

The Oregon Community Foundation Learning Communities Rubric

The below rubric builds on existing definitions of learning communities and on the list of qualities of OCF learning communities. The rubric is a working framework to describe in greater detail what developing, successful, and exceptional learning communities developed by OCF should look like. This rubric will help us to:

- Support the evolution of our thinking about what successful learning communities should look like (and when they should be developed);
- Communicate our expectations for learning communities internally;
- Assess the success of the learning community components of our Initiatives;
- Improve our existing learning communities; and
- Plan for future learning communities.

The rubric is meant to be used to reflect on a learning community overall, and also may be useful in planning for or assessing the success of individual learning community activities. Components of successful learning communities are found in the left hand column; descriptions of three levels of success – developing, successful, and exceptional – are found in the remaining columns. It is important to note that not all learning communities look alike, and not all should or will reflect the “exceptional” criteria below.

At their most basic, **rubrics** are scoring guides. In evaluation, they are used to help us judge the quality, value, and importance of our work. They describe what levels of “performance” or degrees of success look like. We can then review evidence (data!) to systematically determine which category our work fits into, and whether we are making progress.

Successful Learning Community Rubric			
	Developing	Successful	Exceptional
Clarity and scope of purpose	There is no clear purpose for the learning community, or it is not well understood by all involved. Members may report that the learning community is a requirement, and that it benefits their organizations, but they don't fully communicate how it serves a greater purpose.	The primary purpose(s) of the learning community are clear, clearly communicated, and well understood by all involved.	All involved have a strong understanding of the purpose of the learning community and a shared sense of ownership and investment in that purpose. The learning community is clearly defined enough that the purpose can be flexible as the needs of the community or field shift.
Design & implementation	OCF leads design of learning community and determines its form and structure. OCF staff may consult with others but do not engage as deeply with the community or field in designing and implementing learning community activities. Member needs are taken into consideration in shaping the learning community, but this may be done more indirectly or passively.	OCF consults with or otherwise involves other members of the LC (e.g. grantees) in developing and implementing LC activities, but within a structure determined by OCF. Member needs are regularly re-assessed and adjustments made as needed. As appropriate, room is made for grantee members to shape or lead activities.	OCF's role in design and implementation is "right-sized" for the learning community and its activities. Emphasis is placed on the collaborative development of the LC, with all members having a say in its form and structure. Grantee members emerge as leaders in a manner responsive to the LC needs. For example, an advisory group may design content for some or all learning community activities.
OCF positioned as a learner	OCF representatives either lead or participate in learning community activities but do not communicate or demonstrate a position as a learner.	OCF representatives communicate a position as a learner and work alongside grantees and other stakeholders on LC goals.	OCF representatives are learners, and demonstrate learning by being transparent about what is learned and how the learning is utilized (internally and externally). Other members describe OCF as a partner or peer in the learning community.
Learning objectives	For individual LC activities, learning objectives are not clearly outlined, or expectations for learning are not clearly understood. Opportunities to learn are limited to particular types of instruction or format.	For individual LC activities, learning objectives are clear and communicated so that expectations are understood. Opportunities to learn are varied in nature and delivery and appropriate for members. Members report that they have met learning objectives.	For individual LC activities, learning objectives are clear and well communicated. They convey expectations of authentic and engaged learning by attendees. Assessment (not limited to self-report) indicates that members met learning objectives.
Content	Content quality is mixed. Members are satisfied with some, but not all of the content provided, or the manner in which it is provided. Content is developed without consultation with grantees and/or other experts & stakeholders.	Content is high quality at least most of the time. Most members are satisfied with most content. Most content is developed with clear relationship to Initiative goals. Members actively help shape and drive content through formal or informal mechanisms.	Content is of the highest quality possible, rivaling other learning opportunities in the field or community. Members are highly satisfied with the majority of content. Content clearly advances the Initiative goals. Content may be developed and driven by all members.

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Engagement	Not all desired members "show up" and engage fully in the activities.	All desired members show up (the right representatives of organizations attend for the full length of activities) and engage fully (participate actively in discussions, etc.).	All desired members show up, stay the full length, and engage fully. All members' support needs are met so that they can fully participate (e.g. translation is provided). Members express eagerness for the next opportunity to work together.
Network Building	Members connect with one another during learning community activities but deeper networking may be hindered by lack of knowledge of one another, or because members don't yet see one another as resources.	Grantees connect with one another during and between learning community activities. They feel they understand enough about those in the learning community to reach out, and recognize one another as resources.	Grantees begin to collaborate directly, or deepen their collaborative work in and outside of the learning community activities.
Trust Building & Peer Learning	Grantee members share information with one another but are often in "pitch mode" – talking up their programs and work. They don't yet see the value in learning from one another.	Grantee members are willing to be vulnerable and take risks in sharing their experiences, etc. Members share openly about their challenges when prompted. Members see one another as peers and express eagerness to learn from one another.	Grantee members report that trust is built between members of the LC and share openly about their challenges without being prompted. Dialogue may be generated that was not planned but that helps members learn about challenges and ways to overcome them. Members report that they benefit from learning from and with one another.
Extended Learning	Members may share some of what they learned through LC activities with others in their organization, but sharing is not intentional, and doesn't extend to implementation or change in their practices.	Members take back activities or lessons learned at LC activities and share with their own organizations. They implement new practices.	Grantees report that their practice is 'disrupted' positively – that they've changed the way that they do things as a result of learning through the LC.
Impact on the community/ field	Learning is mostly internal to the learning community. Learning is not yet disseminated intentionally, though there are likely plans to do so. Members acknowledge that their participation in the LC is beneficial, but don't yet see the value to the greater community/field.	Learning is disseminated in an intentional way. Members report that their work and the work of others in their field is strengthened.	Learning is disseminated in an intentional way. As is appropriate given Initiative goals, products may be developed and shared broadly. Learning extends beyond the LC activities with others in the field. Organizations (not directly involved in LC) may report that field is strengthened.