

Peer Coaching: Professional Development for Experienced Faculty

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Published online: 26 October 2007
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Abstract The professoriate, as a whole, is growing older and more experienced; yet institutions often overlook the professional development needs of mid-career and senior faculty. This article, based on a review of the literature and the development of a peer coaching project, examines peer coaching as a professional development opportunity for experienced faculty that meets many of their immediate needs and offers a variety of longer-term benefits to their institution. Six recommendations for creating a peer coaching program emerge from the literature and the authors' experience.

Key words peer coaching · experienced faculty · faculty development

The value of peer coaching as a form of continuing professional development for experienced faculty is largely unrecognized. Over the past few decades, the average level of experience and age of faculty has been increasing in the United States, and it has become critical to provide continuing education for college and university faculty members throughout their career span (Seldin 2006). Faculty developers must broaden their program offerings to meet the needs of this growing population (Romano et al. 2004; Sorcinelli et al. 2006). We suggest peer coaching is one effective way to meet the multiple needs of experienced faculty.

Peer coaching is defined as a collegial process whereby two faculty members voluntarily work together to improve or expand their approaches to teaching. Peer coaching may be

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reciprocal, with each partner serving as coach to the other, or it may be one-way with one partner serving as the coach and the other as the recipient of the coaching. Many articles document the general benefits of peer coaching programs (also referred to as peer mentoring): improved faculty morale and motivation, increased collaborations with other faculty members, and more thoughtful attention to one's pedagogical choices (e.g. Brancato 2003; Menges 1987; Skinner and Welch 1996). This literature, however, often focuses on the benefits of these relationships for junior faculty and/or for faculty collaborations within a single department. In this article we explore the benefits of peer coaching for experienced faculty members. We explain why peer coaching is developmentally and professionally appropriate for experienced faculty members and why it has the potential to improve teaching. Engaging experienced faculty in peer coaching also offers tangible benefits for the institution: it offers opportunities for faculty members to contribute to the growing scholarship of teaching and learning, it creates a climate in which teaching is "community property", and it provides a way for experienced faculty to give back to their community.

We begin by examining the growing need for professional development programs that are tailored to the unique interests of mid-career and senior faculty members. We define peer coaching and describe its potential to meet these needs. Finally, we make recommendations for creating peer coaching programs at other institutions based on a review of the literature, our own practice base as teacher educators and faculty developers, and a successfully launched peer coaching project at one institution.

The Often Overlooked Professional Development Needs of Experienced Faculty

The professoriate as a whole is becoming older and more experienced. Although there has been animated discussion and valid concern expressed about the increasing number of part-time or contract faculty hires, tenured faculty remain the largest cohort of full-time faculty in higher education (Alstete 2000; Cataldi et al. 2005; Sorcinelli et al. 2006). According to statistics for fall 2003 in the United States, 49.3% of all full-time faculty members were tenured, compared to 21.3% who were tenure-track and 29.4% who were non-tenure track (Cataldi et al. 2005). Furthermore, the number of older faculty is growing. The average age of full-time faculty members increased from 47 in 1987 to 49.6 in 2003 (Cataldi et al. 2005; Ma 2004). In the fall of 2003, 47.7% of all faculty members were age 50 or older (National Center for Education Statistics 2006, Table 230). The number of older faculty in the United States is expected to remain high because, among other reasons, there is no longer a mandatory age for faculty retirement and the population as a whole is living longer (Ashenfelter and Card 2002).

The professional development needs of experienced faculty are likely to differ from the needs of their junior colleagues (Seldin 2006).¹ Experienced faculty members are likely to ask more nuanced and sophisticated questions about most teaching and learning issues. For example, in a workshop on leading good discussions, a junior faculty member might ask "How do you get students to participate?" whereas an experienced faculty member might ask "How do I change the dynamics so that students are talking with each other, not with me?" For select topics, senior faculty members may actually have more basic questions than their junior colleagues; and they may feel uncomfortable raising those questions. Specifically, research shows that experienced faculty members find it more challenging to learn how to integrate the latest instructional technologies, adapt to growing class sizes, or

¹ For our purposes, we define "experienced faculty" as mid-career or senior faculty members who have received tenure and have been teaching for 10 years or more.

reconcile growing numbers of under-prepared first-year students (Alstete 2000; Sorcinelli 1999; Sorcinelli et al. 2006).

The fact that junior and senior faculty members often have different questions means that either different venues are needed to accommodate both groups or that general venues open to the entire faculty need to draw a sufficient number of senior faculty members so as to ensure that a wide range of questions is considered. As Seldin (2006) noted, faculty members at different points in their careers have different professional development needs. While younger faculty members may need to develop both content expertise and teaching expertise, mid-career faculty members need opportunities to redefine and enlarge the scope of their professional careers; and the senior faculty needs opportunities for creating a legacy (Seldin 2006). Karpiak (2000) noted that midlife faculty members may have greater strengths in some areas, but they also have critical issues to resolve related to generativity. Mid-career and senior faculty members may be disappointed in professional development activities that do not offer sufficient time and opportunity to explore the questions of greatest interest to them at this point in their careers.

Despite the fact that experienced faculty have a unique set of professional development needs, faculty development programs typically target faculty members early in their careers and are not designed to meet the needs of the mid-career or senior faculty group (Austin 2003; Sorcinelli et al. 2006). Historically, the needs of mid-career and senior faculty members were not served, and they were less likely to participate in faculty development programs (Centra 1985; Crawley 1995; Erickson 1986). It could be that experienced faculty members were not participating because they did not have the time, but the fact that few programs were tailored to their interests could be a significant deterrent to making the time. When programs are designed to bring together experienced faculty to discuss their teaching priorities, participants report improvements in their teaching knowledge, abilities, and confidence (Romano et al. 2004).

As the kinds of services offered by faculty development centers continue to become more diverse and resources become more restricted (Franz et al. 2005), providing programs that meet the needs of the experienced faculty becomes more urgent. In response to a call for assessment and accountability, many institutions are adopting post-tenure review procedures (Lacata and Morreale 2002; Miller 1999). These policies are motivating administrators to examine the unique teaching needs of faculty members after tenure, and institutions are looking for ways to re-engage senior faculty members around teaching issues (Hornum 2002; Sorcinelli 1999). A peer coaching program for experienced faculty members creates opportunities for stimulating this re-engagement.

Peer Coaching: One Model of How It Can Work

For the purposes of this article, peer coaching is defined as a formative, collegial process whereby pairs of faculty voluntarily work together to improve or expand their approaches to teaching. In reciprocal peer coaching, each faculty member selects an area of focus for the consultation and works with a coaching partner to bring about the improvement or growth desired, allowing each participant to personalize the process. In this reciprocal relationship, each member of the team serves as a coach and is, in turn, coached. Millis (1999) indicated that "Reciprocal observations (peer to peer) virtually guarantee the positive approach essential for constructive change" (p. 25). When grounded in mutual respect and trust, as well as confidentiality, peer coaching becomes a non-evaluative opportunity for development (Slater and Simmons 2001). In one-way coaching, the process is very similar; but one member of the

partnership, usually the senior member, serves as the coach, and the other faculty member identifies the focus of the interaction and looks to the coach for assistance.

Commonly, peer coaching teams utilize a process involving three major steps: (1) consultation to identify the focus of the coaching, (2) classroom observation by the coach, and (3) a debriefing session where the coach shares his or her observations. Some teams may not use classroom observation, but instead review instructional materials or grading practices (Chism 1999; Malik 1996; Millis 1999; Skinner and Welch 1996).

A Peer Coaching Project Launch

A peer coaching pilot project was created at Seattle University during the 2005–2006 academic year involving ten senior faculty members. Following the pilot project, a cadre of peer coaches provided support to a wide range of faculty members who had requested coaching assistance. See Table I for a timeline of events in the project.

The motivation for this project was rooted partly in the benefits of peer coaching described in the literature and partly in the local need for more feedback and collaboration on teaching. The institution's faculty development office was created in 2004, and less than a year after opening its doors the faculty demand for formative classroom observations was already exceeding the office's capacity. The director of the professional development office and an adult education faculty member from the College of Education launched a pilot peer coaching program to determine whether peer coaching was a feasible solution to meet this growing need and to provide an outlet for senior faculty members to engage in advanced conversations and reflection about teaching.

Year 1 of the pilot program, as listed in Table I, was a planning year. After conducting a literature review and conferring with other institutions that had similar programs, the

Table I Pilot Program Events: Preparing Peer Coaches

Year of Program	Time Frame	Peer Coaching Activity
Year 1 <i>Planning</i>	January–March	Pilot program description developed Program reviewed by CETL advisory board Program reviewed by Deans' Council
	March–May	Participant nominations sought from Deans Nominees invited to participate Participants describe teaching responsibilities and interests to facilitate pairings
Year 2 <i>Reciprocal Coaching</i>	October–November	Workshop 1: Introduction to peer coaching Workshop 2: Peer coaching skills Partners assigned for reciprocal coaching ^a
	January–March	Reciprocal peer coaching activities
	April	Workshop 3: Coaching debriefing, and additional skill building
	May	Assessment of pilot; decision to continue Trained coaches volunteer to coach other faculty in next academic year
Year 3 <i>One-way Coaching</i>	September–May	Trained coaches work with faculty members who request a coach ^b

^a Pilot program utilized reciprocal peer coaching where each member of the partnership coached and received coaching.

^b Reciprocal coaching not expected.

professional development office sought permission for the program and nominations from the institution's administrators. Deans from six of the seven colleges nominated senior faculty members noted for their exemplary teaching. The professional development office invited the nominees to participate in the pilot program for the following academic year; and roughly half of them were interested and available, for a total of ten coaches representing five colleges and ten different departments on campus. The colleges included Arts and Sciences, Science and Engineering, Business, Education, and Nursing.

In Year 2 of the pilot program, the professional development office held a series of workshops to introduce the coaches to one another, discuss the concept and practices of peer coaching, distinguish formative coaching from summative peer review, and help participants develop and hone their interdisciplinary coaching skills. Since none of the participants came from the same department, faculty members were assigned partners to maximize disciplinary diversity, and all of the faculty members were assigned to work with someone from a different school or college. One partnership, for example, included persons from philosophy and nursing; another paired a faculty member in chemistry with one from student development administration. These senior faculty members were experienced in observing faculty members in their own disciplines²; and the objective was to expand their reflection, observation, and feedback skills so that they could confidently and effectively observe faculty from other disciplines. They were asked to engage in reciprocal peer coaching, taking turns coaching and being coached, so they could see differences across colleges and disciplines and between graduate and undergraduate teaching. They also had the opportunity to experience what kind of feedback was least and most welcomed and what kinds of questions led to fruitful discussions. A final workshop at the end of Year 2 gave coaches an opportunity to reflect and have closure on the experience; offer suggestions for improving the program; and discuss how, if they wished to continue as coaches, their roles would shift from reciprocal coaching to a one-way coaching role.

Year 3 of the pilot program was focused on creating a workable structure and process for a one-way coaching program. As noted earlier, we use the term "one-way" coaching to distinguish this process from the reciprocal coaching that was the hallmark of Year 2. Eight of the original ten coaches made themselves available to coach other faculty who approached the professional development office for consultation about their teaching.³ The professional development office managed and administered the coaching program by advertising the coaching service, matching coaches and faculty recipients as requests were received, confidentially assessing the experiences of coaches and recipients, providing support and additional training for the coaches as needed, and paying the coaches a small stipend according to their quarterly coaching responsibilities.

Successes and Challenges

The program launch was successful by several criteria. First, eight of the ten faculty who participated in the reciprocal coaching and training experience wanted to continue as one-way

² Nine of the ten peer coaches were tenured at Seattle University, and the tenth had been tenured at another institution. As a result, all of them were regularly engaged in the peer review process of junior faculty in their departments.

³ Of the two coaches who did not continue in Year 3, one was going on sabbatical but asked to be included in the coaching pool the next academic year; and the other had unexpected professional commitments that reduced her availability.

coaches the next year; and a ninth person asked to be reinstated as a coach following sabbatical leave (for a retention rate of 80–90%) Second, almost all of the feedback about the program from the senior faculty in Year 2 was positive. Participants unanimously said the workshops were a good use of their time, they savored the opportunity to discuss the nuances of teaching and institutional policies around teaching with colleagues from around the university, and they learned a great deal about their own teaching from coaching and being coached. Third, the one-way peer coaching in Year 3 successfully reached a wide variety of faculty members across campus. A total of 18 faculty members sought the services of a peer coach in the first year that coaching services were offered, and several departments that rarely (and in one case, had never) used the services of the professional development office showed a strong interest in the program and spoke highly of the support they received. Lastly, the program gave the director of the professional development office an opportunity to become well-acquainted with several outstanding teachers who had not previously participated in the office's activities. Although many highly competent experienced faculty members seek out the professional development office on campus, some do not. A nomination by one's dean or the opportunity to coach others may successfully draw out these individuals where other invitations fail.

The pilot program did encounter several challenges. First, it was difficult to find several dates and times when all ten of the coaches could gather for the workshops. This problem was anticipated and averted in Year 2 by negotiating the dates for all meetings several months in advance and by requiring workshop attendance. Participation became more problematic in Year 3, when attendance at quarterly luncheons was not required and the meetings were scheduled with less notice; attendance dropped considerably. Also in Year 3, a considerable challenge for the professional development office was to develop an efficient and effective system for connecting faculty with coaches. The institution where this program was developed is on a 11-week quarter system, so when an instructor has a problem and a full week or two goes by before the individual can talk with a coach, a significant portion of the course has already elapsed. The instructor may no longer wish to discuss the issue, or the issue may have seriously escalated.

The Potential of Peer Coaching for Experienced Faculty

Numerous authors have heralded peer coaching for its benefits to new or junior faculty (Bernstein et al. 2000; Keig and Waggoner 1994; Minor and Preston 1991; Weimer 1990), but in the sections that follow we identify a variety of reasons which explain why peer coaching has the potential for revitalizing experienced faculty (see Table II). It is important to note that there is limited substantive data regarding the effectiveness of peer coaching.

Meeting the Needs of Experienced Faculty

First, peer coaching, especially reciprocal coaching, is more likely to meet the needs of experienced faculty than general faculty development events because coaches can talk intensively about teaching with someone who has similar levels of experience. As described earlier, general faculty development programs are likely to focus on problems and solutions at a relatively general level. With greater expertise, however, faculty become more able to identify salient characteristics about the problems they wish to solve (Chi et al. 1988). Problem analysis can be more sophisticated, and resolution is more likely to focus on very narrow or specific aspects of the problem. Again, peer coaching accommodates this kind of effective problem-solving by giving full control of the process to the participating faculty members.

Table II Meeting the Professional Development Needs of Experienced Faculty Through Peer Coaching

Experienced faculty needs	Peer coaching contributions
Exploration of teaching and learning beyond basic problems faced by beginning faculty	Conversation with peers who have similar levels of experience
Exploration of teaching and learning problems for which experienced faculty have not been prepared	Safe and confidential opportunity to admit limitations or lack of knowledge
Exploration of teaching and learning problems that are practice-centered and complex	Individualized coaching on problems selected by colleague being coached Ongoing support to address complex problems and their resolution Coaching completed within idiosyncratic context of targeted practice
Return on investment in professional development	Learning opportunities from both coaching and being coached Conversations about good teaching with faculty who also value good teaching
Opportunities for reflection on practice and critical reflection about teaching	Opportunity to share teaching practices and rationale with experienced colleagues Opportunity to strategize new approaches with experienced colleagues Support for risk-taking and experimentation Safe and confidential opportunity to question assumptions and practices
Opportunities to link scholarship and teaching	Opportunity to make teaching more visible to others Opportunity to focus on improvement of teaching Opportunity to see how others teach and see departmental differences
Opportunities to stay connected to colleagues and give back to the community	Reduce isolation and increase collegial relations among faculty Opportunity to help others improve teaching and improve collegial culture

Peer coaching is also an ideal faculty development format for experienced faculty because the coaches focus on real, individually selected, practice-centered problems. As noted by Angelo and Cross (1993), "the type of assessment most likely to improve teaching and learning is that conducted by faculty to answer questions they themselves have

formulated in response to issues or problems in their own teaching" (p. 9). This is especially true for experienced faculty members, who benefit most from professional development that is both practice- and problem-centered (Daley 2000; Mott 2000).

Likewise, peer coaching is effective for senior faculty members because it fosters analysis of the specific context in which teaching takes place. As many authors note, teaching and learning is highly complex, in part, because of numerous contextual variations (Chism 1999; Hutchings 1996). Weimer (2006) emphasized that "classrooms are dynamic venues where what happens 1 day never guarantees what will happen the next" (p. 9). Although many faculty development opportunities provide insight into new techniques and processes, they seldom take into consideration the uniqueness and great variability of the contexts in which they need to be applied. With their years of experience, senior faculty members can reliably judge when a particular classroom dynamic is highly unusual and warrants a novel approach. Because reciprocal peer coaching involves one-on-one analysis of a teaching or learning problem by two senior faculty members, they can draw from their collective years of experience to select, apply, and critique possible solutions for a specific and dynamic context. The solutions arising from context-specific discussions are much more likely to be successful than those generated in a workshop where the goal is to address the generalized contexts of all faculty members in the room.

A peer coaching relationship generally extends over a defined period of time, thereby moving beyond the one-shot format of the typical faculty development workshop or seminar. Not only does peer coaching provide a distributed learning event with more total time for development, it provides ongoing conversation and support throughout the problem finding, diagnosis, and implementation process. The focus is on change and application, not just knowledge acquisition. While many people leave faculty development events full of good ideas, there is little incentive actually to try any of them in practice. Peer coaching adds a level of accountability not present in many other forums.

Another characteristic of peer coaching that provides opportunity for rich learning is that both roles in the process (coaching and being coached) have the potential for stimulating learning about teaching (Millis and Kaplan 1995; Weimer 1990). When one is being coached, the learning opportunities are obvious. However, when one experienced faculty member serves as a coach to an equally experienced peer, the learning opportunities are sometimes surprising. Mid-career and senior faculty members participating in Seattle University's pilot peer coaching program noted that some of their most important insights came from watching their seasoned colleague teach. They commented on the value of observing other teaching styles, student attitudes, and instructional approaches. All of them were accustomed to watching junior faculty members teach in their own departments as part of the institution's promotion and tenure review process, but they rarely had the opportunity to watch someone as experienced as themselves from another part of the institution. Several of the peer coaches expressed a new appreciation for the great diversity of approaches to teaching and learning across campus.

Reflection on Practice

Reflection on practice, including critical reflection, is another potential benefit of engaging in peer coaching. Dewey's foundational work in the early 1900's suggested that authentic learning could only come from the investigation of solving real problems and reflecting on the experience of doing so (1933). More recent research on faculty expertise indicates that one thing excellent teachers have in common is that they regularly and purposefully reflect on their teaching (Kane et al. 2004). Likewise, Schön's (1987) focus on reflection-in-action

and reflection-on-action made strong links among acting, reflecting, and learning in developing professional competence. He asserted that much of what is important about professional performance may not be taught through direct instruction but can be learned through experience and suggests that "we study the experience of learning by doing and the artistry of good coaching" (Schön 1987, p. 17).

Peer coaching, because of its non-evaluative and confidential nature, also provides a relatively safe opportunity for faculty members to shine a critical light on their teaching and the assumptions they take for granted. According to Brookfield (1995), reflection on teaching is critical when it seeks to expose the framework of power upon which educational practices rest and when it "questions the assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our own long-term interests" (p. 8). Within the safety of a peer coaching relationship, a faculty member can express personal concerns about these potentially controversial issues, engage in constructive conversations, and seek solutions so as to become a healthier and wiser practitioner than before. In this way, peer coaching creates the "conversational space" that is needed to construct new meanings from familiar situations (Baker et al. 2002).

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Many institutions are looking for ways to support faculty in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL; Huber and Hutchings 2005; O'Meara and Rice 2005). Peer coaching is one platform that aligns with several key dimensions of the SoTL, including making teaching public and increasing content and pedagogical knowledge (National Research Council 2003). Peer coaching served as a SoTL catalyst for two of our pilot project participants. One has written a book about teaching, inspired in part by his peer coaching experience; and another submitted a successfully funded NSF grant on pedagogy in science.

If teaching is to be considered scholarship, there is no debate about the fact that it must be reviewed by peers, just as any other form of scholarship is scrutinized by other community members (Chism 1999). While peer review is frequently associated with summative evaluations of teaching, Quinlan and Akerlind (2000) included "collegial conversations and collaborations about teaching" in their definition of peer review (p. 27). Peer coaching that is non-evaluative can make an important contribution to creating a climate that opens teaching to review by others.

SoTL also requires that faculty improve their teaching and demonstrate those improvements (Kreber and Cranton 2000), and peer coaching provides a powerful venue for both. As discussed earlier, peer coaching is focused on improving teaching practice, both in and out of the classroom. Given that peer coaching, by definition, involves explaining one's choices and decisions to another experienced teacher, peer coaching provides a context-centered opportunity to target improvement strategies and analyze the impact of those strategies, including the impact on student learning.

Peer coaching provides an opportunity to improve faculty pedagogical and content knowledge. If peers are selected from different disciplines, coaching can focus on cross-disciplinary exchanges and pedagogical issues common to all faculty members. In addition, those who are not familiar with the content being taught may be able to ask both pedagogical and content questions that reflect the students' point of view (Hubball and Burt 2006; Mundy and Grabau 1999). If peers coach someone from the same discipline, they can provide content expertise that may assist with both pedagogical decisions and with discipline-related issues such as content inclusion and sequencing. Thus, peer coaching has

the potential to broaden conversations about pedagogy and content for partnerships that cross disciplinary boundaries and deepen conversations about pedagogy and content for partnerships that are discipline specific.

Generativity

Peer coaching may be the perfect opportunity for mid-career faculty to renew thinking about teaching and for senior faculty to mentor others and give back to the academic community (Seldin 2006). Because peer coaching is formative in nature, it aligns with the kinds of evaluative activities that have a positive influence on morale and collegiality (Keig and Waggoner 1994; Menges et al. 1988). Additionally, these authors link engagement in formative peer activities with Erikson's developmental processes related to generativity, productivity, and creativity. Peer coaching offers an opportunity for self-renewal, the satisfaction of giving of one's time and talent to others within the academy, and the knowledge that one is improving the organization as a whole.

Recommendations for Success

In this article we have described peer coaching's potential and outlined how experienced faculty members, in particular, stand to benefit from the experience of peer coaching so as to improve teaching and learning, increase collegiality, foster generativity, and stimulate the scholarship of teaching and learning. For these benefits to be realized, however, it is important to follow six broad guidelines in the creation of a peer coaching program, as described below. These guidelines synthesize elements from successful peer coaching programs (as featured in the higher education literature) with core principles of effective feedback (as documented in the faculty development literature). Similar guidelines have been published for creating peer coaching programs that focus on mentoring junior faculty (e.g. Boyle and Boice 1998; Minor and Preston 1991), but the guidelines presented here are tailored to address concerns of senior faculty partnerships. Most of these guidelines concern the relationship between the faculty member doing the coaching, hereafter referred to as the coach, and the faculty member seeking feedback and advice, more conveniently referred to as the colleague.

Recommendation 1: Goal-Setting

The first and perhaps most important guideline is that the goals of the coaching relationship are set by the colleague, rather than by the coach. In other words, the coach's first objective is to determine what the colleague wants to focus on and to support that person in setting the agenda. This concept of empowering the colleague to set the agenda is a basic principle of giving effective feedback (Brinko 1993; Carroll and Goldberg 1989; Vohra and Singh 2005). This action, sometimes summarized as the recipient "owning the goals" or "owning the feedback process" (Schmuck 1995; Vohra and Singh 2005), serves as a foundation for peer coaching, where one of the primary goals is to provide feedback about teaching that will be heard, valued, and used. For example, if the colleague wants the coach to provide feedback on the syllabus and final writing assignment, then the coach follows this request and examines these documents, rather than insisting that a classroom observation is necessary. As the coach and colleague work together, they may encounter questions that might be best answered by a classroom

observation, and the coach can certainly suggest that possibility; but the final decision about which strategies are suitable remain in the hands of the colleague.

This guideline is potentially the most important because the next five principles are logical implications of the colleague's ownership of the coaching process. As outlined earlier, the most effective programs for experienced faculty members are those that focus upon practice-centered issues selected by the individual.

Recommendation 2: Voluntary Participation

The second guideline follows directly from the first: a peer coaching program must be voluntary. More explicitly, the program must be voluntary for both the coach and the colleague (Bernstein et al. 2000). If experienced faculty members are forced into coaching roles, it will be more difficult for them to be genuinely interested in and receptive to the needs of their colleagues (Webb and McEnerney 1995). Furthermore, Mundy and Grabau (1999) concluded that peer review of teaching can improve student ratings of teaching but only when faculty members participate "whole-heartedly" in helping themselves and others (p. 31). On the receiving end, faculty members who are coerced into seeking feedback are much less likely to follow that advice than are those who seek feedback out of their own interest in improving their teaching (Skinner and Welch 1996).

Recommendation 3: Confidentiality

A third guiding principle concerns the confidentiality of the coaching process. The content of the coaching relationship—including the colleague's questions, the coach's suggestions, and the colleague's receptiveness (or lack thereof) to those suggestions—must remain confidential between the two faculty members. Research repeatedly indicates that, if a colleague is to trust the coach and ask those candid questions or reveal those teaching dilemmas that really matter, then the colleague must know that the coach will not share the content of these conversations with anyone who might affect the colleague's tenure or promotion possibilities or, in the case of faculty who are already tenured, threaten the respect that colleague has earned as a teacher (Brinko 1993; Carroll and Goldberg 1989; Hicks 1999). In keeping with the notion that the recipient owns the feedback process, the colleague decides when, how, and with whom they will share information about the coaching relationship. Even experienced, tenured faculty may be reluctant to participate in any faculty development activity that is not confidential.

Maintaining confidentiality may be a very contentious issue at some institutions. There are several reasons why an office sponsoring a peer coaching program would want data from the faculty participants about their peer coaching experience, not the least of which would be to justify the costs associated with the program.

Recommendation 4: Assessment

The good news is that there are several ways to assess the institutional impact of a one-way peer coaching program and still protect the confidentiality of participants. At the most basic (and protective) level, one could ask coaches to indicate how many people they coached but not provide any identifying information about those individuals. Coaches could also report the types of faculty members they work with (i.e. adjunct, tenure-track, or tenured) or the number of faculty colleagues from each division, college, or school on campus and still protect individual identities. Also, of course, coaches could provide the full names of faculty colleagues to the office sponsoring the program, which is the model being

used at the authors' home institution⁴. It is not within the scope of this article to evaluate the pros and cons of each system; but we offer two recommendations about assessing the impact of a one-way coaching program, based on the faculty development literature and our experience: (1) whatever level of reporting the coaches do, it is important that the content of the conversations remain confidential; and (2) if names are being tracked for assessment purposes, it is important that colleagues' names are not shared with department chairs or administrators who might weigh this information negatively in tenure and promotion decisions.

It is also important to assess the reciprocal coaching process, and we recommend assessing the coaches' experiences at least once during the year of reciprocal coaching and once afterwards. In our pilot program, we asked our coaches for input only after they had completed their quarter of reciprocal coaching (i.e. at the end of Year 2), and we learned that one of the coaches was disappointed in the depth of teaching feedback offered during reciprocal coaching. This person perceived that the investment in the coaching and feedback process was not equal between the coaching partners. The disappointed coach did not wish to elaborate because the process was over, but it underlined the importance of checking in with the coaches about their experience during the training process.

Recommendation 5: Formative Evaluation

Following closely on the heels of confidentiality and assessment, the fifth guideline is that a peer coaching program should be used for formative and developmental purposes rather than for summative purposes. Summative evaluation refers to assessments that are used to render a judgment, often about tenure, promotion, or salary increases, whereas formative evaluation refers to assessments that are focused exclusively on improving teaching (Cavanagh 1996; Scriven 1973, 1996). Research indicates teaching is much less likely to improve when faculty receive feedback as part of a summative evaluation and more likely to improve when that feedback is separated from the review process and focused around helping that faculty member (Brinko 1993; Hicks 1999). For this reason, the sole function of the coaches should be to help colleagues improve their teaching; the coaches should not be commandeered to participate in top-down, administration-driven evaluations of teaching.

We raise this issue because department chairs or deans may be tempted to require experienced coaches to conduct annual peer reviews of junior faculty, arguing that these coaches are better trained than other department members at classroom observation and constructive feedback. If an administrator insists that coaches fulfill this responsibility, one solution is for the coach and faculty colleague to agree before the observation whether the consultation is part of peer coaching (and therefore confidential, formative, etc.) or part of a summative evaluation, in which case all parties agree that the content of the feedback may be reviewed by a formal committee. As more institutions develop post-tenure faculty

⁴ By collecting the names of faculty colleagues who seek out coaches, the faculty development office sponsoring the peer coaching program can follow-up with these colleagues and assess the quality of the coaching they received and identify additional training that the coaches might need. This was the main motivation in establishing this kind of reporting at the authors' home institution, and coaches and faculty colleagues are given full assurance that this list of names is not shared with anyone beyond the program's director. Because we have been able to follow up with faculty members who sought a coach, we have received confidential feedback that has enabled us to make immediate improvements in how coaches are assigned to work with instructors seeking a coach.

evaluations, even mid-career and senior faculty members may be faced with the need to improve their teaching outside of the summative process.

Recommendation 6: Institutional Support

The sixth and final recommendation is that an effective peer coaching program, like other programs supporting advances in teaching and learning, requires central institutional support from a provost's office or other central academic office (National Research Council 2003). Such support is necessary because there must be clarity about the purpose and use of peer review of teaching in an institution, including those designed to provide formative feedback (Chism 1999). Deans and other administrators are more likely to honor and abide by aspects of the coaching program that appear to run contrary to their immediate needs (such as the confidentiality of the coaching process) if the provost has visibly supported the coaching program and its objectives.

Central institutional support is also needed because coaches need to see that the institution values the service they are providing; and faculty members, in general, need to see that the provost's office values and invests in teaching improvement. Faculty members may also need evidence that the faculty is supported at all career stages.

The provost (or chief academic officer) can support peer coaching by:

- providing funding for the program,
- publicizing and marketing the program,
- nominating potential coaches (or asking deans to nominate coaches), and
- sponsoring events to honor the coaches.

In summary, these six guidelines serve as a foundation for building a peer coaching program. The person planning to direct the program would be wise to discuss these recommendations with a central administrator, such as the provost, early in the planning process to ensure that everyone agrees on the purposes of the program and the formative roles of the coaches.

Conclusions

Providing appropriate professional development opportunities for experienced faculty members is a growing challenge for institutions as the faculty continues to increase in both years of experience and age. We recommend the creation of peer coaching programs to engage experienced faculty members in problem-based, contextualized opportunities to reflect on teaching and learning. When faculty members have an opportunity to voluntarily participate in confidential, trusting partnerships with equally experienced colleagues, conversation is focused on problems faced by the participants in the here-and-now. Experienced faculty members know that generalized solutions do not fit specialized problems; thus the ability to investigate solutions to selected problems cooperatively increases the probability that teaching will improve. Furthermore, these conversations provide a safe opportunity for experienced faculty to question assumptions, share problems, and address emerging issues generated by a changing classroom landscape. Additionally, when experienced faculty serve as coaches to more junior members of the academic community, they are able to provide a valuable service to the faculty members with whom they work and the community as a whole. The experienced faculty member is provided an opportunity to connect with newer members of the community.

As campuses increasingly focus on teaching as community property and engage in post-tenure reviews, peer coaching may provide opportunity to prepare experienced faculty members for wider reviews of teaching. Peer coaching is consistent with the tenets of the scholarship of teaching and learning and may encourage experienced faculty members to engage in such scholarship. Finally, if campuses are dedicated to providing faculty development throughout the career-span of the faculty they support, providing additional opportunities for experienced faculty members is a must. We believe peer coaching is an appropriate and meaningful investment in the ongoing development of this important group.

Acknowledgements We are indebted to Jeffrey Anderson and David Green for their thoughtful feedback on earlier versions of this manuscript and to the entire cohort of peer coaches for their time, energy, and commitment to improving teaching.

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Learner-centered Leadership: An Agenda for Action

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Published online: 18 October 2007
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Abstract Institutions are attempting to revitalize undergraduate education through the shift of the dominant pedagogy to a learner-centered focus. While this is encouraging, it is crucial to acknowledge that most of the efforts and literature on the learner-centered paradigm have necessarily focused on strategies for faculty. It is, however, equally important for administrators to consider the impact of the paradigm shift on their roles. Professional development and leadership training that takes into account the need for both a technical shift and shift in perception is key to the success of the transition to a new paradigm.

Key words learner-centered · academic leadership · professional development · administration

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