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Kathryn McAtee
Cuyahoga Community College

Catherine A. Hansman
Cleveland State University

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Kathryn McAtee, Cuyahoga Community College, USA
Catherine A. Hansman, Cleveland State University, USA

Abstract: The primary purpose of this research is to explore examples of peer coaching, learning communities and mentoring as faculty development.

Barlett and Rappaport (2009) contend that when higher education institutions invest in faculty development workshops there is a robust effect on the faculty members' research and teaching innovation, interdisciplinary dialogue, university quality of life, personal engagement, and interdisciplinary cooperation. Furthermore, O'Meara and Terosky (2010) discovered the level of commitment, satisfaction and retention rates of faculty increase when faculty members feel that their academic environments are generative and genuine places for professional growth. Nonetheless, faculty members may struggle to find development opportunities that meet their individual needs and wrestle with finding the personal motivation to engage in professional development to fuel their individual career trajectory. To help meet these challenges, emerging types of faculty development techniques, peer coaching, learning communities, and formal and informal mentoring, are a means to encourage faculty to critically reflect upon their practices as teachers and researchers while engaging with peers to share knowledge. The primary purpose of this research is to explore examples of peer coaching, learning communities and mentoring as faculty development methods that engage faculty members in interactive activities while addressing individual professional development needs. The following research questions guide our inquiry: a) What does the literature inform us about best faculty development methods/ practices? b) What faculty development activities enhance faculty members' research and teaching skills? And c) What does auto ethnographies of faculty members' reveal as the most useful faculty development methods?

Abbreviated Literature Review. Huston and Weaver (2008) discuss peer coaching as a "collegial process whereby two faculty members voluntarily work together to improve or expand their approaches to teaching" (p. 19). They ascertain three steps typically utilized in peer coaching: identifying the area of coaching, peer classroom observations, and debriefing sessions. McLeod & Steinert (2009) discovered in their research that peer coaching "increased participant confidence in teaching, appreciation of exposure to new education ideas and an improved sense of institutional support and collegiality" (p. 1044), aligning with concepts of both self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975) and critically reflective practice (Brookfield, 1995). Learning communities, similar to the concepts of communities of practice, can provide an environment for faculty to reflect upon their teaching and profession. Marshall (2005) presents three essential elements to learning community training program: (1) develop transitory communities of scholar-teachers who are interested in examining their vocation as teachers, (2) experience communities representing interdisciplinary and cross-institutional and (3) provide a sense of importance of honoring teachers for their vocations and encouraging appropriate self-care. Formal and informal mentoring relationships "have been unquestioningly and uncritically accepted as fundamental to foster learning in the workplace, advance careers, help new employees learn workplace culture, and provide developmental and psychological support" (Hansman, 2002, p. 39). Sorcinelli and Yun (2007) present emerging models of mentoring that take the mentoring relationship from a top-down, one-to-one relationship to associations based on "flexible networks of support, in which no single person is expected to possess the expertise required of someone to navigate the shoals of a faculty

career" (p. 58). Borders et al's (2011) research uncovered that faculty members appreciate informal and spontaneous mentoring relationships.

Preliminary Findings. We employed autoethnography to uncover stories of how faculty member's engaged in peer coaching, learning communities and mentoring opportunities in their faculty development. As tenured full professors at a community college (Kay) and an urban public university (Catherine), we both have engaged in peer coaching and mentoring faculty development opportunities. Kay's experiences have developed her teaching and classroom management skills through informal peer coaching. On a daily basis Kay discusses new teaching techniques and classroom management issues with colleagues in an informal peer coaching environment. Catherine's experiences have focused more on developing her research and writing skills. She had formal and informal mentors, colleagues at other universities who supported her career through inviting her to co-author articles, book chapters or conference presentations and proceedings and included her in research opportunities. Similarities in our stories emerged from our narratives concerning the opportunities we both experienced throughout our tenure process and beyond it to mentor others as well as be mentored by peers.

Discussion: As our preliminary findings illustrate, opportunities for peer coaching and mentoring existed for us; however, we both had limited experiences with learning communities, especially on our own campuses. Learning communities can provide valuable opportunities for faculty members to interact and reflect upon their teaching and research. Learning communities, consisting of faculty members who share these challenges, may meet the needs to develop professionally through reflective dialogues. Future research focusing on faculty development should include focus groups and narratives of other faculty members to explore successful faculty development opportunities that engage and support faculty.

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