
Short Paper

Silva Karkoulian

Lebanese American University
Lebanon

INVESTIGATING THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING IN THREE LEBANESE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Key Words

*Higher Education;
Mentoring; Training;
Gender and Culture.*

Abstract

Mentoring is a means to support professional growth and development, which in turn empowers faculty members as individuals, and thus benefits the educational institution. The purpose of this study is to emphasize the importance of mentoring, as perceived by faculty members.

Ninety faculty members, full time and part time, at three universities in Beirut, were chosen for this research. This study elucidated the importance of mentoring as perceived by faculty members. The issue of training, gender, culture, advantages and disadvantages of mentoring was investigated.

Introduction

Mentoring to enhance professional preparation is not a new idea. It can be traced back to ancient Greece and Homer's *Odyssey*, where Mentor was the teacher entrusted by Odysseus to tutor his son, Telemachus (Lattimore, 1967). This provides an image of the wise and patient counselor serving to shape and guide the lives of younger colleagues. This image is described in many recent definitions of mentoring (Kapur, 1997; Bush, 1995). Ashburn *et al.*

(1987: 1) defined mentoring as "the establishment of a personal relationship for the purpose of professional instruction and guidance". Philips-Jones (1982: 21) referred to mentors as "influential people who significantly help you reach your major life goals".

Mentoring as a form of training can be defined as a relationship between an experienced and a less experienced person in which the mentor provides guidance, support, and feed-

back to the mentee (learner) (Haney, 1997). In the simplest terms mentoring is a relationship and a power-free partnership in which a less knowledgeable individual is nurtured, trained, and “shown the ropes” by a more knowledgeable person, both desiring mutual growth (Allen, Poteet, & Russell, 2000). Mentorship is part of the nurturing needed by adults at different career and life stages (Daresh and Playko, 1992).

This paper addresses the importance of mentoring in Higher Education and presents the viewpoints in this regard of faculty members in three universities located in Lebanon. The main issues tackled herein are gender and culture as to their relationship with mentoring; importance of training in mentoring; qualities of good mentors; and the worth of mentoring for new faculties. The researcher as well aimed to discuss problems faced by mentors and shed some light on the disadvantages of mentoring.

Mentoring in Higher Education

“Experience forges wisdom and wisdom leads to effective living. In this issue of Direction we offer tribute to people who have walked the road ahead of us and offered guidance and encouragement for our development.” (Ron Penner, 2001)

Mentoring is useful, especially for new faculty members, in understanding and learning about the organizational culture (Luna and Cullen, 1995; Bierema, 1996). It is a particularly labor-intensive and intimate form of professional induction where much of the work is carried out on a one-to-one basis. Hence, mentoring is a means to support professional growth and development, which in turn empowers faculty members as individuals, and thus benefits the educational institution (Bush and Middlewood, 1997; Luna and Cullen, 1995).

“Most professors typically have little formal preparation for their careers in academe and thus learn their craft by doing. Often those who seek support during this process look to experienced colleagues to mentor them” (Dubetz & Turley, 2005). Wise, mature mentors have always been around to help new teachers learn their craft in ways that were not usually covered in teacher training programs (Gehrke and Kay, 1984). Mentors initiate new faculty members into the customs and expectations of academic life, share knowledge about the institution, and help them establish an identity within the academic community (Dubetz & Turley, 2005). However, during the early 1990’s, the potential value of mentoring as a feature of professional development for educational personnel was more

thoroughly appreciated (Krupp, 1984 as cited in Daresh and Playko, 1992). Today, focus is placed, with considerable regularity and visibility in educational institutions, on the development of formal, structured, contrived, and institutionally supported mentoring programs. Mentorship has become the central focus of many proposals to improve induction for beginning educators for the potential value derived from mentoring programs. Mainly, teachers are becoming more effective, gaining self-confidence, learning technical aspects of their jobs, understanding better the expectations of administrators, developing creativity, and working effectively with others (Daresh and Playko, 1992).

In teaching institutions, mentoring programs pair novice teachers with outstanding experienced teachers who can explain school policies and practices, share methods and materials, and help solve problems (Anon, 1995). By utilizing the knowledge of 'old-hands', the novice can perhaps learn and be guided in quicker and easier fashion than if left to them. Preliminary and concurrent training or consultancy is essential if head-teachers and teachers are to be adequately prepared for, and supported in, the tasks of development planning or any related approach to the management of change and

school improvement (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1994).

At most schools in the UK, it is highly encouraged that mentoring programs be promoted as a way to bring experienced head-teachers (principals) together with less experienced colleagues. In the UK, relationship between classroom teachers and head-teacher is maintained, and the head-teacher is viewed as a member of the instructional team and not as an outside administrator (O'Neill, 1994). However, in the USA there is a tendency to look at the role of the principal as a person allied with formal administrative responsibility quite distinct from the roles and expectations of teachers. Despite some of the differences among the traditional practices of educational management in the USA and the UK, there is a common appreciation of the value of mentoring schemes that may be available for individuals in the earliest stages of their careers (O'Neill, 1994).

Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Daresh and Playko (1990) have found some of the most important characteristics for effective mentors. Good mentors should be in the first place good educators and good motivators. They should be sensible to the

individual needs and stated goals of those being mentored. Mentors have to be caring and giving people who are truly committed to the enhancement of the professional lives of beginners. Effective mentors are able to ask right questions to those with whom they work and not just provide right answers. Most importantly, to be effective, mentors should try to express the desire to see people go beyond their present levels of performance, even if it might mean that they will be able to perform better than the mentors themselves. Mainly, mentors must accept other ways of performance and avoid the temptation of telling candidates that the right way to do something is 'the way I used to do it'. According to Montgomery (1991), even when individuals want to serve as mentors and possess all the desirable characteristics of effective mentors, they still need additional training to carry out this crucial role. Training includes activities related to the identification of alternative leadership styles, interpersonal communication skills, and effective instructional leadership practices. One area identified as important in training is the area of interpersonal skills, which appears to be the quality that counts most in mentoring (Brooks, 1996). Although some mentors may be naturally equipped with the skills of mentoring, such stock of natural talent cannot be

relied on to achieve effective mentoring. Therefore, there is a need for training, which can build skills, knowledge, and qualities, which are additional to those, needed for effective educators but which may enhance educator effectiveness (Sampson and Yeomans, 1994).

Given the importance of relationships in learning, none of the mentor's roles can be effective if the mentor lacks the ability to form appropriate helpful relationships. Help in the educator's role in mentoring has a very different meaning from the normal social sense of the word. This type of help, as in helping someone to learn, has been variously described. Williams and Burden (1997) call it 'mediating', Tomlinson (1995) refers to it as 'influencing'. Freeman's (1990) term 'intervention' describes what mentors do, since it highlights the idea that everything a mentor says, does, or even arguably is, will make a difference to a mentee's development. In the educator's role, helpful behavior might include, encouraging explicit talk about the mentee's beliefs, and providing selected data either from observation, theory or the mentor's own experience. This is designed to challenge and provide the mentee with a more complete conceptualization of the particular teaching focus in question (Malderez and Bodóczy, 1999).

The success of mentoring depends on the strength of the interpersonal relationships and the informality of the process. Mentoring, both formal and informal, can be very powerful in encouraging a climate of equal opportunities and in the mentor's professional development (Coleman, 1997). According to Kerka (1997), mentoring supports much of what is currently known about how individuals learn, including the socially constructed nature of learning and the importance of experiential, situated learning experiences. Learning is most effective when situated in a context where new knowledge and skills will be used and individuals construct meaning for themselves within the context of interaction with others. Functioning as experts, mentors provide authentic, experiential learning opportunities as well as an intense interpersonal relationship through which social learning takes place (Kerka, 1998).

“By not mentoring, we are wasting talent” (Wright and Wright, 1987: 207). Faculty mentoring focuses on developing and empowering faculty members and benefiting the educational institution that leads to commitment within the university. In such an institution, university wide climate for mentoring must be established with faculty members' assistance and input. They must be involved in the design and implementation of strate-

gies and plans for mentoring. Therefore, mentoring becomes a general rule that is central to the operation of a higher institution since it is an activity, which will be of benefit to all (Wilkin, 1992). Faculty members should strive to develop their capacity to learn from and support the learning of others. Mentors may also guide the professional development of new faculties by promoting reflection and fostering the norms of collaboration and shared inquiry (Feiman-Nemser and Parker, 1992). Mentoring also provides a unique source of personalized information that is specific for the task at hand. It may have taken the mentor two years to come to terms with a difficult task but he or she can pass on this information and the trainee can learn in a shorter period of time and hence improve their professional growth.

Importance of Training in Mentoring

The discussion about effective mentors brings us to a question of what helps create and maintain effective mentors. Again, a mentor's role is multifaceted: teacher, counselor, role model, guide, and friend. A mentor ought to model professionalism, offer a balance of challenge and support, and help the mentee develop or redefine his/her professional identity (Casto *et al.*, 2005).

Nevertheless such features are not easy to build and sustain. Echoing his experience in teaching and mentoring, Professor Lundy Braun (2004) argued that to integrate different perspectives into his teaching required time, planning, and an interest in listening to and learning from other faculty. And through these interdisciplinary experiences he was, again, being mentored and at the same time mentoring others in a way that could not have happened had he remained confined to the ways of thinking and knowing of one discipline. Although this learning process could have been an “invisible activity” that is inherent in the very intention of teaching, not all mentors serve the mission effectively since it is not having the knowledge that matters but the know-how of transmitting such knowledge. Thus some sort of training for mentors is deemed vital for building up what really constitutes an effective mentor. Fields to be tackled could be developing the mentors’ communication skills and interactivity since the most crucial element of a successful mentoring is the mentoring relationship itself.

Within the training process, administrators supporting the mentoring program should constantly emphasize the mutual benefits of mentoring especially the benefits for the mentors themselves. Such benefits may not be sensed by all mentors

who would only feel the mere load of teaching other faculty with the knowledge and experience they have got; thus their reluctance in developing an effective mentoring relationship.

“Mentoring is what all of us who take the job of teaching seriously do without even thinking about it... I think is a critical question for us...how do we sustain and cultivate an environment that encourages open and critical inquiry and that nourishes the laborious and largely invisible mentoring and learning activities - of undergraduates, graduate students, and our faculty colleagues - so crucial to excellence in teaching, in the face of strong and, at times seemingly unstoppable, pressures to commercialize universities nationally and internationally?” (Braun, 2004)

Gender and Mentoring

As organizational diversity increases, the question of whether mentoring is a vehicle for assimilation and exclusion arises. The personal relationship at heart of mentoring can be problematic when mentor and mentee are of different genders (Kerka, 1998). Ensher and Murphy (1997) found that perceived and actual similarity affected the amount of instrumental and psychological support mentors provided as well as the protégé’s level of satisfaction. Although there are variances within geographic regions,

ethnicities, and occurring changes, there is still a reinforced general dominant culture regarding gender (Birge *et al.*, 1995).

As aforementioned, the emphasis of mentoring relationships is to build significant connections between mentor and mentee. Therefore, it is important to shed some light on how men and women communicate differently when setting up the structure of mentoring programs. Verbal communication is identified most often, and differences in this area were recognized (Birge, *et al.*, 1995). For example, women tend to organize their talk co-operatively, whilst men tend to organize their talk competitively (Coates, 1986). Men and women both interrupt but they do it in different ways. Men interrupt most often in an attempt to steer the conversation toward their own point, whilst women interrupt with nods and noises of affirmation most often in an attempt to support and give encouragement to the speaker (Tannen, 1990). Therefore, when cross-gender relationships are anticipated, gender specific styles of communication should be introduced in orientation and training so that the mentor and the mentee have a high potential to fully benefit from the relationship (Birge *et al.*, 1995).

Literature has always focused on the women mentees feelings of isola-

tion or fears of failure that may be engendered especially in a male-dominated field. It is essential for women to have someone to listen to their ideas and give them objective, critical feedback without the influence of gender bias. Thus women-to-women mentoring has been advised to help counter such possible fears (Greene, 2002). Woman-to-woman mentorship may be geared more toward social support and networking and focus less on the aspect of power differentials within the mentoring relationship than man-to-woman mentorship (Casto *et al.*, 2005).

According to Cawyer *et al.* (2002) new female faculty members and graduate students as well may be entering a historically male-dominated field wherein women have been underrepresented, and it may be difficult to find female faculty role models. Mentoring can combat feelings of isolation by providing insight into the professional culture of the new field. There are social norms, unwritten rules, and the history and lore of your department to learn. Within academia, female graduate students need the perspectives, advice, guidance, support, and networking assistance that can be provided by more experienced women.

Mentoring in both formal and informal settings can be very powerful

in encouraging a climate of equal opportunities. In professional development, especially of women, it provides individuals with someone who can give feedback, an opportunity for discussion and critical feedback (Bush and Middlewood, 1997).

Culture and Mentoring

Nations and organizations evolve through the efforts of people having widely diverse customs, beliefs, and native languages. Multi-culturalism is that attitude in an organization, which provides an environment free of discrimination, and barriers in which all individuals who represent great diversity have the opportunity to develop, participate, and contribute fairly and equitably.

Nevertheless, difficulties may arise when there is diversity within an organization since most of us have limited information about other people's worldviews. Frustration often occurs when two people with different worldviews interact; frequently neither feels valued or understood. This is what might occur between the mentor and the mentee if they belong to different cultures, thus each one of them may perceive things his way that may result in conflicts and a tensed environment instead of a cooperative one. In the mentoring context, it has been widely evident that minorities and *women (gender issue)* often receive little sup-

port from senior faculty in settings where informal structures dominate the socialization process (Dubetz & Turley, 2005).

Mentors need to recognize how cross-cultural communication and differences in and power dynamics between races may influence the mentoring relationship (Casto, Caldwell, & Salazar, 2005). The authors argue that in successful cross-cultural mentoring, mentees of minorities must gain from their mentors a sense of genuine concern for their personal welfare as well as for their professional development. Furthermore, demonstrating cultural sensitivity and willingness to learn about the mentees' ethnic heritage and appreciation of an individual mentee's differences within his or her culture are crucial. Mentees of minorities may experience feelings of isolation especially if they believe they must give up or deny aspects of their cultural identity when entering academia (Williams & Schwiebert, 2000). Ellis (2001) perceives that mentors can take steps to ease this isolation by looking outside their departments to the state or national level, introducing their mentees of minorities to culturally diverse mentees, who are successful in the field, in these wider settings.

The fact of being exposed to various cultural differences enhances the tendency of accepting these differ-

ences whether in perspectives, modes of behaviors, or opinions. Either party will be involved in a wider realm of knowledge as referred to the Johary window concept where both can see clearly the “big picture”. It also encourages man not to follow blindly by weighing all sorts of odds and evaluating those differences without being a victim of certain preconceptions or biases. In the mentors and mentees case mentors can play around those differences to convert them into opportunities or mentees can benefit from.

Disadvantages of Mentoring and Problems Faced by Mentors

Before presenting the current study and results, the author see it necessary to come across some of the drawbacks of mentoring on the heels of what the interviewees perceived and raised in this regard and the problems they expected to face if engaged in a mentoring program. In spite of the several benefits of mentoring for/to the mentee, the mentor and the organization as well, there are some drawbacks stemming mainly from the fact that mentoring programs are very demanding in both the time and effort needed over and beyond the mentor’s job requirements.

According to Ron Penner (2001), the most common hindrances to mentoring identified by faculty are heavy teaching loads, large classes, student contact load, committee work, publication, service, high performance expectations by the institution, and family responsibilities. Beyond these, the next most often identified factors could be the absence of an intentional faculty orientation and development program at most colleges and low value placed on mentoring. Thus, of the greatest hurdles to the actualization of mentoring is lack of time.

In his way to find out what are the most important conditions for effective and imaginative teaching and mentoring, Professor Lundy Braun (2004) made a key point that the institution at every level must see teaching as a scholarly activity, not as a mere “service”. Faculty members debate endlessly whether teaching/mentoring is “valued” at universities, especially in the tenure and promotion process. He added but satisfactorily that learning to teach and mentor did not happen by chance. It took hard work, careful if not compulsive planning; consumed an enormous amount of time for years, and was often frustrating, especially at exam time. These ought to be of the faculty’s primary scheduled duties and rewarded tasks as well; or else mentoring will be a mere load.

Ron Penner (2001) comes across the case where mentoring is generally not included in faculty role expectations, considered in load computations, or tracked in faculty or promotion reviews. Faculty are too busy with other priorities and, without the reinforcement offered through means such as load computations and inclusion in reviews, they will gravitate toward those duties for which they are compensated and reviewed. If mentoring is to increase in schools, administrations and boards will need to incorporate it in formal expectations, allocate resources in such a way that faculty loads allow time for mentoring. Further special funding must be secured.

Therefore the main obstacle for effective mentoring is the difficulty in its implementation. In this regard, many practitioners and professors have given seminars and published papers providing key steps and advices for implementing successful mentoring programs and avoiding the evident problems faced by mentors and leading to ineffective mentoring. The main point is that mentoring must be part of a more comprehensive faculty development program. Orientation to the mentoring process is provided and a monitoring system is in place to determine progress and satisfaction in every respect to both the mentor and the mentee. And what is important is that some recognition is provided to mentors be it financial or

load; hence the mentor's sense of commitment to the mentoring process.

Sampling and Methodology

The sample chosen for this study comprised full time and part time faculty members at three universities located in Beirut. 90 faculty members, 50 males (33 full-timers & 17 part-timers) and 40 females (26 full-timers & 14 part-timers), were interviewed during the academic year 2005 using purposive sampling in order that every division of each school at the universities participated. This allowed the researcher to select the sample to serve the specific purpose of the study, and to handpick the cases to be included on the basis of her judgment of their typicality. The researcher found no significance between the sampled universities for they all lacked a formal mentoring program.

The classification of the respondents by rank is presented in Table I Below.

Table I
Classification of the Respondents
by Rank

POSITION	FULL TIME	PART TIME
Professor	6	1
Associate Professor	8	3
Assistant Professor	22	7
Lecturer	4	0
Instructor	19	20
Total	59	31

Semi - structured interviews were the main technique to gather data, since they are more adaptable than questionnaires and allow the interviewer to follow up participants' ideas. As first attempt to run this study, the researcher decided to conduct a questionnaire-type survey and distributed 200 questionnaires. However and following a dreadfully low response rate of 14% (28 out of 200), the researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews. At that stage this method was expected to provide rich material and would further clarify how faculty members perceived mentoring. Although there was a risk of bias in this method, it was decreased through awareness and self-control as Cohen and Manion (1994) recommended.

The semi structured interview approach involved an interview schedule that was administered in a face-to-face setting where the purpose of the research was explained and participants were given the opportunity to ask questions. The interviews started with broad questions about what participants thought about mentoring, and as the interview progressed, the questions became more structured and specific.

The length of each interview was restricted to 30 minutes on average. Participants were encouraged to an-

swer all questions in the survey honestly and were assured of complete anonymity. The respondents were invited to amend or modify the transcript of their interview where they deemed it necessary. The agreement of interviewees was obtained to include quotation from the transcripts in the form and context in which it had been represented to them.

10 academic staff members undertook the piloting of the study. Piloting the interview helped in improving the validity and reliability of the study. In order to check for reliability the interview was administered twice. While, validity was checked by asking those who read the interview whether or not the questions asked were likely to serve the purpose of allowing a proper measurement of what was to be found.

Results

Mentoring

The researcher was interested in investigating whether there are any formal mentoring programs at the universities researched, and in assessing how faculty members perceive the importance of mentoring in higher educational institutions. All the respondents confirmed that no mentoring programs are implemented at their universities.

One of the interviewed part-time instructors (teaching at two universities) emphasized:

“Mentoring helps people from different backgrounds to adapt to the environment through creating a friendly atmosphere. It helps creating a more serious and professional workplace. However no mentoring programs are adopted at both institutions where I teach, new faculty are not given enough attention and orientation to fit in the new environment.”

One of the interviewed instructors when discussing the importance of mentoring commented,

“Mentoring should focus on development and empowerment of faculty members and not only on helping new faculty members.”

Importance of Training in Mentoring

Most of the interviewed faculty (83 out of 90) agreed that training is essential for effective mentoring since many ignore its real advantages and uses. They agreed that training would provide mentors with the knowledge, skills needed as to be sensible and caring to the new faculty members' needs.

One Associate Professor emphasized that training will increase the qualities of the mentors to communi-

cate effectively with their novice faculty members, so that they will be able to offer expert feedback to them.

Most of the faculty members also agreed that training teaches the mentor how to interact with the mentee since it is not enough to have the knowledge, it is important to know how to transmit it, since the mentee should be specialized and have social skills.

Qualities of a Good Mentor

The overall discussion with the faculty members about the qualities of a good mentor brought about almost all what literature has documented about effective mentors mainly and ultimately being good educators and motivators per se with all what it demands to be really a good teacher in the first place. The researcher has chosen the following comments to reflect on the interviewees' perceptions in this respect.

When asked about the qualities of a good mentor, one full-time professor said:

“The mentor should have good communication skills, leadership skills, good background, patience, knowledge, and the ability to make the mentee interested in the subject matter.”

Another instructor added:

"A good mentor is someone who operates without using power, who has good communication skills, and most of all respects the thoughts and personality of the mentee. In addition, he /she should be dedicated and perseverant to follow up on the mentee."

One part-timer assistant professor added:

"The mentor must be a good teacher on whom the majority approves. The experience or training is not as important as the ability to teach and understand others".

Gender and Mentoring

The researcher was interested to know the views of male and female faculty members regarding gender and mentoring. As afore-mentioned, the sample comprised of 50 males and 40 females. On average 78% (70 out of 90, Table II) reported preference regarding the gender of the mentor. 80% of the females agreed that gender influences mentoring as far as our society is man-oriented while 20% argued that gender should not affect mentoring stressing the importance of equal opportunities of man and woman in academia.

From the male perspective, 76% of the males stressed the issue of differences in communications between male and female; and if not dealt with

professionally would then negatively affect any mentoring program as long as the mentoring relationships are not set on clear and formal communication ways-- hence their preference to the same gender of the mentor.

On the aggregate, the researcher sensed a feeling of consent among interviewees that gender dramatically affects the mentoring relationships especially in a gender-oriented society. This concurs with contemporary researches, which tackle the issue of gender in mentoring. During their mentoring experiences Dubetz & Turley (2005) found that mentees preferred and tended to choose mentors of the same gender and even race. As aforementioned in the literature, women and minorities often receive little support from senior faculty in settings where informal structures dominate the socialization process.

The following quotations were selected to elaborate on the interviewees' viewpoints regarding the gender issue.

A female instructor, when asked about her preference regarding the gender of the mentor, commented:

"As long as the relationship in mentoring programs is formal, I think that gender would not be problematic. But we cannot deny that sometimes the informality of the relationship is essential for its success, thus leading to

effective mentoring programs. If this is the case, I prefer a female mentor who is well qualified”.

Another female faculty member commented:

“Our society is man oriented so difference in gender may cause problems between the mentor and the mentee since in general men do not accept guidance and orientation from women even if she is more educated, knowledgeable, and experienced.”

A male instructor raised an interesting viewpoint regarding the difference in communication between male and female. His comment was:

“Men tend to steer the conversation in a way to force their points, while women most often try to be in a position to help and give encouragement sometimes by showing their agreement to the raised views during a conversation. Therefore, specific styles of communication should be of main concern in mentoring programs so that such differences would not dramatically affect the effectiveness of the mentoring relationships”

One female faculty drew the attention to a critical point by stating:

“Our society is gender oriented; the difference in gender between mentor and mentee could lead to negative results because if the mentor is a male he may try to abuse the female mentee.”

Most of the discussed gender issues with the interviewees have been widely documented in literature. Casato *et al.* (2005) set some challenges for male mentors of female mentees to overcome, such as persistent or un-addressed sexist attitudes toward women in the department, gender politics, and power relations. They argued that socialized roles may interfere in cross-gender mentoring by creating a double bind for female mentees because they find themselves in traditionally subservient positions as both a student and a woman. According to Johnson & Huwe (2002), cross-gender mentorship may lead some mentors to worry that others may perceive them as having ulterior unethical motives in the relationship, and thus they may be reluctant to engage in mentoring relationships.

Culture and Mentoring

As previously discussed in the review of literature and as per the interviewees' comments on this issue, culture differences play a definitive role in the effectiveness or failure of a mentoring relationship. Well-developed cross-cultural communications skills of the mentors will lead to a successful cross-cultural mentoring whereby the mentees are secured with a sense of authentic concern for their personal well being as well as for their professional development. However, when the educational

institutions in question are sensed to lack such cultural sensitivity within the mentoring programs, cross-cultural mentoring could be ineffective to some extent and mentees of the minority sect or those speaking a different language feel reluctant to effectively participate in the mentoring programs-- thus their feeling of isolation being more stressed.

83% (75 out of 90) of the interviewees preferred same language of the mentor and mentee. In this regard, one of the interviewed full-time instructors said that since mentoring plays a major role in inspiring people, both mentor and mentee should speak the same language, (not literally). The ability to inspire someone does not only require conventionality in certain norms and standards, but rather demands a set of unique impact full qualifications that are to mobilize someone eventually. Hence engaging in a process like mentoring provides one common sound ground that should be able to add value to one's own commonsense if the background is one and the opposite also holds true. This has been the opinion of most interviewees probably due to the common cultural structure in their universities. To illustrate 86% (77 out of 90) stressed that the mentor and mentee be from the same culture.

However, few of the instructors supported the cross-cultural mentoring (14%) on the argument that in

academia at least there should be a well understanding and meld of all cultures as long as the world is becoming closer and closer in the very aspects of life. So it is our challenge to overcome such cultural and power differences and instead fortify cultural sensitivity and readiness to learn more about each other's ethnic heritage and appreciate the differences within cultures. This would indispensably lead to successful cross-cultural mentoring relationships that will add value to academia when diverse individuals bring about in the most effective collaborative way challenging creativity.

One full-time instructor added that culture differences affect the efficiency of a mentoring program since we as Lebanese are influenced by religion and family values in quite different ways than other cultures. The Lebanese culture and society awards titles to certain professionals. Educators have power and prestige and are highly respected, meaning that the higher the position of the mentee the more he/she is ready to learn since he/she considers it a prestigious experience.

Problems Faced by the Mentor

This issue was not of major discussion among the interviewees whereby only few were interested to comment. Three interviewees agreed that the problem which could be faced by the

mentor include gaining the mentee's confidence. Other problems could also take place if the mentee is not interested, not serious, emotionally and psychologically unstable or lacks the cooperation needed.

One full time professor said:

"Mentoring could be a source of problems if there are personality differences, the trainee would not accept ideas from the mentor concerning certain methods or treatment of people. In addition communication with the mentee could be the major problem but once both of them reach an agreement, things should run smoothly".

One part timer added:

"The mentor could face problems if the mentee is not willing to learn and cooperate with him or if he/she doesn't have the required capabilities or if they differ in their personalities and beliefs".

Importance of Mentoring for New Faculty Members

When asked about its importance of mentoring for new faculty members, 90% of the interviewee (81 out of 90) agreed that mentoring is highly essential in higher education because new faculty members do not know the culture of the institution, so mentoring saves time and effort for the new faculty. They argued that mentors vastly influence the work of novice faculty, as stated by Dubetz & Turley

(2005) that in socializing the new faculty, mentors not only provide expertise but also transfer values that continue to serve as a frame of reference once the day-to-day mentoring relationships has dissolved. Mentoring provides career advisement and instruction, support, understanding, and overall assistance to propel new faculty to the next level of development (Casto *et al.*, 2005).

While discussing the advantages of mentoring, one full time professor commented:

"Mentoring offers new faculty several advantages, building a new generation, building up experience, opening the spectrum for new perspectives and specialization".

Most of the interviewed faculty members (79 out of 90) agreed that mentoring creates closer interrelation and better coordination among team members. It helps new faculty fit in, creates a community and family atmosphere, reduces the feeling of worry among new comers, helps new employees, and to a certain extent provides new horizons to the mentee.

One full time professor said:

"I would recommend mentoring if the mentor were highly skilled and professional. He/she should have good interpersonal skills to understand and cooperate with the mentee"

An assistant professor added:

"I personally recommend mentoring since it opens chances to those interested in subjects not offered in the curriculum to be learned from experienced people. It provides guidance for professional development. And if mentoring is well implemented, it affects the work environment, creates good coordination, results in exchange of ideas and techniques, and stimulates a positive environment for orientation."

An instructor had a view that:

"Serving as a mentor will bring newly hired faculty members together with old faculty members (mentors). This type of arrangement would provide faculty members with the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each others research findings".

Another instructor remarked:

"The relationship between mentor and mentee should be based on objectivity, openness, knowledge, confidence, and trust or else it will fail".

Disadvantages of Mentoring

Despite the numerous benefits arising from mentoring programs, accruing to both the protégé and the mentor, there are still certain disadvantages since mentoring is quite demanding in terms of the emotional support the mentor has to give to the trainees.

78% of the interviewed faculty members (70 out of 90) agreed that mentoring could expose the mentor to time pressure since he has to be available for the benefit of the mentee. In addition interviewees agreed that it is sometimes difficult to develop trust.

When asked about the disadvantages of mentoring a full time Professor stated:

"Mentoring could be time consuming for full time faculty members who have to teach a minimum of 12 credits per semester equivalent to 4 courses on average. In addition, we cannot ignore the fact that it is really hard to tell someone that he's wrong since this would create conflict and antagonism."

An instructor added:

"Mentoring could be a source of problems if the mentor is not highly qualified, if he's subjective in his judgment, if he doesn't have fixed standards and if he lacks the adequate tools for mentoring".

An instructor attributed the disadvantages of mentoring to the potential problems arising between mentor and protégé. He mentioned:

"Mentoring relationships unfortunately do not always succeed as expected. For example, the new educator may expect too much from the mentor

and may be demanding detailed answers and solutions to all his questions and problems”.

One of the interviewed professors commented:

“Adaptability could also be a problem. Faculty might look at mentoring from a very negative and critical perspective because they may feel threatened and it could cause plenty of ill feelings if old and new faculties are not sufficiently open-minded. Thus mentoring could cause potential misunderstanding and feelings of competition between faculty members instead of cooperation and teamwork”.

An assistant professor commented that:

“ Some professors might misinterpret his/her position and use it differently as a power tool and may abuse the

mentee to perform unnecessary tasks. Furthermore, some new members would not find it necessary and some mentors may be bossy”.

One of the full-time professors was against applying mentoring since it limits the source of learning of the mentee to the mentor only. Group learning and interaction helps more the new faculty members.

Another full-time instructor added that:

“Mentoring either increases the risk of creating followers or copies the old stuff, or creates conflicts of interests between old and new faculty members”.

The frequencies of the responses in the two categories (Yes/No) to each question are shown in table II.

Table II
Frequencies of Responses

Question	90 Faculty members	
	Yes	No
1. Any Mentoring programs implemented at you university?	0%	100%
2. Is training essential for effective mentoring?	92%	8%
3. Any preference regarding the gender of the mentor?	78%	22%
4. Should the mentor and mentee speak the same language?	83%	17%
5. Should the mentor and mentee be from the same culture?	86%	14%
6. Is gaining the mentee's confidence to be considered a problem facing the mentor?	3%	97%
7. Is mentoring important for new faculty members?	90%	10%
8. Do you believe that mentoring creates closer interrelation among team members?	88%	12%
9. Do you believe that mentoring will expose the mentor to time pressure?	78%	22%

Discussion

Although there are no formal mentoring programs at the universities researched, results of the semi-structured interviews showed that faculty members emphasized the importance of mentoring in higher educational institutions. Results also showed that mentoring empowers faculty members as individuals, and thus ultimately benefits the educational institution. This concurs with the findings of several authors such as Shea (1992) and Bolam *et al.* (1995) on the qualifications of mentors. Moreover, most of the interviewed participants believed that mentoring relationships would help faculty members work effectively with others. This also concurs with the findings of O'Neill (1994).

The mentor/protégé relationship was of concern to the researcher. The participants emphasized the importance of such relationship in providing a climate of equal opportunities for all faculty members to collaborate effectively and learn from each other's studies and researches. This concurs with the findings of Coleman (1997).

To make mentoring programs more successful, it was suggested by the interviewees that training should be provided for mentors. They agreed that there is a need for training to build skills and knowledge, which will further enhance

the mentor's effectiveness. This concurs with the argument of several authors such as Montgomery (1991), Brooks (1996), and Sampson and Yeomans (1994). Montgomery (1991) argued that even when individuals want to serve as mentors and possess all the desirable characteristics of effective mentors, they still need additional training to carry out this crucial role. Sampson and Yeomans (1994) in the same token argue that although some mentors may be naturally equipped with the skills of mentoring, such stock of natural talent cannot be relied on to achieve effective mentoring.

To avoid the failure of mentoring programs, the participants emphasized some of the characteristics of effective mentors. They strongly stressed communication and leadership skills, patience and knowledge. This concurs with Brooks (1996), who identified one area as important in training, interpersonal skills, which appears to be the quality that counts most in mentoring. The participants also mentioned the tolerance, respect and dedication demonstrated by the mentor towards the mentee.

The researcher also raised the issue of gender and mentoring during the interviews, for according to Kerka (1998), when organizational diversity increases, the question arises whether mentoring becomes a vehicle for assimilation or exclusion. The personal

relationship at the heart of mentoring can be problematic when mentor and mentee are of different genders. Accordingly, a female faculty member stated that the Lebanese culture is gender sensitive and male oriented thus preferring a female mentor to avoid conflict. Moreover, a male faculty emphasized that male and female faculty tend to have different communication skills, which would dramatically affect the communication process. Birge *et al.* (1995), suggested the introduction in orientation and training programs so that the mentor and the mentee have a high degree of potential to fully benefit from the relationship.

In addition, cultural differences are to be highly considered while recruiting faculty members from diverse ethnic backgrounds to check whether those backgrounds or cultures prove to be individually or collectively oriented. Both parties should share the same motto concerning mentoring under a learning organization's roof. It's literally unrealistic or simply impossible to implement mentoring while disregarding both mentor's and mentee's cultures.

Hence, mentors should be granted the privilege of nourishing, polishing, and updating their portfolio of knowledge and skills since the practical implications of applying mentoring

in a country like Lebanon revolving around a multiplicity of various cultures namely: Arab, Armenian, American, and European suggests an overview on those cultures.

Results of the interviews showed that faculty members were aware of certain problems that would arise from mentoring programs in educational institutions. This reverberates Daresh and Playko's (1992b) concern about protégés' independence: "mentoring can be potentially harmful to growth if and when protégés develop too great a reliance on mentors, who are expected to provide all possible questions" (p. 112). Accordingly, one of the faculty members' responses was that sometimes mentors tend to be reluctant in letting the trainees become independent, a situation that may be detrimental for the new faculty and the institution as a whole.

Conclusion

This study elucidated the importance of mentoring as perceived by faculty members. Although sampled universities have no formal mentoring programs, mentoring was still perceived as essential for professional development and growth. The participants also emphasized having effective mentors who would be continuously trained if the mentoring programs were to be more successfully implemented to serve their developmental purpose.

The issue of gender as well as culture in mentoring was investigated as well to see whether the relationship between mentors and mentees could be problematic when both parties are of a different gender. Distinct views were held in this regard. Besides, it was found that the faculty members were aware of certain disadvantages of mentoring such as being quite demanding in terms of the emotional support that mentors have to provide for the mentees who

may tend to be dependent by expecting much from their mentors.

In relation to future research on mentoring, it would be constructive to explore in more detail mentoring at different universities in Lebanon and the readiness of these universities to adopt mentoring. It is suggested that the Universities sampled adopt a formal mentoring program through which mentors accommodate newly appointed faculty.

References

- Allen, T. D., M.L.Poteet., & J.E. Russell, 2000. Protégé selection by mentors: What makes the difference? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21: 271-282.
- Anon, 1995. Reconceptualizing Professional Teacher Development. ERIC Digest. [Online]. Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education. Available: < http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed383695.html > > [Accessed 27 March 2000].
- Ashburn, E.A., M. Mann, and P.A. Purdue. 1987. Teacher Mentoring. ERIC Clearinghouse on teacher education, paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, DC.
- Bell, J. 1993. *Doing Your Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bierema, L.L. 1996. How Executive Women Learn Corporate Culture. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7(2): 145-164.
- Birge, J., K. Bowman, B. and Peterson, 1995. Gender and Mentoring: White Paper. [Online]. Available: <http://www.csf.colorado.edu/mail/service-learning/95/mar95/0089.html> > [Accessed 23 November 2000].
- Bolam, R., A. McMahon, K. Pocklington, and D. Weindling, 1995. Mentoring for New Head teachers; Recent British Experience. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 33(5): 29 - 44.
- Braun, L. 2004. Teaching and Mentoring Challenges in Higher Education. *The Teaching Exchange*. January 2004.
- Brooks, V. 1996. Mentoring the Interpersonal Dimension, *Teacher Development*, February: 5-10.
- Bush, T. 1995. Mentoring for Principals: Pre-Service and In-Service Models

- Singapore Journal of Education*, 15(1): 1-13.
- Bush, T. and D. Middle wood, 1997. *Managing People in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Casto, C., C. Caldwell, & C.F. Salazar. 2005. Creating Mentoring Relationships Between Female Faculty & Students in Counselor Education: Guidelines for Potential Mentees & Mentors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*. Summer 2005, 83: 331-336.
- Cawyer, C., C. Simonds & S. Davis, 2002. Mentoring to Facilitate Socialization: The Case of the New Faculty Member. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15: 225-242.
- Coates, J. 1986. *Women, Men, and Language*. New York: Long man.
- Cohen L. and L. Manion, 1994. *Research Methods in Education* (4th ed.) London: Routledge.
- Coleman, M. 1997. Managing Induction and Mentoring in T. Bush and D. Middle wood (Eds.) *Managing People in Education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing, Ltd., 155-168.
- Coolican H., 1996. *Introduction to Research Methods in Statistics and Psychology*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Daresh, J.C. and M.A. Playko, 1990. Mentor Programs: Focus on the Beginning Principal, *NASSP Bulletin*, 74(527): 73-77.
- Daresh J. and M. Playko, 1992. Mentoring for Head teachers: a review of Major Issues, *School Organization*, 12(2): 145-152.
- Daresh J. and M. Playko. 1992b. *Leader Helping Leaders*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
- Denzin, N. 1970. *The Research Act in Sociology: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*. London: The Butter worth Group.
- Dubetz, N. and S. Turley, 2005. Mentoring in Higher Education: A Self Study of Faculty Socialization. Networks: An On-Line Journal for Teacher Research.
- Ellis, E. M. 2001. The Impact of Race and Gender on Graduate School Socialization, Satisfaction with Doctoral Study, and Commitment to Degree Completion. *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 25(1): 30-45.
- Ensher, E.A. and S.E. Murphy, 1997. Effects of Race, Gender, Perceived Similarity, and Contact on Mentor Relationship, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50 (3): 460-481.
- Feiman-Nemser, S., and M.B. Parker, 1992. Mentoring in Context: A Comparison of Two U.S. Programs for Beginning Teachers, NCRTL Special Report. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, Michigan State University.
- Gehrke, N.J. and R.S. Kay, 1984. The Socialization of Beginning Teachers Through Mentor protégé Relationships, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(3): 21-24.
- Greene, K. A. I. 2002. In the Minority In Graduate School. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 8, 49: 11.

- Haney, A. 1997. The Role of Mentorship in the Workplace, *Workplace Education*.
- Hargreaves, D.H. and D. Hopkins, (Eds.) 1994. *Development Planning For School Improvement*. London: Cassel Villiers House, 1-23.
- Johnson, W. B., & J.M. Huwe, 2002. Toward a Typology of Mentorship Dysfunction in Graduate School. *Psychotherapy: Theory/Research/Practice/Training*: 39, 44-55.
- Jossi, F. 1997. Mentoring in Changing Times, *Training and Development*, 51(8) 50-54.
- Kapur, S.L. 1997. Who Finds a Mentor Finds a Treasure. (Online). Available: < <http://www.expressindia.com/fe/daily/19799720/20155343.html> > (Accessed January 2003).
- Kerka, S. 1997. Constructivism, Workplace Learning and Vocational Education, *ERIC DIGEST*, no. 181. Columbus: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (ED 407 083).
- Kerka, S. 1998. New Perspectives on Mentoring. *Eric Digest*. [Online]. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. Available: < http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed418249.html > [Accessed 27 March 2000].
- Krupp, J-A. 1984. Mentor and Protégé Perceptions of Mentoring Relationships in an Elementary and Secondary School in Connecticut, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, as cited in J.C. Daresh and M.A. Playko (1992) *Mentoring for Head teachers: a review of Major Issues*, *School Organization*, 12(2): 145-152.
- Lattimore, R.A. 1967. *The Odyssey of Homer*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Luna, G. and D.L. Cullen. 1995. Empowering the Faculty: Redirected and Renewed.
- ERIC Digest. [Online]. Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education; George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development. Available: < http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digest/ed399888.html > > [Accessed 27 March 2000].
- Malderez, A. and C. Bodoczky, 1999. *Mentor Courses: A Resource Book for Trainer-Trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- McIver, J.P. and E.G. Carmines, 1994. Basic Measurements in M. S. Lewis-Beck (Ed) *International Handbook of Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*. vol.4. London: Sage Publications, 139-171.
- Montgomery, D. 1991. Positive Appraisal: A Critical Review of Ten Years Work, *Management in Education*, 5 (3): 41-45.
- Multi- Cultural Diversity Plan for The Earth Sciences Directorate. May, 1995. Available at: <http://sdcd.gsfc.nasa.gov/ESD/mcplan.html>
- O'Neill, J. 1994. Managing Human Resources in T. Bush and J. West-Burnham (Eds.) *The Principles of Educational Management*. London: Long man Group U.K. Ltd., 199-221.

- Penner, R. 2001. Mentoring in Higher Education. Direction Amennonite Brethren Form.
- Philips-Jones, L. 1982. *Mentors and Protégés*. New York: Arbor House.
- Sampson, J. and R. Yeomans, (Eds.) 1994. *Mentorship in the Primary School*. London: Falmer Press.
- Shea, G.F. 1992. *Mentoring*. London: Kogan Press. Special Issue on: Impacts of Diversity in the Workplace: Maintaining Open Communication. Available at: <http://www.aviary-group.ca/newsletter13.html>.
- Tannen, D. 1990. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: Bellantine Books.
- Tomlinson, P. 1995. *Understanding Mentoring: Reflecting Strategies For School-Based Teacher Preparation*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Wilkin, M. (ed.) 1992. *Mentoring Schools*. London: Kogan Page.
- Williams, J., & V.L. Schwiebert, 2000. Multicultural Aspects of the Mentoring Process. In V.
- L. Schwiebert, *Mentoring: Creating connected, empowered relationships* (pp. 57-70).
- Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Williams, M. and R.L. Burden, 1997. *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, C.A., and S.D. Wright, 1987. Young Professionals, *Family Relations*, 36 (2), 204-8.
- Youngman, M.B. 1979. *Analyzing Social and Educational Research Data*. London: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Zikmund, W.G. 1994. *Business Research Methods* (4th ed). New York: The Dryden Press, Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

الملخص

بحث أهمية التوجيه في ثلاث مؤسسات لبنانية للتعليم العالي

سيلفا كاركوليان

الجامعة اللبنانية الأمريكية

التوجيه وسيلة لدعم النمو المهني والتطوير، وهذا بدوره يشجع أعضاء هيئة التدريس، ومن ثم يؤدي إلى إفادة المؤسسة التعليمية. والهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تأكيد أعضاء هيئة التدريس على أهمية التوجيه، وقد تم اختيار تسعين من أعضاء هيئة التدريس، من المتعاقدين ومن المتفرغين من ثلاث جامعات في بيروت للقيام بهذه الدراسة. وتوضح هذه الدراسة أهمية التوجيه من وجهة نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس، حيث تم البحث في المسائل المتعلقة بالتدريب، والجنس، والثقافة، وما للتوجيه من مزايا وعيوب.

Silva Karkouljian (B.S., and MBA, Lebanese American University, formerly Beirut University College in Beirut, Ed. D, Leicester University, U.K.) is an assistant professor at the Lebanese American University, Beirut. Her current Interests Include Knowledge Management, Human Resource Development and Ethical Impacts of Information Technology.