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

