

COLLABORATIONS FOR LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT: OUT OF THE BOX MENTORING

Paula Gill Lopez, Patricia Calderwood, Emily Smith, & Faith-Anne Dohm
Fairfield University



MODES OF MENTORING

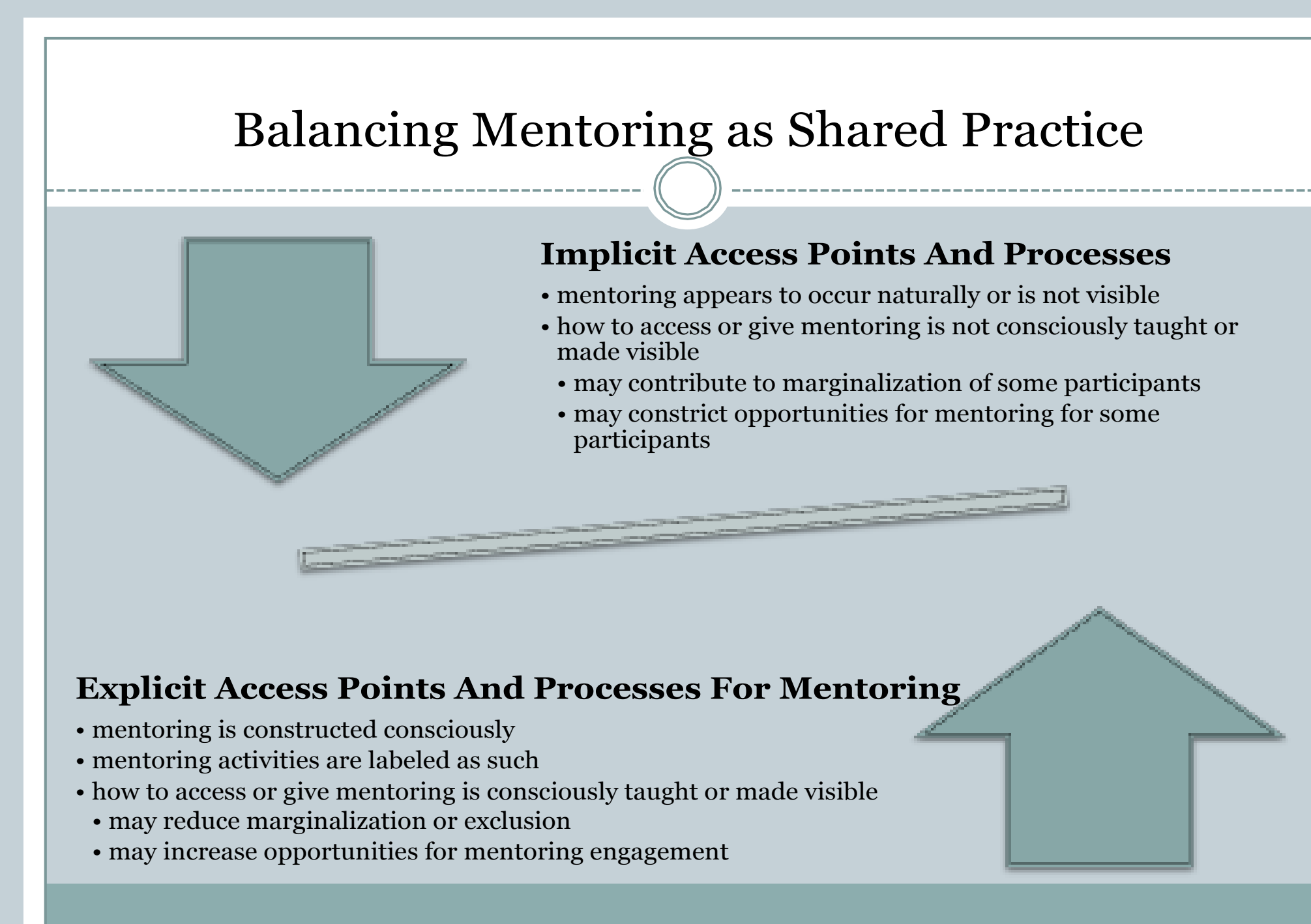
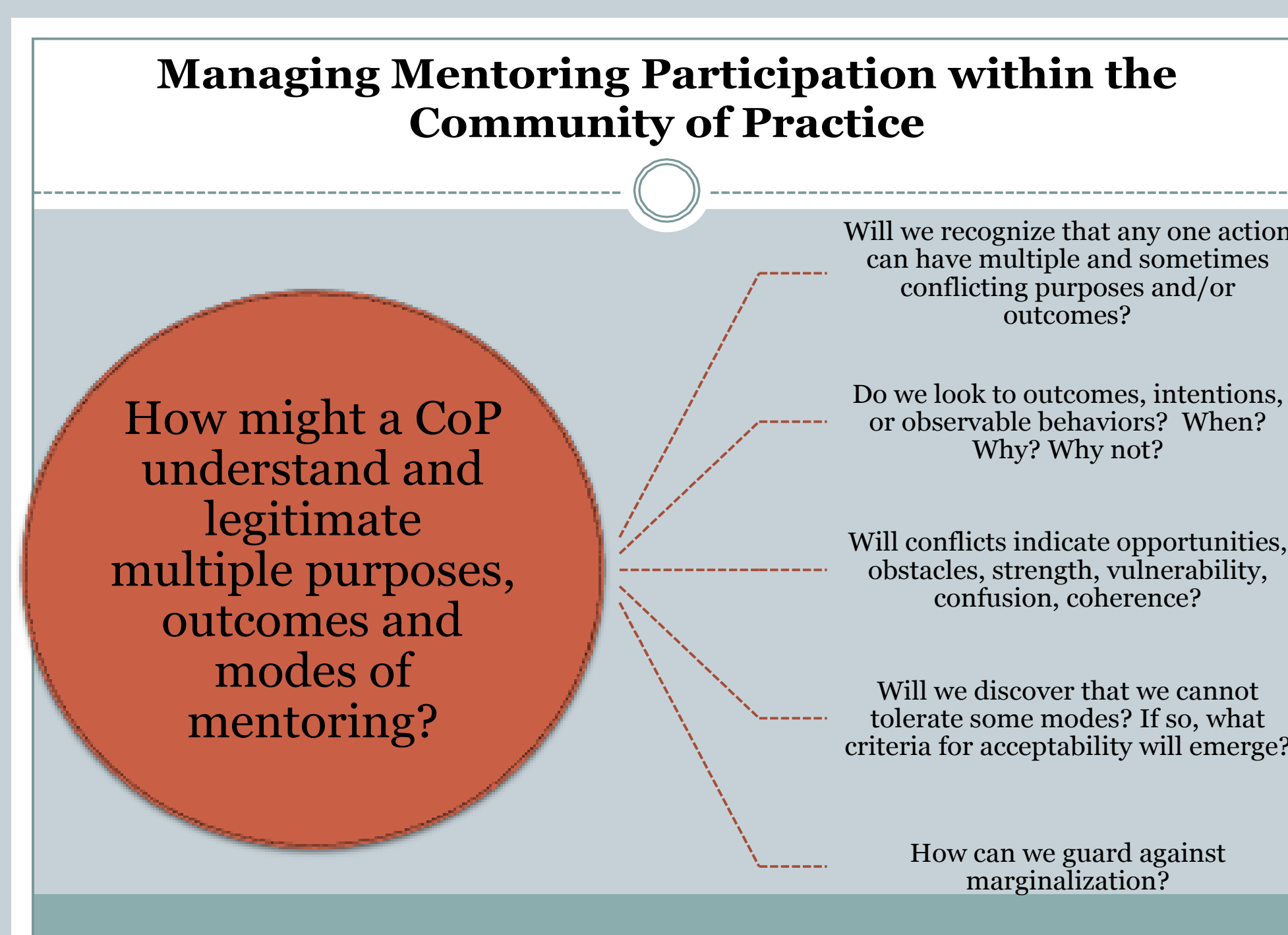
In higher education settings, when people think of mentoring configurations, they most frequently call up the dyadic model. The dominant dyadic model is that of a experienced senior colleague guiding a less-experienced colleague.

A second mentoring configuration, mentoring networks (or mutual mentoring) extends the dyadic model toward mentoring that is distributed within a network, where colleagues seek or give focused mentoring specific to a context. One person may interact with one or more co-mentors with different expertise and perspectives.

We propose a third model, the Community of Practice (CoP), in which multiple mentoring relationships and configurations arise organically during shared activity, where all participants mentor and are mentored, and where mentoring is a signature practice and primary mechanism for learning the CoP's practices.

TWO DILEMMAS OF MENTORING WITHIN A CoP

- *How do we make mentoring explicit in a community of practice when it is embedded organically in shared practice?*
- *How do we define and legitimate diverse ways of participating in a CoP that mentors?*



Selected References

- Smith, E.R., Calderwood, P. E., Dohm, F. & Gill Lopez, P. (in press). Reconceptualizing Faculty Mentoring Within a Community of Practice Framework. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 21 (2).
- Sorcinelli, M. D., & Yun, J. (2007). From mentor to mentoring networks: Mentoring in the new academy. *Change*, 39(6), 58-61.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aspects of Mentoring Within a Community of Practice Framework

- SHARED PRACTICE
 - Mentoring is an outcome of shared activity
 - Mentoring and being mentored are signifying practices of the CoP
 - ✦ Mentoring activity is formal and informal
 - ✦ Mentoring access points and processes are explicit and implicit
- IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT
 - The group may be identified as a community that mentors
 - **Mentor** may be a signature element of personal identity
- LEARNING, NEGOTIATION AND CELEBRATION
 - The practices of the community are opportunities for mentoring to be modeled and learned
 - ✦ Mentoring is negotiated organically through shared activity and reflection
 - Meanings and norms of the community's practices and roles are negotiated
 - Mentoring is a significant mechanism for learning
 - ✦ Participants learn how to mentor and to be mentored
 - Meaning, norms and options for mentoring are negotiated
 - Transitions, changes and continuity in mentoring norms are negotiated
 - ✦ Emphasize or make visible aspects of mentoring practice
 - Mentoring is honored and celebrated
 - ✦ Participants who mentor well are models for the community
 - ✦ Outcomes of well-functioning mentoring are celebrated