

Peer Mentoring in Education: Preparing for Teaching and Learning

Kristen Chorba, Anne Morrison, Ashley Rothermel, and Mike Wylie
Kent State University

Abstract and Literature

The purpose of this ongoing study is to investigate the experiences of mentors participating in a Peer Mentoring Program tied to an Educational Psychology class. The class is grounded in a social constructionist approach to learning. Twelve peer mentors were interviewed resulting in rich description about the benefits of their experiences.

In general, mentoring has been shown to increase:

- Academic achievement (Bernier, Larose, and Soucy, 2005; Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Rodger and Tremblay, 2003)
- Retention (Rodger & Tremblay, 2003; Good, Halpin, & Halpin, 2000) and learning (Smith, 2008).
- Self-efficacy (Wang and Wu, 2008)
- Social exchanges (Ugrin, Odom, & Pearson, 2008)

According to Good (2001), mentors who participated in a peer mentoring program experienced:

- Increased academic outcomes and retention
- Improved social skills
- Increased levels of self-satisfaction



"Every interaction I had with my mentees as an learning experience and I can talk to them and help them."

Research Questions and Methods

What kinds of experiences are these mentors having?
What are the learning outcomes for these mentors as they interact with each other and with their mentees?

Social Construction, using a Reflecting Processes approach to research (Morrison, 2001):

- Reflecting on ways knowledge and understanding are constructed within relationships

Qualitative data collection:

- Conversational interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2006)
- Semi structured life world interview (Kvale, 1996)

Participants were mentors who previously completed the Educational Psychology course:

- 3 male, 9 female undergraduate teacher education majors
- Ages ranged from 19-27 years



"It's been a learning experience for me. I take everything that I do as a learning experience because, as a future teacher, the more I work with students, the more I work with professors, adults, professionals, then the more experience I'll get and more I'll learn about what it is, exactly to be a teacher. So I've taken this experience kind of as both a learning experience and an experience to kind of further my skills as a teacher."

Results

Four main categories:

- Intrapersonal Experiences - Interpersonal Experiences,
- Professional Growth - Ways the Program Can be Different

One subcategory (of Professional Growth) was **Career and Teaching Preparation**. Benefits that were identified include:

- Feeling more prepared to interact with colleagues and peers in a collegial manner
- Having the ability to convey information to and interact with diverse individuals in a number of ways
- Being able to practice leading others to answers and guiding them in their educational development
- Having the opportunity to take on the role of a professional, while still in a "safe" (i.e. University) setting, among their peers.

Future Directions

The research being done on this Peer Mentoring Project will allow researchers and educators involved in mentoring projects to hone in on the benefits of mentoring experiences

- Creating a quantitative Likert-type inventory from the data already collected to more broadly assess mentoring experiences
- Continuing qualitative interviews with future mentors



References:

- Bernier, A., Larose, S., & Soucy, N. (2005). Academic mentoring in college: The interactive role of Student's and Mentor's interpersonal dispositions. *Research in Higher Education*, 46(1), 1, 29-51.
- Campbell, T. A., & Campbell, D. E. (1997). Faculty student mentor program: Effects on academic performance and retention. *Research in Higher Education*, 38(6), 6, 727-742.
- Good, J. M., Halpin, G., & Halpin, G. (2000). A promising prospect for minority retention: Students becoming peer mentors. *Journal of Negro Education*, 69(4-4), 375.
- Morrison, A. (2001). *Reflecting processes in therapeutic conversations* (Doctoral dissertation). ProQuest Information and Learning, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Smith, T. (2008). Integrating undergraduate peer mentors into liberal arts courses: A pilot study. *Innovative Higher Education*, 33(1), 1, 49-63.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rodger, S., & Tremblay, P. F. (2003). The effects of a peer mentoring program on academic success among first year university students. *Canadian and self-efficacy on web-based learning: The social cognitive perspective. Computers & Education*, 51(4), 4, 1589-1598. *Journal of Higher Education*, 33(3), 3, 1-18.
- Rubin, H. and Rubin, I. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ugrin, J. C., Odom, M. D., & Pearson, J. M. (2008). Exploring the importance of mentoring for new scholars: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, 19(3), 3, 343-350.
- Wang, S., & Wu, P. (2008). The role of feedback