

Introducing the Agora!

In Ancient Greece, the "Agora" was a central meeting place for community members. It featured public forums for ongoing conversations, as well as an exchange for the sharing of resources.

AEA PD Online proudly sponsors the Agora, a 21st century digital counterpart to the Greek meeting place. In this online space, different communities can create a venue for social learning and all its benefits, including access for online conversations, professional development events, and sharing of resources.

An Online Community of Practice

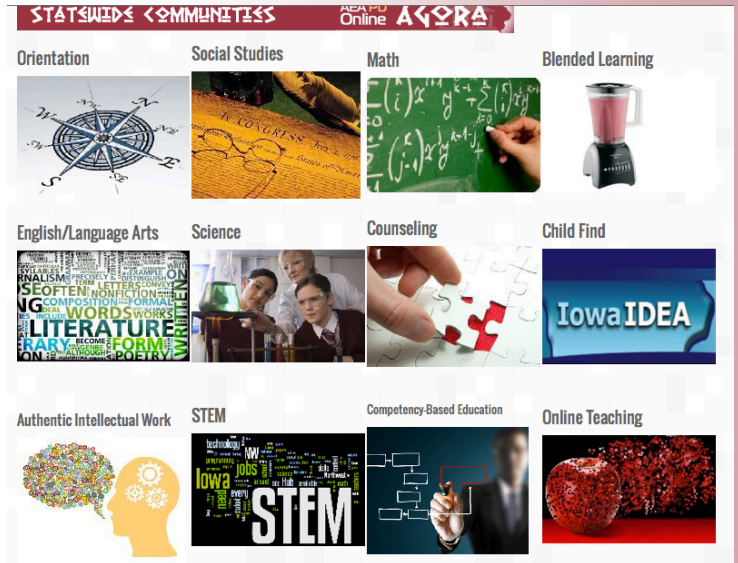
In our world today, professional development is changing. It is moving online, meaning it can be available any time or any place. And, it is shifting from a focus on the professional development content to a focus on connecting educators with other educators.

This new era of professional development is known as a "community of practice", and it empowers educators to develop themselves with a wider array of colleagues. Its reliance on ongoing conversations, sharing, and collaborative work aligns itself with the Iowa Professional Development Model's ongoing cycle of implementation.

Supporting the Iowa Core

Several statewide sponsors, including the Iowa Department of Education and School Administrators of Iowa, help keep the focus on the Iowa Core. Communities help teachers learn from other teachers, even if their home district has no other teachers in her discipline.

The Agora provides teachers with ways to calibrate their understanding of core standards and rigorous student learning. And, communities help teachers discover new ways to infuse the curriculum, including the characteristics of effective instruction and the universal constructs.



Piloting Communities Include

- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- English/Lang. Arts
- Child Find
- Blended Learning
- STEM
- AIW
- Competency-Based Education
- Counseling
- Child Find
- Online Teaching

Pilots will begin in January 2014

What is in a Community?

The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with 'Home', 'AEA PD Online', 'Language', 'My Courses', and 'My Dashboard'. Below the navigation, the main content area features a 'STEM' section titled 'What is STEM?' with a brief description. At the bottom, there are four tabs: 'About Us', 'Discussion', 'Community Exchange', and 'Professional Development'. Three callout boxes with arrows point to these tabs:

- Discussion:**
 - Threaded forums
 - Twitter feeds
 - Teacher chat areas
- Community Exchange:**
 - Sharing of teacher-created resources
 - Links of websites
 - Repositories of classroom content
 - Student examples
- Professional Development:**
 - Stand-alone self-paced modules
 - Calendar of live events
 - Webinars
 - Other community activities