Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Toward 'hybridised' faculty development for the twenty-first century: blending online communities of practice and face-to-face meetings in instructional and professional support programmes

Catherine F. Brooks*

Communication Studies Department, California State University, Long Beach, CA, USA

This manuscript begins with a synthesis of research on communities, communities of practice (CoPs), and the potential for their development in online forums, while specifically discussing the value of virtual CoPs for educational professionals in higher education. Working within constructivist and sociocultural frameworks, this manuscript addresses how online forums for faculty support can be beneficial in ways distinct from face-to-face environments. Further, this paper presents an argument for the hybridisation of faculty development by suggesting that online forums for collegial interaction are viable and culturally sensitive complements to traditional face-to-face faculty support, socialisation, and mentoring programmes. In conclusion, resources that can assist in designing a hybrid model of faculty development are offered.

Keywords: communities of practice; faculty development; faculty learning communities; hybrid environments; Web-based communication; computer-mediated communication

Introduction

All faculty members at one point or another need help or support from others on campus, but they may not have the time or opportunity to make important social connections. In addition to heavy work loads and time constraints, factors such as physical disabilities, cultural norms, or personal anxieties about communicating may make it difficult for some faculty members to seek assistance through face-to-face channels. Professional development centres on college campuses often provide forums for collegial interaction and support on faculty issues, research, and teaching. But, maintaining traditional mentoring relationships, generating ideas from face-to-face dialogue with peers, or attending scheduled events can be difficult for both new and seasoned faculty members.

Though faculty members' needs and constraints vary, faculty support is increasingly necessary in an age of technological advancement that brings new educational tools that faculty members are being asked to learn about and use in their classrooms. With regard to these new technology-based approaches, 'many institutions are still struggling to provide appropriate and effective training, development, and reward opportunities for faculty' (Zawacki-Richter, 2005, online section one). Web-based enrollment documents, grading procedures, and other online classroom tools are becoming more commonplace, complicating the teaching load for those trained in and

---

*Email: cbrooks1@csulb.edu

accustomed to face-to-face and paper-based classroom approaches. As technological advancements rapidly evolve, therefore, and as expectations for college instructors and professors to utilise educational technologies increase, faculty members may find themselves needing timely assistance when faced with technology-related problems. They may also be interested in learning about the social implications of technology use in classrooms (Brooks, 2008). Thus, given the changes in faculty roles and objectives that researchers have suggested take place as institutions shift toward the use of technology-based educational practices (Easton, 2003; Morris, Xu, & Finnegan, 2005; Turoff, 2006), college instructors may indeed benefit from a blend of online and face-to-face support.

The increased technology use for classroom purposes and, in particular, the blending of online and face-to-face classroom meetings in college courses, inspires consideration of how the 'hybridising' of other practices, such as those related to faculty development, may offer the best of both online and face-to-face environments for instructional or professional support purposes. Vaughan and Garrison (2006) explore blended learning in a faculty development context and suggest that a 'blended faculty learning community approach…will create a flexible and accessible environment for faculty to engage in sustained critical reflection and discourse about their teaching practice' (p. 150). In addition to the formalised face-to-face meetings arranged by administrators, which may be suitable for meeting particular needs, both new and seasoned faculty may be more apt to seek out information online on certain occasions. Online support may appeal to faculty members who, for example, need assistance or want to build skills/knowledge at times beyond campus business hours; they may also appeal to those who are hesitant or unable (for whatever reason) to make social connections with peers or mentors through formal face-to-face channels. Also, online forums may be particularly ideal for new faculty who may not know where or from whom they should seek the support they need. Along with the practical assistance and immediate support possible in online forums, meeting others virtually can provide an additional space beyond face-to-face engagements for developing a sense of collegial community, for making professional connections across a college campus, and for building cross-campus communities of like-minded professionals that work across social, cultural, and geographic boundaries. Virtual spaces that support ongoing asynchronous chats, bulletin boards, and links to helpful online or printed literature can thus complement face-to-face development programmes, supporting faculty in ways that are tied to both practical assistance (e.g., with technical troubles, teaching issues, questions about employment materials) and social support/development (e.g., peer–peer connections, sharing ideas, constructing new knowledge and understandings with others on and beyond campus).

In addressing needs for both practical assistance and social connections, faculty members can benefit from participation in a 'community' of learners (Cox, 2002, 2004). In organisations, people who engage in regular interaction with others – others who have similar concerns – in order to share ideas, knowledge, and expertise, have been conceived as participating in a community of practice (CoP) (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). At the core of these meetings is the idea that learning is a social process, (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), and that through interaction with others, new understandings are constructed.

These communities can meet in face-to-face settings or via electronic mediums (Barab, MaKinster, & Scheckler, 2003; Palloff & Pratt, 2005). Though developing

CoPs in virtual spaces is a relatively new idea, online CoPs are increasing in popularity (Di Petta, 1998; Sherer, Shea, & Kristensen, 2003). Moreover, their facilitation can be incorporated into face-to-face/traditional faculty support programmes already in place, effectively 'hybridising' faculty development efforts by blending face-to-face and online interactions.

While a comprehensive review of the literature is not possible here, a focused examination of CoPs and the theories framing communities more generally contextualises a larger discussion of the benefits of online forums for faculty socialisation, development, and support in higher education. Specifically, this paper will point to some of the positive implications of providing faculty members with the online space for collegial dialogue from constructivist and sociocultural perspectives. This theoretical and applied literary tour provides an analysis of online CoPs and how they may be beneficial when coupled with face-to-face development programmes in place on most campuses.

From communities to communities of practice

Communities

Groups of people collaborating are often referred to as communities, and a 'sense of community' is a construct central to the social science of community psychology (Rapley & Pretty, 1999). Research suggests that perceptions of community occur among members who share a sense of belongingness (Unger & Wandesman, 1985) and similarity (Sarason, 1974). Community is thus 'a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together' (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

Community-building is thus beneficial for people who are working collaboratively because it develops a personal sense of connection with fellow group members. Increased perceptions of community have been found to be negatively associated with burnout in the workplace (Pretty, McCarthy, & Catano, 1992), and many have explored the importance of community organising in society more broadly (Brown, 2006; Putnam, 2000). In educational research, students' positive perceptions of community have been linked to students' persistence in school (Tinto, 1993) and a number of other important learning outcomes (Smith & Bath, 2006; Tinto, 2000). Indeed, many researchers have pointed to the importance of community in educational settings (Babinski, Jones, & DeWert, 2001; Cox, 2002, 2004; Heckman & Annabi, 2006). Among those who study professionals on college campuses, 'there is growing evidence about the importance of creating community for faculty development in higher education if long-term changes are to be realized' (Vaughan & Garrison, 2006, p. 141). Thus, the promotion of a collegial sense of community among faculty members on campuses of higher education ought to be a primary objective of faculty support efforts.

Interest in *online* communities or 'virtual communities' has increased in recent years (Putnam, 2000), and as relational constructs, they can develop when people are not proximate in terms of geographical space (Heller, 1989; Wellman, 1999). Many studies investigating online communities focus on learning communities that develop among students, but these online learning communities resemble those that develop among practitioners for the purposes of collaborative work or professional support. In fact, the line between education and professional development is blurred when geographically divided practitioners participate in online classes – and in learning

communities tied to those classes – in order to earn graduate college credits and develop professionally (Kidwell, Freeman, Smith, & Zarcone, 2004). Because practitioners may engage in online communities for multiple purposes at the same time (e.g., for the purposes of learning *and* building relationships with like-minded professionals), CoPs are the best way to think about online forums for faculty development in higher education.

Communities of practice

Because of the variegated disciplinary backgrounds of CoP researchers, CoPs have been defined in multiple ways. Wenger (1998) and his colleagues (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) originated the construct and provide the following explanation:

> CoP are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. …These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs. They ponder common issues, explore ideas, and act as sounding boards. …Over time, they develop a unique perspective on their topic as well as a body of common knowledge, practices, and approaches. They also develop personal relationships and established ways of interacting. They may even develop a common sense of identity. They become a community of practice. (Wenger et al., 2002, pp. 4–5)

Put simply, CoPs are 'knowledge-based social structures' (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 5). CoPs have been conceptualised by other scholars as groups of united individuals (Liedka, 1999) who engage in active participation and decision-making (Collier & Esteban, 1999). Members of CoPs have similar task responsibilities (Wick, 2000) and have a desire to solve shared problems (Allee, 1997). Because CoPs are dynamic social structures, and because they are relationally created and maintained, they are activated through interactions. These interactions make them both important sights for social science research and opportunities for professional outreach.

 Sherer et al. (2003) assert that the 'concept of CoP is one way to think about how to create and maintain a community of professionals dedicated to teaching and learning' (p. 185). Wenger (2006) also suggests that CoPs in educational contexts can provide ways for teachers and administrators to connect, and he highlights the current interest in the applicability of peer-to-peer communities for professional development purposes. CoPs are subtly different in terms of focus and group membership from other types of communities identified in educational research. 'Learning communities', for example, are groups of learners who gather for learning purposes and these communities have been conceived in numerous ways in higher education-related research (Cox, 2004). Some researchers position students as 'learners' (Smith & Bath, 2006; Tinto, 2000), while others speak specifically of 'student learning communities' (Cox, 2004; Davies, Ramsay, Lindfield, & Couperthwaite, 2005). Still others have specified 'faculty learning communities' (Cox, 2002, 2004; Vaughan & Garrison, 2006). While certainly CoPs are learning communities, they are not simply learning focused. CoPs are instead devised for the purposes of knowledge construction among professionals; they are social structures providing an opportunity to build skills and relationships, providing the means through which 'practitioners can connect across

organisational and geographic boundaries and focus on professional development' (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 20).

Wenger (2006) points to the expanding possibilities for *online* CoPs by asserting that new technologies require new kinds of communities. Online CoPs seem to be of particular interest for educational scholars, many of whom focus on teaching and learning issues such as the design of online seminars (Putz & Arnold, 2001), the fostering of online classroom communities (Palloff & Pratt, 1999), or the promotion of coherence in virtual learning communities (Rogers, 2000). Some have experimented with online communities for educational professionals (Babinski et al., 2001; Schlager & Fusco, 2003; Schlager, Fusco, & Schank, 2002). King (2002) suggests that online learning communities among students as future teachers can actually evolve into professional CoPs once participants have moved into teaching positions. These studies add support for considering the viability of online CoPs among faculty members in higher education. The next section focuses on how online forums for faculty support may be beneficial in ways unique from face-to-face communication venues. Specifically, several practical implications of providing online spaces for faculty interaction to complement traditional face-to-face programmes are suggested. These implications are offered in light of two related theoretical arguments, constructivism and socioculturalism, which inspire additional ways to think about how online CoPs can function for faculty participants.

Theorising online CoPs through constructivism and socioculturalism

The constructivist learning philosophy situates knowledge as generated through interaction with others, through engagement with one's environment, and as existing in a constant state of renewal. That is, learning and knowledge production are social processes that are negotiated through interaction (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Wertsch, 1985). Knowledge expansion, then, is a collaborative enterprise (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, 2005), and through shared knowledge building, the community (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999) and that community's common history (Wenger, 1998) are also co-constructed. A constructivist perspective, then, suggests that online CoPs can provide faculty members with a forum for interaction through which knowledge can be generated, negotiated and expanded. In the development of these communities, peer-to-peer dialogue can 'perpetuate and serve as a reinforced foundation for reflective practice and constructivist discovery' (King, 2002, p. 240). While face-to-face meetings provide faculty with a 'place' to dialogue in an off-the-record fashion, the facilitation of online CoPs may allow participants to speak more than they do in face-to-face meetings or to participate in knowledge construction in ways not possible in traditional face-to-face discussions. This is not to suggest that all online forums for communication are collaborative, and this is also not to suggest that all face-to-face meetings adhere to information-transfer models of knowledge production. Research shows, though, that online forums have a strong propensity to support constructive interaction and collaboration (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag, 1995; Palloff & Pratt, 1999).

Sociocultural theories further help explain how faculty members on college campuses might contribute to the development of CoPs and the construction of knowledge within them through their own sociocultural position. Simply put, each faculty member brings a sociocultural background based in their gender, age, race, sexuality, ethnicity, history, and ability to the community. These identities impact what and how

participants learn from and with a particular group. Educational literature suggests that sociocultural variation among faculty members influences knowledge construction in CoPs. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998) theorise that diverse backgrounds and experiences among learners contribute to a collaborative learning process. In addition, Florio-Ruane (2001) writes directly of the importance of sharing culture through conversation, arguing that 'educators and theorists of multicultural education are turning increasingly to narrative and dialogue to study teaching and culture' (p. 7). Through interaction with others, then, CoP members can learn about those others and about themselves.

In addition to emphasising the importance of cultural sharing in the construction of knowledge (Florio-Ruane, 2001), sociocultural theorists maintain a central focus on assimilation – and certainly assimilation and mentoring relationships are a part of the new faculty experience as they learn the cultural norms of their institution as well as those of the academy more broadly. While traditional mentoring programmes, in which senior faculty are matched with junior faculty, are popular, they are often not particularly successful (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002; Darwin, 2000) and certain social characteristics, such as gender, can hinder the efficacy of traditional mentoring approaches (Ragins & Cotton, 1991, 1999). In addition, mentors can take advantage of their mentees (Phillips-Jones, 1982), and finding a mentor in the traditional sense can be problematic for new faculty coming from marginalised backgrounds (Powell, 1999). In contrast, online CoPs that include both junior and senior faculty can serve many of the functions of traditional mentoring relationships without many of the associated complications. Bierema and Merriam's (2002) research, for example, points to the ability of mentoring that occurs online to cross 'boundaries of race, class and gender by targeting marginalized groups in society such as minorities, low income students, and young girls and women' (p. 216). In a similar vein, researchers have explored accessibility issues relative to disabilities and some have suggested that online resources may be utilised differently across able and disabled populations (Badge, Dawson, Cann, & Scott, 2008). Another body of literature focuses on the social implications of interacting in one venue or another and, in addition to finding that interaction differs as people move across environments (Brooks, 2008), researchers have found that some people just *prefer* face-to-face (Meyer, 2005) or online communication (Caplan, 2005; Morahan-Martin & Schumacher, 2003). Providing forums for online CoPs to develop along with face-to-face approaches to faculty socialisation, development, and support thus offers flexibility and accessibility, giving people 'options' for developing relationships with their peers, especially those relationships that are so critical for assimilating into the academy.

Exploring the provision of an online forum for collegial dialogue to enhance traditional face-to-face professional support opportunities from a sociocultural perspective shows how personal backgrounds impact the construction of knowledge, interaction, collaboration, and negotiation of institutional culture that takes place in these communities. This perspective also illuminates the potential for online CoPs to function as *accessible* socialising agents, aiding faculty members to assimilate (be mentored) into and maintain social connections in their field. Because finding an optimal 'hybrid' model of development is perhaps an enticing proposition for those in charge of faculty support efforts in higher education, the final section of this manuscript proposes ways to think about how traditional means for faculty support might progress – how we might begin to implement a 'hybrid' programme.

Moving forward: applying a hybrid model

Administrators whose charge is providing professional development, socialisation, and mentoring programmes on campuses of higher education might consider the efficacy of a hybrid faculty support programme and the facilitation of virtual CoPs on their own campus, but they may be wondering *how* to facilitate online communities or blended models of faculty support. To begin with, Palloff and Pratt (1999) offer detailed descriptions of how to construct online communities, how to promote collaborative learning, and they discuss the implications of their work on faculty development scenarios. Johnson (2001), in his review of online CoPs, details scholarly works that have explored the different types of communication modes which might be utilised to support virtual meetings among colleagues. Salmon (2002, 2004), among others (Collison, Elbaum, Haavind, & Tinker, 2000; Palloff & Pratt, 1999, 2005), has engaged in extensive work on how to moderate virtual meetings and offers a number of resources for facilitating online activities. Finally, we can examine the growing selection of studies that not only offer evidence that this model of support is possible, but that discuss what does and does not work as well as the benefits and challenges faced relative to the use of virtual forums for collegial conversation (Cowham & Duggleby, 2005; Hammond, 2005; Motteram, 2006; Puzziferro-Schnitzer & Kissinger, 2005; Reece & Lockee, 2005; Vaughan & Garrison, 2006; Wisker, Robinson, & Shacham, 2007).

Once online forums for collegial interaction among faculty are implemented, researching the enactment of community online will bring about enhanced understandings of what it *means* to be a faculty member in contemporary times. As education continually evolves, so will the needs, questions, concerns, and stressors among faculty. Faculty will likely be continually challenged given the increased use of educational technologies across various sectors of the academy. It makes sense, then, that development efforts would evolve along with other 'shifts' taking place on campuses of higher education. By providing varied forums for peer communication among faculty, and by reflecting on participants' dialogue as a way to illuminate their evolving experiences, development efforts can be continually adapted and revised for the twenty-first century.

Notes on contributor

Catherine F. Brooks (PhD, University of California Riverside) is an assistant professor in the Communication Studies Department at California State University, Long Beach.

References

Allee, V. (1997). *The knowledge evolution: Expanding organizational intelligence.* Boston, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Angelique, H., Kyle, K., & Taylor, E. (2002). Mentors and muses: New strategies for academic success. *Innovative Higher Education, 26*(3), 195–209.

Babinski, L.M., Jones, B.D., & DeWert, M.H. (2001). The roles of facilitators and peers in an online support community for first-year teachers. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 12*(2), 151–169.

Badge, J.L., Dawson, E., Cann, A.J., & Scott, J. (2008). Assessing the accessibility of online learning. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 45*(2), 103–113.

Barab, S.A., MaKinster, J.G., & Scheckler, R. (2003). Designing system dualities: Characterizing a web-supported professional development community. *The Information Society, 19,* 237–256.

Bielaczyc, K., & Collins, A. (1999). Learning communities in classrooms: A reconceptualization of educational practice. In C. Reigeluth (Ed.), *Instructional-design theories and models: A new paradigm of instructional theory* (Vol. 2, pp. 269–292). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bierema, L.L., & Merriam, S.B. (2002). E-mentoring: Using computer mediated communication to enhance the mentoring process. *Innovative Higher Education, 26*(3), 211–227.

Brooks, C.F. (2008). *Exploring face-to-face and online classroom discourse: A case study of social roles as performed in a college course.* PhD thesis, University of California, Riverside.

Brooks, J.G., & Brooks, M.G. (1999). *In search of understanding: The case for constructivist classrooms.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brown, M.J. (2006). *Building powerful community organizations: A personal guide to creating groups that can solve problems and change the world.* Arlington, MA: Long Haul Press.

Caplan, S.E. (2005). A social skill account of problematic internet use. *Journal of Communication, 55*(4), 721–736.

Collier, J., & Esteban, R. (1999). Governance in the participative organisation: Freedom, creativity and ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics, 21*(2/3), 173–188.

Collison, G., Elbaum, B., Haavind, S., & Tinker, R. (2000). *Facilitating online learning: Effective strategies for moderators.* Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

Cowham, T., & Duggleby, J. (2005). Pedagogy and quality assurance in the development of online learning for online instructors. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(4), 15–27.

Cox, M.D. (2002). The role of community in learning: Making connections for your classroom and campus, your students and colleagues. In G.S. Wheeler (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in college: A resource for educators* (pp. 1–38). Elyria, OH: Info-Tec.

Cox, M.D. (2004). Introduction to faculty learning communities. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 97,* 5–23.

Darwin, A. (2000). Critical reflections on mentoring in work settings. *Adult Education Quarterly, 50,* 197–211.

Davies, A., Ramsay, J., Lindfield, H., & Couperthwaite, J. (2005). Building learning communities: Foundations for good practice. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 36*(4), 615–628.

Di Petta, R. (1998). Community online: New professional environments for higher education. In K. Gillespie (Ed.), *The impact of technology on faculty development, life, and work.* (Vol. 76, pp. 79–92). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Easton, S.S. (2003). Clarifying the instructor's role in online distance learning. *Communication Education, 52*(2), 87–105.

Florio-Ruane, S. (2001). *Teacher education and the cultural imagination: Autobiography, conversation, and narrative.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Hammond, M. (2005). A review of recent papers on online discussion in teaching and learning in higher education. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(3), 9–23.

Heckman, R., & Annabi, H. (2006). Cultivating voluntary online learning communities in blended environments. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 10*(4), 51–66.

Heller, K. (1989). The return of community. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 17,* 1–15.

Johnson, C.M. (2001). A survey of current research on online communities of practice. *Internet and Higher Education, 4,* 45–60.

Jonassen, D., Davidson, M., Collins, M., Campbell, J., & Haag, B.B. (1995). Constructivism and computer-mediated communication in distance education. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 9*(2), 7–26.

Kidwell, P.K., Freeman, R., Smith, C., & Zarcone, J. (2004). Integrating online instruction with active mentoring to support professionals in applied settings. *Internet and Higher Education, 7,* 141–150.

King, K.P. (2002). Identifying success in online teacher education and professional development. *Internet and Higher Education, 5,* 231–246.

Knowles, M.S., Holton, E.F., & Swanson, R.A. (1998). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (5th ed.). Houston, TX: Gulf Professional Publishing.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Liedka, J. (1999). Linking competitive advantage with communities of practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 8*(1), 5–16.

McMillan, D.W., & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology, 14*(1), 6–23.

Meyer, K.A. (2005). The ebb and flow of online discussions: What Bloom can tell us about our students' conversations. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(1), 53–63.

Morahan-Martin, J., & Schumacher, P. (2003). Loneliness and social uses of the Internet. *Computers in Human Behavior, 19,* 659–671.

Morris, L.V., Xu, H., & Finnegan, C.L. (2005). Roles of faculty in teaching asynchronous undergraduate courses. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(1), 65–82.

Motteram, G. (2006). 'Blended' education and the transformation of teachers: A long-term case study in postgraduate UK higher education. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 37*(1), 17–30.

Palloff, R.M., & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building learning communities in cyberspace: Effective strategies for the online classroom.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Palloff, R.M., & Pratt, K. (2005). *Collaborating online: Learning together in community.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Phillips-Jones, I. (1982). *Mentors and proteges.* New York: Arbor House.

Powell, B.J. (1999). Mentoring: One of the master's tools. *Initiatives, 59,* 19–31.

Pretty, G.H., McCarthy, M.E., & Catano, V. (1992). Psychological environments and burnout: Gender considerations in the corporation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13,* 701–711.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Putz, P., & Arnold, P. (2001). Communities of practice: Guidelines for the design of online seminars in higher education. *Education, Communication & Information, 1*(2), 181–195.

Puzziferro-Schnitzer, M., & Kissinger, J. (2005). Supporting online adjunct faculty: A virtual mentoring program. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(2), 39–43.

Ragins, B.R., & Cotton, J.L. (1991). Easier said than done: Gender differences in perceived barriers to gaining a mentor. *Academy of Management Journal, 34,* 939–951.

Ragins, B.R., & Cotton, J.L. (1999). Mentor functions and outcomes: A comparison of men and women in formal and informal mentoring relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84,* 529–550.

Rapley, M., & Pretty, G.M.H. (1999). Playing procrustes: The interactional production of a 'psychological sense of community'. *Journal of Community Psychology, 27*(6), 695–713.

Reece, M., & Lockee, B. (2005). Improving training outcomes through blended learning. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 9*(4), 49–57.

Rogers, J. (2000). Communities of practice: A framework for fostering coherence in virtual learning communities. *Educational Technology & Society, 3,* 384–392.

Salmon, G. (2002). *E-tivities: The key to active online learning.* London, UK: Kogan Page Limited.

Salmon, G. (2004). *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Sarason, S. (1974). *The psychological sense of community.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schlager, M.S., & Fusco, J. (2003). Teacher professional development, technology, and communities of practice: Are we putting the cart before the horse? *The Information Society, 19,* 203–220.

Schlager, M.S., Fusco, J., & Schank, P. (2002). Evolution of an online education community of practice. In K.A. Renninger & W. Shumar (Eds.), *Building virtual communities: Learning and change in cyberspace* (pp. 129–158). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sherer, P.D., Shea, T.P., & Kristensen, E. (2003). Online communities of practice: A catalyst for faculty development. *Innovative Higher Education, 27*(3), 183–194.

Smith, C., & Bath, D. (2006). The role of the learning community in the development of discipline knowledge and generic graduate outcomes. *Higher Education, 51,* 259–286.

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2000). Learning better together: The impact of learning communties on student success in higher education. *Journal of Institutional Research, 9*(1), 48–53.

Turoff, M. (2006). The changing role of faculty and online education. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 10*(4), 129–138.

Unger, D., & Wandesman, A. (1985). The importance of neighbors: The social, cognitive and affective components of neighboring. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 13*(2), 139–170.

Vaughan, N., & Garrison, D.R. (2006). How blended learning can support a faculty development community of inquiry. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 10*(4), 139–152.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wellman, B. (1999). The network community: An introduction to networks in global village. In B. Wellman (Ed.), *Networks in the global village* (pp. 1–48). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E. (2006). *Communities of practice: A brief introduction.* Retrieved December 3, 2004, from: http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (1985). *Vygotsky and the social formation of mind.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wick, C. (2000). Knowledge management and leadership opportunities for technical communicators. *Technical Communication, 47*(4), 515–529.

Wisker, G., Robinson, G., & Shacham, M. (2007). Postgraduate research success: Communities of practice involving cohorts, guardian supervisors and online communities. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 44*(3), 301–320.

Zawacki-Richter, O. (2005). Online faculty support and education innovation – a case study. *European Journal of Open, Distance, and E-Learning [On-line], 2005*(I)*.* Retrieved June, 2008, from: http://www.eurodl.org/materials/contrib/2005/Zawacki_Richter.htm