

## Mentoring and elearning: A reflection on an ascilite CMP relationship

**Jennie Swann**

Centre for Educational and Professional Development  
Auckland University of Technology

**Marica Ševelj**

Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

### *Abstract*

*This poster is a reflection on one of ascilite's 2005 Community Mentoring Program (CMP) projects, which involved the mentee's analysis of a previous online mentoring relationship. A constructivist approach to online learning and teaching necessarily has a mentoring element, and this poster maps a meta-analysis of models of mentoring and online dialogue that has informed the mentee's research. Its purpose is to encourage dialogue on the relationship between mentoring and learning in an online context with a view to improving the practice of both.*

### *Keywords*

*mentoring, online learning, elearning*

### **A reflection on an ascilite CMP relationship**

“The ascilite Community Mentoring Program seeks to involve participants in a professional mentoring relationship built between a new learner (the mentee) and an experienced practitioner (the mentor)” (ascilite, 2005). This poster is a reflection on one of the 2005 CMP projects, which involved the analysis of a previous online mentoring relationship. It maps a meta-analysis of models of mentoring and learning in an online context whose purpose is to encourage dialogue on the relationship between the two.

Much of the literature on mentoring to date comes from a management background and has assumed that dialogue takes place in a face-to-face environment. However, most of the communication in this CMP relationship took place online, and parallels between models of mentoring and of elearning quickly became apparent. Megginson and Clutterbuck (2005) suggest that dialogue in mentoring can have as many as seven layers of increasing depth and impact. Some of these levels are very similar to those in a number of models of elearning, for example Gilly Salmon's (2000) five-stage model of a process for learning online through communication and collaboration, and also McFadzean and McKenzie's (2001) process for developing collaborative learning teams. There is a difference of focus among these models — that of the mentoring model is the development of the individual while the elearning models also concentrate on the social and collaborative features of groups engaged in a learning process. However, a constructivist approach to online learning and teaching necessarily situates individual cognitive development in a social environment (Vygotsky, 1978) and the fostering of such development has a mentoring element.

A comparison of models of mentoring and of online interaction in a learning environment may identify synergies, which could be of benefit to the theories of both mentoring and elearning and this is the subject of the mentee's forthcoming research paper.

### **References**

- Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ascilite). (2005). *Guidelines for ascilite community mentoring program*. Retrieved May 6, 2005, from <http://www.ascilite.org.au/mentoring.html>
- McFadzean, E., & McKenzie, J. (2001). Facilitating virtual learning groups. *Journal of Management Development*, 20(6), 470–494.
- Megginson, D., & Clutterbuck, D. (2005). *Techniques for coaching and mentoring*. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Salmon, G. (2000). *E-moderating: The key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page.

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

Copyright © 2005 Jennie Swann and Marica Ševelj

The author(s) assign to ascilite and educational non-profit institutions a non-exclusive licence to use this document for personal use and in courses of instruction provided that the article is used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. The author(s) also grant a non-exclusive licence to ascilite to publish this document on the ascilite web site (including any mirror or archival sites that may be developed) and in printed form within the ascilite 2005 conference proceedings. Any other usage is prohibited without the express permission of the author(s).