Mentoring

Working and Novice ASL/English Interpreters

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research conducted and presented in this thesis is to explore mentoring programs for ASL/English Interpreters, with a focus on the question “Is a Peer Mentoring Program a successful approach to mentoring working and novice interpreter?” The method of qualitative data collection was done via questionnaires and interviews with past participants of a Peer Mentoring Program and questionnaires to identified persons who have experience creating and running mentoring programs. The results of the data collection show that a Peer Mentoring Program is a successful approach to mentoring working and novice interpreters. This research provides valued information in regard to the experience of persons in a Peer Mentoring Program as well as successful aspects of such a mentoring approach.

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Much has been written and discussed in various professions as it relates to professional opportunities that serve from the time of program or training completion to obtaining credentials. Physicians, for example, are required to fulfill a post-graduate residency, working under the supervision of fully licensed physicians, followed by a fellowship, for the purpose of hands on experience and exploring specialty focused medicine. Another example of a professionally established mentoring program is electricians. Electricians work as an apprentice under a licensed electrician for the purpose of hands on experience.

The field of American Sign Language (ASL)/English Interpreting faces the challenge of being both a practice profession and a technical profession, much like the medical and electrical field. While in an interpreter education program, students learn the technical aspects of the field, which includes language and interpreting. Upon graduation, these same students are then limited to the venues in which they can work because they are not yet credentialed. Unlike the medical and electrical fields, the field of ASL/English interpreting has yet to establish a required residency, apprenticeship or mentoring program post graduation and credentialed work. Due to the fact that the field of interpreting is an emerging field, becoming a profession within the last 50 years, minimal research has been conducted within the field of interpreting and even less has been focused on mentoring. Recent research has focused on the

guiding principles for those who create mentoring programs to ensure success.

Within recent years, the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Center (NCIEC) has established a mentoring initiative that was able to identify current, best and effective practices for mentoring. With this initiative as the guiding principle for current and future mentoring programs, research is needed to evaluate the successes and failures of mentoring programs across the United States. The research reported in this thesis explores and presents, in addition to the outcomes of the Peer Mentoring Program from the participant's perspectives, insights from those who have experience creating and running a mentoring program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ASL/ENGLISH INTERPRETING: A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1964 a workshop was held to discuss the improvement and quality of education to interpreters, ultimately for the purpose of advancing the services for deaf people across the United States. A direct result of this workshop was the establishment of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc., (RID). As a member run organization, the RID's function is to support its members by providing structure of educational, standards and resources while focusing on improved services for deaf people.

THE NATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INTERPRETING EDUCATION CENTERS

(NCIEC). Found on http://www.interpretereducation.org/about-the-consortium/, on March 18, 2012, The NCIEC is explained a consortium of Interpreter Education Centers that strive to provide resources for interpreter education programs and educational opportunities for interpreters. Further initiatives include consumer self advocacy education and interpreter recruitment. Found on the same website, the NCIEC's mission is "to connect and collaborate with diverse stakeholders to create excellence in interpreting. The NCIEC works to increase the number of qualified interpreters and advance the field of interpreting education and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, RSA CFDA #84.160A and B. The NCIEC received funding and started its work in 2005.

THE CENTER FOR TEACHING INTERPRETING EDUCATORS AND MENTORS

(TIEM). One of TIEM's projects, called Project TIEM.Online, ran during the years 2000-2005. Project TIEM.Online was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, RSA #84.160C. Housed first out of the University of Colorado, Project TIEM.Online moved to Northeastern University for the remainder of its cycle (2003-2005). Found on its website, http://www.tiemcenter.org on March 18, 2012, Project TIEM.Online reports

working on various projects including the Master Mentor Certificate Program (MMCP)_during the years 2001-2005.

THE MASTER MENTOR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

(MMCP). The MMCP was a graduate certificate housed within Northeastern University's, Boston Massachusetts, School of Professional and Continuing Studies. Pre-requisites for applicants to the MMCP include a BA/BS degree and 5 years of working interpreting experience. The MMCP was able to serve persons across the Unites States as it was an online-based program. A requirement for completing the certificate program, students are responsible for creating a mentoring program.

Retrieved January 2010 from the website http://www.asl.neu.edu/masters/interpreter_education/, the MMCP identifies mentors as "specialized educators who know how to guide adult learners in a process of professional self-discovery". Through the partnership of placing interpreters with mentors they are able to focus on individually focused needs, i.e. skill development. The MMCP believes that successful mentoring experiences allow the student to "learn how to learn" and learn "how to assess their own skills levels and hot to set specific targets for themselves that are directly related to the enhancement of their work lives".

Further information, found on the same website, about the MMCP states:

- Built around the concept of learning as discovery
- Pedagogy that requires students to take on the risky process of self-challenge and personal investment in skill development
- Pedagogy that includes the current understanding of the processes and functions of mentoring
- MMCP takes a "learn-by-doing" approach. Through the experience of self-development, future mentors learn to guide the growth process in others.

Note: The MMCP is no longer offered as a program at Northeastern University.

THE PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

(PMP). The PMP is a program that originated due to the creators participation in the MMCP. It was learned, in personal communication, that Wendy Watson, after having completed the MMCP in 2004, has completed 13 iterations of her Peer Mentoring Program, as of Spring 2010. Watson's program supports, teaches and promotes development of a "Community of Learning" and professional development.

To date, the PMP has been hosted in Massachusetts, New York, Arizona and Puerto Rico. The first cycle included eight participants. The average iteration currently includes approximately ten participants. During

specific iterations, the program has received sponsorship for leadership training and material development[1].

One of the changes Watson reported making to the program, due to participant feedback, include the addition of ”training of facilitators” track. When asked why she thought participants take part in the PMP, Watson reported various reasons including: the opportunity to network, the opportunity to openly process their work with other professionals, the fostering of in depth relationships due to weekly pairings as well as the shared experience that the group creates allows for a strong community of leaders. Watson further described, through personal communication the program as:

- Flexible enough (in structure) to allow for support in a wide variety
- Ever changing
- Goal setting and foci for professional development

Watson also explained “ongoing support and energy of past participants has kept the program running,” and added that “in most cycles, at least 1/3 of the participants have been repeaters. In addition, some participants have taken on making peer-mentoring opportunities in their areas.”

Watson stated that a few cycles had insufficient registrations thus the program could not run. She reported that when the program is run

[1] The Regional Interpreter Education Project at Northeastern University and the Boston University Center for Interpreter Education provided sponsorship.

locally (in Massachusetts) it can run successfully with only fees paid for registration, by participants. Conversely, when the program is run outside of the local area additional costs are incurred such as travel expenses. The additional costs require sponsorships from companies and organizations. Watson noted that sponsorship has been harder to find during recent years and credited the state of the economy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

MENTORING REPORT ON FOCUS GROUP (2007)

In 2007, The NCIEC conducted focus group discussions to gather information with the goal of identifying effective practices in mentoring. The focus groups included not only mentors and mentees but also persons who run mentoring programs. Various factors were identified as challenges for mentoring programs. Two of those factors that this thesis will focus on include:

- Sustainability and fees of mentoring programs
- Identification of mentors and mentor program requirements

Sustainability and fees of mentoring programs. The results of the 2007 survey completed by the NCIEC noted that the keys to sustainability included funding, commitment, training of mentors, and structure. Funding emphasized the need for operating funds collected through donations, grants, volunteer time, fundraising activities, and fees paid by mentees for their participation.

Inquiries about fees charged by programs ranged from programs charging no fee to the mentee, to programs asking for volunteer mentors, to fees paid by the mentee and/or supplemental funding from outside resources. Of note is the recognition that "people paying for mentoring may demonstrate more commitment to the mentoring work." (Gordon, 2007, p. 34).

Identification of mentors and mentor training requirements. Focus group participants reported that the mentors identified were previous mentees. A rare instance identified requirements for mentors. Most participants in the focus group reported the need for mentors to have structured training and supervision but also cautioned that standards not be exclusionary.

Training and skills identified as necessary for mentors include the ability to support, guide and collaborate. Specific skills include knowledge in content area and mentoring pedagogy. Results from the survey completed in 2007 and published by the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (Gordon, 2007) of mentors and mentees identified the following mentor qualifications to be the most important:

- Certification: an overwhelming majority of mentors indicated that holding professional certification in interpreting is fundamental to becoming a mentor.
- Availability: mentees most often chose to work with mentors who gave time and attention to the mentorship.
- Ability to provide support: mentors who were the most sought out were those known to be nurturing and supportive.
- Patience and respect: mentors who are known to be patient and

respectful are among those sought out most often by mentees.

- Training: 89% of respondents felt training was essential in becoming a mentor. Mentors who received formal mentor training left feeling well prepared and confident to work with others in mentorship. Training programs offering the widest range of mentoring tools and longest duration were seen as the most valuable.
- Experience: practice working in the interpreting profession and familiarity with an assortment of settings and specializations help prepare the mentor to respond to many of the issues that confront the mentee.
- Specialty Skills: mentors should be trained to deliver both language-specific and interpretation-specific mentoring services. Mentors that were known to be skilled in a specialty area were often sought out to help mentees in those same specialty areas.
- Mentoring tools: people seek mentorship for myriad reasons and come with an array of learning styles, needs, and experiences. Therefore, the mentor needs to have a broad understanding and an extensive collection of skills and abilities, or mentoring tools, to be successful.

MENTORING PROGRAMS, TIME FOR CHANGE?

Mentoring programs for working interpreters has employed the traditional approach, defined as an older more experienced person teaching a younger less experienced person. Gordon and Magler (2007) outlined the mentoring process for interpreters. The outline starts with the hiring of a mentor, the beginning of the relationship, and works its way through the determination of needs, assessment, and a final evaluation. According to such a program, upon completion of the designated time or successful accomplishment of the determined goal, the mentoring relationship ends. Additionally, retrieved January 2009 from http://www.tiemcenter.org/projects_mmcp.html, TIEM identifies mentors as

experienced interpreters who work with recent graduates and/or less experienced interpreters. Further, TIEM identifies the goal of the relationship between the mentor and mentee as assisting the less experienced interpreter to transition from their undergraduate education to work. The mentor expects to teach and the mentee/protégé expects to learn.

One can assert that professionals in the field of interpreting, the culture of the field of interpreting, values age and experience as wisdom. This assertion is based on the approach to mentoring. William Perry addressed the epistemological growth of students via an intellectual and ethical journey through four categories of movement. On the website, retrieved March 7, 2012, http://www.cse.buffalo.edu/~rapaport/perry.positions.html, Perry's categories of movement are listed as:

- (1) Dualism/Received Knowledge
  - There are right/wrong answers
- (2) Multiplicity/Subjective Knowledge
  - There are conflicting answers
- (3) Relativism/Procedural Knowledge
  - There are disciplinary reasoning methods
- (4) Commitment/Constructed Knowledge
  - Integration of knowledge learned from others

Looking at this relationship of mentors and mentees in the field of interpreting from the Perry scheme, we see that the student is in a stage

of basic dualism, believing that the authorities, in this case the mentor, knows what is right and wrong and all others are frauds (Perry, 1970).

In his book, *Mentor*, Laurent A. Daloz states that "growth means transformation and transformation means the yielding of old structures of meaning to making of new." (p. 137). The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) shows the trend of growth that has occurred in the field of interpreting. At its inception in 1964, RID had 42 interpreter members, and 22 sustaining[2] members. Of the sustaining members, seven constituted themselves as interpreters also. (Fant, p. 5). According to the RID website[3], RID currently has more than 13,000 members. One could argue that, based on this growth constitutes the need for transformation.

The Peer Mentoring Model has challenged the field of interpreting to shift its understanding of what mentoring can look like. A newly identified approach to mentoring within the field of interpreting, the peer mentoring modell is an approach that was encouraged as early as the 1960s through the work of Paulo Freire. Freire (1997) identifies mentoring as a "liberatory task". Freire challenges mentors to allow the mentee/protégé to "become the owners of their own history." (Freire, 1997).

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[2] Sustaining members were identified as non-interpreters, such as deaf persons.
[3] www.rid.org

The question of whether a peer approach to mentoring is effective is determined worthwhile because of the fact that there is resistance to the paradigm shift. Questions have arisen as to whether a peer approach to mentoring is a valid approach for working and novice interpreters. Current literature lacks data showing the outcomes of a peer mentoring approach.

Research Question

This thesis explores mentoring programs for ASL/English Interpreters, specifically focusing on the question "Is a Peer Mentoring Program a successful approach to mentoring working and novice interpreters?" For the purpose of this thesis, successful is being defined as self reported change, or point-to-point growth.

The goal, as stated earlier, is to provide data of a program that follows a peer mentoring model. The program chosen for this thesis research is the Peer Mentoring Program (PMP). The PMP was chosen because of my personal experience with the program.

RESEARCH METHODS

EXPLANATION OF STUDY

Interviews were conducted and online questionnaires were administered. The goal, from the beginning, was to represent the authentic voice of the person(s) interviewed. Through a modified grounded theory approach the process of coding and analyzing the data collected the theory would present itself in an organic way. By creating

talking points, or interview questions, the interview was structured with the goal of learning the perspectives of each participant about the topics or subjects. Along with specific talking points, it was understood that statements, or responses from the participant, might arise during the interview that would warrant further exploration.

In addition to video recorded interviews of past PMP participants, online questionnaires were used to gather more information. An online questionnaire sought to understand the approach of the PMP from the perspective of the creator, Wendy Watson. Another online questionnaire was created to gather information from past participants in the PMP, qualitatively gathering information about their experience within the program.

In addition to the surveys conducted online, PMP participants were invited to participate in video recorded interviews about their experience in the program.

DATA COLLECTION

Two surveys and 18 interviews were conducted:

1. One survey examined persons who completed the MMCP. For the purpose of creating the big picture, learning about the MMCP and the mentoring programs that were created as a direct result of participant's experience in the MMCP was recognized as key. In order to do so, a collection of data would be necessary from this

group. The survey of MMCP participants served to, qualitatively, gather information about the participant's experience establishing a mentoring program. Eleven persons who completed the MMCP responded to this survey.

2. A survey was administered to past participants in the PMP, qualitatively gathering information about their experience within the program.
3. Eighteen interviews of past PMP participants were conducted. This approach was added to the survey for the purpose of collecting further, qualitative, data of the participant's experience and opinion/feedback of/about the program.

INSTRUMENTS

Online surveys were conducted using *Survey Monkey*[4], an online survey and questionnaire tool. Persons can create a survey/questionnaire and allow participants to respond anonymously. The creator of the survey/questionnaire can then view results.

Past participants of the PMP were invited to their interviews via Ichat is a video chat instant messaging application. Ichat allows for video taping of the video chat. Video chat was determined as a instrument due to the location of the interviewers in relation to the interviewees.

[4] http://www.surveymonkey.com/

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Within this chapter you will find the common themes noted among the respondents. For the readers of this thesis, it is important to keep in mind that invitations to participate were sent to all contacts provided by the program leader, participants were able to self select.

MMCP SURVEY

Participant Created Programs. I asked the respondents to explain their created mentorship project, required for the MMCP Internship. As expected, the respondents reported varying program development.

Data Breakdown

Interestingly, of those who responded, the venue for which the highest number of programs was created focused on educational (k-12) interpreting. Four reported working specifically with educational (k-12) interpreters either on a small scale or state-wide. Further, one respondent specifically identified working with interpreters preparing to take the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). Of the remaining respondents, one reported working with post-secondary interpreters, one worked with seniors within an Interpreter Education Program, two reported on a program for working interpreters, and one did not specify the demographics or a venue for the persons they mentored.

To further break down the information reported, the two who reported programs for working interpreters were notably different. One

approach mentoring from a peer stance, and did not specify years of experience working as an interpreter. The second was identified as a Graduate Mentoring Project for seasoned interpreters. While not specifying the years of experience that qualifies one as a "seasoned interpreter."

To further breakdown the data, of the eleven who responded, six were specifically educational interpreter focused. The range was from k-12 to post-secondary. This is important to note, but there is not enough data within this research to identify why more than half of those who responded specifically focused on educational interpreters. In addition, it is unclear if those who responded but did not specifically identify educational interpreters, for example those who reported "working interpreters" and those who did not identify the arena for the persons they mentored, may have mentored educational interpreters, though did not targeting that specific group.

Program Structure. Six respondents reported mentoring interpreters, and four reported mentoring interpreters as well as training persons to become mentors. Not one respondent reported solely an approach to training persons to become mentors. As seen in the literature review section of this thesis, training of mentors was stated as a means to sustaining a program.

The reported structures of the respondents' mentoring programs varied. Many of the programs were structured in terms of time (i.e. 3 month cycle, and 10 hours per semester) and noted flexibility in content and approach for the purpose of meeting the need(s) of the person(s) being mentored.

Unsurprisingly, the program offered through a University, the Graduate Mentoring Project, offered the greatest structure in terms of time and content. It is also important to note that, based on information provided, it is understood that the University based program is geared toward mentors.

Funding. Four reported having received national, state, or local sponsorship or monetary assistance. Three reported that participants who take their program pay for the program. Two reported having received no sponsorship or monetary assistance. However, it is believed that the structure of the question asked was not clear. The goal was to determine outside sources of funding, not individuals paying for services. It can be deduced that those who reported that individuals pay did/do not receive funding from national, state or local organizations.

Continuation of Program. All but one respondent reported having successfully launched their program/project following the MMCP. Of the ten, each reported offering their respective program for multiple cycles, or years, following the first offering outside of the MMCP.

Of the ten who responded, four have run it in several states and US territories, two were established within a specific university thus limiting their ability to travel but allowing for persons from across the country to come to them, two remained focused within the creator's state, one offered online access but did not specify the location of the participants, and one had left the role of facilitation and thus was unable to respond.

Challenges. Two reported that successful implementation was not met and both identified the reasoning to be the follow through and/or interest of the participant(s) being mentored. This was also seen as a theme in the 2007 survey conducted by the NCIEC. As seen in the literature review section of this thesis, commitment was one of the identified keys to sustainability.

One theme emerged from the question about challenges, finances. Respondents noted that without outside funding, the responsibility of payment for services falls entirely on the participants. One respondent noted; “while I am willing to give back to the field to some extent, I cannot afford to mentor for free.” Another respondent reported “It is difficult in some communities to command a sufficient registration to cover costs.” Funding was also one of the identified keys to sustainability seen in the 2007 survey conducted by the NCIEC.

PMP PARTICIPANT SURVEY

Demographics of the 18 respondents:

Nationally Certified	Not yet Nationally Certified
16	2

State Screened or Licensed	Not yet State Screened or Licensed
13	5

*Note: Not all states require a State Screening or license.

Number of years working as an interpreter at the time of the survey

Lowest	Greatest	Mean
2	23	10

Number of years working as an interpreter at the time of participation in the PMP

Lowest	Greatest	Mean
0	17	6

Venue in which participants worked as an interpreter at the time of the survey

Freelance (full or part time)	Video Relay Service (full or part time)	Educational (k-12 and/or post-secondary)
13	4	2

Venue in which participants worked as an interpreter at the time of participation in the PMP

Freelance (full or part time)	Video Relay Service (full or part time)	Educational (k-12 and/or post-secondary)
7	1	8

Why a Peer Mentoring Approach? Interested in knowing why participants chose the PMP, I asked the persons I interviewed to explain their motivation behind joining the program. The themes that emerged were three fold; encouragement and/or positive feedback from previous participants (including that there is the ability to work with peers in a safe environment), the presenters/facilitators of the program (knowledge and trust), and curiosity about the mentoring approach. Interestingly, the main theme noted in the data was that the participants walked into the program without an idea of what the program would look like but trusted previous participants and/or the presenters.

Personal Goals (participants). Thirteen responded that their personal goals had been met as a direct result of their participation in the PMP, three responded that their goals had been met in part, one reported "not yet," and one stated N/A. Reasons provided varied, including the recognition of tools learned, the structure of discussions learned during the program being applied to present day situations, relationship building with colleagues and peers, practice applying learned concepts during the program allowing for understanding and ability to apply after the completion of the program, and communication skills. Those who took the program as a means to prepare for the National Certification exam reported taking the test 3 months, 2.5 years, and 4 years after having

completed the program. Participants were not asked to report if they passed the exam.

Participation: Number of Cycles. Three of the persons interviewed participated in a second cycle and two persons participated in four or more cycles. Of those who participated in more than one cycle, some chose to participate as a participant in all cycles while others took on roles including assistant to the presenter and co-presenter. Further inquiry found that those who chose to participate in more than one cycle wanted to learn more, further explore the concept of a peer mentoring approach, and the desire to continue the feeling of connectedness with peers and colleagues.

It is of importance to note that participants aren't always able to participate in more than one iteration due to location restrictions. In some areas, New York, Arizona, and Puerto Rico, the PMP has only been offered once, which led to the next question. Recognizing that not all survey respondents had the option to participate in a second cycle, I asked if future iterations were offered in your area would you participate. I also asked them to explain why or why not. Ten responded yes, reporting reasons that include having benefited from the lessons and wanting to be immersed in that environment again to the desire to network again. Several respondents noted that, at the time of the survey, they had more years of experience under their belt since the first (or last) time they were

involved in the program. Thus they wanted to be involved in the program to revisit their approach to their work at this point in their career. Six respondents reported that they might take the program again if offered in their area. The main reason for the hesitancy was the time commitment required. Two responded that they would not participate again. Of the two who reported that they would not, one stated that they didn't utilize lessons learned after the completion of the program.

Recommendation of Program. All but one of the persons interviewed stated that they would recommend the PMP to their peers. The one that didn't say yes they would recommend the PMP stated that their reason was that it would depend on the individual. The themes that emerged from those who responded that they would recommend the program, included the safe environment to learn and grow as a professional, the importance of learning the peer mentoring method, and the ability to network with colleagues. Interestingly, the respondents spoke at a higher level than learning discreet skills.

PMP PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

Before you took the Peer Mentoring Program, what did you envision when someone mentioned being a mentor?

The overwhelming response was one that is defined as the traditional approach to mentoring. Respondents identified

- Someone with more experience

- Working one on one
- Someone telling me what to do

An interesting observation is that most respondents spoke of someone (a mentor) telling them (the respondent) what to do, or teaching them (the respondent), thus implying that they (the respondents) were not identifying themselves (the respondent) as the mentor within the relationship.

What did you think about a mentor after taking the program?

The response noted by several of the persons interviewed was that "mentoring can be anything" and the fact that years of experience and specialization is not as important as it had seemed in a traditional mentoring approach. Here it is important to return to the list, published by the National Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers (Gordon, 2007), of mentor qualifications identified as the most important. The list, shown in the literature review section, identified experience and specialty skills as two of the most important qualifications. However, here we are seeing that participants from the PMP are stating that these qualifications are not as important as they are deemed to be in the traditional mentoring approach.

What results have you seen or produced as a result of your participation in the PMP?

Varied responses were received. Responses included:

- Building relationships

- A whole cohort of people that know how to talk like I talk, that learned the same dialogue

Other noted that confidence in skills and understanding of their placement within the field of interpreting were increased as a result of their participation in the PMP.

What do you see as the overall impact of the PMP?

The overwhelming response was the effect on the community and the field of interpreting as a whole. It was noted that the PMP, and the peer approach to interpreting, is:

- "It is revolutionizing the way that people view mentoring"
- "It can really create a change for the good for interpreting."

Persons interviewed noted that the PMP was changing how interpreters view mentoring and the "stereotypes of mentoring."

Did anything surprise you (about the PMP)?

Three themes emerged in the response(s) to this question.

- Participants identified that the program as a whole was a surprised
- Participants could enjoy and have fun within the program
- Despite years of experience or which venue that you choose to work, that everyone became peers quickly, whether in the role of mentor or mentee.

One respondent recognized that “other interpreters were having the same fears and worries, and am I am good enough…there really isn’t a hierarchy as much as there is just a network and a community, a family of sorts.”

Are there any examples that you'd like to share about how the PMP has affected you, your life, your career, et cetera?

Two themes emerged from this question

- Perspective. Acknowledgement that lessons learned could be applied to their personal lives.
- Interaction. Similar to the first but was in regards to their professional lives.

Respondents noted that they were able to build lasting relationships with people that they may have never encountered in any other setting and the ability to be open to their perspectives on the field of interpreting.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the question “Is a Peer Mentoring Program a successful approach to mentoring working and novice interpreters?” is shown to be yes. Based on self-reported data, peer mentoring is successful.

The fundamental difference found in the research data included the fact that, while the widely known most common purpose of a traditional mentoring approach is to achieve a measurable goal, participants of the

PMP were open to exploration and held no preconceived notion of what they would experience while in the program.

The factors of sustainability, funding and duration were similar between the peer mentoring approach and traditional approach to mentoring within the field of ASL/English Interpreting. As was noted in the review of the literature, payment for services, while varied amongst programs, created more commitment when participants paid their own fee. Interestingly, when interview respondents were asked if they, given the opportunity, would take the PMP again the reason behind not taking it was not reported as funding. The issue of funding was not reported as a concern of the participants in the program. The surveys completed for persons involved in the MMCP as well as the discussion with Wendy Watson of her Peer Mentoring Program, finances were identified as a challenge.

The main focus on the peer mentoring approach versus the traditional approach, and the major factor that seemed to set them apart, was in regards to who qualifies as a mentor. Identified in the literature review, it was noted that, among other things, it was important for mentors to not only hold certification but also have training, experience and specialty skills. The official definition, as found on dictionary.com, is a "wise and trusted counselor or teacher." This was the reaction that was noted from persons interviewed when they reported their picture of a

mentor prior to entering the PMP. However, the response of those same persons following their participation in the PMP was that “mentoring can be anything.” The belief expressed was that, at least within this approach to mentoring, importance was not on the years of experience or specialization. Those who participated in the PMP were, often times, surprised that they were already mentors.

Limitations. Limitations were noted from the beginning and, in some cases, caused further delimitations. The first limitation noted was the participant list record for the PMP. It was/is unknown if participants who have participated in any of the iterations were invited to participate in the interview. In some situations it was unknown if all of the iteration lists of participants were kept and provided to the researcher. In other situations, participants in the PMP may have changed their contact information, meaning that the researcher was unable to make contact.

The next limitation was the researcher was based in Arizona and the majority of those being interviewed were on the east coast, where the PMP is housed. With the goal of video recorded interviews, participants were invited but asked to participate through the use of Ichat. It is unknown if possible participants did not respond to the request because they did not want to be interviewed or because they did not have access to Ichat.

Yet another limitation for data collection related to the PMP is that all of the participants who agreed to be interviewed had the same positive experience, overall. The question remains if participants who had an experience other than positive if they chose to not participate in a video recorded interview. For this purpose it was decided to also create a survey on *Survey Monkey*. Adding this piece to the research allowed participants to anonymously respond. Because every participant, who could be reached, were invited to participate in the video recorded interview first and then the survey second, it is unknown if participants participated in both.

Another limitation was the number of persons who participated in each of the surveys as well as the PMP interview. The information learned may not be able to be generalized across the ASL/English Interpreting community as a whole.

Another limitation is the objective measure of "success." Without a defined measure, each respondent, whether it be the survey or interview, could have a different definition of success.

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

The research demonstrates that the Peer Mentoring Program has proven to be successful. The research compiled is the first of its type and provide foundational information to support the philosophical approach and paradigm shift from a traditional mentoring model to a peer mentoring model.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The PMP has run additional iterations since the time of this research. Data collection for those iterations is needed to determine continued success and/or challenges. Also, the PMP has run iterations in several locations outside of Massachusetts once but has yet to offer further iterations in those locations. Data collection as to barriers preventing multiple iterations in those locations is needed. While the research demonstrates that the Peer Mentoring Program has proven to be a success, there is no proof that the Peer Mentoring Program can be duplicated in a manner as successful as it is in Massachusetts. Data collection to define why this is the case is needed.

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APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTED MAY 2009-MAY 2012

DEFINITIONS

ACDHH. Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Best Practices. The NCIEC defines Best Practice as research-verified or based on prior literature or followed by exemplary institutions. It is also defined as a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven to reliably lead to a desired result.

Certified. The RID offers a certification process. To obtain certification, the potential interpreter must first pass a written/knowledge exam and then pass a performance exam, which tests their interpreting skills and ethical decision making skills.

General license. Arizona is a licensed state for Interpreters. A generalist interpreter is defined as an interpreter who can provide services in any community setting and is qualified by education, examination, and work history.

MA State Screening. The MCDHH provides quality assurance screening that evaluates freelance interpreters who are not certified by the RID but may be qualified to interpret in specific settings in MA.

MCDHH. Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Mentee/Protégé. The person receiving mentoring services.

Mentor. The person providing mentoring services.

Mentoring. The method of traditional mentoring is defined as one person, in this case an interpreter, with more experience (which could also include credentials), works with a less experienced interpreter for the purpose of obtaining a specific goal such as certification.

Peer Mentoring. The method of mentoring defined as two or more people working together, both teaching and learning from each other.

Mentorship: The NCIEC defines mentorship as:

> A mentorship is a supportive relationship established between two or more individuals where knowledge, skills, and experience are shared. The mentee is someone seeking guidance in developing specific competencies, self-awareness, and skills in early intervention. The mentor is a person who has expertise in the areas of need identified by the mentee and is able to share their wisdom in a nurturing way. The mentorship established between two or more individuals is unique to their needs, personality, learning styles, expectations, and experiences. Retrieved from: interpreter/mentorship/what-is-mentoring/.

The NCIEC provides further insight into the relationship of a mentor/mentee, when the relationship follows the definition above, as a relationship that allows the mentee the ability and freedom to participate

fully. The relationship allows a safe and open environment for the mentee to ask questions and share concerns of, and with, his or her mentor. Through this safe environment the mentee can become more confident in themselves and their skills/knowledge.