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ABSTRACT
         Despite research findings showing that mentoring
exists in all types of organizations, it is unclear whether mentoring
is critical to advancement to the highest levels of organizations,
and if it is, what factors in the mentoring relationship are critical
to that success. This paper presents case studies of mentoring taken
from three organizations: higher education, business and industry,
and government agencies. It examines mentoring from the perspective
of 15 top-level executives of whom 14 were perceived as mentors in
the three types of organizations. The paper reveals the importance of
the "insider" perspective on the mentoring process. Findings address
the frequency and types of mentoring relationships experienced by
persons at the highest levels in business and industry and higher
education (the highest ranking individuals named the most mentors).
Additionally, a more in depth look at two intense, mentoring
relationships, one in business and one in higher education were
conducted. The study suggests that mentoring occurs frequently in
business and industry, and even more frequently in higher education.
The study did not support the need for the mentoring relationship to
be a close personal one. In both business/industry and education it
appears that the quantity of mentors is more important than quality
of the relationships. Conclusions also address role models, career
planning, and critical feedback. (Contains 60 references.) (GLR)

MENTORING IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY:

IS THERE A PARADOX?

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Abstract

Recent research findings on mentoring suggest that mentoring relationships exist, and that they exist in a variety of organizations, at a variety of levels. The studies which look at mentoring at different levels of orga ___tions clearly document the existence of mentoring relationships in **business** (Dalton, 1977; Kantor, 1977; Kram, 1980; Lean, 1983; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, M. Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Speizer, 1981; and Zey, 1983), in **education** (Adam, 1986; Kouba, 1984; Levine, 1986; Marsiciano, 1981; and Robinson, 1981), and in **government** (Ryan, 1983). In addition to documenting its existence, researchers have also provided information about the nature of the mentoring relationship and the roles of mentors and proteges (Collins, 1983; Dalton, 1977; Kram, 1980; Marisciano, 1981; Reich, 1985; Vaudrin, 1983; Fenske, 1986; Kouba, 1984; and Williams, 1986). The research further suggests that persons in a variety of organizational settings perceive that mentoring positively enhances career advancement (Collins, 1983; Fenske, 1986; Kouba, 1984; Queralt, 1981; and Villani, 1986).

Despite this research, important, unanswered questions remain about mentoring. While it is clear that mentoring occurs in organizations, it is unclear whether mentoring is critical to advancement to the highest levels of organizations; and if it is, what factors in the relationships are critical to that success. Equally unclear, is whether career advancement mentoring across organizations achieves similar results for the participants.

This paper presents two case studies of mentoring. The cases are taken from a larger study of career development mentoring at the highest levels of three kinds of organizations (higher education, business and industry and governmental agencies). Specifically, they offer contrasting views of mentoring in higher education and industry from the perspective of

individuals (proteges) at the highest levels of these organizations and those whom they identified at mentors. The larger study from which they were taken focused on the following research questions related to career advancement mentoring: (a) Do individuals at the highest levels of organizations perceive they were mentored as they advanced in their care; and if they were mentored, what was the perceived effect on their career advancement? (b) Do the perceptions of individuals named as mentors match those of the to-level executives? (c) Does mentoring occur in all three organizations, does it occur in the same way, and with similar results?

The intent of the study was to examine mentoring as seen by top-level executives (primary subjects) and those they perceived as-mentors (secondary subjects) in the three different types of organizations. Fifteen primary subjects and fourteen secondary subjects participated in the study.

The cases were constructed using a descriptive methodology in which the researchers attempted to understand mentoring from the perspective of the participants involved (Brogden, 1975; Denzin, 1978; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Through in-depth interviews, subjects who held top-level positions and those they perceived to have mentored them provided an "insider" perspective on the mentoring process in which unpredicted aspects of the phenomenon emerged (Patton, 1980).

It is these "insider" perspectives which form the epistemological bases of the two case studies related to higher education presented in the paper. Findings related to mentoring in two organizations will be offered. These will be framed through an examination of the following questions and their implications for those developing career advancement mentoring relationships and/or programs.

a. How is mentoring defined?

b. What characterizes mentoring?

c. What distinguishes mentoring from non-mentoring?

d. What kinds of career assistance has been given to individuals who advanced to positions at the highest levels of organizations?

e. Do varying promotion practices among organizations have different effects on mentoring?

f. Do superordinates' philosophies about developing individuals influence the types of mentoring they provide?

Despite more than two decades of research and writing, mentoring remains an ill-defined, illusive concept of a relationship that occurs in a variety of settings, between pairs of dissimilar types of individuals, and for diverse reasons. Yet, despite a lack of clarity about mentoring, it is clear that a mentoring relationship is perceived as a positive relationship that enhances the lives of proteges.

Although unanswered questions remain about mentoring, some information is available. Clearly, the origin of the term mentor is recognized. The purposes of mentoring relationships have been identified, as have the nature and dynamics of an established mentoring relationship. Further, the frequency with which mentoring occurs in organizations is acknowledged; and the roles of a mentor have been well-documented.

The term mentor appears to have originated in Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey. In this poem, Odysseus, a leader in the Trojan War, entrusted the care of his son Telemechus to his good friend Mentor. While Odysseus was away, Mentor was to act as a surrogate father, teacher, role model, protector, advisor, guide, and counselor to the inexperienced boy (Beye, 1976).

Levinson (1978) in his book The Seasons of a Man's Life is credited with popularizing the term mentor when he wrote about his findings in the study of the lives of 40 men. From his research, he concluded that the mentoring relationship was one of the most important relationships a man could have, and that these relationships occurred as young boys moved into adulthood, and later as young men advanced from novice/apprentice to expert/authoritative adults.

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The purposes of mentoring relationships are diverse. The literature speaks about adults who appropriately guide youth toward adulthood, particularly in situations where youth are either troubled and need guidance in developing appropriate values, or where adults help young people reach their career potential. This relationship can occur between adult/child or teacher/student (Berger, Moore, and Van Voorhees, 1986; Flaherty, 1985; Gilbert, 1985). The relationship also happens between adults, where one needs the assistance in dealing with personal problems (Fagan, 1986). Or, the term mentoring can be used to describe the relationship between teacher and student in a higher education setting (Gilbert, 1984), or between a senior person and a novice in educational settings (Boser and Wiley, 1987; Daresh, 1987).

And, mentoring can be used to describe the relationship between a more experienced person and a less experienced individual (often called protege), where the goal is to develop the protege's career (Jones, 1986; Campbell, 1982; Ortiz, 1982). Finally, the mentoring relationship is one that occurs between a more experienced individual, often a senior-level executive and employees perceived to have the talent to advance (Roche, 1979).

Explanations of the nature and dynamics of a mentoring relationship grew out of the research by Levinson (1978) and Kram (1980). Levinson describes the relationship as an intense one, lasting an average of two to three years. He further reported that these relationships often ended in conflict. Kram confirmed Levinson's findings adding that there were four distinct phases of the mentoring relationship: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. During the initiation phase (usually six to twelve months), the "seeds were planted" for the entirety of the relationship. During the cultivation phase, trust, mutuality,

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and friendship emerged during a reciprocal exchange between the mentor and protege. This phase lasted until expectations changed, needs were met, or the mentor and protege were physically separated by job changes. Kram found that the value of the relationship lessened, and a redefinition emerged either into anger or disappointment, or as a distant friendship/sponsorship. The work of both Levinson and Kram have indicated that the mentoring relationship, is a close, intense, personal, and special association between two people.

The frequency of the occurrence of mentoring relationships is well-documented in business and industry and in education. In a widely recognized study of 1,250 top-level manager, Roche (1979) reported that more than two-thirds perceived they had one or more persons who assumed the role of mentor during the first five to ten years of their careers. Phillips (1977) also found in her study of 331 females managers and executives that 61 percent reported having had mentors. Studies in education also suggest that mentoring occurs just as frequently in education as in business and industry (Dickson, 1983; Kouba, 1984; Fenske, 1986). Dickson found that 53.4 percent of the administrators surveyed perceived themselves to have had mentors. Kouba found that 52 percent of college and university presidents surveyed indicated that they had had mentors. Fenske also found that over half of the female chief academic officers of colleges of nursing and deans of colleges of education were mentored.

Several researchers have also identified the many roles of mentors. Perhaps the best known of these are Kram (1980), Missirian (1980), and Phillips (1977), who have all described the roles that might be assumed by a mentor. Kram described a mentor in terms

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of two functions, career (where the mentor sponsored, coached the individual, as well as gave exposure, visibility, and protection) and psychosocial (where the mentor serves as a role model, counselor, and friend). Missirian characterized the roles as sponsor, coach, and even peer. Phillips reported the roles of mentors to be supportive bosses/partners, sponsors, invisible godparents, peer strategizers, role models, patrons, and favor-doers. However, the literature does not clearly define a single set of mentor roles. In fact, Fields (1988) analyzed 23 selected research studies and found that not a single role was identified which was accepted by all the researchers.

Many questions about mentoring remain unanswered, including: (1) What roles must a person assume for the relationship to be classified as mentoring? (2) Is a mentor different from a sponsor? (3) What criteria are used in protege selection? (4) Does mentoring occur differently for women, and with different results? (5) Does mentoring occur differently for minorities, and with different results? and (6) What effect does mentoring have on career advancement?

It is the last question which became the focus of this study. Clearly, over the last two decades much has been written to suggest that mentoring plays a critical role in determining which persons advance to the highest levels in organizations. It has been suggested that "everyone who makes it has a mentor (Collins and Scott, 1978), that nearly all routes to the executive suite require mentoring (Jennings, 1971); and that those who are mentored advance farther than those who do not receive mentoring (Queralt, 1981; and Roche, 1979).

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine mentoring at the highest levels of organizations to determine if individuals at these levels were mentored as they advanced in their careers, and the perceived effect of any mentoring they received on their career advancement. Further, the study sought to determine whether or not mentoring occurred in different organizations, with different results. To do this, top-level executives in three types of organizations (business and industry, education, and government) and individuals they identified as mentors were interviewed and their perceptions compared.

METHODOLOGY

Procedures

Mentoring as a critical element in career advancement is a relatively unexamined phenomenon. Further, the actual study of mentoring relationships in career settings from the perspective of both individuals involved remains unexplored. To understand the effects of mentoring for advancement to the highest levels of organizations and for understanding the phenomenon from the perspective of the participants involved (Brogden, 1975; Denzin, 1978; Cook and Reichardt, 1980; Patton, 1980; Spradley, 1983; Goestz and LeCompote, 1984), a descriptive study was undertaken.

In-depth interviewing was chosen as the most appropriate method of data collection. This method allowed subjects to provide the "insider" perspective of individuals as the highest levels of organizations, as well as those individuals they perceived as having affected

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their careers through mentoring. The in-depth interviewing method also allowed for unpredicted aspects of mentoring relationships to emerge.

The interview protocols were designed using a method suggested by Patton (1980) to ensure that basically the same information was gained from all subjects. This method allowed the researcher to expand or probe the subject to illuminate or elucidate related information that arose. The protocols were designed based on previous research on mentoring relationships between mentors and proteges conducted by the author (Mertz, Welch, and Henderson, 1988). The protocols were field-tested on top-level executives in one organization to determine their effectiveness in gaining the needed information.

Data Collection

Contact was made by telephone or letter to the individual holding the top-level position in each of the three organizations (business and industry, higher education, and government) to obtain their agreement to participate in the study. They were asked to help the researcher schedule interviews with those persons who were in the second-highest positions in their respective organizations.

In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 primary subjects in three organizations. They were given the following definition of a mentor to ensure that the researcher and the subject had a common understanding of the term: a mentor is a senior level person in an organization who takes a personal interest in a junior member patron and facilities that person's advancement by acting as a teacher, sponsor, role-model, or patron (Henderson, 1990). Where possible, the interviews were audio-taped. Seventeen interviews were then

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conducted with 14 secondary subjects (those named as mentors by primary subjects). The secondary subjects were also given the same definition of mentoring to ensure a common understanding of the term. In every case, each question of the protocol was asked. The interviews were transcribed and primary and secondary subjects were sent summaries of their own interviews to ensure agreement about the data received.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed according to an approach suggested by Goetz and LeCompte (1984). In the initial step in data analysis, data were repeatedly scanned and reread. And, an inductive analysis produced important observations about the data. In the second step, data were analyzed by categorizing the patterns which emerged. In the final step, the data were analyzed deductively to test theories which emerged. The theories that were supported by the deductive analysis are presented in the finding.

FINDINGS

This study yielded a number of important findings that begin to answer some of the questions about mentoring that have not been adequately addressed in the literature and research. Among those is a model which clearly defines career assistance in four levels, distinguishes mentoring from non mentoring, and career development mentoring from career advancement mentoring. The study looks at mentoring received by those at the highest levels of organizations, and compared and contrasts mentoring in the context of business and

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industry, higher education, and government. The study also begins to clarify the effect of mentoring on career advancement.

Two other findings are addressed in this paper: (1) a look at the frequency and types of mentoring relationships experienced by persons at the highest levels in business and industry and higher education, and (2) in-depth look at two intense, mentoring relationships that approximate the relationships described by Levinson and Kram. These relationship are discussed from the perspective of the protege and the mentor, and from organizational viewpoints.

Frequency and Types of Mentoring Relationships Experienced by Persons at the Highest Levels in Business and Industry and Higher Education

The findings of this study suggest that mentoring occurs frequently in business and industry, and even more frequently in higher education. In business and industry, four subjects were interviewed. Two of the four primary subjects (50%) reported having had mentors. One named six mentors and one named two mentors. The others did not feel that they had had mentors, but rather good supervisors. In higher education, four of the five primary subjects reported having had mentors. One reported six mentors, one reported four, one reported three, one reported two, and one reported not having had a mentor. **It is important to note that in both organizations, the person at the highest level was also the person with the most mentors (in both cases, the highest-ranking person named six mentors).**

Subjects receiving mentoring saw it as an important, but not critical factor in their advancement. Of those not receiving mentoring, the two in business and industry reported

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having good supervisors. One of the subjects saw his career advancement as having resulted from his willingness to learn and obtain a Ph.D. In higher education, the person reporting no mentors felt he would have had a mentor, but the person who was in the process of becoming a mentor died.

Approximately half (50 percent) of the participants experienced mentoring relationships within the first seven years of their careers. And, over three-fourths of the relationships were with direct supervisors. In every case, the mentor initiated the relationship. The relationships began as a result of the protege being hired or because of an assignment that requires mentors/proteges to work together.

In both organizations, primary subjects spoke about the things they learned from their mentors rather than experiences provided. All primary subjects in both organizations spoke about their mentors as role models indicating their eagerness to "emulate him," "watch the way he makes decisions." The mentors were also reported to have provided encouragement, orchestrated duties, and provided career counseling. Subjects in higher education spoke about their mentors as teachers of organizational politics.

In both organizations, subjects were told to "consider what's best for your career," or "You can have this job if you want it...but your talents would be wasted...even if it would double your salary." In business and industry, a primary subject was given a "money back guarantee" by his mentor that he would be re-hired should the new position (in another state) did not work out.

All subjects in business and industry who had mentors and three of four subjects in higher education spoke about the importance of being given the freedom to do their jobs

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without feat or retaliation if they failed. Primary subjects spoke of the importance of delegation. They appreciated being given freedom to run with a responsibility, but also with a level of comfort in asking for help should it be needed.

Sponsorship was a factor in higher education, but not in business. All of the primary subjects saw sponsorship as a role that was assumed by their mentor.

Critical feedback was a major factor in business and industry, but much less so in higher education. Primary subjects in business industry reported asking "how did I do" or reported that "He would tell me if I screwed up."

An-In-depth Look at Two Intense Mentoring Relationships that Approximate the Relationships Described by Levinson and Kram

Clearly, from this study, everyone who made it to the highest levels of organizations had larger numbers of mentors, and those at the very top had more mentoring experience than those at the second highest levels. However, the ideal mentoring relationship as characterized by Kram and Levinson was not a critical ingredient in making it to the highest levels. **Only one-third of the primary subjects in the study had intense, close relationships with individuals they classified as mentors, and none of those subjects held the highest positions in their organizations.** This close personal relationship did occur three times more frequently in higher education than in business and industry. Only one close, intense relationship occurred in business and industry, and three occurred in the higher education setting. In every case, the relationship was continuing at the time the research was being conducted. Two of the relationships are described in this paper.

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The only close, mentoring relationship in business and industry occurred bet een two white males; the primary subject and a senior manager were approximately ten years apart in age. In this relationship, the mentor was described as being a friend, confidante, excellent role model, and career developer. The mentor was described as a "super boss..tough..he would deal with you." The mentor saw the relationship as just part of his job, perhaps the part he enjoyed best, developing people. It is this mentor who closely monitored the kinds of experiences he provided for the primary subject, the jobs he recommended the primary subject be considered or encouraged the subject to consider. It was this mentor who gave the subject the "money back" guarantee that he would give him his old position back should the new one not work out. The primary subject's career was carefully orchestrated to ensure that he had experience in the managerial (production) as well as the financial side of the organization. The subjects continue to have contact, even though the mentor is retired. Contact is often made over breakfast, where the primary subject frequently asks for continued advice. In turn, the primary subject "repays" the mentor by using him as a paid consultant to the organization in his area of expertise.

The relationship in higher education was between two black males, and the difference in their ages was approximately 20 years. And, in this instance, the mentor, as a college president, had "inherited" financial difficulties at his institution, and he needed someone to "turn those problems around." While he did not hire the primary subject himself, he quickly became aware of the primary subject's talents and began to include the subject in more meetings and in decision making roles for the institution. The primary subject was promoted and included in the mentor's inner circle until the mentor was offered a job in a totally

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different setting. Before he left the institution, he made sure he had helped broker another position for his protege. He called friends at other colleges and universities and recommended his protege be hired. In fact, once the protege had applied for his current position, the mentor acted as a sponsor by calling the president of the institution three times to tell him he would be making a mistake if he did not hire the primary subject. The relationship was personal, as well as professional. The mentor speaks of the primary subject as a son. He is very interest in the subject's family and professional happiness. The mentor is now serving in a governmental capacity on another continent. Yet, he continues to keep in touch and act as a mentor to the primary subject. Distance has not diminished the intensity of this relationship. This mentor also viewed the relationship as part of his responsibility as a manager of people.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study underscore the confusion in the literature on mentoring and mentoring relationships. Clearly, while similarities exi between and among some mentoring associations in business/industry and higher education, there are equally important differences. Therefore, data from this and other studies can have important implications for organizations as they seek to promote talented individuals.

Currently, there is a trend in which organizations attempt, through formal programs, to create the "ideal" mentoring relationship, described in the literature. As stated earlier, in these relationships, the mentor assumes a variety of roles, including career development counseling and sponsorship (Levinson (1978), Missirian (1980), Phillips (1977) et al).

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However, this study suggests that individuals advancing to the highest levels of organizations receive assistance from a number of persons, rather than one "ideal" mentor. Indeed, the kind of close, personal mentoring association popularized in the literature was enjoyed by only **one third** of the primary subjects with those they classified as mentors. Further, **none** of these primary subjects held the highest positions in their organizations. This suggests that the close personal relationship described in the literature may not oe as critical to career advancement as first thought. Additionally, where this kind of mentoring did occur in the study, it appeared to be very dependent on the mentor's commitment to a philosophy of developing people, not necessarily developing one particular person (Mertz, Welch & Henderson, 1988). However, the study did confirm the importance of the mentor as sponsor in higher education. Interestingly enough, however, those who reported not having had a mentor were also those who assumed that they **could not** reach the highest levels of their organizations.

Role Models

In business/industry and higher education mentoring relationships, the primary subjects discussed the role modeling function performed by mentors. Specifically, this related to what the mentor taught, either directly or through example, rather than the actual experiences he/she provided.

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Career Planning

Primary subjects in both settings (business/industry and higher education), discussed the importance of career planning in the mentoring relationship. They suggested that mentors who assisted them in making career decisions had performed an important function in their development as professionals.

This finding also underscored the significance primary subjects placed on the freedom to be creative and to demonstrate initiative in the performance of job - related activities. In this study, it would appear that "effective" mentors were those who confirmed their confidence in their proteges' abilities by allowing them to complete tasks with a minimum of direction.

Critical Feedback

In much of the literature on mentoring, the importance of critical feedback to the protege's development has been cited. The primary subjects from business/industry in this study supported the importance of feedback, describing it as a major factor in their professional growth. Less prevalent was the use of critical feedback in higher education. Instead, primary subjects cited the influence of mentors in identifying the appropriate venues (i.e. conferences and journals) within which to present their work.

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Implications

Mentoring does occur in business/industry and higher education. However, this study suggests that it occurs more frequently in higher education, with sponsorship its major benefit for proteges seeking advancement.

In both business/industry and higher education, however, the **quantity** of mentors appears to be more important than the **quality** of the relationships. This argues for a re-examination of the role of the personal relationship paradigm in the study of mentoring, particularly mentoring for career advancement. This finding further suggests the need for follow-up studies to compare assistance received by persons who advanced to the highest levels of organizations and those who did not. These studies coupled with additional research across organizational contexts, can significantly enhance inquiry into the definition(s) of mentoring and the nature of mentoring relationships which remain so elusive.

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