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Mentoring: An Overview

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CONCEPTIONS OF MENTORING THEORY

Mentoring is typically thought of as a personal, long-term professional relationship that deepens over time, with a ripple effect (Varney, 2009). Mentors' industry on behalf of their protégés produces a 'multiplying investment' in people's lives and communities (Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell, 2004). From this perspective, mentoring is, metaphorically speaking, an investment in the younger generation. When viewed alternatively as a developmental relationship that is sustained and valued for humanistic reasons, the root metaphor of mentoring changes to a journey. Mentoring as a journey encompasses both or all parties – implied is the notion that learning is open-ended, creative, and uncertain, and as well as subject to unknowns. While ways of understanding relationships vary depending on epistemological outlook, belief systems, and more, the idea I wish to foster is that mentorships are developmental, intentional, and generative. From this perspective, mentors foster critically supportive, nurturing relationships that actively promote learning, socialization, and identity transformation within their work environments, organizations, and professions (Johnson, 2006; Mullen, 2011a).

Theorized to involve more than the transfer of skills within dyadic (one-to-one) relationships, mentoring theories emphasize these value-laden ideas:

- an educational process engaging individuals and groups in reciprocal learning, networking, and sponsoring (Tharp and Gallimore, 1995/1988);

- a systemic reform strategy that builds capacity in formal and informal ways to provide assistance and support socialization (Crow and Matthews, 1998);
- a social justice perspective on mentor–mentee identity transformation with respect to cultural differences (Tillman, 2001; Young and Brooks, 2008); and
- a discovery tool for investigating sociocultural elements of international and diverse contexts (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2004).

Theoretically, mentoring encompasses different phases (Kram, 1985/1988; see also Chapter 6) and functions (Rose, 2003), and it has traditional and alternative meanings. Mentoring theory is an educational idea that is inevitably changing, situated, and partial because of its contextual dependency, philosophical rootedness, and political idiosyncrasies. As captured by the worldviews postulated in *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, mentoring incorporates particular skills, values, and understandings, culturally based concepts, school contexts, adult and higher education contexts, inclusion, and research issues (see Sections 2 through 7). However, the points of view I express herein do not speak as a kind of general truth for the contributors to this text. Our mentoring experiences and backgrounds are differently situated and, as will become clear to readers, our lenses for viewing mentoring are pluralistic in that these do not amount to a single breakthrough idea or even consensual understanding of the educational process. As contexts framing this chapter, in addition to the, primarily North American, mentoring literature and chapters in this book, I have drawn upon research and experiences across public schools and universities in the United States.

Mentoring phases

Mentoring relationship phases are addressed in Chapter 6, which describes the operationalization of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition.
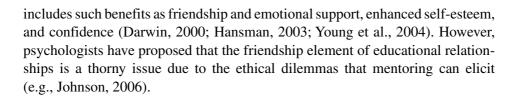
Mentoring functions

Two major functions of healthy developmental relationships are psychosocial and career. Regardless of discipline and perspective, these functions are considered pivotal to any academic mentoring relationship or program. The career function has had more prominence because of the description of 'sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging work assignments', as well as professional ethics (Johnson, 2006) that become activated when mentees network and seek employment (Young et al., 2004).

The need for mentors to contribute to the psychosocial development of their protégés has been a more gradual unfolding, with recent attention on learners who are female, culturally ethnic, and nontraditional in other ways (Mullen, 2008; Tillman, 2001; Young and Brooks, 2008). Psychosocial functions incorporate role modelling, social acceptance, and counselling; the psychosocial dimension of mentoring is enacted when mentors actively listen, provide advice, and encourage development (Nora and Crisp, 2008). Psychosocial mentoring

includes such benefits as friendship and emotional support, enhanced self-esteem, and confidence (Darwin, 2000; Hansman, 2003; Young et al., 2004). However, psychologists have proposed that the friendship element of educational relationships is a thorny issue due to the ethical dilemmas that mentoring can elicit (e.g., Johnson, 2006).

ORIGINS AND OF MENTORING THEORY AND ITS DISTINCTIVENESS

In the 1980s, Kram (1985/1988) established mentoring as a workplace model and it has since proliferated in such forms as social psychology, learning theory, adult theory, organizational development, leadership theory, and systems thinking. Mentorship historically involves training youth or adults in skills building and knowledge acquisition (Merriam, 1983), provoking the metaphor of mentoring as training. Technical mentoring involves the transfer of skills within authoritative and apprenticeship contexts whereas alternative mentoring questions hierarchical learning and favors new forms of socialization (Darwin, 2000; Hansman, 2003).

I believe that mentoring and peer coaching are often mistakenly interchanged even though some researchers have argued that they are similar because they share commonalities. Coaching, like mentoring, can be difficult to define, largely because these practices are multifaceted, ambiguous, and contextually driven (Gallucci, Van Lare, Yoon, and Boatright, 2010). Briefly, peer coaching, like mentoring, has been construed as a nonjudgmental and nonevaluative approach to professional development. While some theorists think of coaching as a type of mentoring, others see the exact reverse – that is, mentoring as a type of coaching. Coaching is informed by a unique set of principles and practices embedded within learning and instructional contexts (see Chapter 2). As another muddled entanglement, mentoring and induction concepts tend not to be distinguished, most notably at refined levels. Frequently, in fact, researchers and practitioners see mentoring (and coaching) as elements of induction theories and programs. Effective site-based induction programs are content-based initiatives in which new teachers are 'mentored' within a 'highly organized and comprehensive staff development process' (Wong, 2004: 107). However, more needs to be known on the theory and empirical levels about the role of 'instructional coaching', for example, especially given that it dovetails with a proliferation of district-wide reforms (Gallucci et al., 2010).

Mentoring is theory steeped and it is probably more developmentally based than coaching. Cornerstone tenets of mentoring are lifelong, humanistic learning, and reflection upon learning as well as social self-reflection by the engaged mentoring parties. *Humanistic mentoring*, which is integral to voluntary mentoring, focuses on 'care and nurturance' of the protégé over the duration of a long-term relationship (Varney, 2009: 128). Whether traditional or progressive, the learning relationship is sustained, although the character of it changes in

the separation and redefinition phases once the relationship has been successfully cultivated. The mentoring relationship is also intrinsically focused, with feedback geared toward deepened understandings and sensitive practices reflected within the learning process that includes uses of constructive criticism in writing and communicating. In its alternative forms, mentoring is a developmental human project that promotes identity growth, extending beyond pre-set goals, planned activity, and one-way learning. From this perspective, protégé and mentor alike are adult learners engaged in new learning, relearning, and unlearning in changing organizational contexts that demand a new view of educational and other occupational careers not as hierarchical and static but as fragmented and in flux (Allen and Eby, 2007). They benefit from reciprocal learning, activism, and agency that change how they work with others and how they interface with their organizations to model new ways of interacting, learning, leading, and policy-making (Mullen and Tuten, 2010).

TRADITIONAL MENTORING THEORY

Traditional mentoring theory encompasses skills-based, goals-oriented learning passed down through generations. Professionals tend to carry out this work one-to-one in exclusive learning arrangements. Veteran teachers and school principals, for example, mentor by nurturing, advising, befriending, and instructing, and they serve as advocates, advisors, and promoters. Accordingly, seasoned practitioners shape how novice personnel (e.g., newly qualified teachers) learn through professional development as part of a larger structure informed by school improvement and student achievement goals (Portner, 2008).

Traditional and alternative theories alike describe, to varying degrees, the principles governing the mentoring gestalt of places and people. Synergistic leadership (defined later) can be adapted to this broader framework of mentoring (see Mullen, 2011b, for a fuller discussion). Each theory is itself a philosophical framework for explaining human interaction, organizational structure, and cultural change. The alternative models identified (e.g., collaborative co-mentoring) share fundamental principles and core values that promote a view of mentoring as greater than the sum of its parts. The spectrum of traditional and alternative theories of mentoring is influential in the interpersonal arenas of learning, socialization, and professional development, as well as the organizational functions of leadership, management, and preparation. Adult learning (e.g., lifelong learning) and feminist principles underscore some of these models (Hansman, 2003; see also Chapter 24), as do systems and instrumental thinking (Lick, 1999).

Mandated mentoring theory and US government policy

Mandated mentoring is at the extreme end of the prescribed spectrum of teaching and learning where the metaphor of mentoring as mandated prevails

(Mullen, 2011c). Mentoring newly qualified teachers is a reform strategy that US state agencies are prescribing. On the one hand, newly qualified teacher mentoring is a technical, evaluative activity rather than a high-quality professional development experience. On the other hand, policy expectations for mentoring help ensure that new teachers, most importantly, receive the support and assistance they often badly need. In fact, for many teacher mentors, policy demands frame professional development and set in place top-down expectations for school relations, including the work of experienced teachers with their new colleagues (Britton, Paine, Pimm, and Raizen, 2003). When policy is prescriptive about expectations for promoting teacher retention, for example, mentors tend to focus on classroom management strategies that address emotional barriers and curriculum knowledge deficits; when concern is about achievement, mentoring is typically utilized as a means for cultivating instruction and student learning (Portner, 2008).

Given the current policy climate, mandated mentoring has been given credence (Mullen, 2011c). This oxymoronic concept is associated with possibilities because it necessitates staff development for and by public school teachers, giving professional collegial learning importance and visibility. Mentoring along these lines can help schools to satisfy requirements related to induction and certification, teacher retention and performance standards, all while assisting novice teachers in their adjustment to a school's culture. While such mentoring seemingly reflects a higher commitment to new teachers, it introduces inescapable pitfalls. One such problem is the expectation of assigned mentors and protégés to heavily document their learning activity using prescribed templates that shape the direction of the mentoring work and interfere with progress. Importantly, mandated mentoring can complement voluntary mentoring but they should not be confused. Contrasting with voluntary mentoring, then, *mandated mentoring* is an educational reform initiative that compartmentalizes in mechanistic ways the goals and outcomes of mentoring, as well as the relational work of veteran teachers and novice teachers (see Chapter 20).

Voluntary as well as mandated mentoring build the productive capacity of people and organizations, but voluntary mentoring, transpired through informal, spontaneous, as well as creative communication, can enhance the development of the whole person (Varney, 2009). Required mentoring, formalized through program initiatives, is geared toward the systemic reform goals of school improvement and student achievement. It *requires* teachers to mentor and be mentored, and protégés are expected to make documented gains that may feel impersonal and evaluative. This kind of mentoring occurs when teachers are forced to commit to a relationship that is otherwise presumed voluntary, nonevaluative, and humanistic. In constrast, *humanistic mentoring* focuses on nurturing the mentee as a whole person within voluntary relationships (Varney, 2009: 128).

While the heightened expectations that accompany mandated mentoring could enhance veteran teachers' performance and improve organizational efforts, the voluntary spirit and integrity of mentoring can be jeopardized. To what extent

voluntary mentoring relationships can be successfully formalized (in reality, regulated) depends on many variables. The personal connection between mentors and mentees is not replicable, and, moreover, organizations typically treat mentoring as an 'add-on' responsibility. This approach contradicts the sustainability goals of a mandated mentoring agenda.

The purposes and uses of mentoring have greatly shifted in the current policy context. Mandated mentoring and voluntary mentoring each have merits and valuable goals and, where thoughtfully facilitated, can even be implemented simultaneously. Conceptions of mentoring as a voluntary professional service have changed since American legislators launched accountability requirements for the supervision of new public school teachers. Policy initiatives focus on teacher induction as a primary solution to teacher attrition and quality deficits, citing the responsibility of veteran teachers in assisting newly qualified teachers to adapt to student diversity and other school climate issues (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Portner, 2008). Since the 1980s, policies have spearheaded mentoring goals aimed at closing the achievement gaps of ethnic and socioeconomic *student groups* and making equitable resource distribution for low-performing schools (Luebchow, 2009).

Because intentional mentoring can positively affect retention and satisfaction with the profession, it is being harnessed as a resource to help meet state accountability goals. Governmental reform policies require mentoring programs for satisfying such goals through pay for performance and other compensatory incentives. However, the master teacher is not envisioned as someone who understands complexities of learning and who inspires growth in novice teachers (Wong, 2004); rather, some state governments cast the role of mentor as an instructional technician with specific credentials for fulfilling coaching and evaluative functions. *Mentor* is, to the states, a public school expert who has 'demonstrated mastery of the critical competencies for a job role' and the protégé is someone who possesses the required certifications and who is assisted by the expert to develop 'mastery of specific educational competencies' (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2009: para. 28).

State directives for public school systems require master teachers to successfully mentor new inductees, teach low-performing students, and when feasible move to high-needs schools to provide critical support. Congress has set the bar, mandating that districts redistribute teachers and increase the salaries of those teaching in disadvantaged schools. Master teachers who are National Board certified are urged to instruct in high-need schools, with carrot-like incentives ranging from salary increases to better working conditions (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [NBPTS], 2009).

The adaptation of mentoring as a mandated policy mechanism can turn mentoring into a mere achievement measure for schools for purposes related only to school improvement, accreditation, and testing. Changes in laws have established the role of systems thinking for schools and 'outside–in' accountability for student achievement goals. Mentoring is infused with leading,

teaching, and supervising, and notably teacher evaluation (Mullen, 2005). Note the trend in this direction over time: the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) endorsed a view of classroom teachers as change agents and mentors supporting student achievement. The Carnegie Report led to the establishment of the NBPTS, which has infused mentoring expectations into the National Board process. National Board certified teachers are thus required to use their expertise in mentoring other teachers to become accomplished educators.

Former US President George Bush's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 brought issues of mentoring – specifically professional development and collaboration among administrators, teachers, and parents – squarely into line with standardized testing and stronger accountability (US Department of Education, 2002). This program requires a highly qualified teacher in every classroom across America. Implying a direct correlation between student test scores and teaching quality, measures of teacher effectiveness and high-stakes testing have since flourished. The accountability context deflates opportunities for teacher growth and meaningful learning. Teacher mentors are expected to fulfill previously supervisory functions and are charged with such bureaucratic mandates as standardizing the curriculum and controlling teacher behavior within high-pressure testing environments. Rewards and sanctions are linked to student scores, school grade, and reputation.

Because mentoring summons notions of civic virtue and goodness, it is useful as a political tool. Rhetorically exploited, mentoring concepts (e.g., 'mentor teacher') have been co-opted and aligned with national standards. As one effect, policymaking has advanced technical mentoring in a contemporary guise; goals and processes of management have been resurrected as a source of empowerment. Within education, technical mentoring systems and processes have magnetic appeal, making it easier for mentoring to be mandated, not just formalized.

Mentoring sometimes has to be formalized, even mandated, or it simply will not occur. As documented, voluntary mentoring involves greater commitment and risk because the promised assistance does not always occur (Blake-Beard, 2001) and formal mentoring has yielded numerous benefits that include support for new professionals (Mullen, 2008). Thus, school teams formalize mentoring at the building level through programs, learning communities, and other avenues, in effect collaboratively deciding upon their performance expectations of veteran and novice staff members. Because some research has established that mentors and mentees prefer that mentoring processes be as informal (hence 'natural') as possible (Noe, 1988), leaders have been encouraged to build mentoring programs alongside those who will inherit them. While pitfalls can occur with both types of mentoring – required and voluntary – each has also been effectively fostered as well as combined.

Mandatory mentoring takes formal mentoring to another level, though, in that it is required by governmental policy. Because it is in an early stage of evolution,

it remains to be seen whether mandated mentoring is a viable solution to teacher attrition, low student achievement, and negative school culture. What we do know is that mentoring in effective voluntary-required configurations can compensate for situations bereft of teacher bonding and collegiality, and replete with low morale and satisfaction (Varney, 2009).

No schoolwide mentoring process is free of concerns, regardless of the type(s) of mentoring that is adopted. Human dynamics complicate mentoring situations, rendering them unpredictable, and so any mentoring process will have blemishes. As Fullan (1999: 3) cautioned, dynamics can be 'designed and stimulated in the right direction but can never be controlled'. School teams that use mentoring theory to make educational policy potent for their context might find it particularly useful to experiment by creatively combining mandated mentoring elements and voluntary mentoring elements to tap into the benefits of each. By doing so, they may benefit from new networks that renew their learning community.

ALTERNATIVE MENTORING THEORIES AND PRACTICES

Alternative mentoring theory expands upon and even resists traditional mentoring theory, which is the underlying worldview of systems and policies that treat mentoring as a commodity to be traded and exchanged within a market economy (e.g., schools). While alternative mentoring theories in their plurality are budding in the educational literature, traditional mentoring theories remain dominant in the discourse. Mentoring change theorist Darwin (2000) argues that awareness of alternative mentoring is important for redressing this imbalance and transforming educational cultures. Alternative mentoring theories include collaborative mentoring (co-mentoring), mosaic mentoring, multiple-level co-mentoring, and synergistic leadership. To the contrary, technical (or functionalist) mentoring exemplifies traditional mentoring theory, assuming pervasive forms, such as apprenticeships, that perpetuate closed systems. Alternative and traditional mentoring concepts are ideologically disparate but overlap in theory and practice.

The historical and originating antecedents of mentoring have set the stage for the countercultural thrust of alternative conceptions. Alternative mentoring theorists critique traditional mentoring relationships and systems as developmentally limited and exclusive of diverse populations. Traditional mentoring theories are construed as having an underlying masculinist perspective that noncritically assumes the mentoring birthright of an entrenched power class (e.g., White males); normative ideologies perpetuate moral authority in areas that govern sexuality, religion, and citizenship. As a means of enabling social and intellectual capital along these lines, traditional mentoring sustains a biased class structure, facilitating only the psychosocial and career benefits of mentoring for

some groups by some groups (Darwin, 2000). Critics have exposed paternalism, dependency, privilege, and exclusion in mentoring contexts. Alternative theories present a breakaway mindset from defunct hierarchical systems, disempowering relationships, and exploitative arrangements.

Democratic theorists wrestle with new worldviews that celebrate radical humanist conceptions of relationships and systems. These epistemologies underscore (1) collaborative and cross-cultural learning partnerships that are egalitarian and less role-defined, and (2) transformed learning organizations that model interdependence, inclusiveness, and openness (Hansman, 2003; Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2004).

Unlike functionalist mentoring approaches, alternative mentoring awakens theories and practices of empowerment that are critical about and mindful of uses and abuses of power, and that are steeped in nonauthoritative dynamics, progressive learning, and open solutions. Organizing principles are used to foster holistic development, cultural engagement, and institutional change. Mentoring as an equalizing force requires a commitment to ethical agendas involving power, virtue, and circumstance (Hansman, 2003). Intentional mentoring promotes critical care and fosters satisfying but challenging learning environments (Galbraith, 2003). While an ethic of care is associated with interdependence and interpersonal nurturance in educational relationships, 'critical care' is activist oriented, and dedicated to fostering diverse social spaces of learning (Antrop-González and De Jesús, 2006). Alternative learning contexts span mentoring networks, formal mentoring programs, professional learning communities, coalitions, alliances, cross-cultural mentoring, inquiry/writing groups, peer coaching, professional and political activism, staff development, and e-mentoring and virtual learning (Mullen, 2005). Through such conduits, mentors remedy archaic notions of education, support quality in student learning, mobilize underrepresented groups, transform closed systems, and problem solve within organizations that they are aiming to change.

Ideologies of alternative mentoring are value laden, promoting the values of collaboration, co-mentorship, democratic learning, humanistic mentoring, and shared leadership. Democratic learning can be formal or informal, with the team helping all members develop the desired knowledge and/or skills. Members participate in the democratization of learning through team building, setting such goals as identifying and resolving conflict. Teams and leaders facilitate shared leadership and collaborative decision making in ways that function democratically or autocratically (Mullen, 2005).

Institutional leaders who mentor in nontraditional ways strive to make a difference and concurrently learn from others (e.g., co-mentorship). They mentor beyond the demands of their position, seeking to educate mentees outside the supervisory or advisory context. In fact, psychologists describe mentorship as a superordinate function 'above and beyond' teaching and instruction. Alternative mentors take risks, experiment with ideas, exert influence, and confront adverse

forces within workplaces and society. Mentors who are transparent provide feedback and elicit it, and seek understanding of the influence of their ideas on others while actively improving themselves. Moreover, the social justice advocates among them confront barriers that constrict access or learning for disenfranchised groups (Darwin, 2000), and they integrate a diversity of ideas and people in their mentoring and leadership (Irby, Brown, Duffy, and Trautman, 2002; Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2004).

Collaborative mentoring theory

Also known as *relationship co-mentoring*, collaborative mentoring is a proactive force that unites individuals or groups in a reciprocal, developmental relationship situated within a dynamic context for learning. This theory is founded upon feminist postmodern values that, when effectively operationalized, bring women and minorities into educational networks (Bona, Rinehart, and Volbrecht, 1995). A goal is to mobilize social equality among individuals of various statuses and ability levels, enabling productive synergy and solidarity (Kochan and Trimble, 2000; Mullen and Tuten, 2010).

Collaborative mentoring is key to the viability of think tanks, such as mentoring mosaics and cross-cultural mentorships in which vision, commitment, discipline, and synergy all play a role (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2002). Co-mentoring theory is also evident within dyadic mentoring relationships, engaging adult learners through power sharing, turn taking, co-leading, dialogue, constructive feedback, collegiality, transparency, and authentic learning. When learning is reciprocal, mentors and mentees function as adult educators and learners (Galbraith, 2003). More powerfully, as partners in learning they overcome cognitive distancing, shedding the power-laden stigma of 'mentor' and 'mentee' (Mullen, 2005). Because co-mentors have deep personal and professional influence, their microcosmic actions can change their institutional cultures for the better.

Mentoring mosaic theory

A significant alternative conception of mentoring is Kram's (1985/1988) 'relationship constellation,' also known as mentoring mosaic (Tharp and Gallimore, 1995/1988). Even though network mentoring was articulated more than 25 years ago, it is only more recently affecting educational studies. The mentoring mosaic theory posits that members' shared interests and respective strengths activate peer interaction. Members who are primary mentors (e.g., recognized instructional leaders) and secondary mentors interchange roles as mentors and mentees, sponsoring the learning of all through a synergistic, flexible structure. This network is indispensable for cultivating peer mentors, compensating for the dissatisfactions of traditional mentoring and facilitating team projects

(Mullen, 2005). Indeed, if mentoring is defined more as communal learning than individualistic activity, then teams that extend to professional (and virtual) learning communities engage in nurturing, advising, befriending, and instructing. Within such energizing networks, distinctions between 'mentor' and 'mentee' blur as subject specialists, counselors, protectors, advocates, and more emerge. The camaraderie, interdependence, identity development, and ownership that this model supports underscore the value of how learning and mastery are achieved (process), not just what is learned (product) (Galbraith, 2003).

Multiple-level co-mentoring theory

Multiple-level co-mentoring theory underscores facilitating co-mentoring at various levels of an organization via school-based focus teams, study groups, and leadership (Lick, 1999). Serious research and inquiry aimed at reform initiates a mentoring process that is not limited to classrooms or certain groups. Social cultural systems must be deliberately reinvented and teacher resistance confronted through self-directed, authentic engagement.

Collaborative mentoring is essential to a climate of interdependence, commitment, and empowerment, as well as participative leadership. Principals, teachers, and staff decide what changes are necessary, and they spearhead and monitor them. Systems thinking, change management, instrumental methods, and co-mentoring techniques are all embedded functions. Entire systems are the target of change and outsiders (e.g., school boards) may sponsor or initiate the reforms. Stakeholder buy-in and planned transitions accentuate ownership of the change process. Design scripts adapted from change management theorists (e.g., Peter Senge) guide this mentoring theory's implementation.

Synergistic leadership theory

Synergistic leadership theory, while not identified as a mentoring theory typology per se, can be interpreted as such – it offers a holistic alternative to traditional mentoring. This theory is framed around feminist, postmodern interpretations of public schooling and administrator preparation. Male-based theories often do not accommodate 'feminine' values and approaches, such as collaborative relationships and diversity (Ardovini, Trautman, Brown, and Irby, 2010). The changing reality is that most individuals in university-based leadership preparation programs are female (and increasingly culturally diverse). Synergistic leadership theory promotes the integration of four factors: 'leadership behavior, organizational structure, external forces, and attitudes, beliefs, and values' (Irby et al., 2002: 312). Arguably, synergistic leadership enhances collaborative and multiple-level mentoring through an overarching but situated view of 'the feminist organization' in which leadership, decision making, and power are shared experiences for all cultures.

CRITIQUES OF MENTORING THEORIES

Alternative mentoring theories do not simply present mentoring in an entirely new form. In fact, some are predicated upon technical approaches to mentoring, such as the apprenticeship model, while mandated mentoring models influence others. Postmodernist theory gives space to co-existences and continuities in educational discourse, as well as contradictions that 'force' creativity in learning, teaching, and leading (English, 2003; Irby et al., 2002). This is not to imply that assumptions guiding administrative management and leadership theories, including mentoring theories, should fester undetected. Given that co-mentoring theory was birthed as a feminist critique of traditional mentoring, it is a catalyst for changing traditional practices, hierarchical systems, and homogeneous cultures (Bona et al., 1995). For example, while the conception of mentor as above and separate from follower is outdated, it has a foothold in modern-day notions of mentor expertise and apprenticeship.

Political ideologies inform most alternative mentoring theories. As postmodern feminists have argued, because career advancement is a protected 'investment', mentors 'represent dominant cultural values' (Hansman, 2003: 103). Hence, intentional and reflective alternative mentors seek to diversify school systems by critically analyzing the replication of organizational values and generating creative solutions that open up access, expand learning options, and generate new knowledge. In contrast, mentors guided by 'technical rationality' act in ways commensurate with knowledge founded upon untested faith and inherited norms (English, 2003). From a postmodern perspective, multiple-level mentoring reforms resemble a management makeover for schools dependent upon overloaded personnel. While envisioned democratically as change agents, practitioners can be subjected to doing even more labor without compensation. A school's transformation can occur, then, at a serious cost to an organization's wellbeing. Alternative theorists are not ideological purists but rather borrowers of different frameworks. As another example, collaborative mentors who initiate the apprenticeship of nontraditional individuals enact a double helix of shared power and systems thinking. Perhaps mentoring today is less about co-mentoring than a kind of process model for enacting collaborative (and systems) concepts (Cannon, 2003).

Technical mentoring perpetuates a 'foundational epistemology' (English, 2003) that circumvents 'why' and 'what if' questions, sociocultural and political influences, and the regulatory control inherent in it (Mullen, 2005). While ideologically restrictive, technical mentoring is useful for support within practical apprenticeships and skills-building contexts. Human interaction, positive engagement, and fair treatment can be upheld in this context. Hence, one should not assume that technical mentoring has no educational value or that it cannot coincide with robust forms of mentoring. On the other hand, critics (e.g., Darwin, 2000; Freire, 1997; Hansman, 2003) believe that the power and authority, and the efficiency and competitive values implicit in technical mentoring, undermine the

capacity for democratic mentoring at human and organizational levels, and so should not be tolerated.

POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF MENTORING THEORY

On the education policy front, mandatory mentoring is an oxymoron signaling a hidden curriculum where teachers are *required* to mentor and make documented gains (Mullen, 2005). While the mentoring of new practitioners is vital to their success, the US, the UK, and some other countries are increasingly mandating some version of school-based and district-wide mentoring (Mullen, 2011c; see also Chapter 20). Such trends are most likely an outgrowth of evidence-based educational policy that set expectations for teaching practice that bypass complex social roles and particular contexts with instrumental goals that turn the education profession into a metric-driven 'technological enterprise' (Biesta, 2007). Consequently, new teacher mentoring resembles more of a technical, evaluative activity than a process for fostering professional collaboration.

This is not to say that evidence-based practice cannot be successfully tailored to educational contexts – new mentoring as well as coaching interventions and applications can be designed to have a positive effect (see Chapter 26). Perhaps this is one reason why prescribed mentoring in public schools at the individual and collective teacher level has seemingly had mixed reactions, with some teachers receptive or noncritical and others citing unresolved tensions and barriers to change (Hutinger and Mullen, 2007). From a critical theory perspective, schools are objects of change-based mentoring that strips away the voluntary nature of this act. Governmental authorities want to reduce teacher attrition; this is not an issue *per se.* Rather, wholesale, top-down accountability expectations may be confounding the very integrity associated with mentoring. To what extent mentoring relationships, which are personal, contextual, and cultural in nature, can be formalized (in reality, regulated and codified) depends on many variables that are confounded by dynamics involving uniqueness at the individual and contextual level. Hence, mentoring practice does not always reach its ideals – moreover, organizations typically treat it as an 'add-on' responsibility rather than a professional calling for which educators should be recognized.

Arguably, then, the adaptation of mentoring as a policy mechanism has rendered this educational learning process an accountability-driven achievement measure for schools. Changes in US law have mechanized mentoring across the platforms of leading, teaching, and supervising, and especially teacher evaluation. Because mentoring summons notions of civic virtue and goodness, it is useful as a political tool. Rhetorically exploited, mentoring concepts related to professional learning and lifelong growth for teachers (e.g., 'instructional

mentorship') are part of the national leadership standards. As one effect, policies advance technical forms of mentoring in a contemporary guise as best practice. Goals of management (e.g., 'accountability safeguards') have been resurrected as a source of empowerment (e.g., 'cross-cultural mentoring'). Within education, technical mentoring processes and systems are in wide use; these need to be interrogated and modernized.

Studies of mentoring in an international context that more fully attend to diversity and cultural issues are vital. These initiate new understandings of non-American cultures, disenfranchised populations, aboriginal cultures, and feminine leadership. For example, Schlosberg, Irby, Brown, and Yang (2010) investigated a private school in an impoverished part of Mexico whose leaders were committed to serving at-risk students. Results underscored the importance of leaders developing a balanced leadership style as they facilitate change in difficult circumstances. MacCallum and Beltman's (2003) study of aboriginal youth culture in Australia produced insight into the cultural integration of mentoring partners in linguistically enriched mentoring programs. Research that has a global education orientation, albeit resembling a roughly fitted cobbled walkway at this time, makes possible knowledge discovery of cultural contexts and commonalties and differences across them (Kochan and Pascarelli, 2004). This body of research is at an early but promising stage of development, as can be seen from chapters in this book that are informed by and situated within various educational and cultural contexts across countries (e.g., Chapters 12, 20, 21, and 26). Publishing trends suggest that we will see much more study of education on an international scale whilst innovations in mentoring will keep springing up faster than research can keep pace.

PARTING WORDS

Journeying forward as an international research community with this book as one of many touchstones, we are each called upon to tap into our dreams of a better world that are implicit in our productive critiques. Mentoring as a higher calling incites imaginative and democratic civic participation in the global arena for which mentor-activists hold responsibility and stewardship to their constituents.

As educators grapple with mentoring theory, innovate using its desirable tenets, and report outcomes, they may see growth that is more desirable and dynamic. Practitioners can benefit from translating educational ideas in their daily practice through intentional, multifaceted mentoring interventions. Mentoring that is centered in shared principles and practices that are internally generated create the conditions not only for innovation to be possible but also for a desirable education. Mentoring that stimulates democratic civic participation builds capacity beyond the microcosmic, grassroots level to form bridges that bring together different peoples, places, and countries.

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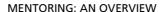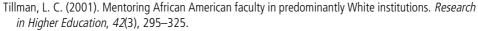
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