

# **VIRTUAL- TEAM- COMMUNITY- OF- PRACTICE (VTCoP) THEORY CAN INFORM ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY**

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# Drop out rates



- In the UK in 2011, 8.6% of students quit higher education after 12 months... Some 21.6% were expected to fail to complete their degree

(Source: HESA, 2011)

- For online courses this is thought to rise significantly but no recent national figures are as yet available

# Overview



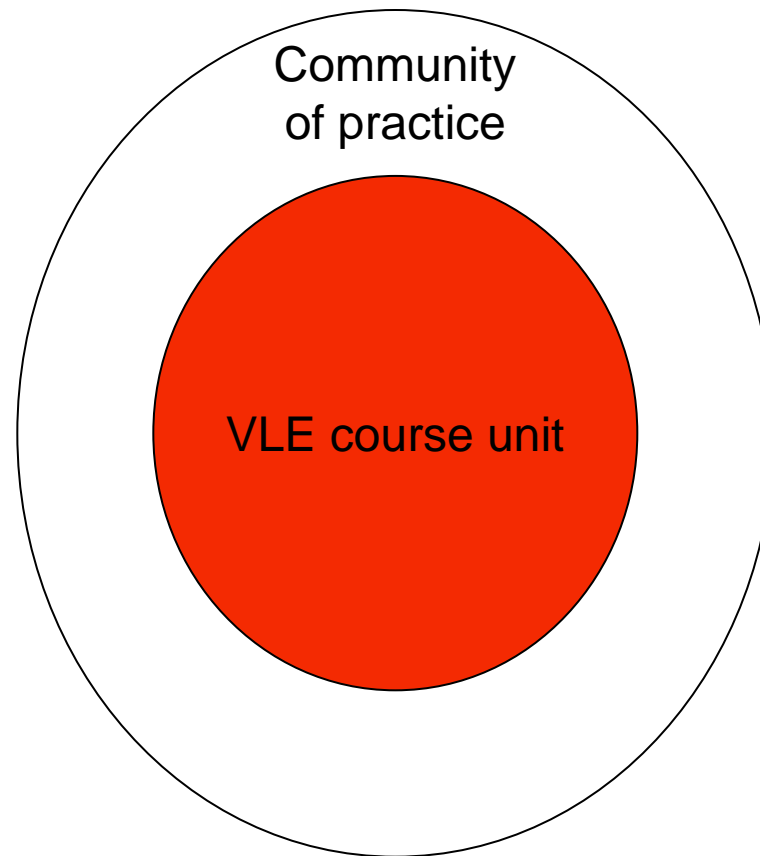
- Online Learners = Virtual Team,  
Community of Practice
- Literature – theory of online motivation
- Mapping theory to practice
- Guidelines for improving motivation /  
reducing drop out
- Ongoing activity

# Online Learners

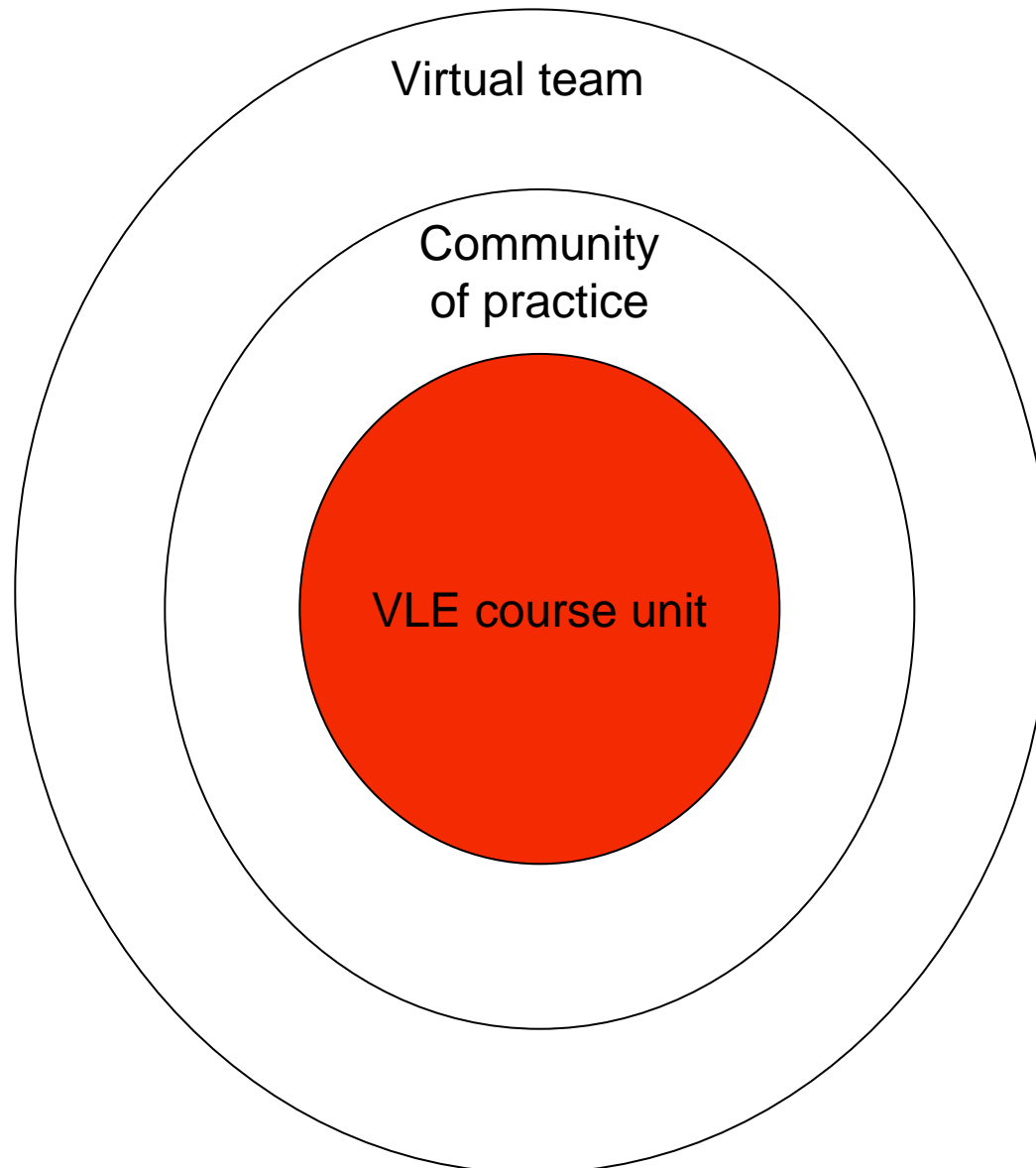


VLE course unit

# Online Learners



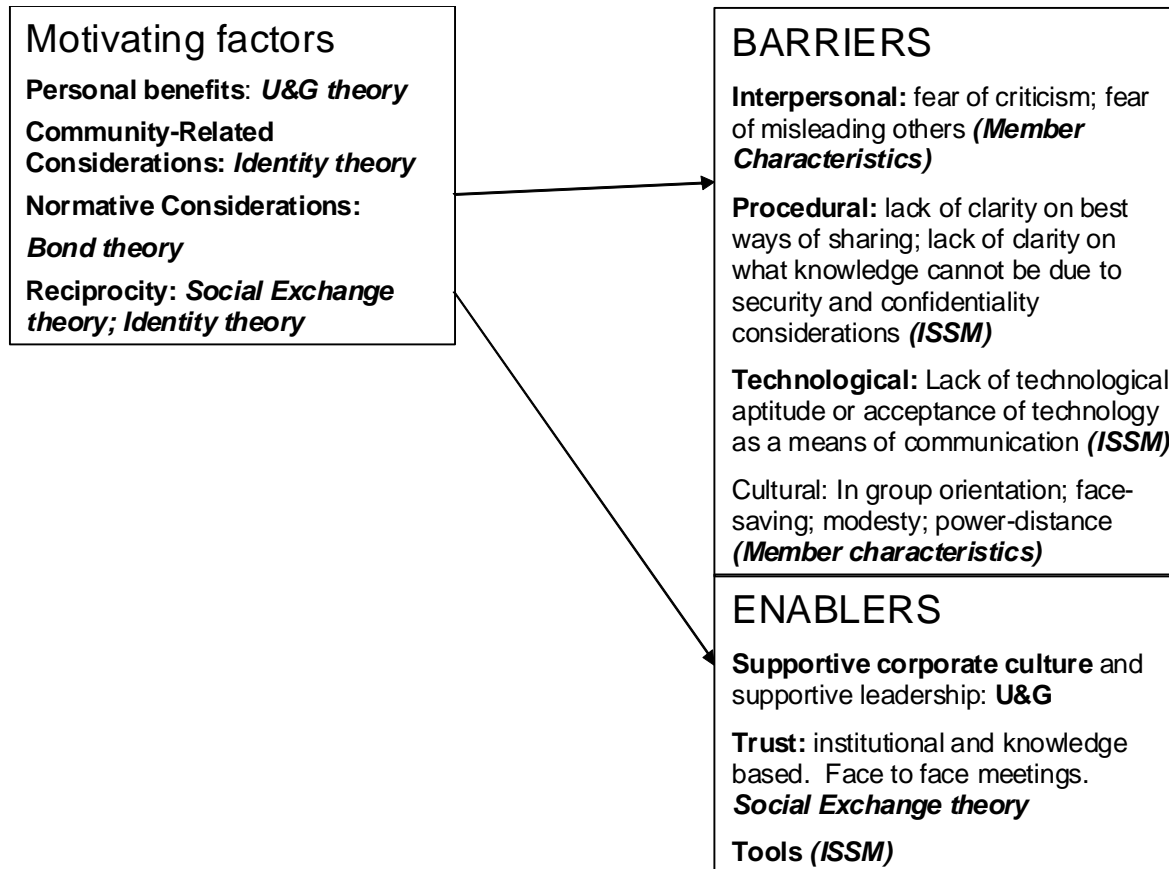
# Online Learners



# Literature

- Ardichvili model (motivating factors, barriers and enablers in VCoPs)
- DeLone and McLean (ISSM)
- Use and Gratification theory
- Social Exchange theory
- Bond theory
- Identity theory

# Participation: motivations, barriers, enablers







# Comparing online learning to a successful project



Pre-course admin	Registration	VTCoP zone			Post course admin and mitigation	Award
		Induction	Course delivery	Assignment completion		
ISSM						
			Social Exchange theory			
				Identity theory		
			Bond theory			
		U&G theory				

Project planning and initiation	Implementation	Control	Evaluation and feedback
ISSM			
U & G theory			
	Social Exchange theory		
	Bond theory		
		Identity theory	

# Induction



- Use and Gratification theory:
  - Motivators for participation: Personal benefits
  - Enablers for participation: Supportive corporate culture and supportive leadership
  - Barriers to participation: Cultural and Inter-personal characteristics
- ISSM:
  - Motivators: None
  - Enablers: Tools
  - Barriers: Procedural and Technological issues
- Social Exchange theory:
  - Motivators: Reciprocity
  - Enablers: Trust
  - Barriers: None additional

# Guidelines



- Highlight personal benefits e.g., alumni success, likely salaries achievable, increased network size, life experience
- Demonstrate the supportive university culture by perhaps offering additional pastoral support, the support of student mentors etc
- Demonstrate course leadership by making clear the course and unit tutors and their responsibilities
- Introduce and facilitate activities to create an awareness of cultural differences with other students and encourage the need for civility
- Create an environment that encourages and rewards questions and constructive criticism e.g., FAQs, credit for contribution to discussion, sanctions for those trolling others
- Provide opportunities for students to assess and improve their interpersonal skills e.g., language, assertiveness, negotiation

## Course delivery and assignment completion

- Bond theory:
  - Motivators: Normative considerations
  - Enablers: None additional
  - Barriers: None additional
- Identity theory
  - Motivators: Community related considerations, reciprocity
  - Enablers: None additional
  - Barriers: None additional

# Guidelines



- Provide opportunities for students to assess and improve their use of online tools prior to use
- Provide clarity on the methods and processes of sharing information in groups, e.g., file sharing, file naming, protocols for the use of groupware
- Provide clarity on the type of information and data that is to be shared using university systems e.g., protocols, what is acceptable and what isn't
- Provide clarity on the technical requirements of hardware and software required
- Design activities which will enable / encourage reciprocity
- Design activities which will enable trust

## Ongoing activity



- Undergraduate portfolio under review Jan 2013
- New undergraduate DL course to be launched Feb 2013
- New postgraduate DL course to be launched September 2013

Recommendations to be fed into new course implementation and results monitored