The purpose of this blog is to contribute to the understanding of Communities of Practice (CoP) by Etienne Wenger (1998), who defines CoP as "groups of people who share a concern or passion about something they do and who learn how to do it better as they interact with one another regularly."  
  
Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger first introduced the concept in their 1991 book Situated Learning (Lave & Wenger 1991). The concept was then further developed by Wenger in his 1998 book Communities of Practice (Wenger 1998).

A (CoP) provides sustainable professional development, according to Mak and Pun (2015).   A group of people who learn together to support one another in developing their practice (Wegner 1999).   Additionally, Hur and Brush (2009) described a supportive culture where they exchanged knowledge, concerns, and values.

Defining the CoP Framework and Characteristics According to Wenger (1998), a CoP is an attempt to promote formal change in professional practice which involves three defining components: domain, community, and practice.

From my perspective, here is my interpretation. Domains are groups of individuals with shared interests, concerns, and a common goal. It implies a commitment to that Domain, and the group members have shared competencies and learn from each other. In an interview with Valerie Farnsworth, Irene Kleanthous & Etienne Wenger-Trayner (2016), Wenger-Trayner defines a domain as a community's claim to legitimacy to define competence in that area.

Each Domain contains a community group of people who have common interests, participate in joint activities, share information, form relationships, and learn from each other. Community is built on a sense of belonging among individuals, based on cooperative tasks and strengthened by mutual expectations.

The third is practice, where members of this community are practitioners. It is more than just a group of people with common interests. It is an environment where people share skills, experiences, and stories, co-create tools and discuss solutions to recurring problems.

Charmi Patel (2018) cities Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger that the impact of this idea depends on the chances provided to individuals for learning through practice, rather than learning through supervision from a teacher.   Instead, the newcomer learns from peers, based on the opportunities provided by social structures. I agree with Servage (2008), communities of practice can assist teachers in changing their beliefs and behaviours

Putting into practice Wenger’s theory of CoP to my own work where I teach and mentor disengaged Aboriginal youth in the Pilbara, Northwest in WA. For Aboriginal people, community spirit is paramount, and Etienne's concept of the individual's active participation in the practices of social communities and the creation of his or her own identity through these communities is central. Teacher participation in a CoP can lead to transformative learning outcomes (Herbers et al., 2011).

Charmi Patel cites that Lave and Wenger proposed “a new approach to understanding learning, whereby they focused on informal and situated social interaction, rather than on traditional forms of knowledge-sharing such as lectures, workshops, and solitary reading.

In Mak and Pun (2015), the community is built on collaborative projects and strengthened by mutual expectations. As a facilitator, I assist my group members in learning new coping skills that they can implement in their everyday lives, which can be used to counteract harmful behaviours that shaped their upbringings, such as violence, alcoholism, and addiction.

We encourage the Elders to take a more hands-on approach to work with disengaged Aboriginal children and teens and learn from them Elders because helping disengaged youth is challenging. By participating in and contributing to the practices of their communities, Wenger (1998) states that people create their shared identity over time. If students look up to those who have the same skills and have achieved a stance in that community, they are more likely to develop those skills themselves.

People in the Pilbara who learn together and support one another will develop skills for coping with everyday life. People who share a common concern or passion will learn to do it better as they interact regularly. As Carpenter (2016) points out, professional development activities involving collaboration, such as CoPs, have transformative potential.

According to Etienne Wenger (1998), learning is central to human identity. Each group is different and finding that common concern and passion can be a challenge each time. The students need to discover that there are new paths through the engagement of learning from each other and having a sense that they belong. Wenger (1998) states engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities allow people to continuously create their shared identity.

Putting into practice the theories into my own classrooms with the disengaged youth, Cox (2005) states that students’ interaction achieves authentic, motivated learning of what needs to be known about the complexities of real practice, the acquisition of knowledge; it requires a change in identity, which occurs through participation in the community of practice.  
  
To close, Patel (2018), applied it to academic terms that mind and body cannot be separated, and knowing and practice are mutually constructed. accepting these statements entails a different ontological perspective and epistemological stance (“ontology” being inquiry into the nature of being; “epistemology” being inquiry into the nature of knowledge). Practice theory considers the relationships between practice and knowing, knowledge and knower, mind and body, and social and individual.

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