Your role is to provide the impetus, or initial energy, to get people communicating and help them get excited as they recognise the relevance and value their participation.

The following example might help you to clarify how this can work in practice. It’s a true story that the writer of this module was part of:

|  |
| --- |
| Some years ago a lecturer in a College of Education became aware that the morale amongst her colleagues in the college was low and the atmosphere in the staffroom was gloomy and full of complaints about everything: college management; curriculum stagnation; lack of collegiality; competition for resources; and even relationships with students. She was the staff representative who attended the college management meetings, so she was conscious that this group was also aware of the generally negative atmosphere but really had no idea what to do about it.  She had a particularly good relationship with her colleagues in the discipline of education leadership and management, and over tea one day an opportunity arose for a conversation and they began to discuss their own feelings about the mood in the college. They shared a belief that they might be able to contribute to changing this around because, after all, this was an issue they taught about in their specialisation. They made time each day to share new ideas, and their time together was characterised by a sense of excitement at the challenge and novel ideas that kept emerging. They also laughed a lot at some of the crazy suggestions that were thrown around.  The team suggested that they could individually engage members of the college management team in informal conversation to assess if there was any enthusiasm for their ideas, and it soon became clear that they all saw value in what was taking shape. Other members of staff were also drawn into conversations, and soon the whole staffroom was talking about doing things a bit differently, with some giving new ideas or offers of help. At a management meeting, the Rector of the college raised the idea formally and they agreed to support the initiative, even to the extent of making a small budget available.  With this level of support and transparency, every second Friday became a day to look forward to. The College usually closed at 15h00 on a Friday, however management agreed to allow staff to gather at 14h00 for a voluntary staff development hour. In the past, staff development had been dry, boring, and unproductive, however, this time around staff were treated to a glass of wine or cold drink, light snacks and the prospect of interesting and sometimes humorous short videos on organisational challenges and novel ideas to inspire collegiality.  The effect was startling and even though it was not planned, spontaneous discussion often took place after the videos. Even staff members who had not initially shown enthusiasm for the idea began to make an appearance at these Friday sessions, and within a few weeks the mood throughout the college had started to lift and there was more laughter and talk heard along the corridors. |

Look at the bullet list of reminders under ‘Being a Champion for CoPs’ – can you see the way they played out in the story? The example reflects more than one community of practice growing in this college. The first one was limited to the lecturers in the leadership and management specialisation, but it generated the energy that drew in the college management and many other colleagues as it grew organically over time.

Activity 31**:** Becoming a champion

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

Use the Collaboration Action Plan you have been developing during this module to help you identify possibilities for fostering a community of practice in your discipline at the college. Clearly you can’t always plan every detail because you are not trying to create something that is separate from the participants who might become part of this community.

Also use the story in the previous text box as an example of how the idea you have in mind might play out in practice.

Your task is to write a brief story of your own, in which you outline what you hope might happen and the steps you will take to set the process in motion so that it grows and becomes sustainable. To help you plan what you story needs to cover, the following textbox lists the eight bullet points that appeared in the last reading you did. You don’t have to follow the list completely, but use it to make sure that you really are familiar with the concept of a community of practice. Write this story in your Learning Journal.

|  |
| --- |
| Communities of practice are important because they:   * Connect people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to interact, either as   frequently or at all.   * Provide a shared context for people to communicate and share information, stories,   and personal experiences in a way that builds understanding and insight.   * Enable dialogue between people who come together to explore new possibilities, solve challenging problems, and create new, mutually beneficial opportunities. * Stimulate learning by serving as a vehicle for authentic communication, mentoring, coaching, and self-reflection. * Capture and diffuse existing knowledge to help people improve their practice by providing a forum to identify solutions to common problems, and a process to collect and evaluate best practices. * Introduce collaborative processes to groups and organisations as well as between organisations to encourage the free flow of ideas and exchange of information. * Help people organise around purposeful actions that deliver tangible results. * Generate new knowledge to help people transform their practice to accommodate changes in needs and technologies. |

Activity 32**:** Reflection on the unit

**Suggested time: 30 minutes**

This Unit has focussed on extending what you have learned about the importance of collaboration, co-operation, and emotional intelligence into an engagement with the concept of community of practice. In your own words, write a page in your Learning Journal about how you can use this knowledge to develop your own practice of collaborative engagement with a range of significant people you interact with as a TVET lecturer.

Discussion of Activity

Hopefully, this is only the starting point of an ongoing journey of learning for you as a TVET lecturer. The best way to really understand the value and significance of collaboration and communities of practice is to be an active part of one or more CoPs and to deepen your knowledge by participating and contributing to the process of fostering and sustaining the relationships that underpin all types of collaboration. All journeys start with the first few steps, and here is your opportunity to get into your stride.

# Summative Assessment: Reflection on using the Collaboration Action Plan

**Suggested time: 60 minutes**

This is a summative assessment activity which is intended to assist students to consolidate their learning in this module. As you come to the end of this module it will be useful to do some self-evaluation about what you are doing differently, as well what you have deliberately planned to do. Have you acted on the opportunities to fully develop and implement your Collaboration Action Plan, or is it still a set of vague ideas somewhere in the back of your mind? Has your thinking about the plan changed or developed along the way?

To complete this summative activity, you will need to go back to your Learning Journal and Collaboration Action Plan to help you respond to the following 3 tasks. You must present your responses as a formal assessment task for evaluation.

1. Read through your Learning Journal and make a note of every reference you made to the Collaboration Action Plan. List the ideas you noted and indicate whether you have acted upon them.
2. Review your Collaboration Action Plan as a whole and select *two* elements of the plan that you have already started to put into action. Write down responses to the instructions and questions below, for *each* of the two examples you have selected:
   1. Explain in detail who you intended to collaborate with, and what the purpose was.
   2. Explain in detail how you went about facilitating the process and what has actually happened so far.
   3. How are you making sure that the benefits of collaborating are adding value to your students’ learning experiences?
3. Reflect on your progress in developing a realistic Collaboration Action Plan during the course of this module and evaluate the process by writing a few lines in response to the questions below:
4. What worked?
5. What didn’t?
6. What have been the successes?
7. What have been the failures?
8. Suggest why something succeeded or failed.

Instead of a full Discussion of the Activity, we here include a rubric for you to evaluate your responses to Activity 32.

Discussion of the Activity

Everything you have learned along the way will lose value and eventually be forgotten unless you make a conscious decision to make positive changes to your professional performance. This is your opportunity to make sure that you implement what you have planned to do, and evaluate the effectiveness of every step you take. Remember, that as a plan like this develops, it may require change and revision, based on new learning and reflection. A plan is only worthwhile if you act on it, review it, and adjust it along the way.

### Summative Assessment Rubric for Collaboration Action Plan (CAP)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade**  **Task** | **Excellent** | **Good** | **Needs development** | **Inadequate** |
| **List of CAP references** | A comprehensive list of CAP ideas and an indication that most have been acted upon in some way | A list of CAP ideas with an indication that some actions have been started | A list of CAP ideas with vague ideas about what actions might still be taken | An unsubstantiated or incomplete list with no actions contemplated or taken |
| **Explanation of 2 elements of CAP** | Full detail of both elements showing collaboration process and actions taken, as well as an indication of the benefit to students | Details of both elements indicating that some action has been taken and comment on possible benefit to students | Detail of only one element, or some ideas about what actions might be taken. Little or no reflection on benefit to students | No detail about either element and no actions taken as yet |
| **Progress reflection** | A clear, succinct and honest reflection indicating learning from both positive and negative experiences | Good evidence of reflection on successes and/or failures | Little evidence of reflection on the process or evaluation of success/failure | No evidence of reflection thus far |

# Conclusion

You have now reached the end of this module, so it’s a good opportunity to reflect on what you have learned. In the introduction to the module you read that its aim was to *enable TVET lecturers to engage collaboratively and maturely in building relationships with peers, business, industry, and students.*

Having completed the module, you should now be equipped to take responsibility for growing and encouraging a range of work-related relationships, so that your college develops a highly professional teaching and learning environment, where knowledge, theory, and collaborative practices are equally valued.

Finally, you should have begun a lifelong journey of developing your emotional intelligence, so that being sensitive to the way others feel and react allows you to manage both personal and professional relationships with greater empathy and wisdom. As a student studying further to become an excellent TVET lecturer, you will want to leave a memorable legacy for the students and colleagues you encounter along the journey, so use the knowledge, skills, and values you have been introduced to here, to become an active agent of change, wherever you may find the opportunity.

# References

Breed, B. (2016). Exploring a co-operative learning approach to improve self-directed learning in higher education. *Journal for new Generation Sciences*, 14(3): 1-21. Accessed: <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/10520/EJC-6ced2999f>

Cox, J. (2011). Emotional intelligence and its role in collaboration. *Proceedings of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences (ASBBS)*. 18(1): 435-445.

Cambridge, D., Kaplan, S. & Suter, V. (2005). *Community of Practice Design Guide*. Accessed: <https://transitiepraktijk.nl/files/Community%20of%20practice%20guide.pdf>

Macpherson, A. (2015) *Cooperative Learning Group Activities for College Course*s. Surrey, BC Canada: Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Accessed: <https://kora.kpu.ca/islandora/object/kora%3A43/datastream/PDF/view>

Making Cents International. (2017). *Demand-driven Training for Youth Employment*. Accessed: <https://youtheconomicopportunities.org/DDTtoolkit>

Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R., & Sitarenios, G. (2003). Measuring emotional intelligence with the MSCEIT V2.0. *Emotion*, (3): 97-105.

Pyrko, I., Dörfler, V., & Eden, C. (2017). Thinking together: What makes Communities of Practice work? *Human Relations; Studies towards the Integration of the Social Sciences,* 70(4): 389–409*.*

Saide, (2006). *Facilitating Outcomes Based Learning and Teaching. A Guide for Trainers and FET College Lecturers*. Saide: Johannesburg

Sambu, L. & Simiyu, J. (2016). Conceptualizing Collaborative Teaching and Learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions: A Psychological Science Perspective. *Africa Journal of Technical & Vocational Education & Training*, 1(1): 53-64. Accessed: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Conceptualizing-Collaborative-Teaching-and-Learning-Lenah-John/d8a06d58dcb3ad2db981973a0fa691218225628d>

van der Bijl, A. & Taylor, V. (2018). Work-integrated learning for TVET lecturers: Articulating industry and college practice. *Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training*, 1(1): 126-145. Accessed: <http://digitalknowledge.cput.ac.za/handle/11189/7171>

Wedekind, V. & Buthelezi, Z. (2016). A climate for change? Vertical and horizontal collegial relations in TVET colleges in Kraak, A., Paterson, A. & Boka, K. (Eds) *Change Management in TVET Colleges - Lessons learnt from the field of practice.* African Minds: Johannesburg.

Wenger, E. (2004). Knowledge management as a doughnut. *Ivey Business Journal*. Retrieved from: <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/knowledge-management-as-a-doughnut>

Zhou, G., Kim, J. & Kerekes, J. (2011). Collaborative teaching of an integrated methods course. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 3(2): 124-138. Accessed: <https://www.iejee.com/index.php/IEJEE/article/view/232>

## Appendix 1: EQ Exercise

**Emotional Intelligence and self-awareness**

Emotional Intelligence or EQ is not accurately measured by doing some kind of test that is scored against a standardised measure, in the way that some IQ tests attempt to do. It’s also not something that you should consider to be an ability or set of abilities that is fixed for all time. The value of exploring one’s own emotional intelligence lies in the belief that there are skills one can learn and develop in order to better understand how emotional responses to people or events can be managed.

So, how do you come to understand more about yourself and the way you respond to others? In other words, how can you identify what personal skills you might need to learn about and improve to help you be more effective in both your personal and professional interactions with a range of people and situations?

John Mayer, one of the modern thinkers about emotional intelligence, believes that *ability-testing* is the only really effective way to make meaning of your EQ. By this, he means asking yourself questions and evaluating the answers you give. The following exercise will give you some questions to answer and guidelines to assess your answers. This is not a scientific ‘measure’ of your EQ, but a simple and effective way of exploring your emotional reactions and responses. The ‘scores’ that emerge from this exercise will only be seen by you, and will only have value for you, so don’t share them with anyone!

**Follow the instructions to complete the exercise:**

Read the following questions and spend a few minutes reflecting on your immediate reaction to them**.**

**You don’t need to write anything down yet, just read and reflect!**

* *When you work with other people, are you always aware of how you are feeling?*
* *How often do you know what other people are feeling, even if they don’t say so?*
* *When you are aware of other peoples’ feelings, does this help you feel compassion for them?*
* *When you are working under difficult/distressing circumstances, can you carry on doing what you want to do without letting these challenges control your life?*
* *When you are angry, can you still help resolve tensions rather than make matters worse?*
* *Do you always want quick results, or can you maintain your focus on long-term goals?*
* *When things seem impossible and you are tempted to give up, do you still keep trying to achieve what you want?*
* *Can you use your feelings to help you make good decisions in your life?*

You probably have a sense of what your answers to these questions *should be,* but you need to be very honest with yourself if you are serious about using self-assessment to help identify areas you can learn about and develop. If you are not prepared to be self-aware and honest, self-assessment will be a waste of time. It’s not emotionally intelligent to allow your heart to rule your head, nor to allow your head to rule your heart! If they each play an intelligent role, personal and professional relationships can both be improved.

**Are you ready to try the following self-assessment exercise?**

Remember there are no right or wrong answers, but the exercise will only be useful if you are as honest as you can be. **No-one else will read or evaluate your answers** and the purpose is to help you establish how aware you are of your emotional responses.

**Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment –** In each section of the self-assessment you need to make one response to *each of the 10 questions* by placing a cross in the block that *comes closest* to how you feel about the answer. Score yourself using the points (highest 10, lowest 2) shown under each choice of answer in the highlighted top line.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Awareness | **Always**  **10** | **Usually**  **8** | **Sometimes**  **6** | **Occasionally**  **4** | **Rarely**  **2** |
| 1. Can you identify which emotions you are feeling and why? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you tell when your emotions are affecting how you behave? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you tell when you are starting to lose your temper or when you start thinking negatively? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you consciously aware of your guiding values and goals? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you recognise your strengths and weaknesses? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you learn from your experience by being reflective? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you respond well to honest feedback, new ideas, and self-development? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you have a sense of humour about yourself? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you say things that are unpopular and take a risk for what is right? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you decisive; can you make decisions despite challenges and pressure? |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Management | **Always**  **10** | **Usually**  **8** | **Sometimes**  **6** | **Occasionally**  **4** | **Rarely**  **2** |
| 1. Can you manage impulsive feelings and upsetting emotions well? Do you just get on with things when you are angry or feel left out? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you stay calm and positive in response to another person’s anger or aggression? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you think clearly and remain focused when under pressure or feeling anxious? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you build trust by being reliable and ethical? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you admit it when you are shown to be wrong? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you take a tough, principled stand against unethical behaviour, even if it makes you unpopular? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you meet your commitments and keep promises? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you handle new demands, changing priorities, and rapid change smoothly? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you flexible when others see things differently? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you open to unique ideas and information? |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Motivation | **Always**  **10** | **Usually**  **8** | **Sometimes**  **6** | **Occasionally**  **4** | **Rarely**  **2** |
| 1. Do you bounce back quickly after things go wrong? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you take action quickly when you need to? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you focused on results, with lots of energy to meet your objectives and standards? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you set yourself challenging goals and take calculated risks? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you respond well to all opportunities to improve your performance? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you willingly make personal or group sacrifices to meet larger organisational goals? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you use a group’s core values to help make decisions and clarify choices? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you ready to seize all opportunities? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you strive for goals beyond what is required or expected of you? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you persist in following goals in the face of obstacles and setbacks? |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Social Awareness | **Always**  **10** | **Usually**  **8** | **Sometimes**  **6** | **Occasionally**  **4** | **Rarely**  **2** |
| 1. Are you aware of other peoples’ feelings and do you listen well? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you show sensitivity and try to understand other people’s views? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you try to find ways to develop other people’s satisfaction and loyalty? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you recognise and reward people’s strengths, achievements, and efforts? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you offer constructive feedback and be sensitive about people’s needs for development? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you respect and relate well to people from different backgrounds? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you see diversity as an opportunity, and create an environment where all people can participate and grow? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you challenge intolerance and bias when you are aware of it? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you identify and understand important power relationships? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Are you able to see and acknowledge important social networks? |  |  |  |  |  |
| Social Skills | **Always**  **10** | **Usually**  **8** | **Sometimes**  **6** | **Occasionally**  **4** | **Rarely**  **2** |
| 1. Are you able to makes others feel good and raise morale? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you show empathy for other people’s feelings? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you listen closely and try to foster mutual understanding? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you lead by example? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you recognise when there is a need for change and actively remove barriers? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Can you handle difficult people and tense situations with diplomacy and tact? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you try to develop and maintain extensive informal networks? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you balance task performance with attention to relationships? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you promote a co-operative, friendly environment? |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Do you model team qualities like respect, support, and co-operation? |  |  |  |  |  |

Now add up your total for each of the five sections and transfer the scores to the following table. Once you have completed the scoring, use the guide on the following page (**Scoring interpretation for each section**) to help you make sense of the score you have given yourself. Remember, this is not a scientific assessment but simply a guide to help you to work on any areas of emotional intelligence you might need to develop.

This template will become your **EQ Personal Development Plan** and if you are serious about strengthening your EQ, you should use the other columns (to the right of your score) to guide the actions you will take to do so.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Steps to stronger EQ | My score | My EQ Development Goals are: | How I aim to achieve my goals  (Development Actions) | What do I need to support me?  (Support/ Resources) | When am I going to start and when am I going to achieve my goals? |
| SELF-AWARENESS |  |  |  |  |  |
| SELF-MANAGEMENT |  |  |  |  |  |
| SELF-MOTIVATION |  |  |  |  |  |
| SOCIAL AWARENESS |  |  |  |  |  |
| SOCIAL SKILLS |  |  |  |  |  |

**Scoring interpretation guide for each section**

* **A score of 90 – 100 - A strength to recognise and use wisely.** These scores are much higher than average and show a particular strength (or a lack of honesty and awareness in the response?) A high score here shows things that probably come naturally to you, or are there because you have worked hard to develop them. Take the opportunity to use these emotionally intelligent advantages to maximise your success as a leader.
* **A score of 80 –** **89 - A strength to acknowledge and build on.** This score is above average but might suggest a few areas where you can develop. There are many things you do well to get this score, so look at the specific areas where you don’t score as well and consider what you might do better.
* **A score of 70 – 79 - With conscious effort, this could be a strength.** You are aware of some of the behaviours which gave you this score and you are doing them well. Some behaviours in this group might be holding you back. Lots of people start here but develop quickly once they become aware of the value of working on their weaker areas.
* **A score of 60 – 69 - Something you should work on.** This is an area where you sometimes show ability, but not usually. A score like this might mean you could sometimes let other people down, so it’s an area to think about changing.
* **A score of 59 or below – A concern you ought to address.**  A score like this shows a skill area that doesn’t come naturally to you, that you don’t value, or that you didn’t know was important. It might mean that your skills are limiting your effectiveness. The advantage of knowing this, is that it’s something you *can* work on, if you choose to and want to improve.
* Any *individual* question where you scored 4 or below might be an important area for you to pay attention to. Think of the benefit of using your personal development plan to change this.

## Appendix 2: Co-operative learning example

This example is from a real TVET setting. You don’t need to actually carry it out; instead you use it to complete Activity 18 in Unit 3.

**CATERING THEORY N6**

**PRACTICAL TASK**

**This assignment will be completed in pairs.**

As a function co-ordinator, you are required to implement various pre-planning steps before a function can take place. The type of event will be a social event, your group will choose the category within that specific event.

* Social function - charity events, reunion, club, farewell, etc.
* Business function - conference, launch, training workshop, seminar, etc.
* Family event- wedding, birthday, etc.

The function must be a maximum of 40 pax.

Once you have chosen the type of function, you can then determine if the function is formal or informal.

It is important to market your function well, in order to have confirmed attendance of your guests. E.G. posters, signage.

The following steps must be completed prior to the event and handed in by 20 February 2019:

1. **Booking the function**

As a group you will develop a booking form. Discuss the various options and facilities needed. Once the option has been decided upon, complete a Booking Form with all the details of the function.

Once all the details of the function have been confirmed the following must take place. (20)

1. **Table seating plan**

You must indicate how the tables and seating arrangements would be set out for the function. (5)

1. **Drinks arrangement**

The group will discuss and decide on the arrangement of how the drinks will be served. This information must be presented on the **Booking Form** (5)

1. **Staff**

Discuss the function of each staff member needed for the function. This must be stated on the booking form. The type of function will determine the staff needed. This information must be presented on the **Booking Form.** (5)

1. **Furniture**

The type of furniture will be determined by the type of function. This information must be presented on the **Booking Form.** (5)

1. **Reception**

The reception is where the guests will be greeted, and it will set the tone of your event. The type of function will determine the proceedings of the reception. This information must be presented on the **Booking Form.** (5)

1. **Catering**

Determine the type of catering for the specific function. The following must be completed in order to ensure the function will be lucrative.

* 1. **Menu**

A menu must be set. Bear in mind the seasons and supply and demand of certain products. Menu pricing must be determined. (10)

* 1. **Standardised recipes**

Once the menu is set, all recipes for the menu must be standardised for the number of people the function will cater for. Provide original recipes too. (15)

* 1. **Costing of all recipes**

All recipes must be accurately costed. (15)

* 1. **Food cost of the entire function**

Calculate the food cost of the function as well as the selling price with a mark-up of 30%. The breakdown starts from the standardisation of all recipes, the costing per person and for the whole dish. (10)

* 1. **Order form**

An order form must be completed correctly in order determine what must be ordered and in what quantities. (5)

**EVIDENCE OF ALL CALCULATIONS MUST BE PROVIDED. Use the ADDENDUMS provided to complete tasks 7.1-7.4. Make copies of the template.**

**TOTAL MARKS OF SECTION A: 100**