

EDITOR COMMENTARY

The Value of Mentoring for Leadership Development

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Introduction

Invited authors published in this 2024 Fall Quarterly Issue of The Chronicle of Mentoring & Coaching were previously published in earlier issues of the CMC. Additionally, many of the articles found in this issue are an extension to or elaborations on previously presented papers from previous Annual Mentoring Conferences offered by The Mentoring Institute at the University of New Mexico main campus. These papers underwent a rigorous, double-blind peer review process and have been cataloged by Cross Reference with stable doi numbers. Also noted as collective contributions to this issue, each author, individually or in partnership with a colleague or colleagues, addresses the values of mentoring for leadership in the field. This issue has a specific interest in mentoring programs for the development of leadership skills in students and professionals, who are also lifelong learners, thinkers, researchers, and practitioners in a variety of educational and community programs.

Background

Mentoring programs offer valuable tools specifically designed to meet the goals and needs of mentees (Irby et al., 2018), add service dimensions to programs (Atkins & Grant, 2021), support the development of an individual's identity process (Nganga et al., 2020), and contribute personal benefits to both mentors and mentees (Keup, 2020). Based on the current literature, attention should be given to strengths-based holistic approaches grounded by theory use, reflection, context sensitivity, cultural responsiveness, social justice, and mentorship supports to navigate the landscape of mentoring tools available (Hunnskaar & Lejonberg, 2024).

Various approaches, forms, and styles of mentoring have been used for leadership development in business, industry, organizations, and educational institutions at all stakeholder levels (Dominguez & Kochan, 2020; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Both psychosocial and instrumental supports provided in mentorships (Eby & Robertson, 2020; Kram, 1985) have promoted successful development of leadership in programs and leadership skills in individuals (Grocutt, 2020; Keup, 2020; Lee et al., 2020). Appropriate professional learning opportunities include training, coaching, and ongoing support for those engaged in mentorships including an emphasis on intentional leadership

components contained in the literature (Keup, 2020). Each of the concepts highlighted in this opening commentary is included in one or more contributions to the literature on the practice of mentoring for leadership development by authors in this issue.

Context

The topics and research populations presented in these articles span the broad range of student populations beginning at the secondary level, transitioning to entry into the college or university level, and progressing through the early years of undergraduate programs. At the other end of the continuum are articles reporting findings from projects and research on programs for mentorships to engage professionals in highly specialized programs of study and/or doctoral studies. Moreover, authors highlight successful evidence-based approaches, practices, programs, and partnerships. Studies and programs with evidence of best practices are found within universities and communities that thoughtfully pair mentors and mentees with consideration to career goals, leadership types, culture, race, gender, ability, and/or generational diversity. Models and frameworks provided by authors contain the level of specificity that potentially enable their work to be transferable and thus, replicated in other settings. Brief highlights from each article follow in the section below.

Author Contributions

Brendan F. Burke

In "Mentoring Across Generations: Design Considerations and Content," Brendan F. Burke explores mentor program designs that serve multiple generations of workers who enter the workforce with differing approaches and values related to their work world. Dr. Burke shares, "The point of this paper is to share design considerations that support the different ages and eras that participate in mentorship efforts." Burke contends that mentor-mentee discussions at work provide first-line helpful reflection on workplace and work life assets and liabilities. Three Suffolk University mentor program options, intentionally designed with consideration of the importance of trust, shared goals, and motivations among generations, are included. Burke provides the background on generational diversity in a section on the five

historical generations that informs readers about content in several articles included in this issue.

Dana M. Griggs

Dana M. Griggs highlights an established school-business partnership in “Informal Co-mentoring for Student Success.” Dr. Griggs explains mentoring as the new workforce support for promotion and retention efforts has increased because business operations have changed due to workplace generational shifts from the time when Baby Boomers and Gen Xs held the majority of positions. Griggs contends that “Teachers and business partners can impart critical skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and soft skills. By understanding workplace expectations and developing necessary skills, students enhance their employability. Mentorship helps students gain confidence in their abilities.” Co-mentoring offers a non-hierarchical relationship where self-awareness and commitment to shared goals and outcomes are reciprocal among teachers and business partners. Several questions for future research on co-mentoring in school-business partnerships are suggested.

Amy Davis & Shallary Duncan

Amy Davis and Shallary Duncan present a 15-year successful strength-based peer mentoring program in their article titled, “In Curating Peer Mentoring Program Curricula for Modern Leadership Contexts.” The program promotes positive outcomes, leadership development, and student retention for students from historically underrepresented communities in rural Pennsylvania at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). Authors review literature that suggests peer mentoring is a high impact practice with benefits for both mentors and mentees. Davis and Dr. Duncan provide a detailed description of their analysis of the positive influences of their curricula on student leadership, retention, and post-graduate outcomes. In the words of the authors, “Robust, culturally relevant training is essential for fostering leadership skills in mentors and achieving successful outcomes for peer mentoring programs serving underrepresented students.”

Gabriela Molina Zamora, Gabrielle Andrade, & Virginia Diaz-Mendoza

In their qualitative research article, “Expanding Opportunities for Latina College Students: Faculty-mentored Research at a Hispanic-Serving Institution,” Gabriela Molina Zamora, Gabrielle Andrade, and Virginia Diaz-Mendoza explore outcomes from a faculty-mentored research project in the Search for Education, Elevation, and Knowledge (SEEK) Department at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a Hispanic-serving institution. Students in the SEEK Department were employed as research assistants to work with a faculty mentor on a research project about the influences of peer mentoring specifically focused on first year, ethically and racially diverse students

with economic challenges, who are interested in career exploration. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) competencies of critical thinking, communication, teamwork, equity and inclusion, career and self-development, leadership, professionalism, and technology were included in the mentoring experience. Mendoza, Andrade, and Dr. Diaz-Mendoza shared, “This body of work serves to improve the teaching and learning experience for Latinas at HSIs and seeks to add to the literature about the importance of mentoring in higher education.”

L. Ady Dewey & Harriet Hayes

In their article, “What’s Needed for Mentoring Future Leaders: The Connections between Risk-Taking, Living Values, and Radical Listening, L. Ady Dewey and Harriet Hayes explore the relationships among risk aversion, values, and listening for Gen Z students. Dewey and Dr. Hayes suggest that multiple opportunities for mentorship exist within classrooms and propose strategies to develop the skills of risk-taking. Coming from their combined experiences as leaders in multiple realms, suggest mentors attuned to student goals and needs should provide “a structure through journaling for mentees to experiment with how values guide actions.” Their strategies link value identification to listening and consider it an essential component to leadership skill development. Numerous strategies to promote the employment of their methods for reflective structured dialogue, a tool for fostering listening skills, are found in this article.

Michele Strano Clark

Michele Strano Clark presents three detailed case studies focusing on the exploration of online portfolios in “Mentoring Professional Identity Development through Media Assignments.” The use of ePortfolios in graduate and undergraduate courses to promote students’ professional identities and development of capacities is frequently used. In Dr. Clark’s words, “These ePortfolios focus on student self-presentation without emphasizing the social construction of self and the opportunities that online spaces provide to enact an authentic professional public persona.” Clark suggests that mentoring students to develop their online personas can be done in a variety of educational contexts, and that it is important to afford faculty to mentor students in effective impression management to guide them in analysis of online environments. The theoretical models and frameworks presented support Clark’s outline of strategies mentors can use to “push” students to view themselves as young professionals as they develop, present, gather data, and evaluate their work.

Henderson Lewis, Jr.

In “From Mentorship to Leadership: A Framework for Supporting the Journey of Black Male Educators, contributed by Henderson Lewis, Jr., highlights the basis for and development of

an equity-based mentorship framework grounded in the intersectionality of servant leadership and transformational leadership. Eight experienced Black male educators participated in this qualitative phenomenological study with interviews. Analysis of data led to the development of the five steps (connect, commit, guide, coach, reflect) in the Mentorship Framework for Supporting the Journey of Black Male Educators. Dr. Lewis's description of the framework has sufficient detail to support its implementation in educational settings. In Dr. Lewis's words, "Turning lemons into lemonade, or mentorship into leadership, the practices of Black male educational leaders...have been applied to development of a Mentorship Framework for Supporting the Journey of Black Male Educators."

Kathleen Cowin

Kathleen Cowin describes the ten-year refinement of a Co-mentoring Circle program in the article "Exploring Co-mentoring Circle Practices: Insights for Leadership Development." This program has prepared more than 100 PK-12 principal and program administrator interns preparing to serve as building-based school or school district level leaders in the state of Washington. Insight into literature and practices grounded in research from scholars, which were foundational to her work in establishing Co-mentoring Circles, are shared. Dr. Cowin began offering the 10 components of co-mentoring circles in response to a need for principal and program administrator interns to have a supportive and confidential space based in trust to process their internship experiences. Multiple activities on each component are shared, as well as findings with examples of hopes and concerns. In Dr. Cowin's words, Co-mentoring "circle members can take the components used in the formation of the co-mentoring circle forward in their future as leaders, using some of the circle formation processes for forming cohesive groups among those they lead."

Donna Augustine-Shaw & Mischel Miller

In "The Kansas Educational Leadership Institute: Mentoring Educational Leaders in Partnership," Donna Augustine-Shaw and Mischel Miller inform readers about the history of the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI) and how its planning and development led to collaborative partnerships established across the state. In the words of Drs. Augustine-Shaw and Miller, these authors, researchers, program developers, mentors and trainers include the need for "Guiding leadership standards and professional licensure requirements propelling the need for continued mentoring support of new superintendents, special education directors, and principals." KELI mentors guide mentees as they exploring "the importance of mission, equity, cultural responsiveness, instructional leadership, community engagement, management, and professional norms." Their work and the commitment of colleagues found the 13 years of state-wide data revealed the impact

of KELI, which also led to the institute's gold accreditation from the International Mentoring Association (IMA).

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