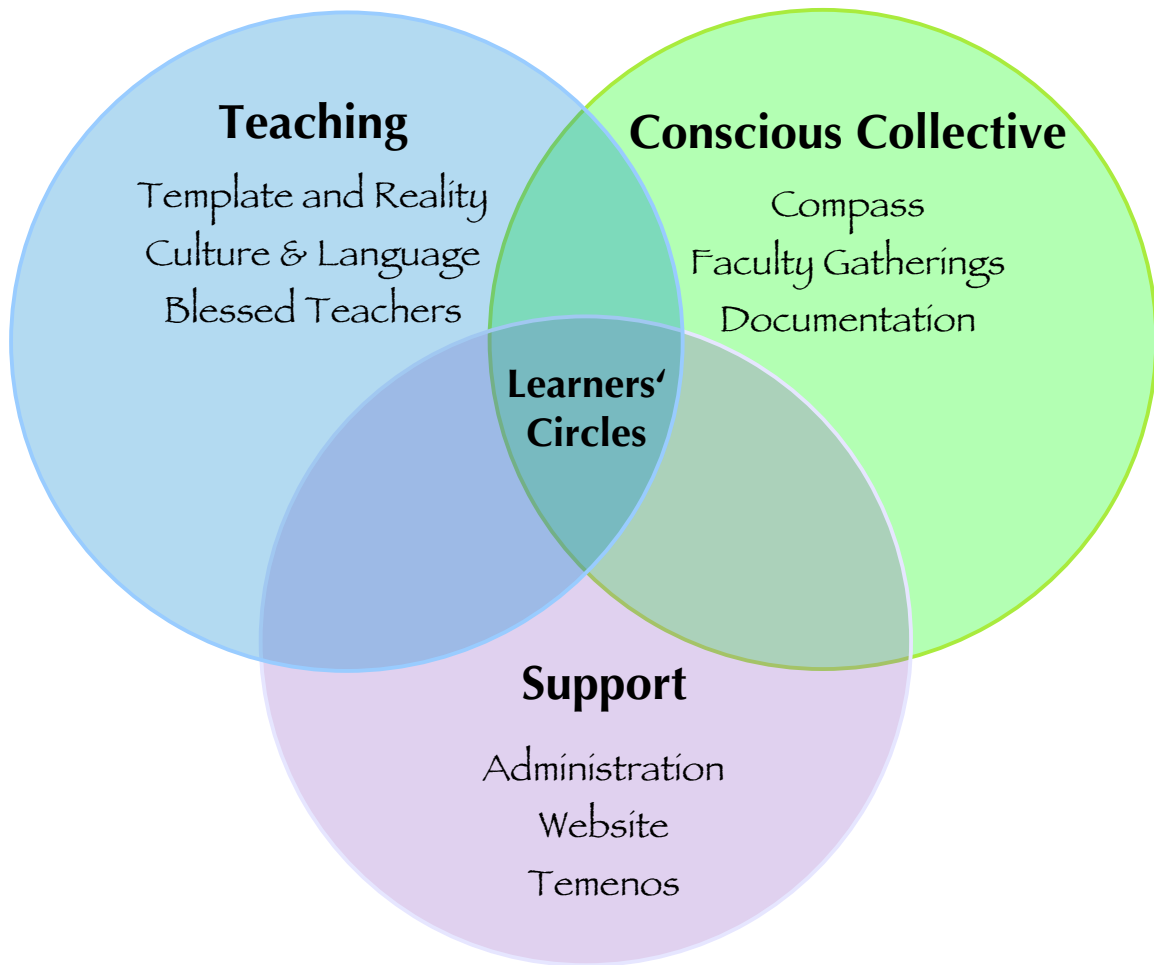


Circles of Four Faculty Organization



May, 2024

Overview

The center of Circles of Four is the circle of each individual learner and their three faculty. Each Learner's Circle is supported by the work of the surrounding circles described below.

The Teaching Circle reflects on and clarifies program structures, supports quality teaching, address challenges in being a multilingual, multi-national program, and creates supports for blessed teachers.

The Conscious Collective Circle builds upon the discipline to create a conscious faculty who are woven together by their love for the discipline, gathering for movement, and shared reflection/ decision-making.

The Support Circle holds all in their hearts as they attend to the program as a whole, attending to financial, administrative, and legal matters, communications, developing and maintaining our website, and providing sanctuary to individuals in times of impasse or difficulty.

Pod Work

Pod Work is the faculty's vehicle for developing as a conscious collective and attending to programmatic matters and decision making. Faculty have engaged in pod work as a means to organize ourselves and "get things done" in the areas described above. Faculty participate in at least one pod and often two so they have the opportunity to work with many members of the collective and be involved in discussions and decisions that matter most to them. We have an paid administrative assistant who provides a few hours of support each week.

Teaching

Culture and Language Pod

Culture and Language offers a bridge of communication and support for those teaching in more than one language. The pod explores and addresses the challenges that emerge within Circles of Four by being a multilingual, and multi-national organization.

Blessed Teachers Pod

The Blessed Teachers Pod supports Blessed Teachers as they transition from being program learners to teachers of the Discipline of Authentic Movement, and for those who have interest, joining the faculty. The pod offers a yearly retreat, supports blessed teachers to connect with one another and faculty, and supports community amongst blessed teachers. The pod develops and hones a pathway for Blessed Teachers who want to join the Co4 faculty.

Template and Reality Pod

Template and Reality communicates with faculty to gather and share information on how program is working. The pod identifies and reflects on program issues or practices that need further exploration or evolution. The pod may bring questions and concerns to the entire faculty.

Guidelines Pod (now merged with Template and Reality)

Developed Touchstones, the initial guideline document for faculty

Conscious Collective

Compass Pod

With membership from each pod and from Europe and the Americas, the Compass Pod connects with all aspects of program and holds a full view. The pod is responsible for helping guide, steer, direct others toward the direction where a solution lives and attend to overall program communication. It consults and develop plans for a decision making process, as needed, when a major program change is recommended and identifies when new pods are needed. The pod holds everyone involved with Circles of Four in their hearts.

Faculty Meetings

Working with support from the administrative assistant for technical assistance, Compass Pod provides leadership (planning, communicating, coordinating, facilitating, and documenting) for faculty meetings.

Faculty and Community Gatherings

Coordination for retreats or gatherings are coordinated by ad hoc groups. Coordinators attend to communication, develop schedules and content for gatherings, coordinates with venue or operates zoom, organizes for documentation process.

Documentation

For transparency, clarity and collective memory within the faculty, each pod and work group organizes documentation of their meetings/gatherings. This information is most often shared through minutes on the faculty pages of the website or through letters to faculty. Individuals create other documentations and expressions of the collective for example, the weaving Indira's Net or photographs of gatherings.

Support

Administration Pod

The Administration Pod discusses and manages administrative aspects of program such as finances, record keeping, and legal issues. The pod is the primary support for the Co4 Administrative Assistant. The pod holds everyone involved with Circles of Four in their hearts.

Temenos

Temenos offers sanctuary to any person or persons within the Circles of Four community who seek to be held in complete confidentiality during a time of impasse or difficulty. Clarity, resolve, or a new perspective may be found from Temenos' available and completely confidential resource.

Website Pod

The Website Pod oversees the website disciplineofauthenticmovement.com, including its design, content, and technical aspects of the website. They revise content and design as needed as Circles of Four evolves.

Summary of Decision-Making Process used within the Co4 Faculty

Structure

Discussion and shaping of decisions most often takes place in pods:

- To support all questions being intimately and fully addressed
- Because faculty meet infrequently as a whole and pods support the whole

Decisions that may impact the collective in significant ways are communicated and discussed at faculty meetings and/or shared in writing.

Decision-Meeting: an ongoing process of discernment and “landing”

The German words "eine Entscheidung treffen" translate in English to "meeting a decision" while the English phrase is often "making a decision." "Meeting a decision" better describes our process of creating consensus. It speaks to an ongoing process of clarifying that is emergent. Through our speaking together, a new clarity emerges amongst us. We engage in a participatory process.

To support and sustain this participatory process, pods:

- Share their decisions and process at a faculty meeting (or by letter.) Their work is met by the collective's insights, questions, clarifications, and comments.
- Consider using Four Finger Sounding within a meeting to sense the collective voice.
- Reflect as a pod when faculty does not seem to be in consensus with what is being proposed.
- Communicate to faculty how they "land" for now as they reflect and integrate faculty response.

Types of Decisions

We have begun to differentiate two different types of decisions in our collective.

- Decisions that revisit, refine, and/or clarify based on our teaching experiences. These decisions are often a witnessing, a conscious naming of a process that is already well underway, a next step emerging. (For example, Letter Writing)
- Decisions that ask us to move into the unknown, to trust not yet knowing. This is generally a slower evolving process needing multiple revisits with the whole. (For example, Path to Faculty)

Four Fingers Sounding

Four Fingers Sounding is a tool for assessing how close to consensus a group is and for supporting a group to move toward consensus. It is a nonverbal method for moving toward consensus, not a voting procedure.

A proposal is shared. Then each collective member in the collective show the number of fingers that best indicate their support for the proposal.

- 4 fingers means I completely agree and support the proposal.
- 3 fingers means I almost completely agree with a small reservation but I will contain my reservation and support the proposal.
- 2 fingers means that before I can agree I need something specific in the proposal to change and I cannot support the proposal until certain changes are made.
- 1 finger means I do not agree and am blocking consensus and cannot support the proposal until a new proposal is made.

Four Fingers Sounding asks us to become conscious of when and what we must speak and when and what we can contain for the sake of the group moving forward.

The faculty collective is still becoming facile in the use of this process.

Learning to Discern

Learning to discern who needs to be involved in what kinds of decisions and what is the best way for them to be involved is knowledge that the collective is developing over time. While the benefits of collective decision-making are many, a shadow side is the time it sometimes takes.

In addition, depending on an individual's temperament, consensus building can be enlivening or challenging. People have varying levels of comfort with shared authority and collaboration as well as varying levels of time to commit to the process. Making room for both individual and collective needs is in service to the ongoing practices of our embodied conscious collective.

Some final words on the value of dissent:

The process of refining a decision by incorporating dissenters' concerns and input is essential to achieving the goal of a decision that will be carried out whole-heartedly by the entire group.

I have learned more about these processes by being a dissenter than when I have been in agreement with proposed actions. It has been hard for me to go against what I assumed to be a group's direction. When the process works and my concerns have been respectfully received and effectively incorporated into the final decision, it is with great joy and relief that I can join in accepting it. Respectful listening to those who disagree is essential for the consensus process, and also for any type of peacemaking work.

Val Liveoak, "Working Together in the Light, Lessons Along the Way," *Peace Time News*, a publication of *Friends Peace Teams*