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**Dockery, Linda Bengé**

**AN EXPLORATION OF MENTORSHIP BETWEEN ADULTS IN THE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**

*The University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Ed.D. 1985

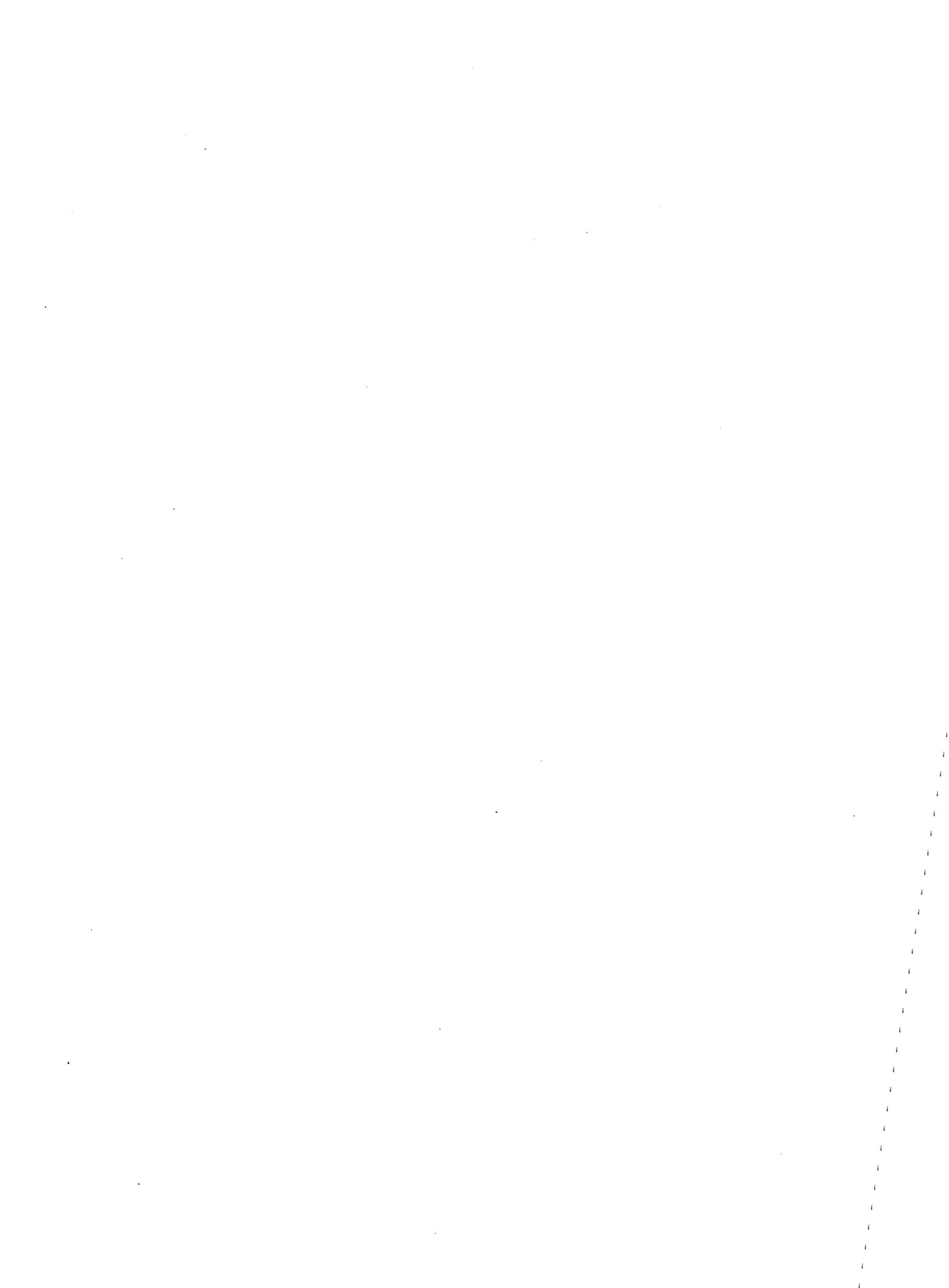
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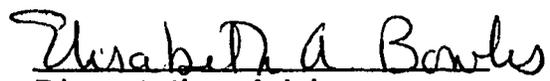
by

Linda Benge Dockery

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

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Approved by

  
Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Adviser Elizabeth A. Bowles

Committee Members Adriano Vallicorsa

Ronald H. Miller

Donald M. Russell

Julie V. Brown

May 29, 1985  
Date of Acceptance by Committee

May 29, 1985  
Date of Final Oral Examination

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**DOCKERY, LINDA BENGE. An Exploration of Mentorship Between Adults in the Public Schools. (1985) Directed by Dr. Elisabeth Bowles. 113 pp.**

The purpose of this study was to identify and determine the nature of the mentoring process that occurred naturally between adults in a public school setting. The major focus was on school-based personnel, primarily teachers.

Chapter I explained the major concepts, limitations, and definitions dealt with by the study.

The literature related to mentor and mentoring was examined in Chapter II. Special emphasis was given to the historical concept of mentoring, the characteristics of mentor-mentoree relationships, and the significance of mentor-mentoree relationships for women. A definition of "mentor" based in the literature on business and women's studies was examined. In addition, the major theories concerning the adult learner were reviewed.

The focus of Chapter III was the dissemination and use of a field study questionnaire and the following in-depth interviews. Questionnaires were administered to a stratified sample of 482 K-12, school-based personnel in a public school district of approximately 2300 teachers. The 20 questions on the questionnaire were used to identify the personal and professional characteristics of mentors, the skills shared during the mentoring process, and the ways in which mentors were helpful or influential to mentorees. Twelve individuals who were identified as being part of three mentor-mentoree/mentor-mentoree chains were interviewed. These interviews gave additional insights into the initiation and nurturing of natural mentor relationships.

Chapter IV dealt with the analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires and the

interviews. Significant differences ( $\alpha = .05$ ) were found through the use of *t* tests and *z* scores in the sex, job classification, and educational background of individuals with and without mentors. In addition, the major characteristics identified in mentors focused on communication, teaching techniques, organization, assertiveness, support, listening skills, friendliness, and encouragement.

Mentors seemed to have an intuitive understanding of the best ways to help other adults grow and flourish. The data drawn from this study showed that mentors were also able to develop this understanding. Chapter V discussed the relationships among the life-span developmental theories, the mentoring relationship, and preservice/in-service programs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Most people can think of at least one human being who has had some influence on their careers. Some individuals have experienced special--even magical or mystical--relationships with significant others who have had a powerful impact on their career development and on their lives. It is only recently that researchers, particularly psychologists, psychiatrists, and business professionals, have begun to look systematically at relationships with a special type of significant other--the mentor--and at the effects of these relationships on individual and career development (Queralto,1982).

Little research was done in the area of mentoring prior to 1970. According to O'Neill (1981), the current fascination with mentor-protege' relationships was the result of three new developments. First, the recent interest in the adult life cycle has focused attention on mentoring as a way of easing middle-adulthood transitions as well as facilitating the growth of younger adults. Second, through the study of adulthood the question of what success

means, both in life and in career has been raised. Mentoring relationships have been presented as processes through which personal success and satisfaction can be derived. And third, due to economic instability and consequent restrictions of both salary and promotion, mentoring has been proposed as a way for individuals to productively use their skills and knowledge. In addition to the literature on the adult life-span development, another independent field of investigation--women's career development--has focused upon mentoring.

Because of limited research, descriptions and definitions of mentors are quite varied. Wrightsman (1981) suggested that "with respect to communication between researchers--an absolute necessity for the body of knowledge to grow--there is a false sense of consensus, (regarding the operational definition of a mentor-protege' relationship) because at a superficial level everybody knows what mentoring is" (p.3).

In fact, because the characteristics of a mentor are "known," many school districts in their search for excellence have proposed career ladders or merit pay plans in which "mentor" teachers hold significant roles. These plans have often had a very definite and formal role for

the "mentor" teacher to play in the educational setting. Paradoxically, according to LaFrance (1981), as certain developments made mentoring more accessible (through formalized settings like a career ladder), other developments have negated the mentoring process. Currently, mentoring is a selective, even exclusionary, endeavor. The efforts to expand and formalize the mentoring process may instead serve to reduce the quality of the relationship (Moore, 1982; Purdy, 1981). Making a characteristically idiosyncratic relationship available to all may change the relationship itself in such a way that it will no longer be one of mentoring.

Yet in primary and secondary schools (under current conditions of limited resources coupled with ever-increasing pressures for accountability), the optimum development of faculty members and administrators has become more desirable than ever. A factor as potentially capable of contributing to the career development of teachers as mentorship is worthy of exploration.

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and to determine the nature of the mentoring process that occurred naturally between adults in the public school setting. A secondary purpose of the study

was to provide information that may eventually lead to improved self-concept and teaching effectiveness for classroom teachers through the use of the mentoring relationship.

The following questions guided the study:

1. What mentorship occurred naturally between adults in the public school setting?
2. What was the nature of the mentoring process between adults in the public schools?
3. What were the personal and professional characteristics of individuals who were mentors? Mentorees?
4. What were the personal measures of success held by both mentor and mentoree?
5. What skills were shared by mentors with mentorees?
6. Will the nature of the natural mentoring process allow it to be formalized through preservice, staff development, and/or career ladder activities? If so, what precautions, problems, etc. should be considered?

#### Limitations of the Study

A review of the literature on the teacher as mentor revealed no systematic study of the role played by mentors in the field of

primary/secondary education. In addition, an examination of Dissertation Abstracts International and the computer data bases of ERIC and Sociological Abstracts resulted in the discovery of few research efforts related to mentorship in the fields of higher education, business, and women's studies. These arenas, although possibly more aligned with public education than one might expect, seem far removed from the primary/secondary classroom.

The lack of information on adults as mentors increased the importance of this study. This research effort will fill a void in the literature and become a basis for others to use in subsequent efforts in this field.

This study was limited to one school district in North Carolina. The data, therefore, reflected the experiences of the particular teacher population that for one reason or another worked in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. This may limit the transferability of the research results to other teacher populations. The study, however, was strengthened by the very use of such a group of teachers. Any results of the study should have direct import on one of the major school systems in our state. The research may speak to the direct needs of teachers which might be met though preservice,

staff development, or career ladder plans. In addition, some understanding of the natural mentoring process could be used as a baseline from which to draw conclusions about structured mentoring processes which may be imposed by career ladders or merit pay plans.

Semantics presented another challenge; the vocabulary dealt with in this study was open to wide interpretation and loaded with emotional connotations. This was especially true during the 1980s in the history of education in the United States. Phrases like "career ladder" or "merit pay" have almost become fighting words for some groups of educators and legislators. Agreement on what these words meant, especially as they became translated into program, was hard to find. Therefore, the following definitions were only a starting point for this study. They should take on a clearer meaning as a result of the data analysis required by this study.

### Definitions

**Career Ladder** - a systematic plan of career development for educators which encourages differentiated rewards, both monetary and nonmonetary, for differentiated responsibilities; tied to competency and teacher choice

**Mentor** - 1. the mythological Greek tutor and close advisor of

Thelemachus, the son of Odysseus (historical); 2. one who "takes a younger man under his wing, invites him into a new occupational world, shows him around, imparts his wisdom, cares, sponsors, criticizes, and bestows his blessings" (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 23); 3. an older, more experienced individual who has an emotional commitment to and who helps a younger individual through a developmental course toward adulthood, professionalism, or the realization of a dream (Phillips-Jones, 1982)

**Mentoree** - an individual selected by a mentor (Collins, 1983); an individual who works with a mentor

**Merit Pay** - a systematic plan which rewards teaching skills with differentiated monetary rewards

**Natural Mentoring** - the interactive process between mentor and mentoree which occurs by choice of the mentor and mentoree

**Structured Mentoring** - the interactive process between mentor and mentoree which occurs only because of the intervention of an outside force such as a school district or an institution of higher education

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Historical Concept of Mentoring

According to the Homer epic, the Odyssey, young Telemachus was entrusted to the guidance and counsel of the wise quardian, Mentor, during his father's ten-year absence. With Mentor's assistance, Telemachus grew to adulthood and was able to reign successfully. This concept of mentor has periodically surfaced in literature since that time.

Most recently the mentoring concept has been depicted in film. Judith Thurman (1981) felt that the relationship between Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi, the old Jedi Knight in Star Wars, and young Luke Skywalker, was that of mentor and mentoree. Ben was a member of a wise, powerful, and elusive Brotherhood which possessed esoteric knowledge. He passed this knowledge on to Luke, his chosen heir, first by recognizing Luke's native capacity to achieve it, and then by submitting Luke to an initiation. This was a rigorous process which

was there to intervene. However, Luke eventually had to learn to use the "Force" to save himself. For not only does the mentor protect and nurture the mentoree, he gives him confidence in his own power and sets him free. The historical concept of mentor was both worldly and magical.

Thurman suggested that the Star Wars myth served as an allegory to the modern business world which at times seems to be an electronic battleground.

#### Characteristics of Mentor-Mentoree Relationships

The Yale psychologist Daniel J. Levinson and his colleagues Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee have done much research on men and their mentors. Their findings published in The Seasons of a Man's Life in 1978 led to several conclusions about male/male mentoring.

"When a young man finds a mentor, he is excited and spurred on by the shared sense of his promise. Yet he is full of self-doubt: can he ever become all that both of them want him to be? At different times--or even at the same moment--he experiences himself as the inept novice, the fraudulent imposter, the equal colleague, and the rising star who will someday soar to heights far beyond those of the mentor" (p. 100).

Thus there is often conflict even at the very beginning of a male/male mentorship.

Nancy Collins in her book Professional Women & Their Mentors (1983) drew on a large research project to relate the work of Levinson et al. to women in the business world of the 1980's. She found that conflict is not part of the early male/female mentorship. Women seem to need and are given more support and encouragement. Even in the 1980's, women have fewer opportunities for the "coaching" experiences that men receive. The idea of someone pushing, guiding, teaching, coaching, or challenging women is still relatively new. Most women, as they accept the mentoring relationship, do so with stronger feelings of sharing and mutual support.

Men also feel strongly from the beginning of a mentorship that they can and will surpass their mentors (Levinson et al., 1978). Women seldom consider this possibility. In fact, women often prolong the mentorship (Collins, 1983; Schockett, Yoshimura, Beyard-Tyler, Haring, 1983) after they have surpassed their mentor either intellectually or through promotion. This overdependency appears to be a common syndrome in male/female mentorships. It may even be a detriment to a women's career. However, the characteristics of support and sharing seem to lead to a more positive and stable relationship between mentor and mentoree after the mentorship has

ended.

Levinson et al. (1978) also noted that men generally select male mentors who are eight to fifteen years older, more experienced, and with greater seniority (p. 99). Collins (1983) found several related trends. First, most females have male mentors. Although this is changing, the reason is quite obvious. Until very recently, few females held positions of real power in corporations. There were no women available at higher levels to serve as mentors. That is why no examination of female/female mentorships is discussed here. Second, women select mentors closer to their ages. Men and women of equivalent age often find the male in a higher company position and with more experience. Also, there is the problem of father-daughter relationships if the male is 20 or more years older than the female. In addition, older mentors, whether male or female, may not have understood the current problems facing the present work force.

Men also select mentors for whom they hold a great deal of affection. "Everyone Who Makes It Has A Mentor" published in the Harvard Business Review (Eliza & Scott, 1978) stated that mentors do get emotionally involved. In the article, Donald Perkins, Chief Executive Officer of the Jewel Tea Company, explained,

If you are asking me if you can work with people without love, the answer is no. On the other hand, if you are asking if it is possible to help people grow by expressing love only in terms of permissiveness, by never hurting them and never being candid with them, the answer is also no. Sponsorship [mentorship] is somewhat like parenthood" (p. 100).

Women also feel strong emotional bonds for their mentors. Over 20% of the respondents in Collins survey of 400 top female executives, admitted to having sexual relations with their mentors. However, all respondents felt such relationships with a mentor were inappropriate and ill-advised. So it seems that women ran additional risks in dealing with the emotional bonds that mentor relationships create.

Eliza and Scott (1978) stated that most males felt they were "handpicked" by their mentors. This may no longer be the case. More recent articles (Kellogg, 1983; Collins, 1983) focused on two aspects: the need that younger employees, male and female, have to locate a mentor and the various ways mentors can be recruited.

Men use their mentors in much the way women do, with some marked differences. Men seem to divide the benefits of their mentor relationship into four general areas and expect all four to occur. Women generally accept the relationship if only some of these

benefits work and have not expected or pushed for assistance in all (Collins,1983).

Beginning Orientation . The first area in which men feel they benefit from their mentors is during a beginning orientation in the new organization. Here, the male protege' gains from such mentor action as "he helped me to plan my career path," "he shared with me the benefit of his experience," "he gave me the push to make it happen."

Specific Aid . The second benefit for younger men is more definite, and I call it specific aid. In this regard, the mentor "recommended me to my boss for promotion," "gave me visibility and approval through his trust and association," and "gave me technical knowledge necessary to improve my job."

Protection . The third area is that of protection. Here I have been told that my mentor "defended me against unjust criticism," "spoke in favor of me," and "took my side in professional battles." The business world is not a fair one, and mentors can be of great assistance in this arena.

Long-Range Assistance . Finally, the fourth type of help was in long-range assistance. Men said their mentors "got me on committees of high visibility with wide-reaching effects," "recommended me and helped me change positions and/or companies," and "gave other general assistance which set up my career for life" (p. 98).

Collins also found that male mentors teach male and female mentorees different skills. Women say their mentors are the most beneficial in "giving encouragement and support, instilling confidence, providing growth opportunities and opening doors, and giving visibility within the organization" (p. 99). Men say their mentors are the most beneficial in "developing leadership, developing

the ability to take risks, giving direction, and providing information about what is going on" (p. 99).

Since only six percent of the top corporate jobs in 1983 were held by women, the different skills taught to male and female mentorees take on even more significance.

Levinson et al. found that the male mentoring relationship lasts two to three years on the average, eight to ten years at most. He added that "most often an intense [male] mentor relationship ends with strong conflict and bad feelings on both sides. The young man may have powerful feelings of bitterness, rancor, grief, abandonment, liberation, and rejuvenation" (p. 100). Men often get out of a mentoring relationship because they feel "constrained." They feel their mentor is taking credit for their ideas or their written work. By far the major cause of the termination of the male/male mentorship is conflict, with a geographical move second (Collins, 1983).

Women terminate mentor relationships much less often because of conflict--only seven percent of the time, according to Collins. Termination is due to geographical moves first and organizational moves second. This is significant because male/female mentorships tend to occur less often--one to three times during a female's career

as compared to three or four times during a male's career. Also male/female mentorships last on the average five years, much longer than the male/male mentorship usually survives.

Men are seldom willing to be mentored much past the mid-forties (Levinson et al., 1978). In their forties, men are more interested in developing the talents under them. They see opportunities to be mentors and have the position and authority to attract mentorees (Collins, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978). Women seldom supervise as many people as men nor are they as entrenched in positions of authority. Although the data were sparse, women mentors appear to be more willing to mentor several mentorees simultaneously and for longer periods of time.

#### Benefits of Mentor-Mentoree Relationships

Sweeping statements proclaiming the benefits of mentoring for the mentoree, mentor, and their institutions are abundant (Cook, 1982; Halatin, 1981; Moore, 1982; Phillips-Jones, 1982; Purdy, 1981). These benefits fall into two general categories, the professional and the personal as defined by Pressler and Blanchard in A Taxonomy of Mentor-Protege' Relationship, 1984.

In the mentoree's professional development, the mentor serves to

initiate the mentoree into the politics of the system, to direct and encourage the accomplishments of the mentoree, to advise the mentoree in career decisions, to bring visibility to the mentoree within the institution, and to use contacts to advance the career of the mentoree (Pressler & Blanchard, 1984). Perhaps most importantly, the mentor serves to enhance the satisfaction the mentoree derived from professional life (Braskamp, Wise, & Hengstler, 1979; Roche, 1979).

In the mentoree's personal development, the mentor serves to enhance the mentoree's confidence in his or her abilities and decisions, to share values and ideals necessary for success and satisfaction within both the professional and personal realms, to help the mentoree overcome personal difficulties and enhance adjustment, and on occasion to develop a lasting, personal friendship (Pressler & Blanchard, 1984). While references pointed out potential difficulties for the mentoree in a mentoring relationship such as conflict between the mentoree and mentor (Levinson et al., 1978; O'Neil, 1981) or unhealthy dependence of the mentoree on the mentor (Collins, 1983; Cook, 1982), the overwhelming consensus remained that mentorees benefit tremendously from a mentoring relationship.

Mentoring also benefits the mentor. Involvement in such a relationship has professional benefits such as acquisition of another perspective on the institution and its operation, retention of contact with new developments within the institution, and recognition of others for developing new talent (Pressler & Blanchard, 1984). Personal rewards of the mentor include the satisfaction gained from helping a mentoree develop and the boost in confidence which comes from the mentoree's respect and admiration (Halatin, 1981; LaFrance, 1981).

Mentor-mentoree relationships enhance the institution in which they occur because both mentors and mentorees are better educated and more satisfied with their circumstance (Cook, 1982; Halatin, 1981; Roche, 1979). In turn, better educated and more satisfied employees and employers raise and maintain morale within the institution (Halatin, 1981).

#### Significance of Mentor-Mentoree Relationships for Women

Mentoring relationships, though highly lauded, present special obstacles and attractions for women. The lack of mentoring opportunities is the initial difficulty women face (Collins, 1983). Bolton, in the article "A Conceptual Analysis of the Mentor

Relationship in the Career Development of Women" (1980), offered several explanations for women's lack of mentoring: (a) an absence of female role models exists; (b) an aspect of social learning acquired through mixing and relating to others in ways to which women are unaccustomed is involved in such relationships; (c) females rarely serve as mentors for other women; (d) the sexual aspect of these relationships prevent men from mentoring women; and (e) some men do not perceive women's talents as worthy of their attention.

Collins (1983) suggested that even after establishment of a mentoring relationship, women's experience differs from men's. Mokros, Edkut, and Spichiger (1981) in a study of the sex-related patterns of mentoring and being mentored found major differences between men and women in the extent to which their mentoring focuses on professional versus personal issues. Female professors are more likely to mention personal characteristics of their mentoree, to report a social as well as a work relationship, and to have served as a role model to the mentoree for integrating professional and personal lives. Male professors, especially those who mentored men, know little about the personal lives of their mentoree and do not discuss their mentoree's personal qualities. The few personal characteristics

they do describe tend to be those which interfere with the mentoree's work. Men's relationships are more professional, less personal, than women's. Mokros et al. (1981) speculated that women's closer relationships do not further the mentor's own academic productivity, while men's more work-oriented relationships increase their own research productivity. These differences between men's and women's emphasis on professional versus personal concerns have been found by other researchers. Schrader (1981) found that primary female mentors have informal, warm, mutually supportive relationships with their mentorees which continue even after the mentoring ended. Quinn (1980) found that women with male mentors reported a greater need for a more personal, friendly aspect in their mentoring relationship.

A natural extension of the issue just raised is the question of whether a male or female mentor is better for the female mentoree. Levinson et al. (1978) believed that a male mentor can help his mentoree accept herself as both achieving and attractive, a hypothesis supported by the work of Vanzant (1981). Vanzant found that women with male mentors made a significantly greater number of positive statements about their mentor's influence on their own integration of feminine and professional self-concepts than did

women with female mentors. Others have argued that a male mentor provides a more realistic experience than a female mentor can, in that the world is still male-dominated (Epstein, 1970). Also, because males are often more professionally powerful than females, a male mentor has greater resources with which to help his mentoree. A female mentor, on the other hand, serves as the best role model for the mentoree. In that role modeling is most effective when the model and observer are similar (Bandura & Waktersm 1963). It follows that a female mentor may be the better model for the female mentoree. Finally, gender may matter less than the qualities and qualifications of the mentor as a professional and as a person (George & Kummerow, 1981; Schrader, 1981).

#### Definition of Mentor

After reviewing the literature, it seemed that the following five criteria are necessary if one is to be defined as a mentor. Although ideally all five criteria are present, the mentor relationship is not a permanent one; different combinations are possible, even preferable as one's career evolves. Also, the first mentor may well be the most important one. This mentor is the first to introduce the mentoree to a new professional life, and can by this interaction provide the basis

for the way a mentoree molds a career.

What are the criteria, then, for mentorship?

Higher Up on the Organizational Ladder First, a mentor must be higher up on the professional ladder than the mentoree. No matter how much one likes or admires someone, that individual can not be below one on the organizational chart and be a true mentor. Mentors need to be higher ranking in order to assist the mentoree with the climb.

An Authority in the Field Second, a mentor must be a recognized authority in a given field. The mentor must be clearly established in the area in which mentoring occurs. And almost always, the mentor is older than the mentoree; certainly the mentor must be ahead in experience and knowledge.

Influential Next, a mentor must be influential. The mentor must have a recognized "voice" in the profession and be close to the lines of authority and power. Mentors have a long track record of being influential leaders, which can usually be traced back as far as their academic and collegiate activities.

Interested in the Mentoree's Growth and Development Fourth, a mentor needs to have a genuine interest in the personal growth and development of the mentoree. The mentor likes and respects the

mentoree as a person, is able to see the mentoree's potential, and feels that the mentoree's development is not only good for the mentoree but for the organization. While some mentors are transitional figures, they give tangible assistance at various stages of the mentoree's advancement. Some mentors remain interested in the mentoree for a lifetime.

Willing to Commit Time and Emotion to the Relationship And last, but not least, a mentor should be willing to commit time and emotion to the relationship. This goes beyond mere interest and is a commitment that, more often than not, is intense. A mentoring relationship can be one of great devotion. There is mutual trust and caring, confidentiality, and a willingness to develop and foster the relationship. It takes time to discuss both fears and problems, as well as to share victories and successes (Levinson et al., 1978; Collins, 1983).

The mentor relationship does not readily lend itself to vivisection or definition of its components. It's somewhat like trying to define what constitutes a friend or what a friend 'does.' The relationship is formal and impersonal, yet constructive and of great use. Perhaps the most valuable thing a mentor does is to help the young person grasp the difference between what's really important and what only seems so--in other words, perspective (Collins, 1983, p. 8).

### The Adult Learner

Having examined the major characteristics of mentorship as it is exhibited in the arenas of higher education, business, and women's studies, it is now appropriate to focus on theories about the adult learner.

A key assumption is that human "development proceeds through a sequence of qualitatively different stages, invariantly, so that each stage builds on the previous stage in an hierarchical manner" (Sprinthall, 1978, p.2). Several developmental theorists supported this key assumption including Piaget, Kohlberg, Loevinger, and Erikson. Since according to Sprinthall (1979, p. 1), "no single developmental theory is an adequate overall framework within which to comprehend human growth," consideration of these theories may produce evidence at the conceptual level, if not the empirical level, which may help to explain mentor/mentoree relationships.

The following summaries are necessarily brief and are not intended to convey the full range of each theorist's thought.

#### Erikson

Erik Erikson (1950) proposed an eight-stage progression in ego development over the whole life span. Each stage was characterized

by a different crucial issue that was either resolved successfully or not; failure to achieve a successful resolution at one stage impeded all later development. The first four stages belonged to infancy and childhood. The last four stages, starting in early adolescence, were identity, intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity.

The main crisis of adolescence is that of establishing ego identity--a sense of knowing who one is, a sense of belonging. Young people who fail to achieve a sense of identity are left with role diffusion and are unable to progress further. Those who do establish a clear identity are ready to go on to the next stage of forming a true close relationship with another person. Failure to do this results in feelings of isolation and loneliness. Should one be successful in establishing intimacy, one proceeds to the issue of generativity: expanding one's interests; creating new people, products, or ideas; contributing to society. Failure to achieve generativity leads to a feeling of stagnation. One does not usually arrive at the final stage, ego integrity, until late adulthood. At this point one looks back over one's life and decides whether it has been worth living.

### Gutmann

David Gutmann (1970) has noted age-related changes in the

relation between the self and the environment which may be considered shifts in locus of control. Young adulthood is typified by self-confidence and risk-taking; the mode is active mastery. From about ages 20 to 50, thought and action are directed outward; the environment is perceived as challenging, something to be manipulated in order to get what one wants. In the middle years, the mode is passive mastery; the focus is turned inward on one's own thoughts and feelings and away from what was perceived to be a complex and hostile environment. The third mode, magic mastery, involves distorting one's perceptions of the environment to reduce feelings of helplessness. Older people are more likely than younger people to convince themselves in this way that they will attain what they want or have already attained it.

### Kohlberg

The focus was on moral development in the theory of Lawrence Kohlberg (1973). Based on a long series of field interviews, which were designed to find out how humans actually think about problems of social justice, Kohlberg discovered that the process of making judgments actually forms a developmental sequence of six stages. This sequence of stage growth parallels what Piaget has found.

Kohlberg saw people as moving through various stages of moral judgment, based on their understanding of the right way to behave toward other people and toward society in general. The progression of moral-judgment levels goes from preconventional to conventional to postconventional. Behavior at all three levels can be the same, but the motivation for it will differ.

Research done by Kohlberg and Gilligan (1971) has shown that from a developmental standpoint, a person's level of moral-judgment thinking tends to lag slightly behind his or her general stage of cognitive development. Thus, although almost 50% of the adolescents in the United States do reach some level of formal, abstract thought, only between 25% and 30% of those adolescents reach Kohlberg's highest level of moral judgment thinking.

### Levinson

Based on an empirical study using the biographical method, the stage theory of Daniel Levinson and his associates Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) focused on relatively universal, age-linked periods in the lives of adult men. Five stages have been identified. (1) Leaving the family, which extends from late adolescence to ages 20-24, is a transition period during which a man is trying to develop

independence from his family. (2) Getting into the adult world, which occupies the early through the late 20s, begins after the man has established a new home base, is starting out in his occupation, and is attempting "to fashion an initial life structure" that links him with the wider adult world. (3) Settling down, a period that usually begins in the early 30s and extends to ages 39-41, has two conflicting aspects, one represented by order, stability, and commitment to career and family life, the other represented by mobility, upward striving, and ambition. (4) Becoming one's own man, which usually occurs in the middle to late 30s is "the high point of early adulthood" (p. 23). (5) The mid-life transition, which starts in the early 40s, resembles the earlier leaving-the-family stage in that it is a transitional period between two periods of relative stability. It often is a period of considerable turmoil as the man senses a disparity between what he is and what he wants to be.

### Loevinger

Based upon an extensive series of field interviews, Jane Loveinger created a framework that helped one comprehend the stages in the development of the ego (1976). She saw the ego as a master trait of personal growth. Ego is a construct which refers to that part of

human personality that acts as an executive. Ego is involved in coordinating, choosing, selecting, and directing a person's activities.

Loevinger's work suggests that there are special qualities of ego functioning (e.g., how adequately or inadequately a person chooses, or makes decisions). At different stages of development, Loevinger suggested, the ego functions in distinctly different ways or patterns. At the higher stages of development, the ego functions more adequately (i.e., takes in more aspects of a given situation, views problems with a greater tolerance for complexity, sees things more broadly, and selects from a greater variety of possible actions). There are clear qualitative differences to the various stages of ego development that Loevinger has discerned. Each one of her stages builds upon the previous stage, but exhibits a higher level of differentiation and integration. These stages can be viewed as a sequence of developmental stages leading toward personal growth and development.

### Neugarten

Bernice Neugarten (1976) was one of the first life-cycle theorists to emphasize the influence of age-related life events and social expectations on individual development during the adult years.

Neugarten specified three different kinds of time: historical (or calendar) time, social time (or expectations), and life time (chronological age), all of which interact to produce the individual's life cycle.

Interviewing 100 "well-placed" men and women in the 40-60 age group, Neugarten found a "heightened sensitivity to one's position within a complex social environment," a "willingness to explore the various issues and themes of middle age," and a conviction "that middle adulthood is the period of maximum capacity and ability to handle a highly complex environment and a highly differentiated self" (pp. 93-97). These people saw themselves as a bridge between generations.

Sex differences were marked. The women emphasized their greater freedom: "Not only is there increased time and energy now available for the self, but also a satisfying change in self-concept....Middle age marks the beginning of a period in which latent talents and capacities can be put to use in new directions" (p. 96). In contrast, the men often suffered heavy job pressures or job boredom. Nonetheless, both sexes reported an increased sense of competence, greater self-understanding, a confidence in their expertise.

Over the past century, historical trends have been such as to speed up the family cycle. Moreover, as the life span has increased, the postparental period has been extended considerably. At the same time, men are reaching economic maturity later than before, whereas women are entering the work force sooner and middle-aged women are becoming more likely to return to the world of work. All these changes have profound effects on the rhythm of the individual life cycle.

#### Critique of Models of the Adult Learner

As the disciplined study of human behavior, psychology has not provided a viable single theory of adult growth. A common conclusion is that psychology has provided an increasingly detailed account of the process of normal and abnormal child development and a growing body of knowledge about adolescence, yet there is a dearth of information concerning adult growth. If any conclusion from these theories can be drawn, it appears to be that humans move from less complex stages to more complex levels. It appears that persons judged at higher stages of development function more complexly, possess a wider repertoire of behavioral skills, perceive problems more broadly, and respond more accurately and empathically to the

needs of others.

If the cognitive-developmental stage predicted differential functioning for adults in general, then what about adults in the helping professions, especially teachers? If a consistent relationship between developmental stage and performance can be established, may we assume that adults can develop, grow, move, and change in order to improve in the level of functioning? If this assumption is true, how does it relate to the characteristics, both personal and professional, that may appear as part of a mentor/mentoree relationship?

The remainder of this study attempts to answer these questions as the mentor/mentoree relationship is explored in the light of what was assumed about the adult learner.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The following research methods represent a search for the **natural mentoring** process and the components which constitute the mentoring relationship. The study investigated the identification of natural mentoring, the beginnings of the natural mentoring relationship, the personal and professional characteristics of the individuals involved, the needs and skills of both the mentor and mentoree, the interpersonal relationships involved in mentoring, the expectations of mentor and mentoree, the length of mentoring relationships, and the personal measures of success held by mentor and mentoree. In addition, the possibility of the "formalization" of the mentoring process through preservice, staff development, or career ladder activities was examined. Two basic research techniques were used to address these concerns, the field study questionnaire and the in-depth interview.

#### Field Study Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to describe the mentoring

process in the public schools. Data from this instrument were examined to determine whether trends or patterns characterized the natural mentoring process. A clearer description of mentorship in the public schools led to identification of criteria which distinguished between natural mentoring and structured mentoring. These criteria may then have direct implications for teacher training.

Preliminary results of the survey were used to develop questions to be asked during follow-up interviews. Moreover, the questionnaire determined the individuals to be interviewed.

Since one of the purposes of the questionnaire was to define the term *mentor* as it applied to the public school setting, the word itself was not used in the questionnaire. Instead, respondents were asked to identify and describe "another person (not a relative) who had taken what respondents considered to be an important interest in their career as an educator (advising, guiding, providing support, providing recognition, listening)." A pilot version of the questionnaire was field-tested with sample respondents (N=20), revised and again field-tested (N=15). A questionnaire which yielded the most helpful information, based on the respondents' suggestions for improving

clarity and content, was then refined for use with the total sample population. A copy of the final revised questionnaire, "Learning From One Another," is found in the Appendix.

The following key features or concerns made up the questionnaire "Learning From One Another."

1. The respondent's sex
2. The respondent's age
3. The highest degree earned by the respondent
4. The respondent's present job classification
5. Prior mentoring relationship(s)
6. The number of mentors experienced by a respondent
7. The respondent's age when the mentoring relationship began
8. The mentor's age when the mentoring relationship began
9. The degree held by the mentor when the mentoring relationship began
10. The mentor's job classification when the mentoring relationship began
11. The length of the mentoring relationship
12. The mentor's sex

13. The personality characteristics of the mentor
14. The professional characteristics of the mentor
15. The skills learned from the mentor by the respondent
16. The way(s) in which the mentor was helpful or important to the respondent
17. Other ways in which the mentor influenced the respondent
18. The mentor's name (optional)
19. Additional comments by the respondent
20. The respondent's name (optional)

#### Procedures for Dissemination and Use of the Questionnaire

The sample population of 482 was taken from the 2373 certificated personnel of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. Inclusion in the sample was determined by a random number selection from a computer-generated list of certificated employees. The stratified random sample included the possibility of representatives from five major job classifications ranging from "teacher" to "system-wide administrator."

The researcher obtained support for the distribution of the questionnaire from the superintendent of schools as well as the

assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services. A memorandum was sent to principals and guidance counselors in each of the system's 56 schools from the evaluator, the superintendent, and the assistant superintendent for pupil personnel services urging the cooperation of each school in completing the forthcoming questionnaire. Questionnaires and directions for their distribution and completion were sent to guidance counselors.

Counselors were directed to assemble the randomly selected participants from their school and to distribute the questionnaires to them simultaneously. The questionnaires were completed by the respondents, usually within fifteen minutes, and returned by the counselors to the evaluator in sealed envelopes. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and thanked for their participation in completion of the questionnaire.

As completed questionnaires were received, the researcher coded each one by assigning to it a three-digit number. The first digit was determined by the color of the questionnaire: rose for respondents from elementary schools, blue for respondents from middle schools, and beige for respondents from high schools. The other two digits in

the code were sequential numbers. This code allowed any original document to be pulled for more specific information. It also allowed the data to be sorted by three major grade levels.

The data were then typed into a microcomputer which had been programmed for various sorting routines. The possible answers to questions 1-16 had originally been coded to allow for easy key-punch sorts and several factorial designs. Although this study was primarily a descriptive one with most data taking the form of frequency tallies, the baseline data of the questionnaire were designed to allow multiple comparisons using *t* tests and *z* scores.

Questions 13-17, which dealt with the more subjective short-answer responses, were sorted by the use of content analysis. To increase the reliability of this analysis, two independent evaluators were used to corroborate or refine the initial sorting done by the researcher. One evaluator was trained in the field of education and the other in the field of counseling. The information gained from the short-answer sections was grouped and analyzed in several different ways.

One important part of the questionnaire was its identification of individuals who were mentors or mentorees. Since a basic assumption of the study was that a mentoree was the only individual who could truly identify a mentor, it was important that respondents not only be willing to share the name of their mentor but their own names as well. This sharing of names allowed the researcher to identify individuals who would participate in the in-depth interviews.

#### In-Depth Interviews

It was anticipated that some mentor chains (an individual mentoring to a second person, who in turn mentored to a third) or at least some mentor pairs would be found from analysis of questionnaire data. Priority would be given to the members of these "chains" as candidates for in-depth interviews. If no chains were discovered, interviews would be conducted with no more than four mentor/mentoree pairs whose responses regarding feelings about mentors and assistance from mentors were most representative of the total sample as determined by the Field Study Questionnaire. In addition, the interview participants had to agree to discuss their mentorships and had to allow the discussions to be recorded.

The basic questions asked during the interviews with both mentors and mentorees were similar. Since the individuals had different viewpoints depending on whether they were mentor, mentoree, or both (as was possible with the middle individual in a chain), the questions had to be tailored to each group. It should also be remembered that the identification of the individuals to be interviewed was the result of a random sampling. It was quite possible that any individual so identified may, upon being interviewed, have played more than one role. For example, during the in-depth interviews individuals identified by the questionnaire as mentors may have indicated their roles as mentorees; individuals identified by the questionnaire as mentorees may have indicated their roles as mentors. If this occurred, the researcher adjusted the questions to fit the new role of the respondent. In addition, the researcher was prepared to coax information from respondents who were modest or otherwise reluctant to tell their stories. In situations like this, the researcher deviated from the prepared list of questions and asked more general questions until the respondent was at ease.

### Suggested Questions for Mentors

You have been identified by another individual as a person who has been especially helpful as an educator (advising, guiding, providing support, providing recognition, listening. Would you be willing to discuss the following questions?

1. Were you conscious of the fact that you were so helpful to another person? If so, did you make an effort to be helpful? Why did you decide to help?

2. Who initiated the relationship? How?

3. What are some of the skills you possess which you have shared with others?

4. What are some of the personality characteristics you possess which allow you to be helpful?

5. What benefits, if any, did you derive from this type of relationship?

6. Are you particularly interested in this phase of education (working with colleagues)?

7. Did you receive such help from someone else?

8. Can an educational system create or encourage this type of

relationship? If so, how?

9. What else would you like to say about this type of relationship between people?

### Suggested Questions for Mentorees

You have just completed a questionnaire on which you identified another individual as a person who has been especially helpful to you as an educator (advising, guiding, providing support, providing recognition, listening). Would you be willing to discuss the following questions?

1. At the time were you conscious of the fact that another person was being very helpful to you? If so, how?

2. Who initiated the relationship? How?

3. Have you found yourself treating others as your "mentor" has treated you? If so, how?

4. Can an educational system create or encourage this type of relationship? If so, how?

5. What else would you like to say about this type of relationship between people?

The information gained from the interviews enhanced and amplified the baseline data gathered from the questionnaires.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Once the researcher had identified the key questions and concerns, the sources of data, and the instruments necessary for collecting information, the next step was the actual data collection and analysis.

The questionnaire "Learning From One Another" (see Appendix) was distributed to a randomly selected sample of subjects who were certificated personnel of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools during the first week of April, 1985. By mid-April 463 of the 482 questionnaires had been returned. The high response rate of 96% was attributed to several factors. A cover letter written by the superintendent, the associate superintendent for pupil personnel services, and the researcher stressed the importance of the research effort. The attractive and easy-to-complete format of the questionnaire encouraged respondents to participate. Counselors, who assembled the randomly selected participants, distributed the questionnaires, collected, and returned them to the researcher,

facilitated a prompt return of the material. Finally, the response rate may have been influenced by the apparent interest respondents had in the research questions. Many respondents wrote lengthy comments about their mentors or about the need to investigate the mentoring relationship. Their responses indicated a desire for people to talk about and share their experiences related to "significant others." The questionnaire was cathartic. That is, respondents took it as an opportunity to share the powerful feelings of support, appreciation, and encouragement they had received from others.

#### Procedures for Data Analysis

The following data analysis was divided into six parts for ease of interpretation and presentation.

First, the researcher examined questions 1-5 of the questionnaire providing a description of the answers in the form of tallies and percentages. This information related to the total sample. Questions 1-4 were useful in comparing the demographic characteristics of the sample to the entire school-based population. Question 5 was a branching question which was used as a "cutoff" point. It directed the respondents to stop answering the questions if they had no mentors.

Second, questions 1-4 were compared as they related to respondents with and without mentors. Patterns that developed helped describe the significant differences between individuals who became mentorees and those who did not.

Third, questions 6-12, which described characteristics and traits of both the mentor and mentoree, were analyzed and represented by both tallies and percentages.

Fourth, content analysis was used to deal with questions 13-17 and 19. These responses refined the definitions and descriptors of mentor and mentoree originally stated in CHAPTER 1.

Fifth, questions 18 and 20 were used to identify and match mentors with mentorees. This matching process produced three three-person "chains" of mentoree-mentor/mentoree-mentor. The individuals in these chains became candidates for the in-depth interviews.

Sixth, although questions for the in-depth interviews were honed from a preliminary data analysis of the questionnaire, interviews were used to give additional insight into the initial research questions ( Chapter I ). Data from the interviews were dealt with

separately and as they related to other survey data.

Part I: Analysis of Questions 1-5. "Learning From One Another"

The questionnaire "Learning From One Another" was sent to 482 randomly selected respondents who were certificated personnel of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (see Appendix). Of the 463 questionnaires returned, 460 were usable; three were blank. This represented a 96% return rate. The sample involved individuals who worked in a school setting and held one of five specific job classifications: teacher, building-based support person, building-based administrator, system-wide support person, system-wide administrator. Questions 1-4 dealt with demographic characteristics: sex, age, education, and job classification (see Table 1).

**Table 1****Description of Respondents, Questions 1-4. "Learning From One Another" (N=460)**

	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>1. <u>Sex</u></b>		
Male	133	28.9
Female	322	70.0
No Response	5	1.0
<b>2. <u>Age in Years</u></b>		
25 Or Under	8	1.7
26-30	46	10.0
31-34	186	40.4
41-50	139	30.2
51-60	69	15.0
Over 60	5	1.1
No response	7	1.5
<b>3. <u>Highest Degree</u></b>		
B.A./B.S.	221	48.1
Masters	197	42.8
Sixth Year	29	6.3
Ed. D./Ph.D.	7	1.5
No Response	6	1.3
<b>4. <u>Job Classification</u></b>		
Group 1	295	64.1
Group 2	83	18.1
Group 3	79	17.2
Group 4	1	0.2
Group 5	1	0.2
No Response	1	0.2

**Note.**

Group 1. Teacher

Group 2. Building-based Support Person (counselor, media coordinator, reading coordinator, CDC, etc.)

Group 3. Building-based Administrator (intern, assistant principal, principal)

Group 4. System-wide Support Person (supervisor, instructional coordinator, psychologist, psychometrist, psychiatrist, social worker)

Group 5. System-wide Administrator (director; administrative intern; assistant, associate or deputy superintendent; superintendent)

Figures describing the sex and age of respondents were in line with the general data available for the total, system-wide certificated population. Slightly more males and slightly fewer females were represented in the sample vs the total population (28.9% vs 24.1% and 70% vs 75.9% respectively) . The mean age of all certificated personnel matched the mean age identified by the questionnaire (i.e., 38 years). The number of certificated personnel holding Bachelor's degrees and Master's degrees fell close to the percentages represented by the sample. The combined items indicating sex, age, and degree held by respondents matched the percentages reflected in the total population ( $a < .05$ ) . Thus, the sample was indeed representative. Only two respondents identified themselves as being "system-wide" vs "school-based" personnel, based on payroll designations (i.e. a "system-wide instructional coordinator" and a "system-wide intern"). However, since they served only one school each and were based in that school, they met the survey criterion of being "school-based" and were included in that group for data analysis.

Part 2: Comparison of Questions 1-4. "Learning From One Another"

Since the sample was a representative one, the differences in respondents with mentors and those without were important. Of the sample, 338 respondents (73.5%) stated they had mentors. The differences between this group and the 122 respondents (26.5%) who did not have mentors were significant (see Table 2).

Mentorless respondents had fewer advanced degrees than the mentorees (59% held bachelor degrees only) and they held fewer building-based support positions (17%). Although there was no significant difference in the ages of the mentorees and the mentorless respondents, more mentorless respondents were female.

Stated differently, a significant number ( $\alpha = .05$ ) of mentorees held more advanced degrees, held more building-based support positions within the system, and were male.

**Table 2**Answers to Questions 1-4. "Learning From One Another"

	<u>Mentored</u>		<u>Mentorless</u>		<u>Significance</u>
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	
<u>Sex</u>					**
Male	100	29.6	31	25.4	
Female	234	69.2	90	73.7	
No Response	4	0.1	1	0.8	
<u>Age in Years</u>					*
25 Or Under	8	2.3	-	-	
26-30	29	8.6	17	13.9	
31-34	151	44.8	38	31.1	
41-50	97	28.7	42	34.4	
51-60	46	13.6	23	18.9	
Over 60	4	1.1	1	0.8	
No Response	3	0.9	1	0.8	
<u>Highest Degree</u>					2.8
B.A./B. S.	140	41.4	72	59.1	
Masters	171	50.6	41	33.6	
Sixth Year	22	6.5	6	4.9	
Ed.D/Ph. D.	5	1.5	1	0.8	
No Response	-	-	2	1.6	
<u>Job Classification</u>					2.7
Group 1	206	60.9	89	72.9	
Group 2	62	18.3	21	17.2	
Group 3	67	19.8	12	9.8	
Group 4	1	0.3	-	-	
Group 5	1	0.3	-	-	

Note.

Group 1. Teacher

Group 2. Building-based Support Person (counselor, media coordinator, reading coordinator, CDC, etc.)

Group 3. Building-based Administrator (intern, assistant principal, principal)

Group 4. System-wide Support Person (supervisor, instructional coordinator, psychologist, psychometrist, psychiatrist, social worker)

Group 5. System-wide Administrator (director; intern, assistant, associate or deputy superintendent; superintendent)

a = .05; Mentoree = .95<sup>t</sup> 338; Mentorless = .95<sup>t</sup> 122

\* No significant t score when a = .05

\*\* a = .05; Males z = 11.43 Females z = 7.58

Part 3: Analysis of Questions 6-12, "Learning From One Another"

Questions 6-12 gave additional data that related to descriptors of both the mentor and mentoree. It was found that since high school graduation most mentorees had found at least two people to serve as mentors (see Table 3). In fact, a large percentage of mentorees (over 44%) had four or more mentors during their careers.

**Table 3**

Number of Mentors Per Mentoree

	<u>Mentorees</u>	<u>%</u>
One Mentor	48	14.2
Two Mentors	77	22.8
Three Mentors	61	18.1
Four or More Mentors	152	44.9

It was also found that almost half of the mentorees were under 25 years of age when they began to work with a mentor (see Table 4). This was important if one assumed that most individuals graduate from college and start their teaching careers at the age of 21. Thus, during the first nine years of a career over 75% of the teachers formed at least one mentoring relationship.

**Table 4****The Age of Mentorees When First Mentorships Began**

<u>Years</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
25 or Under	164	48.5
26-30	90	26.6
31-40	65	19.2
41-50	13	4.1
51-60	4	1.2
Over 60	1	0.3
No Response	1	0.3

The description of a mentor drawn from the data indicated that well over half of the mentors were in their 31st-50th year when they worked with the mentoree who identified them (see Table 5).

**Table 5****Age of Mentors When Relationship Was Initiated**

<u>Years</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
25 or Under	23	6.8
26-30	30	8.8
31-40	117	34.6
41-50	105	31.1
51-60	53	15.7
Over 60	8	2.4
No Response	2	0

The majority of mentors (55%) also held master's degrees while over 20% of all mentors held a doctorate (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

<u>Mentor's Degree</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
High School or Less	13	3.8
B.A./B.S.	70	20.7
Masters	187	55.3
Ed.D/Ph.D.	75	22.2
No Response	3	0.9

Over 17% of the mentorees identified a college teacher as their mentor ( Table 7). Teachers, including both cooperating teachers and peers, made up close to 30% of the mentors. An almost equal number of building-based administrators ( administrative interns, assistant principals, principals) were also identified as mentors. It is significant that 64% of the mentors worked in a school building. When college teachers are included, 90% of the mentors held jobs directly related to education.

**Table 7**

<u>Mentor's Job Classification</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
College Teacher	60	17.75
Cooperating Teacher	22	6.50
Teacher (Peer)	76	22.48
Building-based Support Person (counselor, media coordinator, reading coordinator, etc.)	24	7.10
Building-based Administrator (administrative intern, assistant principal, principal)	94	27.81
System-wide Support Person (supervisor, instructional coordinator, psychologist, psychometrist, psychiatrist, social worker)	19	4.73
System-wide Administrator (director; assistant, associate, deputy superintendent; superintendent)	12	3.50
Other	31	9.17

Almost 10% of the mentors were found outside of the school setting. These individuals were involved in a wide range of occupations from that of minister to stewardess (Table 8).

**Table 8**Occupations of Mentors Outside Education

Business	2
Church Member	1
City Worker	1
College Dean	1
Consultant	2
Father	1
Friend	3
Graduate Student	2
High School Student	1
Husband	1
Labor Organizer	1
Lawyer	1
Minister	3
Musician	2
Psychologist (private)	2
Teacher (prior to high school)	5
Secretary	1
Stewardess	1

The majority of mentors (56%) were female ( see Table 9). Since 69% of the mentorees were female there appears to be an unequal female/female, mentor /mentoree match. More females worked with male mentors. Also, 28% of the total population was male and 29% of the mentorees were male. Yet 43% of the mentors were male. As stated earlier in Table 2, when z scores were calculated there were significantly more male mentorees and significantly fewer female mentorees ( $\alpha = .05$ ).

**Table 9**

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Mentor</u>		<u>Mentoree</u>		<u>Significance</u>
	#	%	#	%	
Male	146	43.1	133	28.9	43.*
Female	190	56.2	322	70.0	123.**
No Response	2	0.5	5	0.1	

Note.  $\alpha = .05$

\*  $z = 43.01$ ,  $z = 123.95$

The length of the mentoring relationships varied with most of them lasting from two to three years or for more than five years.

**Table 10**

Length of the Mentoring Relationship

<u>Years</u>	#	%
One or less	32	9.5
Two - three	111	32.8
Four - five	53	15.7
More than five	142	42.1

Part 4: Content Analysis of Questions 13-17, and 19, "Learning From One Another"

Items 13-17 and 19 provided short-answer responses leading to descriptors which dealt with personal and professional

characteristics of mentors. Responses were coded through content analysis with key words or phrases being listed from each response. These words or phrases were then grouped together by logical analysis. The inclusion of words or phrases in these groups was verified by two independent evaluators who either agreed or disagreed with the grouping of the material. These evaluators were selected because of their strong backgrounds in education and counseling. If agreement was reached between the two evaluators and the researcher regarding the grouping of the characteristics, it was determined that the grouping was valid. If there was disagreement, the reasons for grouping materials in particular ways were discussed until a consensus was reached. The consensus was then determined to be the appropriate placement of characteristics in a grouping and, therefore, a valid placement. The categories into which the responses were grouped are listed in Tables 11-14.

### Personality Characteristics

The most important personality characteristic a mentor possessed was to be a friend or to be perceived as one (Table 11). Over half the characteristics listed in Table 11 related directly to friendship and

the traits expected from a friend. If people were caring, good listeners, positive, understanding, honest, and patient, they had the major personality qualities identified by mentorees as essential.

**Table 11**

What personality characteristics did this individual (mentor) possess which made him/her helpful to you?

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>#</u>
Friendly	54
Caring	47
A listener	38
Positive	38
Understanding	25
Honest	24
Patient	23
Interested	16
Sincere	16
Supportive	16
Warm	16
Concerned	13
Enthusiastic	13
Empathic	13
Encouraging	11
Open	11
Out-going	11
Accessible	10
Dedicated	10
Motivated	10
Intelligent	9
Self-confident	9

### Professional Characteristics

Organization was recognized as the most important professional characteristic of a mentor (Table 12). Mentorees commented on the

preparation and planning skills of mentors. Leadership abilities were also recognized as being important.

**Table 12**

What professional characteristics did this individual (mentor) possess which made him/her helpful to you?

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>#</u>
Organized	29
A leader	21
Dedicated	14
A communicator	13
Knowledgeable of trends	12
Positive	12
Assertive	11
Creative	10
Held high expectations	10
Supportive	10
Confident	9
Experienced	9
A model of behavior	9

Skills

Teaching techniques were recognized as the most important skill, with over 15% of the mentorees placing that characteristic first. Specific teaching techniques were described ( e.g., working with groups, cursive writing skills, writing on the chalk board) as well as more general skills ( e.g., individualization, time management, and directing student movement in the building). When mentorees were

asked to describe the skills of mentors, communication and organizational skill were also high on the list (Table 13). Mentors, as well, were frequently described as being articulate, expressive, and easy to talk to.

**Table 13**

What skills, if any, did you learn from this individual (mentor)?

<u>Skill</u>	<u>#</u>
Teaching techniques	51
Communication	49
Organization	42
Patience	18
How to discipline students	17
Listening	15
Management	14
Leadership	11
Goal setting	9
Time management	9

Helpful/Influential Characteristics

In describing the nature of mentor relationships, respondents most often indicated that mentors were encouraging (see Table 14).

Numerous examples of mentors praising, supporting, and promoting mentorees' careers were given. Many statements described the mentors' abilities to make the best of a bad situation. Often mentors

suggested the mentoree to others for committee work, curriculum development, demonstration teaching, and faculty leadership positions. Mentors also encouraged mentorees to be life-long learners who continued to seek education in both formal and informal ways. Mentorees stated that they were supported in decisions to get additional endorsements, certifications, and degrees. They also were enthusiastically supported by mentors when they participated in workshops, study travel, and community arts and crafts classes. They were given continued praise and encouragement as they worked in any area in which they learned new skills and concepts.

**Table 14**

How was this individual (mentor) helpful and/or important to you and your career? How did this individual (mentor) influence you?

<u>Helpful/Influential</u>	<u>#</u>
Encouraged me	55
Promoted me to others	38
Encouraged my education	36
Was supportive	32
Modeled behavior	29
Advised	20
Offered career guidance	20
Listened	18
Boosted self-confidence	12
Held high expectations	9

It is important to note that a given characteristic may not have had enough responses to be included with the summary of an individual question; however, when responses for that characteristic were tallied across questions, additional characteristics became important. For example, having patience did not make the cut-off point for any individual question, but when the responses for that characteristic were tallied across questions, the total became significant. Table 15 summarizes all responses as they were compiled across questions.

When characteristics were compiled across questions, being a strong communicator was identified by over 34% of the mentorees as the most important characteristic a mentor should possess. Examples were given of being able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences: parents, peers, students, the educational community, and the community at large. The skills of exhibiting valuable teaching techniques and being organized were both identified as important by over 26% of the mentorees. The next several positions on the list were filled by items that described personal and professional characteristics of mentors. A mentor should be assertive, supportive,

caring, friendly, and be a good listener. The characteristics of being an advisor, being positive, and being encouraging were listed. Mentors were also identified as being models of behavior, being dedicated to the profession, being patient, and being leaders.

**Table 15**

Responses to Questions 13-17, Characteristics of Mentors, Grouped Across Questions by Major Category (n = 338)

<u>Category</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>#</u>
A communicator	114	Decision-maker	30
Exhibited valuable teaching techniques	96	Disciplined	29
Organized	90	Managed well	28
Assertive	84	A life-long learner	27
Supportive	84	Open	27
A listener	80	Intelligent	23
Caring	79	Empathic	23
Friendly	72	Motivated	20
Encouraged	70	Knew trends	20
An advisor	69	Concerned	20
Positive	67	Interested	20
Dedicated	66	Knew content	19
Modeled behavior	57	Warm	18
Patient	51	Set goals	14
A leader	48	Flexible	18
Honest	45	Sincere	17
Fair	42	Out-going	16
Promoted others	42	Practical	15
Encouraged education	37	Praised others	15
Held high expectations	36	Set goals	14
Calm	33	Enthusiastic	12
Creative	33	Experienced	12
Self-confident	33	Managed time	12
Accessible	31	Involved	10
Understanding	31	An administrator	2
		Enjoyed life	2

Note. These categories completed the statements "A mentor ...." or "A mentor was ...."

Summary- Part 4: Content Analysis of Questions 13-17, "Learning From One Another"

The most often listed mentor characteristic was that of being a communicator. The next characteristics listed in descending order by frequency count were exhibiting valuable teaching techniques, being organized, being assertive, being supportive, being a listener, caring, being friendly, and encouraging.

Part 5: Analysis of Questions 18 and 20, "Learning From One Another"

Questions 18 and 20 were used to identify and match mentors with mentorees. This matching process produced the three person "chains" of mentoree-mentor/mentoree-mentor. The individuals in these chains became candidates for the in-depth interviews.

Three mentor chains ( an individual who mentored to a second person, who in turn mentored to a third ) were found. The specific composition of these "chains" was shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1****MENTOR-MENTOREE/MENTOR-MENTOREE CHAINS**

MENTOR\_\_\_\_\_MENTOREE/  
 MENTOR\_\_\_\_\_MENTOREE

**Chain A**

Supervisor\_\_\_\_\_Teacher/\*  
 Teacher\_\_\_\_\_Student Teacher  
 Teacher\_\_\_\_\_Teacher  
 Teacher\_\_\_\_\_Teacher  
 Principal\_\_\_\_\_Assistant Principal

**Chain B**

Assistant  
 Superintendent\_\_\_\_\_Teacher/  
 Teacher\_\_\_\_\_Teacher

**Chain C**

Consultant\_\_\_\_\_Principal/  
 Principal\_\_\_\_\_Assistant  
 Principal

Note. \*This mentor was identified by four mentorees.  
 \*\*Mentors or mentorees were identified by their job  
 classification at the time the mentorship began.

### Part 6: In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to give additional insight into the questions which guided the study.

1. What mentorships occur naturally between adults in the public school setting?

2. What is the nature of the mentoring process between adults in the public schools?

3. What are the personal and professional characteristics of individuals who are mentors? Mentorees?

4. What are the personal measures of success held by both mentor and mentoree?

5. What skills are shared by mentors with mentorees?

6. Will the nature of the mentoring process allow it to be formalized through preservice, staff development and/or career ladder activities? If so, what precautions, problems, etc. should be considered?

In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to clarify the results of the questionnaire by talking with the individuals who composed the mentoring "chains." Persons in each chain (twelve individuals all

together) were interviewed separately. Questions asked during the interviews with both mentors and mentorees were similar; however, since the individuals' viewpoints depended on the roles played in the relationships, the questions were tailored to each group.

### Questions for Mentors

1. Were you conscious of the fact that you were helpful to another person?
2. Who initiated the relationship? How?
3. What were some of the skills you shared with others?
4. What were some of the personality characteristics you possess which allowed you to be helpful?
5. What benefits, if any, did you derive from this relationship?
6. Were you particularly interested in this phase of education (working with colleagues)?
7. Did you receive help from someone else?
8. Can an educational system create or encourage this type of relationship? If so, how?
9. What else would you like to say about this type of relationship between people?

### Questions for Mentorees

1. At the time were you conscious of the fact that another person was being very helpful to you? If so, how?
2. Who initiated the relationship? How?
3. Have you found yourself treating others as your mentor has treated you? If so, how?
4. Can an educational system create or encourage this type of relationship? If so, how?
5. What else would you like to say about this type of relationship between people?

The following discussions were drawn from the researcher's notes and the transcripts of the interviews. These discussions included responses from the viewpoint of both mentor and mentoree. It should be noted that all 12 persons interviewed were willing to discuss this topic and often wanted to pursue the discussion after the allotted 30-minute time span had elapsed.

### Responses Regarding the Initiation of A Mentoring Relationship

Mentors stated that at the beginning of the mentoring relationships they had seen needs or strengths, sometimes both, in

the mentorees and had simply responded in some way to help the mentorees meet those needs or use their strengths. No conscious effort had been made to initiate a mentoring relationship. Mentors stated they often did the same kinds of things for others.

### Examples

One mentor while serving as a cooperating teacher recognized a student teacher's strength in teaching writing skills. She began to encourage the student teacher to share these skills with an entire faculty. A mentoring relationship began as they worked together to prepare the student teacher for such a presentation. The student teacher (mentoree) began to spend more time with the cooperating teacher (mentor) discussing new ideas and methods. After the field experience was over, the student and teacher continued to keep a close working relationship. The following year when the mentoree had been hired by the district, she and the mentor together planned and presented a system-wide workshop related to writing skills. Since that time they have continued to work together and learn from one another. During the early years the mentoree learned from the mentor. This relationship has continued for over five years and has grown

until the mentor/mentoree designation should be changed to that of peer.

Another example was that of a principal who found a teacher on her staff who needed assistance in grouping children within the classroom. Because the teacher entered a career after rearing a family, she was older than the principal and was concerned that she would not fit into the school. The principal managed to provide some special observations for the teacher which related to the use of groups. The manner in which the principal handled the situation, the concern and care she took to be careful of the teacher's feelings, began the mentoring relationship. This was not an unusual way for the principal (mentor) to behave. Yet this small act initiated a mentoring relationship that lasted for over three years. The mentoree was able to share problems and concerns because she trusted the mentor. The mentor was able to continue to help the mentoree to improve her skills.

In two instances out of twelve, individuals stated that conscious efforts had been made to initiate mentoring relationships. One mentor explained that he had become aware of the positive reputation of

another individual (mentoree). The mentor invited that person to participate on a committee. There he was able to observe the mentoree's skills and attitudes. The mentor then made a conscious decision to support and promote the efforts of the mentoree. The mentoree was not aware that he had been specifically "chosen" by the mentor until many years later. The mentoree felt the relationship was special but assumed the mentor had other similar relationships. Indeed, the mentor was perceived by others as being supportive and helpful. As the mentor provided opportunities, support, and encouragement for the mentoree, a strong working relationship grew. Over the years the relationship changed to that of a peer/peer friendship.

In the other instance, the mentoree stated she had "fought hard to have the opportunity to work with" the mentor. She struggled with the personnel department until she had the opportunity to be in the same school as the mentor. "I knew through the grapevine that she was personable, warm, consistent. I knew from my past experiences that I needed to work with a person like that. I personally needed a fair evaluation of myself. She was someone I knew I needed to work with."

In summary, data regarding the initiation of mentoring relationships suggested that in most cases the natural mentoring relationship appears to begin by chance (i.e., they occurred naturally rather than as the result of a conscious decision). Two individuals, for some reason, often related to job responsibilities, began to interact with each other. This interaction seemed to spark a symbiotic relationship that flourished. Perhaps some of the reasons for this symbiosis can be explained by examining the benefits derived from mentoring relationships.

#### Responses Regarding the Benefits of A Mentoring Relationship

Subjects indicated that having a strong mentoring relationship was "like carrying a second person's opinions inside you." You were not alone. This feeling of support was echoed again and again by mentorees. To have someone who was "quick to affirm, who is fair" in thoughts and actions was important to mentorees. One mentoree stated, "We tend to become what other people think we are... so it is very important that someone holds high expectations for us." A mentor said "...some people say I have such high standards for myself that it rubs off."

Mentors are perceived as giving the "freedom to fail" to those around them. "I like the idea of living in a fail-safe society. If it doesn't work, try something else." One mentoree shared that her mentor made her "a part of the decision-making process. I am encouraged to use my own judgment and my decisions are supported. I even receive money to spend as I see fit for the needs of my own classroom." A mentor said "...the most important thing is to give people autonomy to do the things they do better than others."

Mentors seemed to have a real interest in working with colleagues. "Once I identify an interest of another person, I really try to bring up opportunities for them. But I don't push it. I may bring something up a time or two but if they don't follow through or appear to be interested, I drop it." Another mentor stated that a part of his professional role was "to support, promote, and encourage colleagues in their career growth."

Mentors seemed to feel a strong obligation to the teaching profession. A mentoree shared that "a mentor brought to me a 'larger knowledge' of my profession; I began to see how everything fits together." "It is my responsibility," said one mentor, "to share my

knowledge for the greater good." Another mentor added,

I believe so much in modeling. I guess in that way we learn from each other. I have admired characteristics in others. For instance, I love people who have a command of the English language. Dr. \_\_\_\_ had such a beautiful command of the language. Mrs. \_\_\_\_ was so direct and specific, so down to earth but it was beautiful. I try to model my communication, especially my written communication, after her style. Her style was so clear and easy to read. Take \_\_\_\_ for example. She is so intuitive that when the attention of a large group is getting away from her, she knows just what to say to bring them back. I am not as effective at that as she but I am working on it.

#### Responses Regarding the Personal and Professional Characteristics Involved in A Mentoring Relationship

The following comments were examples of the statements made during the interviews. Both mentors and mentorees had a great deal to say about the very personal nature of the mentoring relationship.

The following statements were made by mentorees about various mentors:

As I look back and recognize how she helped me with my teaching the most important thing was her manner. She was easy going with the children. She handled them with a very personal style. She taught me the fact that you must teach. You do not assume that children know. You teach and you give them something to take home and practice. But mainly, her manner was the most important thing. I try to have a realistic outlook on the classroom. She taught me that. She also taught me little techniques. I think you develop your own teaching style; I have refined my style over the years. But when I think back ...organization for instance. She showed me

how to take kids out for physical education so that there was no confusion. After 16 years, I still use that technique.

She seemed to be friendly with everyone on the faculty. She was so cordial. She never seemed to have a bad day. I never saw her in a bad mood. I always thought she was so nice and wanted me to do so well.

He never hesitates to talk with people, to ask them questions. There is no stigma attached to asking for knowledge.

She thinks 'we.' You just don't find people who can give credit to others the way she can. She is very secure within herself. One of the things I found out while working with her is how secure she is. She is highly skilled and has wonderful timing. She knows when to speak and when to remain silent.

One of the first things that attracted me to her was the fact that she didn't give me all the choices. She said you need to do this; you can do this. She has a great deal of common sense. She can slice right through the haze and get to the center of things.

The following are comments shared by mentors:

I have read a tremendous amount in my life about the human condition. I believe that the world has to do with 'wellness' instead of 'sickness.' I am very positive.

A positive attitude is absolute necessary [sic]. We do everything for our students to help them feel good about themselves and to succeed. We must do the same kinds of things for each other. This kind of support is very personal and very one-on-one.

It is part of my professional duty to aid and support others in my profession. This is especially true when helping to guide them in career paths.

### Responses to Sharing the Mentoring Process With Others

All of the people interviewed felt that the skills and attitudes they held about working with colleagues had come, at least in part, from the skills and attitudes of people who had worked with them. Many stated that specific skills such as management, organization, and use of time were easily shared. The more difficult sharing processes involved attitudes dealing with support, care, concern, and communication. Most felt that the mentorees had to have a solid base at the intuitive level before these attitudes could be "drawn out" or at least modeled. As one mentoree said, "I am not sure how my mentor did it, but she taught me how to care for others."

Several persons interviewed stated that the degree of sharing between individuals depended upon the level of skills and attitudes held by both mentor and mentoree . The higher the level of skills and attitudes held by the mentor the more likely the mentoree could grow, regardless of the mentoree's level of skills and attitudes. Many felt that mentors with high skill and attitude levels could better identify and enhance the skills and attitudes of any mentorees. Others felt that there could be too much of a discrepancy between the skills and

attitudes of the mentor and mentoree. If this occurred the mentor might not seek out the mentoree because the gap between their skills and attitudes would be too great. The mentoree also might be so conscious of this gap that working with the mentor would be too threatening; therefore, the mentoring relationship could never develop.

The discussion of these points leads quite naturally to the next general category of questions, those dealing with the formalization of the mentoring process.

#### Responses Relating to the Formalization of the Mentoring Process

There were mixed feelings among the people interviewed regarding the formalization of the mentoring process through preservice, staff development and career ladder activities.

One view was that the kinds of skills and attitudes shared through mentoring could be provided in formalized settings. A mentor stated:

I think there are some vital things that we must do for teachers that we do not do because they cost money. We must give teachers time to think and interact with each other. We must provide numerous opportunities for teachers to enrich their lives both professional and personally. We must give teachers the opportunity to grow. We must set the stage in school buildings for teachers to

act and react as professionals. Teachers must have autonomy and the freedom to make mistakes as they try new things.

Another viewpoint was that the natural mentoring relationship was so personal that any attempt to formalize it would fail. Another mentor stated:

A true mentoring relationship depends on the attitudes of the people involved. They must truly respect and like each other. They must make personal decisions to invest the time and effort involved in making the relationship work. This type of relationship is not the kind of thing you can mandate or require. It simply does not work that way.

Most people felt that the natural mentoring relationship can be strengthened but not initiated by a formalized process. If the system is flexible and values the individual, many things can be done to enhance the natural mentoring process. One mentoree suggested that opportunities for teachers to design and implement specialized, individual growth plans can be part of the staff development system. Instead of masses of teachers going to a workshop, whether they need the skills presented there or not, individuals or small groups should be able to plan their staff development time to satisfy their needs. This can include opportunities for mentor/mentoree pairs to work together. Another mentoree suggested that schools become true

growth facilities for teachers as well as students. Teachers constantly flex time and space constraints to meet the needs of students. The system should do the same to meet the needs of teachers. Presently over 73% of teachers in this survey have found at least one natural mentoring relationship. They have done this within the present school structure. With more inviting and supportive working conditions, perhaps others could find mentors and perhaps the natural mentoring that presently occurs could be enhanced.

Further interpretation of the data and descriptors reported here occurs in Chapter V. The literature on mentoring, theories of adult life-span development, and women's career development are reexplored as they relate to the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and determine the nature of the mentoring process that occurs naturally between adults in the public school setting. A secondary purpose of the study was to provide information that might lead to improved self-concept and teaching effectiveness for classroom teachers through the use of the mentoring relationship.

#### Characteristics of the Natural Mentor

Natural mentoring (the interactive process between mentor and mentoree which occurs by choice of the mentor and mentoree) was found in the public schools. Over 73% of the respondents to the questionnaire "Learning From One Another" ( see Appendix) not only verified that natural mentoring exists but stated that the process is important to them.

Several different facets of the natural mentoring process were described by the respondents in the questionnaires and the in-depth interviews. Among them were the personal and professional

characteristics of mentors, mentors' skills, and the ways in which mentors were influential or helpful.

The characteristic of a mentor that was identified most often was that of being a communicator (Table 15). Mentors were able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences: students, parents, peers, administrators, college personnel, and community leaders. As part of being a strong communicator, mentors were described as being good listeners. They gave positive feedback and were supportive of the efforts of others.

The second most used descriptor of mentors was that of exhibiting valuable teaching techniques ( Table 15). Mentors were able to teach or model very specific skills related to knowledge of content, classroom management, general organization, leadership, student discipline, time management, and goal setting.

Although teaching techniques ranked second in the overall descriptors, they were not discussed in great detail in either the short-answer sections of the questionnaires or during the interviews. Respondents focused their narratives on other aspects of the mentoring relationship. It seemed that mentors were expected to have

the skills that allowed them not only to teach but to teach well. These skills were an important part of the mentoring relationship but not the most meaningful to the mentorees.

The most meaningful mentoring relationship was described by mentorees as very personal. To be a friend or to be perceived as one was the most important personality characteristic a mentor possessed. Over half the personality characteristics listed (Table 11) related directly to friendship and the traits expected from a friend. Mentors were described as caring, good listeners, positive, understanding, honest, patient, interested, sincere, supportive, and warm. These traits also appeared in the compilation of mentor characteristics in three other categories: professional characteristics (Table 12), skills (Table 13), and influential or helpful behaviors (Table 14). In addition, almost twice as many descriptors were included in the list of personality characteristics as in any other category. This was another indication of the importance mentorees placed on the personal aspects of mentoring relationships.

Mentors were described as helpful or influential by the mentorees

(Table 14). They supplied encouragement by being accessible, positive, empathic, and enthusiastic. Mentors also promoted the careers of the mentorees by suggesting them to others for committee work, curriculum development, demonstration teaching, and faculty leadership positions. Mentors were supportive and encouraging when mentorees sought additional certification, degrees, workshop experiences, and travel opportunities. Mentors modeled behaviors as well as advised mentorees regarding career choices. They listened to mentorees, boosted mentorees' self-confidence, and held high expectations of the mentorees' performance.

#### Demographic Information: Mentor /Mentoree/Mentorless

##### Age

There was no significant difference in the ages of the mentoree and mentorless respondents; however, there was a difference in the ages of the mentor and the mentoree (Tables 4 and 5). In most cases the mentor was significantly ( $\alpha = .05$ ) older. If the mentoree were the older of the two, the mentor still was the more experienced. This confirmed the work of Levinson et al. (1978) and Collins (1983).

### Sex

The majority of mentors (56%) were female (Table 9). Since 69% of the mentorees were female there was an unequal female/female, mentor/mentoree match. More females worked with male mentors. Also, 28% of the total population was male and 29% of the mentorees were male. Yet 43% of the mentors were male. As stated earlier in Table 2 when z scores were calculated ( $\alpha = .05$ ), there were significantly more male mentorees and significantly fewer female mentorees. In addition, more mentorless respondents were female.

These data reinforced Collins' (1983) findings that most females have male mentors. This was of special interest because the stratified population used for this study was 72.9% female.

### Highest Degree Earned

Mentors were significantly better educated than mentorees; mentorees were significantly better educated than mentorless respondents (Table 2 and Table 6). Mentors had a variety of skills and experiences that were of value when shared with mentorees. It was logical to expect some of these skills and experiences to be the result of educational experiences. In addition, because one of the important

aspects of mentoring was the encouragement of the mentoree by the mentor to seek more education and higher levels of education (Table 13), mentorees were better educated than mentorless respondents.

### Job Classification

A significant number ( $a = .05$ ) of mentorees held building-based support or administrative positions such as media coordinator, counselor, reading coordinator, administrative intern, assistant principal, or principal (Table 1). Mentorees' job classifications matched those of mentors more closely (38% to 34%) than they matched those of the mentorless respondents (38% to 27%; Table 2 and Table 7).

### The Natural Mentoring Relationship

The qualities of the natural mentoring relationships found in this study were of special interest. Collins (1983) found that male and female mentorees in the business world were taught different skills by mentors. The major characteristics shared by mentors in this study (Table 15) focused on communication, teaching techniques, organization, assertiveness, support, listening skills, friendliness, and encouragement. These, with the exception of teaching techniques,

were the same types of characteristics found by Collins to be the ones most often taught to women in the business world. In the field of education all mentorees were taught these skills whether male or female.

Male and female mentors in the field of education were more likely to mention personal characteristics of their mentorees, to report a social as well as a work relationship, and to have served as a role model to the mentorees for integrating professional and personal lives. Mokros, Edkut, and Spichiger (1981) reported similar findings for females only in their study of the sex-related patterns of mentoring.

The length of the mentoring relationship expressed by individuals in this study corresponded to the findings of Collins (1983). Most relationships lasted more than five years. This was in line with what females in the business arena experienced and a longer length of time than the mentoring relationship usually lasted for business men.

An interesting topic was the change of the mentoring relationship from one of mentor-mentoree to that of peer. This transition was often a difficult one. Mentorees, especially females with male

mentors, found it hard to become assertive enough with the mentor to break into the collegial model. Male mentorees, whether they had male or female mentors, found this transition to be an easier one than females. All mentorees as they broke into the peer relationship went through a period of flux. At any given time during this transitional period, mentorees saw themselves as subordinate to the mentor, equal to the mentor, and/or superior to the mentor depending upon the skill or characteristic under consideration. Mentorees stated, as they neared the collegial level, they sometimes did not know where they stood in relation to their mentors.

Mentors appeared to feel real joy in the growth of mentorees to the level of colleagues. This was a clear distinction between the results of this study and the work of Levinson et al.(1978). When studying male-male mentorships, Levinson et al. found that "most often an intense [male] mentor relationship ends with strong conflict and bad feelings on both sides. The young man may have powerful feelings of bitterness, rancor, grief, abandonment, liberation, and rejuvenation" (p. 100). This was simply not the case in the present study. Male-male mentorships as well as female-male mentorships

ended on notes of mutual respect and continued concern. Perhaps the nature of the educational system, which does not have the abundance of opportunities for upward advancement that exist in the business world, has something to do with it. Perhaps, as discussed above, it has more to do with the kinds of skills and personal characteristics shared in the educational setting between mentor and mentoree. The termination of mentor relationships should be examined more carefully in future studies.

### Conclusions

The natural mentoring relationship was overwhelmingly viewed as a positive relationship by mentors and mentorees. It was described as being a method for enhancing personal and professional characteristics, and teaching skills. Natural mentoring was already in existence and, therefore, cost nothing for educational agencies to implement. If educational agencies could build on the apparent strengths of natural mentoring relationships, more positive relationships might exist in schools and better teaching might occur.

For example, it was obvious that communication skills were most important for both the mentor and mentoree. More emphasis on

communication skills should be given in both preservice and inservice activities. Mentorees had to find examples of good communicators in their mentors and learn these skills on the job. Educational agencies should be spending more time with their staffs dealing with the ways people get along with each other, interact, and communicate.

Obviously, teachers must know how to teach. Teaching techniques ranked second as a descriptor of characteristics which were shared during mentoring relationships. Yet mentorees stated that these were often the easiest skills to learn. Teaching techniques, once shared or modeled, became part of the mentorees' repertoires. Mentorees improved these skills and modified them for use as they saw fit. Yet an enormous amount of time was spent dealing with teaching techniques in both preservice and inservice activities.

The third major area mentioned as an important descriptor in the mentoring relationship was that of interpersonal relationships --being a friend. This was the most meaningful process cited by mentorees. Mentors were described as caring, positive, understanding, honest, patient, interested, sincere, supportive, and warm. These were characteristics that related to many of the theories of adult

life-span development (Erikson, intimacy and generativity, 1950; Kohlberg, moral development, 1973; Levinson et al., stage development, 1976; Loevinger, ego functioning, 1976).

Erikson (1950) proposed an eight-stage progression in ego development over the whole life span. Each stage is characterized by a different crucial issue that is either resolved successfully or not; failure to achieve a successful resolution at one stage impedes all later development. The first four stages belong to infancy and childhood. The last four stages, starting in early adolescence, are identity, intimacy, generativity, and ego integrity.

Mentors are able to form true, close relationships with others; they achieve the stage of intimacy. They proceed to the issue of generativity: expanding one's interests; creating new people, products, or ideas; contributing to society. Some mentors have even reached Erikson's final stage of ego integrity. These mentors are able to look back over their lives and make decisions regarding the worth of issues they have faced. From Erikson's viewpoint, mentors are functioning at the seventh stage of adult development.

Kohlberg (1973) proposed that the process of making specific moral judgments forms a developmental sequence of six stages. People move through these stages based on their understanding of the right way to behave toward other people and society in general. The progression of moral-judgment levels goes from preconventional to conventional to postconventional. Mentors are able to function at the postconventional level. They treat others with care, respect, and trust.

Levinson et al. (1978) focused on the relatively universal, age-linked periods in the lives of adult men. Five stages were identified: leaving the family, getting into the adult world, settling down, becoming one's own man, mid-life transition. These stages can be applied to both male and female mentors. Mentors, because they are described as being assertive and being leaders, have reached stage four. Over 60% of mentors were 30 - 50 years old (Table 5). This ties directly to the fifth stage, mid-life transition, which Levinson et al. found began in the early 40s. Stage five is a time when roles shift; mentorees begin to take on the new role of mentor.

Loevinger's work (1976) suggested that there were special

qualities of ego functioning (e.g., how adequately or inadequately a person chose or made decisions). At different stages of development, Loevinger suggested, the ego functions in distinctly different ways or patterns. At the higher stages of development, the ego functions more adequately (i.e., takes in more aspects of a given situation, views problems with a greater tolerance for complexity, sees things more broadly, and selects from a greater variety of possible actions). Each one of her stages built upon the previous stage, but it exhibited a higher level of differentiation and integration.

Mentors function at Loevinger's higher stages because they understand the overall complexity of situations; therefore, their experiences allow them to select from a wider repertory of alternative actions. They are able to promote, advise, and encourage mentorees.

#### Implications for Preservice/Inservice Programs

Perhaps the most beneficial activities that can be planned in preservice or inservice programs will be those which help us learn to deal with ourselves and with others as adults. Educators have used the developmental theories to good advantage when teaching children

and youth. Yet adults are often seen as finished products. This is not the case; individuals grow and change throughout their lives.

There are no long-term studies, according to Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1984), that have been specifically designed, carefully planned, and fully implemented to stimulate adult growth. Howey, Yarger, and Joyce (1978) found as a result of a massive national study almost no evidence that inservice education was anything but a brief relatively mindless experience for most teachers. Hunt (1978) characterized inservice activities "as entertainment rather than education, and bad entertainment at that" (p. 241).

The key to providing growth for adults may be a developmental assumption: learning experiences start where the learner is and move to the next skill or stage level through some type of intervention which stimulates growth. The major concerns, of course, are "determining where the learner is" and providing "intervention which stimulates growth."

Natural mentors seem to have an intuitive understanding of the best ways to help other adults grow and flourish. But the data drawn from this study show that mentors, to some degree at least, have

developed this understanding.

The work of Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1984) set forth an instructional model which reflects the important aspects of the natural mentoring process found in this study. They based their model on six points.

1. "Growth toward more complex levels of cognitive-developmental functioning appear to be most influenced by placing persons in significant role-taking experiences" (p. 6). This is not "role-playing" but "role-taking." The natural mentoring process described in this study begins with the acceptance, either consciously or unconsciously, of a significant role, the role of mentor or mentoree.

2. "A second consideration concerned the qualitative aspects of such experience-based role-taking" ( p. 7). Quality counts. A most important aspect is the matching of the experience to the level of the participant. This matching automatically occurs in the natural mentoring relationship. Mentor and mentoree are drawn together because of the level of the skills of the mentor and the level of the needs of the mentoree. As the mentoree grows, these two levels

approach each other and the relationship changes to that of peer.

3. "In addition to 'real' experience, . . . careful and continuous guided reflection" (p. 7). is needed. "Communicator" is the most important characteristic used to describe mentors. Mentors are able to talk with and listen to mentorees at a level of concern that is important and meaningful. They are able to express care and support while giving advice and council.

4. "Balance is needed between the real experience and discussion/reflection" (p. 7). Mentors and mentorees function in the real world of the public school. The characteristics of mentors include the fact that they are realistic and lead balanced lives. They know when to talk , when to act, when to reflect, when to work, and when to play. They are able to share this skill with the mentorees through modeling.

5. "Programs need to be continuous" (p.7). Mentoring relationships are long term with over 90% lasting at least two years. In fact, over 40% last for more than five years (Table 10). Even when the relationship changes to that of peer, the friendship and often close contact continue.

6. "The developmental stage growth represented by definition, functioning at a new and more complex level. Instruction needed to provide both personal support and challenge" (p. 8). Mentors are able to give this support and challenge. They are identified as holding high expectations for themselves and for the mentorees. They push the mentorees to try new techniques, to modify or drop ineffective skills, and to search for better teaching methods. They are described again and again by mentorees as being supportive, positive, encouraging, patient, and warm.

Since these points so closely follow the important aspects of the natural mentoring process, they may serve as a structure which can be used to support the development of natural mentoring or at least many of the positive aspects of natural mentoring. In any event, this structure would be an improvement on the more traditional preservice /inservice model which focuses on isolated and often immaterial activities.

### Opportunities for Future Research

The area of mentoring is rich in opportunities for continued research. The following are a few ideas which were suggested by this particular study.

Already mentioned was the need to take a closer look at the ending of mentoring relationships. The Levinson et al. (1978) material reported negative, hostile endings to what had been very positive supportive relationships. This study as well as the work done by Collins (1983) found the ending of mentoring relationships to be much more positive and healthy. In fact, many of the relationships did not end at all but survived and changed to that of peer. It would be interesting to examine the reasons for such wide-ranging results. Is the type of ending a result of gender, occupation, or skills shared? Why do some relationships end while others move to a collegial stage? Knowing more about these questions may amplify the knowledge base for mentoring itself.

Since we are moving toward a multiple-career society, it may be helpful to know more about how mentor and mentoree initiate relationships. As people move through several careers, the

"recruitment" of mentors might become very important to mentorees' growth. Only one respondent in this study reported actually seeking out a particular individual to serve as a mentor. Why does this happen so infrequently? Can the matching of mentor-mentoree be structured? The answers to these questions would certainly be important to the career ladder/merit pay movement.

Because there are no clear guidelines related to levels of performance for teachers, the competition among teachers is often very subtle. Teachers sometimes guard specific teaching techniques, management skills, even bulletin board ideas, very closely. Mentors have risen above this level of competition and have willingly shared their ideas and skills. They also have moved their mentorees in the direction of more open sharing. Mentors were very secure in themselves and, therefore, were not threatened by the dissemination of skills and knowledge. This security and lack of pettiness would be vital components for the implementation of career ladder/ merit pay programs. How and why are mentors so secure? How might the feeling of sharing that mentors' hold become a stronger part of the educational setting?

There is a growing trend toward differentiation in the job responsibilities and job classifications of teachers. How might the natural mentoring process make this trend a healthy, positive one? How might the natural mentoring skills be used to actually encourage more individual growth?

The mentoring relationship is still nebulous. What findings would a study similar to the work of Levinson et al. (1978) report today? During the almost ten years since the study, drastic changes have occurred in the business world. Women hold more jobs and more positions of power. Has the stronger inclusion of women in the work force changed the mentoring process?

Another interesting question has to do with the gender of mentor and mentoree. Are the skills and characteristics shared in the mentoring relationship affected by gender? Collins (1983) dealt with women in the business world; this study dealt with teachers, male and female. The findings of these two studies were closely aligned yet both differed greatly from the findings of the Levinson et al. (1978) study. Of course, it would also be interesting to know more about the differences in mentoring relationships, if any, caused by the

sex of the mentor and mentoree. Other occupations that are still sex-stereotyped should be investigated for mentoring relationships. Nursing is an example.

It would also be interesting to look at mentoring in the traditional service professions as opposed to mentoring in other types of professions. Would there be significant differences in the skills shared or the characteristics of mentors that were held as important?

The questionnaire "Learning From One Another" is a vehicle for the investigation of mentoring in other locations. This researcher would be very interested in the replication of this study with different sample stratifications: rural school districts, smaller/larger school districts, districts with lower/higher mean age of personnel, districts with a larger percentage of male employees, districts in other states.

Finally, a great deal more work should be done in the area of adult life-span development. Perhaps further examination of the natural mentoring process, which seemed to exhibit many of the important characteristics included in the theories of adult life-span

development, would aid this endeavor.

The mentoring relationship is worthy of further study. Such relationships definitely have positive results for the individuals involved.

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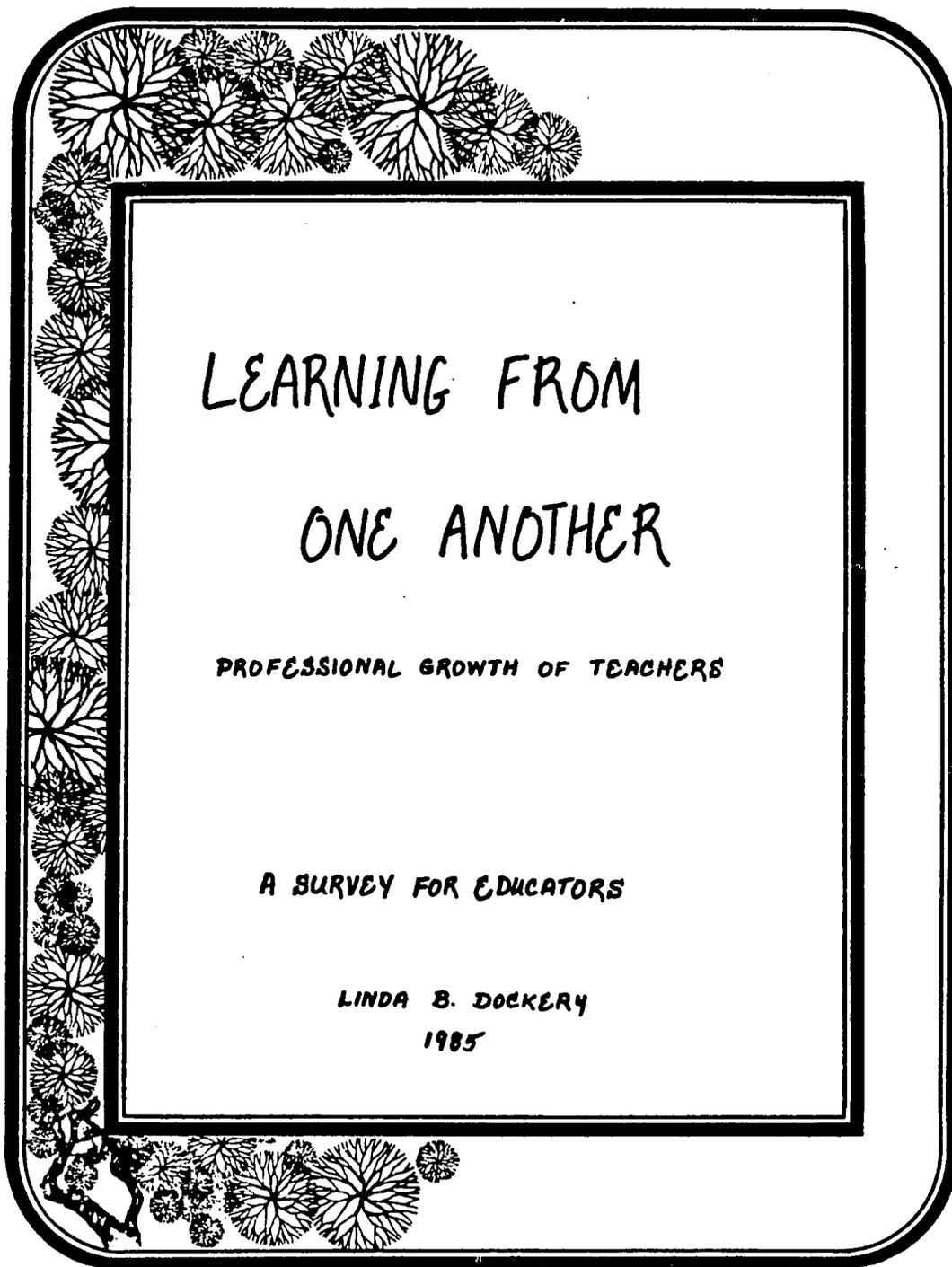
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APPENDIX



LEARNING FROM  
ONE ANOTHER

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF TEACHERS

A SURVEY FOR EDUCATORS

LINDA B. DOCKERY  
1985

What is this survey about?

As more and more programs are proposed and developed in the educational system, there arises a need to assess present levels of functioning. We can not tell how far we have come if we do not know where we started. As we look at the proposed career ladder or merit pay plans presently being discussed in our state, it becomes even more important to understand where we as educators gain our skills and how these skills are passed from one "generation" of educators to another.

As I complete my doctoral studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, my dissertation topic deals with how educators learn from one another. I am attempting to:

1. identify the personal and professional characteristics of individuals who are perceived by educators as having an important influence on their professional growth
2. determine the nature of assistance offered by those individuals to educators
3. recognize trends and patterns of assistance which could be helpful in improving preservice experiences, staff development activities, and career development plans.

How was I selected? What must I do?

You were randomly selected from the certificated employees of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools to participate in this survey. It should take you no more than 15 minutes to complete the questions which follow. Feel free to use pen or pencil and to make short answer responses(words or phrases) to the last sections.

Thank you!

*Linda Bockery*

**Please supply the following information about yourself.  
Check only one answer per item.**

- |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. SEX</p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Male</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> | <p>2. AGE</p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> 25 or under</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50</p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 60</p> | <p>3. HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED</p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> B.A./B.S.</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Masters</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Sixth Year</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Ed.D/Ph.D</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
4. JOB CLASSIFICATION
- 1  Teacher
- 2  Building-based Support Person(counselor, media coordinator, reading coordinator, CDC, etc.)
- 3  Building-based Administrator[administrative intern, assistant principal(teaching and non-teaching), principal]
- 4  System-wide Support Person(supervisor, instructional coordinator, psychologist, psychometrist, psychiatrist, social worker)
- 5  System-wide Administrator(director, intern, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, deputy superintendent, superintendent, business official)
5. Since high school graduation, have you had another person(not a relative) take what you consider to be an important interest in your career as an educator(advising, guiding, providing support, providing recognition, listening)?
- 1  Yes      **—————** If yes, please go to the next page. **—————** 
- 2  No



**If no, please return your survey in the envelope provided.  
THANK YOU!**

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**If yes, please supply the following information**  
**Check only one answer per item.**

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6. Since high school graduation, how many individuals(not relatives) do you feel have taken an important interest in your career(advising, guiding, providing support, providing recognition, listening)?

- 1  one person  
2  two people  
3  three people  
4  four or more

Select one individual from the persons you may have been thinking about in items 5 and 6, perhaps the person who had the most influence on you. Please supply the following information as it relates to that one particular individual.

7. At the time this individual first took an interest in you and/or your career, how old were you?

- 1  25 or under  
2  26-30  
3  31-40  
4  41-50  
5  51-60  
6  Over 60

8. At the time this individual first took an interest in you and/or your career, what was his/her approximate age?

- 1  25 or under  
2  26-30  
3  31-40  
4  41-50  
5  51-60  
6  Over 60

9. At the time this individual first took an interest in you and/or your career, what was the highest degree he/she held?
- 1  High school or less
  - 2  B.A./B.S.
  - 3  Masters
  - 4  Ed.D./Ph.D.
10. At the time this individual first took an interest in you and/or your career, what was his/her job classification?
- 1  College Teacher
  - 2  Cooperating teacher(during your student teaching)
  - 3  Teacher(peer or fellow teacher)
  - 4  Building-based Support Person(counselor, media coordinator, reading coordinator, etc.)
  - 5  Building-based Administrator(administrative intern, assistant principal, principal)
  - 6  System-wide Support Person(supervisor, instructional coordinator, psychologist, psychometrist, psychiatrist, social worker)
  - 7  System-wide Administrator(director, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent, deputy superintendent, superintendent, business official)
  - 8  Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
11. For what period of time was this individual helpful and/or important to you and/or your career?
- 1  One year or less
  - 2  2-3 years
  - 3  4-5 Years
  - 4  More than 5 years

12. Sex of this individual

1  Male

2  Female

13. What personality characteristics did this individual possess which made him/her helpful to you?

14. What professional characteristics did this individual possess which made him/her helpful to you?

15. What skills, if any, did you learn from this individual?

16. How was this individual helpful and/or important to you and your career?

17. In what other ways did this individual influence you?

18. This individual's name is \_\_\_\_\_  
(optional)

**Additional comments:**

Follow-up interviews are planned with a limited number of people who complete this survey. Your signature reflects your willingness to be considered for the follow-up group. However, your signature neither obligates you to participate nor guarantees you will be selected as a participant.

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your signature (optional)

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Please return your survey in the envelope provided.  
**THANK YOU!**

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