

## **Learning Communities: Creating Results through Innovative Educational Environments**

The term learning community began to gain traction in the 80's and 90's was generically defined as "a group of people who share common academic goals and attitudes, that meet semi-regularly to collaborate on classwork." In 2002, Leadership Network asked Tom McGehee to develop a learning community design that could support multiple churches working together. Today, that design has grown in Christian circles and "learning communities" are being used in many different ways. Particularly in Europe, the learning community is very useful as it a great approach to support networks and cross-denominational interactions. In this session, we will discuss the various constructs of learning communities, when they are best applied, and how to use them most successfully. Also, we will discuss a new emerging application of learning communities called "Wave Change."

**Tom McGehee** is the founder and CEO of The WildWorks Group. Tom graduated from university in 1978, and after several years in the US Marines, he entered the private sector. He quickly rose from executive in a large global corporation to a Partner with Ernst & Young consulting. His life story and life's work have the noticeable hand of God directing his path. Tom's life verse is John 10:10, and his passion is to help individuals live abundantly through the church. Tom founded WildWorks in 2001, and has applied his collaborative approach for Results-based Conversations (RbC) to work with many churches, denominations and ministries all over the world. IN 2002, Tom used RbC to create and train Leadership Network to conduct learning communities. Tom is a published author, accomplished speaker, trainer and thought leader in collaboration, group interaction and organizational change. He and his wife currently live in Plano, Texas.

### **I. Learning communities, collaboration and integration.**

#### A. Learning communities and collaboration

1. Learn together, implement separately
  
2. Learn together, do together
  
3. Hybrid

#### B. Integrating learning communities into daily operations

1. It's about teams not individuals

2. It's about doing work not just learning

## **II. The learning community approach**

### A. Different results require a different way of working

1. Bounded sets and centered sets
2. Focused work not multi-tasking

### B. A different way of working requires that you work differently

1. Think your confusion out loud
2. Discover what is really real
3. A defined and facilitated process of group interaction

### C. Systematically, over time with others

1. The importance of relationship
2. People support what they help create

### **III. Learning communities and change**

#### A. Emergent possibilities, not just process management

1. Centered sets and bounded sets
2. Kairos moments and Chronos planning

#### B. Holistic possibilities, not just programs

1. Innovation
2. Integration
3. Sustained success

#### C. Wave Change<sup>SM</sup>

1. Using the learning community model to lead change
2. Use within a church or ministry
3. Use between churches and ministries

#### ***Suggested Readings:***

- The Power of Habit- Charles Duhigg
- Whoosh-Business Unleashed- Tom McGehee
- Orbiting the Giant Hairball- Gordon MacKenzie
- Lateral Thinking- Edward De Bono