Appendix: Connected Educator Month Core Element Details

Connected Educator Month was implemented with a spine of centralized programming supporting a highly distributed, much larger collection of events and activities across the participating organizations. A key goal was to move the field forward together by providing a mix of activities designed to engage and support the less connected while providing compelling opportunities for the highly connected, who typically drive online traffic and often provide offline leadership. Culturally, month’s events operated as something of a cross between a highly distributed MOOC and an online happening, with some leaders likening it to an Olympics or Burning Man Festival for connected education. Key elements were as follows:

- The Connected Educator Month kickoff
- The Connected Educator Month calendar
- Connected Educator Month themes and forums
- Participant support
- Open houses and guided tours
- Contests and challenges
- The Connected Educator Month Wrap-Up
- Postevent activities

The activities were designed to serve as conversation starters and inspirations for the month to follow, and they were structured to be highly interactive and participatory in keeping with Connected Educator Month’s community-based philosophy. Sessions were turned into robust archives that included recordings, chat transcripts, and related links, which participants were encouraged to pass along to the less connected. Steve’s midmonth Learning 2.0 conference also was an integral part of Connected Educator Month and helped support and continue these conversations, infusing them with new energy and insight through the rest of the month.

The Connected Educator Month Calendar

A central belief in the development of Connected Educator Month’s infrastructure was that if we did nothing more than bring together everything that goes on in online education communities every month in one place so that previously unconnected educators could really take it in and appreciate it, we would have done the field a service. To this and other ends, we provided an open calendar that participating organizations could add to before the month and throughout it. The calendar and associated submission form were designed to make it easy for educators to find events and activities developed specifically for them (tagged and searchable by event type, topic, and audience, with rich event/activity descriptions), as well as create Connected Educator Month schedules for themselves.
Figure 1. The Connected Educator Month Home Page and Calendar
Connected Educator Month Themes, Forums

There were six topical themes for Connected Educator Month. Each opened with a panel during the kickoff, continued throughout the month via an asynchronous forum, and closed with a collaborative real-time event during Connected Educator Month’s final week. Other elements, events, and formats were incorporated at the discretion of theme leaders and participants. Each theme had a core group of participants that included both thought leaders and top front-line practitioners recruited by the Center for Teaching Quality and other groups. They were led by top moderators, primarily Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach of Powerful Learning Practice and Steve Hargadon. Topics included the following:

- **It’s Personal—Personalized Learning for Students and Teachers**
- **Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: 21st Century Professional Development**
- **Knocking on the Door: New Technologies and Connected Education**
- **Beyond Top–Down: Distributed Leadership and Teacher-Led Change**
- **Connected Education and the First Six Weeks of School**
- **Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due**

Participant Support: The Connected Educator Month Book Club, Starter Kits, and More

There were a number of vehicles specifically developed for less connected individual educators and institutions or organizations, many of which more connected individuals and groups found useful as well:

- **The Connected Educators Book Club**—With both synchronous and asynchronous elements, the book club became a model for experienced and less connected educators sharing and working together as they navigated the geography of the printed word. The featured book was Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach and Lani Ritter Hall’s *The Connected Educator*; the club was developed in collaboration with Powerful Learning Practice, and we were fortunate to have both authors as club leaders throughout.

- **Connected Educator Month Starter Kit**—The kit provided a 31-day program for educators to get more connected, with one simple activity to engage in for each day of Connected Educator Month. Developed in collaboration with Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach—the author—and Powerful Learning Practice, the kit was heavily downloaded and praised for its applicability across the entire spectrum of connected experience.

- **District Toolkit**—Developed in collaboration with the Consortium for School Networking, this toolkit, downloaded by hundreds, provided materials to enable districts to integrate Connected Educator Month into their back-to-school professional development, promote the event to local educators, track Connected Educator Month activities, and measure Connected Educator Month impact.

- **Connected Educator Month Resource Center**—The resource center provided a wide variety of materials and tools to help participating organizations develop their events and promote

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1 One forum, *Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due*, continues on ProTeacher.net, which we hope will help inform progress toward an important recommendation discussed in the overall report.
Connected Educator Month, everything from an extensive list and description of potential activity ideas for use in brainstorming to a widget that organizations could plug into their site to allow users to follow traffic on #ce12 throughout the month.

- **Connected Educator Month Help Desk**—A ubiquitous UserVoice-based application, modeled on classic homework help services, the help desk fielded questions on any topic related to Connected Educator Month, online communities, or networks and particularly helped track technical difficulties experienced by the less connected.

- **Connected Educator Month Supporter Kit**—The kit provided materials for individual educators to show their support of Connected Educator Month on their pages and help get the word out in other ways.

- **Community Directory**—Although not developed for Connected Educator Month, the directory was a natural next step for the less connected once they decided to get more involved. It was a featured element of Connected Educator Month and doubled in size in July and August.

### Open Houses and Guided Tours

Community open houses were and are opportunities for educators to visit a community, explore it, and ask questions or comment live, in real-time dialog with the community’s managers and members. We developed a simple frame (see Figure 2) to enable open houses during Connected Educator Month and made it available to all participating organizations, and community open houses were among the top draws during the month. We also solicited nominations

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**Figure 2. The Open House Interface**

![Figure 2. The Open House Interface](image-url)
for a series of annotated cross-community guided tours, each tour focused on a specific benefit of connectedness, showcasing how the communities on the tour help realize that benefit. The tours will be built and released later this year as part of our efforts to sustain the momentum for connected education that Connected Educator Month has created.

Contests and Challenges

Connected Educator Month was seeded with three contests, one carried out during the event itself by Powerful Learning Practice and Intel, two others planned as opportunities for reflection and to keep Connected Educator Month momentum going. The purpose of the contests was to further project goals, help us build out new offerings, encourage and value educator-created content, and add the frisson that contests provide to many users. We also encouraged other organizations to develop contests, challenges, games, and other such interactive devices, ending up with enough critical mass to develop a dedicated page with a menu of them on the Connected Educator Month site.

The Connected Educator Month Wrap-Up

The final sessions of Connected Educator Month covered many of the same topics as the opening sessions and forums; their primary purpose was to synthesize the events of the month, determine what we had learned, and generate primary takeaways and action items for the field. There also were some special forward-thinking panels on topics like connected education badges, systems conveners, and the next generation (a student panel). Unlike the kickoff, the wrap-ups were primarily open community discussions, on the theory that the goal of any online community is for its members to step forward and take ownership, which we felt the Connected Educator Month participant community would be ready to do after a rich month of events and activities.

Connected Educator Month Promotion and Outreach

All the above was backed by an extensive promotion plan with the following elements:

- Daily e-newsletters that were, in turn, converted into tweets for the project and partners to use with the official #ce12 hashtag, as well as within other hashtag communities we had established relationships with
- Regular retweeting of others’ notable #ce12 posts
- Additional newsletter distribution via the project’s LinkedIn group and a number of other LinkedIn groups we had previously developed relationships with
- Conversion of newsletters into promotions via our Facebook group and Connected Educator Month Facebook page
- Regular targeted communications with participating organizations and school districts, starting in early July
- Outreach to key media outlets and bloggers

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2 With a moderator, experts, and top practitioners on hand as resources and to help seed discussions.
All this, in turn, helped seed and provide direction to a much larger effort by the 170+ participating organizations to promote the event in general, including extensive cross-promotion of each other’s events, aided by a wide variety of tools and materials we made available to participating organizations (and individuals) to help them get the word out and encourage and facilitate cross-promotion.³

Connected Educator Month Archives and Other Postevent Activities

After the close of Connected Educator Month, the project has developed a comprehensive archive of the events and activities of the month for those who missed some or all of it, and for those who just want to revisit or reference the content and experience. The archives are both searchable and browseable by topic, activity type, and audience. Beyond other plans already described earlier in this appendix, other steps we are either taking or considering for keeping Connected Educator Month’s momentum going and growing include the following:

- Further developing a badge collection informed by discussions and examples from Connected Educator Month
- Using the #ce12 hashtag to continue the connected education dialogue in general and to start talking about what we would like to do together in the future, whether in a Connected Educator Month 2013 or other initiatives.
- Encouraging and moderating more extended discussions about Connected Educator Month and connected education in the Education Community Managers Network on LinkedIn.
- Reopening the Connected Educator Month calendar to new events and activities on selected topics involving multiple collaborating organizations and promoting these events via the same mechanisms used during Connected Educator Month.
- Promoting events and activities that use the Connected Educator Month archives as jumping-off points to follow up on the event’s discussions.
- Expanding the use of ConnectedEducators.org as a place where the field shares its work, via existing vehicles like the Innovation Exchange blog and new ones like the upcoming Community Cookbook.

³ A special level of appreciation is due to Powerful Learning Practice, Classroom 2.0, edWeb, and #edchat for taking a leadership role among the participating organizations in this area.