

Abstract Submitted  
for the PHYSTC19 Meeting of  
The American Physical Society

**Impact of online discussion in forming a community of practice of educators** BAHAR MODIR, ROBYNNE LOCK, WILLIAM NEWTON, Texas AM University-Commerce — Community formation is important in identity development of teachers. However, many teacher communities form in isolation from each other, and demonstrate limited sustainability over time. Texas A&M University-Commerce has designed a new and unique online Master program to prepare high school teachers with better informed teaching practices in their own high schools by reinforcing foundational and pedagogical content knowledge within a remote collaborative learning environment. In this study, we investigate the role of this program in community formation and development for educators nationwide. Using the community of practice theoretical framework, we discuss the role of course structure in promoting an ongoing online discourse among participants as they practice: learning physics, teaching, and overcoming their challenges. We outline our future plans for developing a new communicable scheme for recognition of an online community of practice. Using this platform, we are able to gain further evidence supporting formation of teacher communities in high schools. The result of this research can help to extend the professional development activities of teachers to a new level that goes beyond geographical boundaries of local high schools.

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Date submitted: 15 Feb 2019

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