Mentoring as professional development

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Abstract:

This issue of the Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning Journal includes research from scholars representing Australia, Canada, and the United States (Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, and North Carolina). The authors present research on teachers, university faculty members, and executives as mentors.

Keywords: Education | Mentoring | Professional Development

Article:

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In this editorial, I focus mentoring as professional development. Such professional development can be observed in schools, universities, and companies. At the very least (and I say at most), mentoring can become an important part of professional development programs. Mentoring as professional development, in my experience with having directed such programs, though virtually, across the state of Texas provides a way to ensure that human capacity is built in schools or companies among their employees and that programs are improved (see *Mentoring & Tutoring* Journal Editor's Overview: Virtual Mentoring, Volume 23, Issue 3 for more information). Our research team (Irby, Tong, & Lara-Alecio) has found via our research that mentoring as professional development in schools can do the following: (a) retain teachers in the programs/schools, (b) improve productivity and performance of the teachers, (c) increase commitment to and comfort with the program, and (d) effectively integrate new teachers into a program. We have also determined that use of mentors can help with inducting teachers into working within a new program. Mentors can be paid mentors by the organizations, or they can be co-teachers or instructional specialists. Usually, these mentors will be ones with experience with the program area and those who can offer support and guidance. In the case of the virtual mentoring as professional development, our research team has found that the mentors build the

skills of the teachers who are better able to reflect on their own practice. Also the mentors are not judgmental or critical; rather, they develop relationships that create a trusting environment for instructional improvement. Following are ways that other researchers have found mentors working in developing others professionally.

Richmond, Dershimer, Ferreira, Maylone, and Kubitskey, in their article *Developing and Sustaining an Educative Mentoring Model of STEM Teacher Professional Development through Collaborative Partnership*, presented details of a partnership to provide ongoing support for teachers serving as mentors for individuals preparing for careers in high-poverty schools. This endeavor included educative mentoring professional learning community component, utilized as a professional development (PD) model for these mentors. The authors express that when faculty, mentors, and interns engage deeply in professional learning communities to explore common challenges and experiences, they develop trust, professional friendship, and community. As they develop a positive co-dependence of professional support, the mentee teachers prove their capacity to enact reform-based teaching practices as effective teachers.

In her article, *Exploring the Dyad: The Relationship Establishment between a Novice Physical Education Teacher and His Mentor,* Gordon posits that the attrition of physical education teachers can be combated by induction programs that have a strong emphasis on mentoring. Gordon describes the working relationship (e.g. improving job related skills) and personal relationship (i.e. outside of the school walls) developed in this dyad. She suggests that effective relationship building between mentor and mentee will assist with the retention and preparation of novice teachers in all fields and that the mentoring process should benefit both parties.

In the next article, *Mentoring Triad: An Alternative Mentoring Model for Preservice Teacher Education?*, Ambrosetti, Dekkers, and Knight speak and report about pre-service teachers' experiences in Australia as using an alternative, holistic mentoring model that placed two pre-service teachers with one classroom teacher. This mentoring triad breaks from the traditional dyadic model used in Australia to extend the scope of mentor support to pre-service teachers. Participants from this study discussed how the triad model should be structured during the pre-service teachers' final year, as the mentor's role as mentor changes to a needs-based model.

In their article*, Nursing Student Peer Mentorship: A Review of the Literature*, Rohatinsky, Harding, and Carriere wrote about the benefits of peer student mentorship programs in nursing education in this review and synthesis of 20 articles. Peer mentorships showed to foster the development of skills that are transferable to students' academic studies and future careers. Emerging themes include the development of students' skills in the areas of (a) clinical (psychomotor and professional nursing skills), (b) laboratory (psychomotor skills), (c) socialization (to the post-secondary education system), and (d) academia (study skills to enhance academic success).

Kroll advances that effective mentorship hinges upon the personal characteristics of the mentoring collaborators. In this paper, *Requisite Participant Characteristics for Effective Peer Group Mentoring*, he explored requisite participant characteristics of one dozen executive-level professional women. He shows that the characteristics of (a) intrinsic interest; (b) a learning

disposition; (c) commitment to the mentoring experience; (d) comfortability with vulnerability and having the courage to share struggles; and (e) an inherent desire to support others in their learning, growth, and development are essential characteristics for mentors to possess.

In the final article of this edition, *Women Mentoring in the Academe: A Faculty Cross-racial and Cross-cultural Experience*, Guramatunhu-Mudiwa and Angel examined the informal mentoring relationship of two women faculty members, one White from southeastern US and one Black African from Zimbabwe. Their goal was to illuminate the complexities associated with their affirmative cross-racial, cross-cultural experience in which a deep appreciation for the importance of engaged dialog is put forth. Themes of trust, care, and power dynamics emerge in as factors in defining productive mentoring relationships.

Publishing in *Mentoring & Tutoring*

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Books to be reviewed must be about mentoring and tutoring. Visit this journal's website, http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/13611267.html, for more information about *M&T*, as well as special rates and discounts.

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