

Mentoring Within a Community of Practice for Faculty Development: Adding Value to a CTL Role

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Volume 34, Issue 1–2, 2015

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/tia.17063888.0034.106> [<http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/tia.17063888.0034.106>]

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Abstract

E. R. Smith, P. E. Calderwood, F. Dohm, and P. Gill Lopez's (2013) model of integrated mentoring within a community of practice framework draws attention to how mentoring as practice, identity, and process gives shape and character to a community of practice for higher education faculty and alerts us to several challenges such a framework makes visible. In this exploratory study, we apply the model, and the consideration of the challenges it highlights, to consider how mentoring might figure in and configure a community of practice for faculty development localized in a university Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTL) for teaching and learning.

Keywords: faculty mentoring, teaching and learning centers

Faculty mentoring, dyadic, networked, and co mentoring, in higher education has been extensively studied (Johnson, 2007; Luna & Cullen, 1995; McGuire & Reger, 2003; Zachary, 2005, 2011; Zachary & Fischler, 2009; Zellers, Howard, & Barcic, 2008). Dyadic mentoring, the most familiar configuration, operates within an expert novice continuum, in which a more experienced or expert partner guides the less experienced into increased competence in their shared practice. Networked mentoring occurs episodically, on an as needed basis, as one reaches out or is tapped for specific resources, guidance, or other collegial assistance needed at the moment. Co mentoring differs from dyadic and networked mentoring. Co mentoring arises during and from shared engagement in common practice (such as teaching) with peers who share developing expertise, learning from and, more significantly, *with* each other in the process. Lindholm (2003) notes that faculty seek a sense of community, relationships energized by commonality of interests and values, intellectual stimulation, professional resources, and emotional nurturance, all of which are also elements of co mentoring, mentoring partnerships, and networks. Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTL), including our CTL, are often such spaces. Although Yee and Hargis (2012) and Sorcinelli and Yun (2007) tell us that the interpersonal knowledge, skills, and dispositions of faculty developers, and the processes that facilitate faculty development, are vital for CTL. Amundsen and Wilson (2012) discovered a predominant focus in the literature on outcomes over process. Others have discussed the transformative possibilities that a CTL might spark for a university and its faculty, complicating a simplistic notion of faculty development, opening possibilities for positioning CTLs to co construct the very nature of the university (Green & Little, 2013; Little & Green, 2012; Schroeder, 2012). We posit that a CTL, regardless of the manifest purpose of activities it provides or facilitates, can be a source or facilitator of three modes of faculty mentoring (dyadic, networked, and co mentoring) integrated within a community of practice (CoP), the situated context for faculty work and for faculty development.

Learning and development are inextricably entwined and embedded within situated social activity (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1980; Wenger, 1998). Vygotsky's groundbreaking notion of the zone of proximal development (*ZPD*) illuminates the importance of an actual (or internalized) guiding presence scaffolding the development of an individual during shared activity. For the less experienced, knowledgeable, or skilled person, the shared activity is developmentally just beyond

what she or he can understand or accomplish independently. In the ZPD, successively nearer approximations of competent practice on the part of the less experienced are co constructed by the guide (mentor) and learner, setting the groundwork for continued learning and development. The ZPD is a symbolic space, within which peers can also collaborate on a shared activity, and imagine themselves, and act as if, already competent. They share a proximal developmental arena as they co construct authentic, if not yet expert, activity and practice. They support (co mentor) each other to gain competence, share insights, understand and correct their errors, innovate, and solve problems. Even relative experts (mentors), as they guide their less experienced fellows into more competent practice, construct a ZPD that propels them toward increased expertise as they break down, guide, model, explicate, and reflect for the benefit of their protégées (Benner, 1984). Rogoff, Baker Sennett, Lacasa, and Goldsmith (1995) noted that situated learning and development, as described above, is personal, interpersonal, and communal. The situated context, the CoP, itself is susceptible to change as its participants learn and develop through participation and co construction of shared activity. The CoP itself can be thought of as a ZPD, enacted through dyadic, networked, and co mentoring.

Smith, Calderwood, Dohm, and Gill Lopez's (2013) model of integrated mentoring within a CoP framework draws attention to how mentoring as practice, identity, and process gives shape and character to a CoP for higher education faculty and alerts us to several challenges that such a framework makes visible. Smith et al. noted that much of a CoP's negotiation of mentoring practice and identity can be implicit or informal, and thus invisible or inaccessible to those who are not deeply enculturated. This model, and the consideration of the challenges it highlights, has inspired us to consider how mentoring might figure in and configure a CoP for faculty development localized in a university CTL for teaching and learning. If we tested the framework suggested by Smith et al. for mentoring within a CoP, what light might that shed to guide our work? In this exploratory study, we found that our CTL activity supports mentoring as practice, identity, and process within the larger CoP of faculty and professional work at our university, with positive impact on the CTL role (see Table 1).

Table 1. Integrated Mentoring Within a Community of Practice for Faculty Development

	Mentoring within a Community of Practice for Faculty Development (adapted from Smith et al., 2013)
Shared practice	Mentoring and being mentored through co mentoring, dyadic mentoring relationships, and networking are embedded within the CTL activity, regardless of the activity's primary purpose.
	Mentoring can be an impetus to or outcome of shared practice, regardless of the activity's primary purpose; is fluid and contextualized; is possible for all participants.
Development of group and individual identity	New faculty mentors have a formal and explicit identity within an identified traditional dyad and co mentoring group.
	Co mentoring group participants identify explicitly as co mentors during shared activity.
	Mentoring identity is contextualized by sociocultural factors (e.g., gender, race, age, or longevity of one's membership in the community), formal roles and role related identities (department chair, dean, program director, CTL director, etc.).
	Mentoring identity can be transitional, arising only during episodic shared practice or can endure over time, transcending specific or episodic shared practice.
Teaching, Learning, Norming, Negotiating, And Celebrating The Community of Practice	Shared meaning and valuations of mentoring and mentoring leadership are negotiated (contested, accepted, ratified, or otherwise examined) formally, informally, explicitly, and implicitly by participants during participation in some CTL activities, most notably those that are explicitly labeled as mentoring events.
	Transitions, changes, and continuity in mentoring configurations and practices within the CTL activity within the CoP may be explicit or implicit, as may access to mentoring opportunities.
	Participants expect to gain access to mentoring or to learn how to mentor and be mentored through participation in CTL activities that are intentionally designed as mentoring catalysts or advertised as mentoring events.

Mode of Inquiry

We incorporated a qualitative approach to support grounded theory building (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), such as content analysis of CTL documents and artifacts, and various aspects of participant observation. Using the CTL databases, we developed a curriculum map of our recurring activities. We then examined selected examples of the CTL activities in light of the challenges and suggestions noted by Smith et al. (2013). For example, labeling an activity or set of activities as mentoring may not ensure that any mentoring is actually being constructed. Conversely, activities that are not explicitly labeled as mentoring

events (such as a writing retreat) may be hotbeds of mentoring action. Activities arranged to incorporate prevalent configurations for mentoring found in academe (dyadic mentoring relationships, mentoring networks, and co mentoring) or that may be considered as catalytic spaces for mentoring to occur may support mentoring, or may not, depending on the context of the moment. The activities may not be equitably accessible. They may be so subtle as instances of mentoring that faculty will not notice them, or would even reject them as mentoring (Yee & Hargis, 2012). Teasing out the multiple meanings of situated activity requires that one trusts that the activities and contexts will add significant depth to initial research questions. As our inquiry questions slowly developed nuance, they were as much tested by our practices as they tested our practices. A few of our questions that at first seemed obvious and important paled in the light of lived experience and multiplicities of meaning as participants engaged in shared activity and critically reflected upon their experiences. This untidy but not unorthodox approach to theory building and theory testing put lived experience and reflective practice at its core.

About the CTL

Our CTL, the Center for Academic Excellence, or CAE, founded in 2003, is located at Fairfield University, a mid sized comprehensive Jesuit university in New England. Its mission statement positions the CTL as a locus of development support for faculty and campus groups, calling upon the Jesuit mission of engagement in the world, and the principles of Ignatian pedagogy to guide its work. The stated mission of the CTL is not explicitly one of mentoring. But it is implicitly so. Further, the CTL is a localized CoP for faculty and organizational development, identifying as such within a larger professional CoP linked through at least one professional organization (the POD Network). Located within the Academic Affairs constellation, the CTL, at full strength, employed a faculty director, associate director, assistant director, a program assistant, and collaborated extensively with a faculty member who functioned informally as codirector.

During 18 months of this study (July 2012 through December 2013), we served as the CTL administrators (Calderwood as director and Klaf as associate director), intentionally working to institutionalize a culture of integrated and reflective practice on campus, in line with our CTL mission of supporting faculty and professional staff development of expertise in teaching and learning. But our mission was not the only factor that led us in this direction. The period also marked a significant transitional time for the CTL. The CTL leadership had shifted, and the arid wind of a deep fiscal crisis howled steadily across campus, blowing away the assistant director line, one third of the program assistant's time, and much of the CTL funding.

Within this context, we took stock. We identified common and divergent professional knowledge and skills, engaged in problem solving and strategic planning, and added faculty leadership fellows, promising professional development and a modest stipend in exchange for their assistance in carrying out the CTL activities. We supported faculty and professional staff as scholars of their practices as we continued our core offerings of new faculty mentoring, workshops, learning communities, collaborations, and consultations, and as we introduced writing retreats (Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006); course design institutes, cohort based co mentoring seminars for faculty and professional staff at all career stages; piloted a leadership fellows program; collaborated with campus partners (Lee, Jones, Verwood, Iqbal, & Johnson, 2011; Schroeder, 2012); and revitalized the CTL annual conference. We organized or collaboratively facilitated over 60 workshops and events, partnering with key campus collaborators for many of these. We conducted approximately 65 confidential individual consultations and about a dozen more extensive group consultations, and with the assistance of our three leadership fellows conducted 83 mid semester assessments of teaching (MATs). During our shared leadership of the CTL, these offerings, initiatives, and partnerships included a collaborative initiative to envision and develop a mentoring culture on campus (Zachary, 2005, 2011; Zachary & Fischler, 2009).

Locating mentoring and mentoring catalysts in shared activity

Like most CTL, our CTL facilitates workshops, panel discussions, celebrations, and exhibitions of faculty work, and other brief events tailored to meet specific development needs of faculty. These are frequently **catalytic of networked mentoring**, in that they episodically bring together faculty and professional staff who otherwise would not spend time together engaging in reflective practice and shared activity. We

highlight and celebrate local expertise, offer some education, or prompt reflective conversations about common interests or concerns. Several of our **more extensive and highly structured events**, such as two day institutes (on assessment, for example) and our annual conference on pedagogy, also serve as mentoring networking nodes. Co mentoring is less visible during our **episodic events and events not labeled as “mentoring,”** even if the focus is an examination of an aspect of mentoring, quite likely due to time constraints, event configuration, or both. For example, we offered a two hour faculty development event at the end of the spring 2013 semester, during which the notion of mentoring networks was explored, participants mapped their networks, and faculty panelists explicated their own networks. As another example, during our 2013 conference, a leading expert on faculty mentoring networks (Sorcinelli) facilitated a well received workshop, during which participants mapped out their mentoring networks. The shared activities of mapping networks in both instances were brief, and the organization of the events was brisk and tightly organized. This was appropriate and effective as an educative event about mentoring for faculty, raising awareness of how to benefit from participating in mentoring networks. As we reflect upon this workshop, we consider that elegant efficiency of the organization of an event, such as a well defined, highly focused workshop of brief duration, can impede or preclude the opportunities for co mentoring to arise. Co mentoring—mutually constructed, egalitarian, reciprocally beneficial, arising naturally from peers’ engagement in shared practice—might require more open ended, less elegant parameters for shared activity than CTL usually design into a workshop.

Consultations: One to one mentoring

Taken as an aggregate, the MAT (mid semester assessments of teaching, known in the teaching and learning literature as SGIDs—Small Group Instructional Diagnosis) consultations are catalytic for mentoring, although they are not explicitly framed as such. Designed to provide feedback to faculty from their students, the debriefing session element of the service is frequently an example of networked mentoring within a CoP when the consultee requests not only information about how the students are experiencing the class, but also advice to help improve her teaching. Some expertise in teaching is attributed (or assumed) for the staff member, but faculty status is not necessarily a prerequisite condition for this expertise, nor is it sufficient, as faculty status enables us to claim authentic collegiality, but not necessarily the expertise of a career track faculty developer. Balancing expertise and peer/not peer status, CTL personnel approach the MAT debrief as an opportunity to share the work of understanding the role that our pedagogical choices play in students’ experience of a course. We collaboratively consider how to use our pedagogical toolkits to improve student experience and learning opportunity when the debriefing goes well. We know that the shared activity was generative when the instructor reports back on the follow through she tried, and that it was helpful if the report provides evidence that the students’ learning opportunities were improved.

As we conducted our “meta debriefs,” however, we noted that debriefs often evolve into an intense peer mentoring activity. As Yee and Hargis note “Seasoned faculty developers become adept at recognizing moments when their roles can advance beyond consolation and commiseration to a more active mentoring capacity ... Faculty developers become part of that ecology primarily by positioning themselves as ready to assist when asked, but they can also increase their effectiveness by presenting themselves as a mentor to faculty members when the need and context are right (Yee & Hargis, 2012, p. 69).” We believe that it is the reciprocity between consultant and consultee that we frequently construct during the MAT debriefing that kicks mutually beneficial co mentoring into action, as any comfort, praise, advice, or cautions we offer are most credible when we discuss our personal experience along with the “best practices” we share and the insights we discover together. We are not so much experts doling out affirmation or helpful hints, but rather trustworthy allies who also engage in teaching, the heart of our CoP on this campus (Little & Palmer, 2011). In return for coming clean about our own teaching challenges or joys, we have the opportunity to learn more deeply the lessons lurking within our own practices. This validated sense of being a legitimated participant invested in enacting and exploring one of the most important activities of the CoP transforms a consult into a co mentoring experience.

We have noted similar movement from ascribed expertise sharing (network model) toward co mentoring through engagement as peers sharing authentic work in many of our one to one consultations and in

some, but not all, of our group consultations. Our one to one consults require CTL staff to guide and advise, listen, encourage, model strategies, and exhibit other mentoring attributes in service to the consultee seeking the mentoring (Little & Palmer, 2011). If the consultee utilizes the CTL as an impersonal locus of expertise, the consult is an example of networking, in which episodic mentoring exchanges happen on an as needed basis. However, as with the MAT's, a reciprocal sharing of relevant personal experience changes the experience. We open to the give and take of co mentoring. For example, simply asking a consultee to elaborate on how or why she organized a learning activity in a particular way provides opportunity for the consultant to review, deepen, or add to her own knowledge of curriculum design, or of student learning needs. This is empowering for both parties, as the consulting faculty is now sharing and modeling her construction of our CoP's signature practice. This reciprocal modeling of practice enacts a ZPD for both the consultant and consultee, where it is possible for each to be just a bit more expert together than they might be solo.

Our group consultations in school, departmental, or programmatic curricular development or assessment projects include shared activity in planning and implementing projects, providing training through workshops, facilitating faculty learning of skills and strategies, conducting focus groups, and analyzing data. As such, some of the work, particularly the educative activities, offers opportunities for networked mentoring for the participants. Other shared activities, such as planning or analyzing results of the project, when done in collaboration with the consultees, are more peer based and less expert novice valenced. CTL staff co construct the meanings, purposes, outcomes, and other aspects of the project with, not for or about, the other participants. In such instances, we are not service providers and clients, but members of our CoP in action. The opportunity for multiple iterations of co mentoring arise informally during the shared activity, and when taken are sometimes, but not always, noted as instances of mentoring by the participants.

Learning communities offer sustained co mentoring opportunities

We draw distinctions between learning communities and other CTL offerings to highlight the long term nature of the learning communities, and the necessary development of interdependent relationships among the learning community participants (Cox, 2004; Furco & Moely, 2012). Rogoff (1994) noted the key feature of informal learning communities: "In a community of learners, both mature members of the community and less mature members are conceived as active; no role has all the responsibility for knowing or directing, and no role is by definition passive (p. 213)." Cox (2004, p. 8) described faculty learning communities as "... a cross disciplinary faculty and staff group of six to fifteen members ... who engage in an active, collaborative, year long program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning and with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, the scholarship of teaching, and community building ... There are two categories of FLCs: cohort based and topic based. Cohort based FLCs address the teaching, learning, and developmental needs of an important group of faculty or staff that has been particularly affected by the isolation, fragmentation, stress, neglect, or chilly climate in the academy. The curriculum of a cohort FLC is shaped by the participants to include a broad range of teaching and learning areas and topics of interest to them."

In contrast, other CTL offerings, although drawing in participants with similar interests or learning goals, are not characterized by sustained, mutually committed relationships, shared projects, or commitment to significant, sustainable long term outcomes. Our CTL sponsored learning communities (FPLC's), modeled substantially on Cox's framework, are intentionally designed as catalytic of co mentoring.

Institutes make mentoring networks visible and co mentoring irresistible

Understanding that our faculty were loathe to commit to year long FLC's absent stipends, but not having stipends to offer, we determined to continue to organize alternative activities that incorporated the sense of community and interdependence of FLC's. Multi day, high quality, intensive course design institutes fit the needs of our full and part time faculty. The CTL hosted three four day Course Design Institutes during the study, in between semesters. A total of 23 faculty participated, representing all schools within our university. During the course of the four day institutes, faculty designed new courses or redesigned existing courses using the backward design model. They reflected on their teaching and student learning while building an interdisciplinary community of practitioners. The CTL collaborated with a reference

librarian and academic computing department to include components on assignment design and technology for teaching and learning, introducing faculty to the on campus, collaborative network of expertise within which we operated. Co mentoring arose naturally through peer consultations during shared activity during the institutes. The appeal of the co mentoring became apparent as end of institute codas continued the relationships forged across disciplinary boundaries. As the faculty continued to work on their courses, they continued their peer consultations on all aspects of course design and reached out to the network of experts for continued guidance.

Learning that faculty appreciated **timely low key, low commitment activities** that evoked the commons, we scheduled writing retreats. These retreats, modeled upon Elbow and Sorcinelli's (2006), situating faculty as a community of writers, were enthusiastically welcomed by faculty. Feedback from participating faculty and professional staff, and some feedback from others who were not able to participate in the retreats, is encouraging. In particular, participants appreciated the opening tone setting remarks and the celebratory closing moments of the retreats, felt the comfort and inspiration of a community of writers, appreciated the simple but upscale snacks and meals, and delighted in the small touches (inspirational quotes, postcards, flowers) scattered about the retreat area. Many participants noted significant progress in their writing during and after the retreats. Our intent was to facilitate the retreats as co mentoring opportunities, so it was important that the CTL staff and our consultant for faculty writing were present and writing companionably. We encouraged peer consulting and sharing among the participants, and many sought out the CTL director, associate director, our consultant, for writing and our neighborly research librarians for in depth discussion of their projects.

Co mentoring programs integrate dyadic, networked, and co mentoring

The CAE's new faculty mentoring program had been informally organized and lightly facilitated since its inception. In September 2012, we paired 11 new tenure track and seasoned faculty with the goal of enculturation and collegial support for the new faculty. We sponsored orientations in September 2012 and a mentoring social in December 2012 and provided the new faculty with funds to treat their mentors to coffee and lunch. During the year, new faculty variously attended back to school workshops, Course Design Institutes, requested and received individual and MAT consultations, and attended writing retreats, workshops and other events. One participated in a year long PRoT discussion group. Feedback from the new faculty and the volunteer mentors indicated mixed satisfaction with the matches, the activities, and with perceived benefits of the program. We planned a more robust approach for the 2013–2014 year. First, outreach for mentoring volunteers was general *and* also personalized, so as to enlist a more diverse group of experienced participants to serve as mentors. We then organized starter mentoring networks, which clustered two to four new faculty with one to three experienced colleagues, held off on suggesting pairings, and discovered that the clusters held as popular configurations. We scheduled a new faculty mentoring luncheon in early September and mentoring communities networking socials in late September and early December.

Finally, we advertised a co mentoring seminar for early career faculty and invited the incoming tenure track faculty to join. Interest was strong at first, as 11 of the 14 new tenure track faculty and three early career full time and adjunct faculty signed up for the co mentoring seminar, which met in smaller groups thrice during the semester. Feedback from the new faculty at mid semester advised us that this co mentoring seminar was redundant, as their clusters were thriving as co mentoring groups. As a consequence, the early career co mentoring seminar was put to bed by early November, as the clusters began to improvise and expand their activities to fit their needs. Feedback from the more experienced faculty in December 2013 resonates with the recent literature, indicating a range of outcomes, from a positive enhancement of their own skills as mentors to negative perceptions that the newly enhanced mentoring experience required more effort than they would have preferred to expend (Bottoms et al., 2013; Parise & Forret, 2008).

In addition to the new faculty mentoring program and the early career co mentoring seminar, the CTL initiated a cohort based co mentoring learning community for 2013–2014, welcoming all faculty and professional staff at the mid and senior (or legacy) career stages. We hoped that co mentoring within these cohort based seminars would arise organically during the seminar's shared activities, building a CoP that

mentors for individual and collective professional development, responsibilities, and opportunities. We anticipated that for one semester, the mid and senior career seminar would be facilitated by the CTL director and associate director, who would build in long term sustainability through a gradual release of the facilitation to the group, as their needs and interests dictated. Over 20 faculty and professional staff at mid and senior levels signed up, and about a dozen more indicated interest, but were not available at the time. It was clear that we needed to identify several smaller cohorts, and to recruit additional facilitators. By the end of September 2013, we had organized the group into four smaller cohorts based on affinity (professional staff, a dossier preparation group, a leadership group, and a life/work group). The professional staff cohort was facilitated by the CTL associate director, the life/work cohort by the director, the leadership group by one of our leadership fellows, and the dossier prep group was cofacilitated by a faculty member and the CTL director. We provided preliminary education about co mentoring groups and processes, along with continued support for the cohorts continuing beyond the first semester, as needs indicated and resources allowed. Each seminar series included monthly cohort coffee hours and brown bag conversations to build connections and share insights and resources, along with occasional cohort sensitive events and workshops on relevant topics. The co mentoring seminars and new faculty mentoring clusters came together for common reflective socials to transition in and out of the fall semester, building a sense of commons and of community. Three of the more clearly bounded or task oriented cohorts continued their monthly meetings through the spring 2014 semester. The life/work group members decided that they would not schedule monthly sessions during the second semester, but would work independently on the goals and plans they had developed during the fall. Feedback indicates that the engagement in shared activity, whether it was identifying goals for professional development or building dossiers, prompted co mentoring and networking among the cohort. Other activities, such as interrogating pathways toward tenure and promotion, drew in a network of colleagues from across the university, who modeled, shared, listened, and encouraged the group members to become more expert in the ways of our campus CoP.

Peer review of teaching builds on networked and co mentoring

We have observed and facilitated mentoring networking and co mentoring configurations among the faculty who engaged in peer review of teaching (PRoT) activities. Working catalytically to promote PRoT networking and co mentoring, and supported by a Davis Educational Fund grant, the CTL has engaged groups of faculty to develop PRoT within their departments or schools (Chism, 2007; Reder & Gallagher, 2007). We arranged various networking opportunities across the teams, such as multiple day workshops during which participants worked within their teams to learn about PRoT, set goals, and draft their plans, and during which they shared their progress, insights, struggles, and concerns with the other groups. Twice a year for two years, we showcased the teams' projects during university wide faculty development days, inviting all faculty and administrators to learn about PRoT and to influence how it was being imagined and executed on campus. All the groups were provided with funding, online and print resources, workshops, and consultations with CTL staff to support their work to stretch beyond their groups to their departments and schools. In the fall of 2012, during our case study period, when asked to reflect upon their process, most of the groups identified a co construction of knowledge and skills for improving their teaching and student learning as they designed and tried out their PRoT systems.

The participants approached PRoT from the conceptualizations that rang truest to their disciplines. Several groups worked to develop observation protocols for their departments that could be used primarily by senior faculty to record and comment on the classroom teaching of their less experienced peers and arranged reciprocal teaching partnerships and discussions. One group reached outward from its members' disciplines in the visual and performing arts, establishing reciprocal teaching partnerships with faculty from other disciplines, and was deliberate in their inclusion of part time faculty in the partnerships. Resisting the turn to immediate design, another team surveyed their colleagues about elements they would like to see play a role in PRoT, collaboratively negotiated definitions of significant concepts (such as peer) and, by the end of a year, presented a model of PRoT that constellated around the notion of engagement within a CoP (Smith, Calderwood, Gill Lopez, & Robert, 2012).

Findings

When we scrutinized our CTL activities through the lens of mentoring within a CoP for faculty development, we found evidence that the CTL signature activities (workshops, consultations, learning communities, collaborations) made nodes of multiple existing and potential mentoring networks visible and accessible, regardless of whether we labeled them as mentoring opportunities. We have indications that some faculty and professional staff have traveled the networks subsequent to the activities that made them visible, as reports filter back about how they have extended their experiences by engaging with the individuals or services highlighted.

Although the CDI's were not labeled as mentoring activities, they were consistently successful in prompting networking and co mentoring during and after the formal span of the CDI's. This hallmark of a CoP, the liminality of expertise negotiated through shared activity, was also an element of the gradual release of responsibility from CTL staff to faculty within the formal co mentoring seminars, arising naturally from, and prompting or extending, shared activity.

Co mentoring across the network of faculty development on campus has been a welcome, though unexpected, outcome of our collaborations. Our collaborations, viewed through the CoP mentoring lens, were invaluable to us during the period of the case study. Wrestling with innumerable details as we designed dozens of workshops, a handful of institutes, and a conference, we found ourselves functioning within an extended set of mentoring networks and developing sustained co mentoring relationships with each other and with our colleagues. We shared what expertise we had and invented what expertise we needed to get the work accomplished, reaching out to our differing networks as needed. These relationships, and our gratitude for and enjoyment of them, were visible to the faculty with whom we interacted, serving as models for co mentoring practices.

Not unexpectedly, our sustained learning communities (co mentoring groups, PROT groups, and the Course Design Institutes in particular) frequently gave rise to co mentoring relationships as faculty and professional staff co constructed the activities of the group. Feedback from participants about activities that were deliberately designed to rely upon the give and take of negotiated situated practice indicated that co mentoring was not only recognized but also much appreciated. For example, when surveyed at the end of the fall 2013 semester, faculty in the new faculty co mentoring group noted worthwhile social activities, such as the first lunch meeting of the new faculty co mentoring cohort, which was a "...Nice informal opportunity to interact," where "The mentor had many suggestions of relevant info for new faculty. I had questions too but it was good having another new faculty member asking questions that were very relevant but I hadn't thought of. I appreciate all the changes to bond with new faculty—it formed cohesion in our cohort."

In years past, the only mentoring explicitly associated with our CTL had been the new faculty mentoring program's dyadic matches, and we know that these have been much appreciated by each year's crop of new tenure track faculty. The dyadic mentoring configurations, however, were trumped by the enthusiastic response to the co mentoring clusters we organized for the 2013–2014 year. We were surprised by this outcome, having expected to broker dyads between the new and senior faculty after a month or so, but see it as positive. The arranged dyads in the past had mixed outcomes, with regard to the depth, quality, and longevity of the partnerships, most likely because they were designed to be informal for acculturation purposes rather than for intense, formal partnerships. The co mentoring clusters, however, while also informally organized, have generated a sense of commons grounded in authentic faculty work for many of the participants. From the new faculty, we learned that "Meeting under a semi structured gathering was helpful. Every gathering helped the group to meet out milestone." Another new faculty member wrote, "Group mentoring was more flexible than an assigned individual allowed me to establish relationships on my own." The commons and sense of community were important, particularly "learning that I am not alone, strategies for planning for the next step and seeing/hearing examples of what worked for others, community where it was safe to speak about concerns" as was "Sharing ideas in a welcoming environment." We learned that "the simple things: carving out time for dialogues and connecting," informal discussions about common problems, and the semi structured, guided discussions

were significant and built confidence. Perhaps most appreciated was the “small mentoring group sitting in on each others’ classes and exchanging feedback.”

One drawback for some of the new and senior faculty was that the co mentoring was more extensive (and thus energy and time consuming) than they expected. When compared with the dyadic pairings, however, the co mentoring clusters also provided an instant network for the new faculty that was visible and accessible.

Developing mentoring is not the formal purpose of our CTL, but thinking about mentoring as one of our shared activities within a CoP for faculty development offers practical benefit. As seen above, many of the faculty and staff who participate in our activities tell us that they seek the commons and sense of community noted by Lindholm (2003) along with the knowledge infusion and skill building that might be seen as the primary purpose of their participation. The opportunity to engage together in authentic work holds great appeal. From this, we learn that the shared, authentic activities that prompt co mentoring can be leveraged through strategic design and outreach to serve this desire for the commons.

But, when we consider co mentoring’s role in our sustained learning communities, we find significant value added for our participants. Stipend free, our co mentoring seminars and new faculty co mentoring clusters attracted about 40 participants, a sizable number for our small campus. Quelling our fears that faculty would not commit to learning communities without financial incentives; we found that they would commit to co mentoring each other through shared engagement in faculty work. Inventorying the mid and senior career faculty and professional staff who joined our co mentoring seminars was illuminative. We found that our participants had expectations for co mentoring responsibilities and outcomes that were grounded in reciprocity, a desire to share the wisdom of experience, openness to learning, and respect for and commitment to the process of co mentoring. Just as importantly, they identified their personal strengths for co mentoring within the CoP. Sharing our understandings, expectations, and self appraisals during our initial meeting required a leap of faith in each other. We (CTL staff) needed to be willing to diffuse our responsibility for faculty (and professional staff) development through co mentoring, and the participating faculty and professional staff needed to contribute substantially to the success of the community.

We offer a few simple suggestions for making explicit mentoring practices, development of mentoring identities and their negotiated meanings within a CoP through CTL activity, noting that they may serve small or modestly funded CTL particularly well.

- In planning an episodic event, build in opportunity for participants to visualize and access mentoring networks. Include hands on activities that require collaboration to complete successfully, to encourage small moments of co mentoring.
- When possible, in addition to serving as nodes within a mentoring network, CTL staff can capitalize on shared identities and roles (e.g., as educators) and common authentic work (e.g., curriculum planning or attending to students’ developmental learning needs) during individual consultations, opening an opportunity to co mentor with the consultee.
- For learning communities and group consultations, consistently arrange opportunity for participants to engage together in sustained, authentic practice that requires co mentoring to be successfully achieved. Acknowledge and celebrate the mentoring.
- Advertise events as opportunity to (along with their manifest purpose) develop or expand a mentoring network, establish co mentoring relationships, learn how to mentor, and so on.
- During events, identify mentoring activity as it occurs, noting it as a facilitative process, as a practice of the community, and as an element of one’s faculty or professional identity, as appropriate. This calls attention to the process of mentoring, and to the process of constructing the CoP.

Overall, investment in envisioning faculty development within the mentoring model was a good decision for our CTL (Table 2). We have learned that capitalizing on the CTL as a mentoring catalyst within a CoP is efficient and economical enough for a small staff to manage. It respects and celebrates our faculty and professional staff, interrupts expert/novice divides, and breaks down some of the barriers between staff

and faculty roles. Understanding that we are constructing a shared practice together, from the ground up, positions our CTL as deeply connected to faculty work, rather than as an ancillary service provider. This is sustainable with a small staff. But emphasizing mentoring as important to our practices, identities, and the negotiation of these, also makes visible the campus communities of practice (of faculty work and of faculty development) and positions a CTL as a catalytic force in co construction of the communities of practice. Rather than needing to protect status (and employment) as “the” campus experts on teaching and learning, CTL staff can leverage their resources to reach more faculty and support more faculty development needs through sharing and facilitating the give and take of expertise, sometimes serving as expert guides, network builders, co mentors, collaborators, matchmakers, or consultants, other times as catalytic agents within university culture.

Table 2. Overview of Value of Mentoring within a Community of Practice for Faculty Development

Activity	Manifest purpose	Primary participants	Community of practice feature			Mentoring modes			Value added
			Co construction of practice	Co construction of identity	Negotiation of process	Network	Co mentoring	Dyadic	
Sustained collaborations	Identify and attain shared goals	Faculty developers, Campus Collaborators	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
									Broadening of expertise in faculty development, organizational, and leadership knowledge and skills
	Optimize use of resources								
FPLC's	Professional development in teaching, scholarship and/or service	CTL, Faculty & Professional Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
									Visibility of the CoP
Course design institutes	Teaching	CTL Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
		Faculty							
Peer review of teaching	Teaching	Faculty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
									Visibility of the CoP
New faculty mentoring program	Professional development in the CoP practices and culture	Faculty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sense of the commons
									Visibility of the CoP
Co mentoring seminars	Professional and personal development	CTL Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
		Faculty							
		Professional Staff							Empowerment within CoP
Faculty leadership fellows program	Facilitate CTL Activity	CTL Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of the commons
		Faculty							
	Faculty Leadership Development								
									Additional Identity the CoP

Community of writers	Writing for professional or personal purposes	CTL Staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Sense of commons and identity (as writer) within CoP
		Consultant for Writing							
		Faculty							
Consultations	Varied	CTL Staff	✓			✓	✓		Sense of the commons
		Faculty							
									Visibility of the CoP
		Professional Staff							
MATs	Teaching	CTL Staff	✓			✓			Sense of the commons
		Faculty							
									Visibility of the CoP
Workshops, symposia, institutes, conferences	Varied	Varied	✓	✓	✓	✓			Sense of the commons
		CTL, Collaborators, faculty, professional staff, guests from external CoPs							
									Visibility of the CoP
									Visibility of networks of CoPs

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Online ISSN: 2334-4822