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MENTORS and SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

THE IMPACT ON ADJUNCT PROFESSORS

By

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THE IMPACT ON ADJUNCT PROFESSORS

Abstract

Adjunct professors are growing in numbers across higher education institutions. There are mentor programs at many universities, but there is little research into the social aspects of mentoring relationships. The traditional format of mentor programs is a structured program between a senior faculty and a new faculty member. This qualitative study of a medium sized public university focused on mentor programs between adjunct and full-time faculty. Three research questions were addressed during the study. The first question was: what is the past experience of the participants in group mentor programs? The second question was: what characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship? The third question was: how do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors? Data was collected by one-on-one interviews which were transcribed and then coded for themes. The interviews uncovered four themes: (1) feelings regarding group mentoring, (2) social aspects of group mentoring (3) important characteristics of group mentoring, (4) informal group mentoring. Recommendations include having more social events off campus to encourage forming relationships and to host a semester workshop on different topics.

Keywords: *Mentoring, Adjunct Professors, Higher Education, Group Mentoring, Informal Mentoring*

University of New England

Doctor of Education
Educational Leadership

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Adjunct professors make up a substantial portion of professors at four- and two-year colleges. The American Association of University Professors, (AAUP, 2017) cite that more than 50% of all faculty appointments are now part-time and this number continues to grow each year. Many adjunct professors enter the classroom with little teaching experience. They are often supplied with a sample of the syllabus and an email detailing where their mailbox is located and how to make copies. Adjunct faculty may receive little mentoring or training on teaching pedagogy prior to being hired for their content expertise, it is important to explore mentoring style programs that have been effective for new faculty. However, some colleges have set up mentoring programs, such as Lesley University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ziegler and Reiff researched the adjunct mentor program at Lesley University that focused on a) emphasizing the academic integrity of the course and program; (b) supporting effective teaching; and (c) sustaining professional collaboration between the mentor and mentee while continuing to attend to immediate concerns around policies and procedures. Ziegler et. al believe adjunct faculty members deserve mentoring designed to support their teaching, build on their expertise, and extend their involvement in the institutional community (2006).

One such program is the New Scholars Network (NSN), established in 2001, at Penn State. The NSN is a mentor style program and was created as a group that would come together from diverse backgrounds. The New Scholars Network allowed the sharing of information between new and current full-time faculty, concerns as well as scholarship support such as peer editing, and ideas ranging from classroom management to balancing teaching with research. Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002), found the NSN group was instrumental in introducing

relocated members to their new community, providing a social outlet, and some professors began friendships. The importance of informal networking and friendships are described as the professors from the NSN engaged in social activities outside of the college campus. They discussed coffee shops, restaurants and cultural events. Angelique, et. al. (2002) also discovered the groups discussed personal and family responsibilities while offering emotional support.

Mentoring programs in both formal and informal settings are proving to be a vital component to the adjunct experience; this study focused on the past experience of adjuncts and full-time professors in group mentor programs and what characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship and how the social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors.

Statement of the Problem

While adjunct professors are an integral part of the college community, too often they are not given enough support by their department. The growth of the adjunct faculty profession shows one way the community of higher education is changing. Through creating ways to orient and support faculty to make connections, friendships, and work-place relationships, college leaders can keep adjunct professors in their department and reduce turn over. There is an increase in research pertaining to adjunct faculty as the silent majority, but research into adjunct faculty specific mentor programs is lacking. Figlio, Schapiro, & Soter (2013) 2013 conducted a study at Northwestern University, they found when adjunct faculty taught introductory classes, students rated them higher than tenured faculty teaching introductory classes. Students were also more likely to take another class within that subject.   Figlio et. al. attributed this to the support Northwestern University adjunct professors receive through increased wages and orientations programs. A study by Watanabe and Falci (2017) focused on friendships in the workplace and

creating a work-family culture. Watanabe and Falci investigated friendship connections and the perceived supportiveness from these connections. They found that faculty members with more friendship connections were more likely than those with fewer connections to report that their department was work-family supportive. A mentor program that combines support for adjunct professors with creating work place friendships could contribute to an adjunct professor's personal and professional growth.

Purpose of the Study

There is a gap in the research pertaining to mentor programs specifically for adjunct professors. This study focused on full-time and adjunct faculty perceptions about whether a mentoring program would increase perceptions of engagement and commitment for adjunct professors. This research was conducted at a northeastern mid-size public University. The adjunct and full-time professors were asked about past involvement with mentoring programs, what they felt where important characteristics of a mentor and if they feel they would benefit from a mentor style relationship. With the growing number of adjuncts, it is important to learn how the university can increase support, reduce turnover and make transitions when full-time positions become available.

Research Questions

This study focused on faculty perceptions about whether a mentoring program increases perceptions of engagement and commitment for adjunct professors. The three central research questions are detailed below.

- What is the past experience of the participants in group mentor programs?

- What characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship?

- How do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors?

Conceptual Framework

Adjunct professors provide instruction in numerous courses and guidance to their students as well as support to their department. What has not been addressed is how the college can support adjunct professors. This research explored how the adjunct professors felt they could benefit, grow professionally, and personally while continuing to contribute to the college community. Research into career happiness continues to highlight personal relationships, but most adjuncts do not feel connected or a sense of commitment to their campuses. Eagan, Jaeger, and Grantham (2015) reported that 73% of adjuncts want more opportunities for professional development and acknowledgements such as teaching awards. These were some examples of simple ways to help adjuncts feel motivated and excited about their jobs.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1961) claims a person learns by paying attention, retaining the information, being capable of replicating what they learned, and finally receiving reinforcement for successfully implementing the new behavior. The mentor relationship ties into this theory as it relies on a social exchange to encourage new behavior. Bandura theorized the first step in learning is to observe another person perform a task and concentrating on what actions are being taken. The second step is to find a way to retain what they learned, either through association, or being able to verbally explain what the process is. The third step is to be able to replicate what they learned. Reinforcement occurs when the behavior is accomplished and the person continues said behavior.

Further, Lankau and Scandura (2002) found the most important characteristic of mentoring is that it is a collaborative process, wherein both the mentor and the mentee are working together. Crow (2001) also stated that mentoring is not a passive process but an active one in which the mentee and the mentor are actively engaged with each other in learning. Mentor

programs are based upon building relationships in a social setting to assist others in accomplishing new professional goals. Universities will be able to develop mentor programs that are beneficial not only to the individuals involved, but to the departments, and the larger college community. Mentor programs are a form of professional development, if colleges invest in their adjuncts, they will feel more a part of campus. This transition could lead adjuncts to become better teachers, achieving professional growth and overall personal satisfaction. Knippelmeyer and Torraco (2007) define mentoring as "an interpersonal relationship that fosters support between a mentor and protégé (p. 3). They go on to state that mentoring fits in with the higher education community by reinforcing the idea that

> Many would argue the purpose of higher education is to enhance learning, inquiry, and development for individuals within our society. In such a setting, mentoring, a common method of employee development, would then fit within the scope of enhancing learning, inquiry, and development for faculty. (2007, p. 4)

A mentor's role is to provide knowledge, structure, reinforcement and guidance to their mentee. This relationship is built on the mutual aspects of trust and respect.

Abraham Maslow described his theory of the Hierarchy of Needs in a 1943 edition of *Psychology Review*. The Hierarchy of Needs also relates to the mentor relationship. Maslow's triangle of needs begins with physiological needs (water, food, sleep), next is safety (resources, property, job security), then love/belongingness (friendship, family), esteem needs (confidence, achievement) and finally self-actualization. In a mentor/mentee situation both must feel safe with each other, feel a sense of belongingness to the campus community and/or their department, feel respected and competent in their roles, both must desire knowledge and the ability to understand and hopefully be striving for self-actualization. Lunsford, (2011) theorized the need

for belongingness may lead to a close interaction between a mentor and a mentee, which often leads to the development of strong interpersonal and communication skills for the mentee. Maslow's theory is based on reasoning that people have an intrinsic desire to become self-actualized. The mentor's role is to guide, advise and support the mentee on this journey.

Social learning theory relies on collaboration, relationship building and a mutual respect to succeed. Incorporating the three steps of observing, retaining and replicating requires the mentor and mentee to find value in the mentor relationship. This study asked what full-time and adjunct professors think important characteristics are needed for a successful mentor/mentee relationship.   Mentor programs are a form of professional development. If colleges invest in their adjuncts, will they feel more connected to campus therefore becoming better teachers, grow professionally and experience higher levels of overall personal satisfaction.

Further, Lankau and Scandura (2002) found the most important characteristic of mentoring is the act of collaborating, Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory is built upon observing, learning and acting. Both styles of mentor programs require the art of collaboration, where the mentee is learning by observing the mentor, the mentee is learning by asking questions, and expanding their networking. The mentee then experiences personal and professional growth. Social Learning Theory extends to mentor programs as it provides a foundation for a successful mentor program. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs contributes to mentor relationship as once a sense of belongingness occurs, the mentor/mentee relationship is more successful.

Assumptions, Limitations and Scope

Assumptions in this study were that adjunct professors would like to remain and grow professionally at their college. Additional assumptions were that participants would be honest on

the questionnaires, be responsible in the relationship, and that they understood their corresponding role within the study. Confidentiality was discussed to help promote honesty and the informed consent paper was presented with ample time to read and to answer any questions. Limitations of the study were the limited participants and the data may be specific to a smaller style public university. The study also relied on faculty attending the events and volunteering to be interviewed. The data was collected within a psychology department and may not represent the views of professors in other departments. It should also be noted the researcher is an adjunct professor within this department and at an additional college. The scope of the study includes adjunct and full-time professors in a psychology department answering questions referring to mentor programs and the social aspects of these programs.

Rationale & Significance

Many adjunct professors are current graduate students, or professionals from other disciplines or fields of practice, such as lawyers or therapists (AAUP, 2017). Too often adjunct professors make a living by teaching at more than one school, so they are on the road instead of holding office hours and teaching more than a full course load. This dynamic makes it more difficult for an adjunct to feel connected to their campus community and their students. Studies of mentor programs that found a sincere element of friendship was evaluated as more successful than when friendship was not identified. Researchers Franko (2006), Angelique et. al (2002) and Ambler et. Al (2016) each found through interviews that, when the element of friendship was discovered, the mentor/mentee relationship was viewed more beneficial. Additionally, they also found mentor relationships that were described as negative were characterized as lacking time to meet or the meetings covered surface information regarding basics about campus or the department. When the element of friendship was part of the relationship, people made time for

each other. Friendship was identified as an element in successful mentor programs.

Definition of Terms

Adjunct professor: part-time, contract teacher hired for a specific purpose by a college or university. (aaup.org)

Friendship: a close association between two people marked by feelings of care, respect, admiration, concern, or like. (goodtherapy.org)

Full course load: a full-time professor or tenured professor would teach 5 courses plus carry a caseload of student to advise. (aaup.org)

Mentor programs: a relationship where a more experienced person assists a less experienced person in a certain area of expertise. (Carreau, 2016).

Perceived Self-Efficacy: People's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects. (Bandura, 1961)

Academic Tenure: an indefinite appointment that can be terminated only for just cause. Tenure includes academic freedom in teaching and research findings, tenured professors cannot be terminated for religious reasons, encouraging open dissent and cannot be controlled by the university, corporations, special interest groups or the government. (aaup.org)

Conclusion

According to the American Association of University Professors, (AAUP) at all US institutions combined, the percentage of instructional positions that is off the tenure track amounted to 73 percent in 2016, the latest year for which data are available. The AAUP also states faculty in contingent positions often receive little or no evaluation and mentoring, making them more vulnerable to being dismissed due ineffective teaching skills, reduced academic freedom, and evaluations. Some recommendations they suggested include voting rights,

inclusion in committees and a mentor program. The mentor relationship is complex and contains various elements such as professional boundaries, interpersonal skills, respect and a commitment to the relationship. Some researchers suggested there needs to be a balance to include both a professional relationship and a friendship. Researchers Franko (2006), Angelique et al. (2002) and Ambler et al. (2016) have found that a solid foundation of a personal relationship helps facilitate the professional relationship.

With the framework of Social Theory Learning, Bandura (1961), the mentor relationship is seen as participating in observational learning. If people learn by watching, then the mentor relationship becomes even more important. Adjunct professors provide an additional layer to the research, as part-time professors many desire professional development and workplace connections. Bandura' Social Learning Theory and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs could provide the missing pieces for adjuncts to fulfill their career potential. Bandura and Maslow together integrate the humanistic approach to assist the learner in reaching their potential. Both agree that the humanistic theory is mostly intrinsically motivated, this connects to the mentor relationship, as both parties must commit to participate in an open, respectful, attentive way.

The mentor/mentee relationship is not new, but implementing a formal program for adjunct professors may provide individual support, new opportunities for the adjunct professors and create a more cohesive department.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explored different mentoring programs and what the impact is upon the professor's experience in the classroom and with the college community. Mentoring programs are proving to be a vital component to the adjunct experience. The literature reviewed first addressed mentor programs for first year and associate full-time faculty more generally. The next section addressed mentorship programs in groups versus the traditional one-on-one model. The third section addressed benefits and costs of mentor programs. The fourth section looked at structures of mentor programs.

This review presents what a mentor program is and various styles of mentor programs designed for professors and will outline which style is most beneficial to the adjunct, the mentor and the college community. The literature review was conducted by the researcher using the University of New England database as well as the database at the research site. Descriptors used were mentors, mentor programs, group mentor programs, adjunct professors, tenured professors, also included universities, higher education and part-time faculty. The researcher also used sources from Albert Bandura and Abraham Maslow describing their theories on social learning, self-efficacy and needs. There was plenty of literature discussing mentor programs and higher education institutions. The limited data was when searching for mentor programs specifically for adjunct professors.

Mentor Programs

What is a mentor? Alpert (2009) defines a mentor as "an older, experienced colleague who helps guide the career and life direction of a younger co-worker" (p. 1). He continues to describe the mentor relationship as "when the more experienced professional, the mentor, takes a

younger colleague, the mentee, under their wing" (p. 1). Alpert uses terms such as instruct, admonish, assist, wise, respect, responsibility, instruction, discipline and role-model to further describe the mentor/mentee relationship.

Nottingham, Mazerolle, and Barrett (2017) described the purpose of mentoring as "bidirectional and mutually beneficial for both the mentor and mentee" (p. 245). Nottingham et al. go on to describe higher education mentor programs as "experienced faculty members provide guidance for junior faculty members as they navigate job expectations, scholarly endeavors, and promotion and tenure requirements" (p. 245). Nottingham et al. found mentees reported personal development and an increase in confidence from their mentoring experience. They also found more informal mentoring relationships within higher education settings. They described informal mentoring relationships as growing organically due to shared interests, including professional and personal goals. Formal mentoring was defined as one-year programs where the organization matched the mentors and mentees. A formal mentor relationship follows a program and process outlined by the organization. Their study reported higher levels of satisfaction within informal mentoring than formal mentoring relationships. Nottingham et al. concluded their research by stating "whereas professional mentoring relationships are often focused on career development, they appear to be strengthened when mentors and mentees develop personal bonds. Therefore, mentor program participants should be encouraged to share both personal and professional experiences during their time spent together" (p. 255).

When Allen, Eby and Lentz (2006) researched qualities within mentor relationships they found when the mentees felt they had input into choosing their mentor, they reported higher satisfaction rates. Mentors also reported higher levels of quality when they felt they were chosen by their mentees. Allen et al. suggest both parties may start to prioritize this relationship before

the first official meeting. If both are investing more into the relationship, the relationship may be stronger and the program outcomes may be more effective.

Thirolf, (2012) found adjunct professors identified they are highly satisfied when interacting with students, but not with the full-time faculty. This finding implies that more is needed to encourage the relationship between peers. Perhaps having mentees choose their mentor would encourage both parties to get to know each other better.

Through this research, the idea of what a mentor is takes shape. Alpert (2009) begins by describing a traditional mentor/mentee relationship. This consists of a seasoned colleague advising a new co-worker. He used terms of advising, discipline and respect to describe the relationship. Nottingham et al. (2017) expand this definition to include informal organically grown mentor relationships where both parties learn from each other. They also mentioned developing personal bonds within the mentor relationship. Allen et al. (2006) add an additional layer of having the mentors and mentees having a sense of control in who your mentor/mentees is. The researchers wondered if choosing your mentor made the participants prioritize the relationship even before the official start.

Mentor relationships involve more than a seasoned full-time faculty member advising a newer faculty member. Important aspects highlighted are mutual respect, reciprocal learning, having a sense of control, and developing personal bonds. The next section discusses mentor programs designed for associate or first year professors. There are specific topics first year professors may need to discuss, such as teaching skills, classroom management, the community, and long-term goals.

Mentor Programs for Associate or First Year Professors

Mentor programs exist at many higher education institutions, this section discusses research pertaining to mentor programs for associate or first year professors. Various programs focus on teaching support, career goals, campus culture, faculty life, guidance, personal growth, and collaboration. Assisting with teaching skills involves building confidence and developing a classroom management style. Career goals include short and long-term goals, reaching them builds confidence in new teachers. Campus culture and faculty life involves fostering connections between faculty, learning about a new environment and feeling connected to the environment.

Elizabeth Ann Reed discusses a mentoring program that supports new instructors within the teaching role.

> A mentoring program provides opportunities for young and old, new and full-fledged teachers to observe master teachers in action. "This was a great lesson I just gave," with a feeling of pride and a sense of longing to share the positive outcome with colleagues. A mentoring program allows you to share these successes and provides a platform for experienced teachers to pass along their acquired knowledge and inspire younger teachers. (Reed, 2019, p. 28).

Mitten and Ross (2016) conducted a study at a large southeastern research university. The participants were 10 faculty members that won the undergraduate Teacher of the Year (TOY) award. Recipients of the award are viewed as being committed to the undergraduate teaching mission of their university. During interviews they advocated stronger mentoring for novice faculty and on-going opportunities for professional development for experienced faculty. They elaborated their suggestions by outlining five ideas including creating teaching centers for training, mentorship, professional development and collaboration. Second, to encourage faculty

to explore research opportunities regarding student learning. Third, create short videos

showcasing different strategies of teaching. Fourth, to encourage peer observation of instruction

instead of peer evaluation. Lastly, to reward faculty mentors by asking them to create programs

to strengthen teaching skills of new faculty. These award-winning teachers felt the mentor

relationship is a vital component to assist their junior colleagues. They felt a mentor relationship

was the best way to "convey their passion, the challenges they faced, the solutions they

developed, and their ideas for communicating the priority of teaching in higher education, they

hope, and we hope, to pass their passion to the next generation of higher education faculty."

(Mitten et. al. 2016)

Many programs are structured to address general socialization to academic life. At Brown

University a mentor program pairs a tenured faculty member with a first-year faculty member

from the same division but outside of their department. This is to ensure the mentor is not

someone on the new professor's tenure review committee. The Brown University mentor

handbook provides an outline of responsibilities of the mentor and mentee. It discusses

confidentiality, how to prepare for meetings, and to be open to feedback for the mentee. Advice

for the mentor is to help set attainable career goals, be a pro-active problem solver and

knowledgeable about the institutional culture and faculty life. The handbook recommends once

a month meeting, in person, on the phone or even through email. This program has been rated

highly successful, 100 percent on mentees rated the program very or extremely effective, 91

percent stated it enhanced their professional development, mentees also reported feeling more

self-confident, valued and empowered due to the program. (Singer, 2018)

At the Anisfield School of Business at Ramapo College in New Jersey, Eisner (2015),

followed the implementation of the Faculty Mentoring Program (FMP); the goal of FMP is to

partner a tenured faculty member with a non-tenured faculty member and provide a sense of community. After one year the program was revised to include more mentors, better training and the ability to change a mentor after one year. Further research at the Metropolitan State University of Denver by Faurer, Sutton, and Worster (2014), revealed that including a second-year program was essential. Year one centered on guidance, training and basic university information, and year two focused on personal growth and relationships. At Ramapo College the program is adding a second year to provide further support and build lasting relationships (Eisner, 2015).

These programs revealed the traditional model of a mentor program of linking a tenured professor with a non-tenured faculty member. These programs are seen as providing advice, the ability to collaborate and to learn more about the campus community.

This section described traditional mentor programs for first year or non-tenured professors. The literature presents successful programs that are a varied. At Brown the program is a semester, with the option to continue. At Ramapo College the program is a two-year commitment from both parties. Both programs offer a structure to get to know each other, a basic understanding of what their roles are and suggestion to teach and learn about the culture of the campus and the community. The next section discusses research into the group form of a mentor programs.

Mentor Programs in Group Form

A new form of mentor programs is based on the concept of group mentoring. This structure allows for faculty to meet more people, grow a larger network and be exposed to a diverse environment. Three schools highlighted are Norbert College, Penn State and Stanford University.

A program at Norbert College in Green Bay, Wisconsin focused on group mentoring rather than the traditional one-on-one relationship. Beane-Katner (2015) indicated the next generation of faculty is made up of more minorities and as a larger group the expectations for more interaction, feedback, to be challenged and engaged are higher with this generation. This group approach allows more resources and more people; therefore, the responsibility is spread out, rather than requiring one person to carry out all the tasks. This cohort meets regularly allowing for professional development and relationships to build with both groups learning from each other. An additional style of a mentor program was developed at a health sciences college. This program was designed to include workshops, talks and one-on-one meetings. Mentees and mentors reported finding the workshops informative, helpful and reported overall satisfaction with the program. Franko (2006), found the more successful the mentor/mentee relationship is, the higher career satisfaction is.

At Penn State, a program called the New Scholars Network (NSN) was created as a group that would invite faculty to come together from different backgrounds and where individuals were able to share information, concerns, peer editing, and ideas ranging from classroom management to balancing teaching with research. Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002), found the NSN group was instrumental in introducing relocated members to their new community, providing a social outlet, such as the Friday evening meeting at a local restaurant and sharing information about coffee shops, restaurants, theater, and other cultural events. They noted that some professors began friendships, as documented by reports of members going hiking and have played racquetball together

Stanford University 's office of faculty development and diversity offers guidance for new faculty mentor relationships. It includes junior faculty members being matched with a more

senior faculty. Senior faculty are suggested to offer performance reviews and advice on promotions. One suggestion is that the mentee seek out group mentoring if they choose. Rick Reis (2015) proposes the group be 6-8 members, confidentiality and comfort are highly valued. Reis suggests a check list titled the "Needs Assessment for New Faculty" to determine what topics new faculty would like to learn about. The groups are promoted as an opportunity for open discussion, and there is occasionally a speaker and/or a devoted topic. Mentees reported they gained a new perspective of the campus community, and found it helpful that others shared their concerns and had the same questions. They also made friends that extend outside of the program, for example, someone to attend events or have coffee with.

These types of programs are nontraditional, innovative and built on collaboration and building social connections rather than keeping the main focus on work. Findings from a study by Franko (2006) did reveal personal connections provide more satisfaction at work, and Angelique et al. (2002) discovered new professors were able to gather information about the community at large helping them feel more at home if they had relocated.

The role of group mentoring is shown by these studies to bring people together to combine professional and personal growth.   Group mentoring program have been shown to create connections between faculty and their campus community. Through this connection, faculty increase engagement with each other, increase job satisfaction, and social engagement.

The next section discusses research pertaining to the benefits and cost of mentor programs. Interviews and surveys were completed after the faculty participated in a mentor program sponsored by their university.

Benefits/costs of Mentor Programs

Research into benefits, drawbacks and the overall experience of mentor programs used interviews and surveys. Researchers asked what they gained out of the program and drawbacks experienced. They also found some unintended consequences of the mentor relationships. This section discussed the findings further.

Thomas, Lunsford and Rodrigues (2015), researched a mentor program at university in the Southwestern United States where a junior faculty member was partnered with a mentor to work on a project. The mentor and mentee were supposed to work on psychosocial relationships, they defined psychosocial mentoring as involving listening, confidence-building, and encouragement. They reported that mentored individuals receive more promotions, earn more money and report higher levels of satisfaction. Thomas et. al. (2015) found the mentees were happy with the frequent communication, having their career questions answered, but also found it was too time demanding in conjunction with their other duties. Mentors found the meetings and professional development useful but commented that they did not get enough time with their mentee. There was difficulty in scheduling meetings with regular frequency due to class schedules, personal time and other responsibilities.

At a university in Australia, researchers Ambler and Cahir (2016) found mentoring helped faculty learn how to build professional relationships and friendships, and develop a sense of personal satisfaction; mentoring acted as a catalyst for career and leadership enhancement; expanded understanding of teaching and research. An unintended consequence of the mentor program for faculty was self-reflection. Participants explained that the process encouraged reciprocal learning, the senior faculty member also learned from their junior associate. Their mentor relationships opened up new ways of thinking about and regarding their work. Sixty-five

faculty members answered the online questionnaire and six of them volunteered for the interview process. The mentor relationship was viewed as a sharing process instead of one person being more senior; more friendships were also reported.

Other researchers found the costs to a mentor relationship to include burnout, poor time management, and reports of the time used unwisely. Carreau's (2016) research found that many mentors self-reported feeling under trained, over used, leading to feeling as though they are under preforming in their mentor role. The act of mentoring is not a cure all to faculty morale. She describes in this research a theory that the person is in control of their career and destiny. Professionals must create their own path, take risks and not rely on someone else for advice. Carreau suggests people create an overlapping network of mentors, sponsors, peer mentors and role models. This group is constantly growing and changing. A sponsor's role includes advocating for, assisting in making connections, and opening career opportunities. Peer mentors can highlight certain networking groups to join, provide feedback or skills you may want to adopt. A role model may be a person you do not know personally, but follow on social media, or read about. You can adapt their style of dress, investigate their major and/or career path. She concludes her theory by stating "genius doesn't rest with a mentor or anyone else; it is your job to find it and use it to make the most of your career" (2016, p. 180).

Jacobson (2013), provides a "roadmap" to assist colleges in establishing a program to increase the adjunct's satisfaction in the classroom and in their personal growth. Jacobson begins with connecting the benefits and costs to these programs and how best a program can assist adjunct professors in professional and personal growth. Jacobson addresses concerns about time constraints, time management, feeling under trained to be a successful mentor, and burnout. The

benefits found for mentees were building confidence, having their questions answered, career enhancement and expanding their relationships with other faculty as well as building friendships.

Jacobson's recommendations are to create orientation programs, build instructional teams in the departments, provide an instructor support area and the availability of someone to answer questions as needed, lastly to offer flexible schedules.

Structure of Mentor Programs

The structure of mentor programs varied from one on one programs to groups, and the topics they focused on. Faurer, Sutton and Worster (2014), investigated a program at the Metropolitan State University of Denver that focused on guidance, training and basic university information in year one and on building personal growth and relationships in year two. The Faculty Learning Community held meetings to gather the thoughts of the current faculty; they provided material pertaining to the qualities of a good mentor, described what a mentor program should look like, and made suggestions about how program leaders can adapt it to suit their needs.

At an Australian university, researchers Harvey, Ambler and Cahir (2017) interviewed 8 leaders who had received a Learning and Teaching award. From this research a Spectrum Approach to Mentoring, (SAM) was introduced. SAM is a three-step process;

1) requires the mentee to select a mentor and to take an active approach in selecting his or her own mentor. Mentors can be selected from a SAM website or mentee may approach a particular person in their field. Harvey et al. (2017) recommended contacting the person through email, and, once the person agrees to be a mentor, an agreement should be made clearly stating what the purpose of the relationship is, expectations, style, regularity of meetings and if those meetings will be in the office, on the phone or even through email.

2) the second step is the process of building a relationship; this step requires both the mentee and mentor to be proactive in learning new skills. The mentor must practice active listening, provide information, guidance, and constructive feedback. The mentor is a professional role model and may need to advocate on the mentee's behalf. Other responsibilities include confidentiality, completing tasks, and engaging in ongoing reflection.

3) the conclusion consists of completing and sharing their final reflections. The reflections are written and shared as a type of debriefing of the relationship. They may review the experience together and in turn use them for future research. (2017, p. 167)

This three-step approach provides a flexible yet measurable system for higher education mentors. The contract discussed in step one connects to the final reflections in a systematic way to provide evidence if the contract was followed and the subsequent outcomes.

A 2009 mentor program at Massachusetts General Hospital was research from 2009-2016 by Efstathiou and Drumm (2018). The Center for Faculty Development (CFD) created a formal mentorship program between junior and senior faculty members in two departments. It started with a survey asking mentors what their top five interests of professional development were and asked senior faculty to rank the top five areas they were interested in mentoring about. Participants were then matched by compatibility. There were three formal training sessions and several informal meetings within the first nine months. At the first formal training sessions, the CFD leadership discussed the mission of the program, best practices in a mentoring relationship, and the pairs created an action plan for their relationship detailing expectations, guidelines and boundaries, strategies for addressing stumbling blocks, and goals. The second training session was scheduled for halfway through the program. It allowed the pairs to review their action plan, and discuss emotional intelligence, mentoring concepts, worked with case studies of difficult

mentoring situations, and revised their goals. The third and last mentoring training session was for closure and to discuss continuing the mentor relationship informally. The session worked to assist in redefining the relationship, share with other mentor pairings, reflection and to work on future plans. Efstathiou et al. (2018) findings were "mentee satisfaction with level of personal achievement increased from 29% to 50%, and their satisfaction with their work environment increased from 35% to 65%" (p. 9). Researchers also found "a majority of mentees continued to work with mentors to achieve promotion, leadership positions, and a broader professional network, and most mentees cite participation in the pilot mentorship program as integral to their improvement in these domains" (p. 9).

Research from these three programs reveals how important relationship building is to participants in mentor programs. The people involved must feel connected on a personal level to build a supportive working rapport. Harvey et al. (2017) and Efstathiou et al. (2016) both found that when a mentor/mentee has some control over choosing their mentor, it helps to find commonalities. It promotes a closer mentor relationship. The three programs also provided some structure while promoting informal relationships and continued involvement outside and after the program is over.

Friendship within mentor relationships

Mentor programs come in a variety of forms, such as those that focus on one-on-one pairings and those that support a group; they run for one to three years and can be helpful or harmful. They may be useful for mentees to assist in obtaining promotions, gaining professional development and higher levels of satisfaction at work. Mentors also participated in self-reflection as well as gaining professional and personal growth. Drawbacks included not having enough time to meet, difficulty scheduling meetings, experiencing burnout and feeling

undertrained. A mentor program requires the mentor to be just as enthusiastic about the role as the mentee. One characteristics of effective programs that is less understood is the role of friendship. Franko, (2006), Angelique et. al, (2002) and Ambler et. Al (2016) found research that determine when friendship is felt within the mentor/mentee relationship, both parties rate the program more successful. The relationships that were viewed negatively noted the lack of time to meet or the meetings only covered surface topics regarding basic information about campus or the department. When the element of friendship is felt, people make time for each other.

Clark, Moore, Johnston, and Openshaw (2011) found some colleges rely more on available adjuncts, rather than teaching experience. They encourage adjunct faculty training, support, evaluation and to develop opportunities to integrate adjuncts into their departments.

Adjunct professors provide instruction in numerous courses, recommendations and guidance to their students as well as support to their department. What has not been addressed is how the college can support adjunct professors. This research explored how the adjunct professors feel they can benefit, grow professionally and personally while continuing to contribute to the college community. Research into career happiness continues to highlight personal relationships, but most adjuncts do not feel connected or a sense of commitment to their campuses.

The one-on-one mentor program is the most traditional form, it has many positive aspects as participants make time for each other, continue to be open and respect one another. Group mentor programs expose participants to more diverse group of people. They allow for networking outside of one's department and to learn more about their community. Drawbacks include if the mentor and mentee do not get along, if the group has scheduling problems, if either program is not felt as mutually beneficial, it will fail.

Conclusion

This literature review highlighted research into mentor programs that are both one-one-one and in the group form and lasting from a semester to two years. The literature review also looked at different ways for a mentor/mentee program to be structured. Among them are one-on-one or groups, and different lengths of time (short-term and long-term). A reoccurring theme in the literature is that for the relationship to be reported as effective or successful, there is usually an element of friendship. Research into Social Learning Theory, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and mentor programs uncovers several tie ins. Mentor programs are structured to assist people learn and grow professionally and personally. Both humanistic theories strive to help people reach their potential. Making these two theories ideal for mentor program building. This study researched how adjunct and full-time professors felt about mentor programs, what they valued within them and if the social aspects impact the relationship.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The growth of the adjunct faculty profession is one way the community of higher education is changing. Through creating ways to make connections, friendships, and work-place relationships, college leaders can keep highly regarded adjunct professors in their department and reduce turn over. The study used an exploratory qualitative approach to framing the study and organizing data collection. Exploratory qualitative research obtains answers to questions using a set of procedures, and collects data leading to findings that are relevant beyond the limits of the study.

The three central research questions are:

- What is the past experience of the participants in group mentor programs?

- What characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship?

- How do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors?

The researcher used an exploratory qualitative approach to data by conducting interviews after two events. The first group event was a department meeting in a conference room. At this meeting the study was presented and discussed. The meeting was attended by full-time faculty. The researcher requested to be on the agenda and was given fifteen minutes to present the study and request volunteers to be interviewed. Each attendee was given a copy of the questions (see Appendix A) and the informed consent form (see Appendix C). The second group event was arranged as an after work social event in a private room on campus. The event was attended by full-time and adjunct faculty. A private room provided confidentially and a cohesive setting for participants. The study was discussed with the adjunct faculty, copies of the questions and informed consent form were provided. The questions consisted of between nine and six open-

ended questions, allowing for follow up questions; interviews were transcribed and coded for emerging themes surrounding important aspects of the mentor/mentee relationship.

The events were structured as a meeting and a networking style event. The second meeting had refreshments offered and encouraged people to freely talk to each other. After the second event, all attendees were sent an email requesting a follow-up interview. The interviews focused on their perception of the social aspect of mentor programs.

Setting

The study was conducted at a medium size Northeast public university, within the psychology department. The sample site psychology department consists of 16 full time tenured professors and 19 adjunct professors. At the time of the study, there are 385 students enrolled as psychology majors, and it is the fourth largest major on campus and the number one minor. This location was ideal for participation. At the time of the study there was not a formal mentor program in place. With one tenured professor recently retired and two more planning on retirement in the coming year, a mentor program could provide a way for adjuncts to feel an increased sense of belongingness and commitment to the college.

Participants/Sample

The invitation, for the second event was sent via email and flyers in the psychology faculty mailboxes (see Appendix B). RSVPs were requested leading up to the event through email and/or a sign-up sheet in the office. Upon arrival to the first event, the participants were each given a detailed description of the study and a consent form. The researcher discussed the voluntary nature of the study and that they were not obligated to participate. Professors were reassured that they can leave at any time, that their participation was kept confidential, and that the study will not impact their professional roles. The goal was to have eight full time

professors and six adjunct professors to attend; and six interviews with a mix of full time and adjunct faculty. The participants ranged from professors with twenty plus years' experience to a recent hire in the last three years. Their areas of expertise range from clinical psychology, research based to health psychology. The adjunct professors also have multiple years of experience. One has taught at many universities in the last twenty years, another is head of the department at a community college, and the third also teaches at another school, with a specialization in sports psychology.

Data

Participants who volunteered for the follow up interview were contacted in person after the second meeting. Interviews were set up for as soon as possible and took place in a psychology classroom or the professor's office. The interviews were recorded and automatically transcribed using the Otter app on the researchers iPhone, they were edited by the researcher for any corrections, and emailed to the interviewees for review within 24 hours.

Analysis

The interviews indicated the level of experience with mentor programs, what skills they think are important for a mentor, and if they are willing to be a mentor/mentee in the future. The interviews were recorded and automatically transcribed using the Otter app, they were edited by the researcher for any corrections, and emailed to the interviewees for review within 24 hours. The researcher looked for commonalities and differences regarding the thoughts of important characteristics of a mentor/mentee relationship and an overall successful mentor program.

Using an exploratory qualitative data approach allowed the researcher to gain insight regarding the perceived importance of the social relationship of the mentor/mentee experience.

The interviews focused on how the professors felt about the experience and if they were interested in attending more events.

Participant Rights

The researcher obtained approval from the University of New England's Institutional Review Board as well as the Institutional Review Board of the university where the research will be conducted. Confidentiality was kept by referring to the site as the psychology department within a medium size Northeast public four-year university. Participants were referred to by pseudonyms in the study. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form advising them what the purpose of the study is, their right to end participation, and that they would receive a copy of the findings. Participants were debriefed at the conclusion of the study to answer any questions.

Potential limitations, Benefits and Unintended Consequences

Limitations included the small sample size of possible participants. Attendance at the meeting was mandatory for full-time faculty, however attendance at the social event was voluntary. Interviews relied heavily on the subjects being honest about their experiences. Participants might not fully understand a question, although the researcher strived to keep the questions short and clear. The researcher also needed to rely on the honesty of the professors. Benefits of the interview protocol included the ability of the researcher to ask follow up questions and the ability of the professors to speak freely regarding their feelings and attitudes about mentor programs. Potential bias was present in the study because the researcher is an adjunct professor in this psychology department. The researcher has been in the adjunct role for six years and feels having a sense of attachment to the workplace is beneficial to her own career.

Conclusion

Research has shown gaps regarding how to assist the growing number of adjunct professors to become fully integrated into their campus communities. There is pressure from the unions to offer adjuncts more money, guaranteed course loads, and other perks.

If adjuncts are not treated as fully part of the department or the campus community, the divide will continue to impact the performance of adjunct professors. Data from the three research questions: what is the past experience of the participants in group mentor programs, what characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship and how do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors, was helpful in determining what the next steps are for the research site and future sites.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Past research suggested that social aspects of group mentoring programs are beneficial to full time professors, adjunct professors, mentors, and the college community. The key ideas addressed in the literature review that informed this study include that mentor programs may provide a key component to adjunct professors feeling more connected to their college community. The ideas expressed by previous researchers found several elements to mentorship, including respect, shared interests, learning, collaboration, connection, choice, structure, boundaries and friendship.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore full time and adjunct professor's awareness of group mentoring programs and the value perceived of the social aspects of group mentoring. Data was collected from analyzing interviews with full time and adjunct professors in a psychology department at a small public university. The researcher analyzed the transcripts from the interviews, coded the data, and developed themes that emerged from the data. The researcher explored participants' beliefs about the social aspects of group mentor programs, and whether they would allow for more informal relationships to develop and for deeper connections to be made between full time and adjunct professors.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the past experiences of the participants in group mentoring programs?

2. What characteristics were valued within the mentorship program?

3. How do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors?

Setting

The study was conducted at a medium size Northeast public university, within the psychology department. The sample site psychology department consists of 16 full time tenured professors and 19 adjunct professors. The range of disciplines was from cognitive research, health psychology, sports psychology, to clinical psychology.

Brief Review of Methodology

The participants were three full time professors and three adjunct professors. The participants have been teaching between 8 and 28 years. The participants were a mix of female and men; 3 of each gender. The interviews were conducted one-on-one in either a classroom space or in the professor's office, (see Appendix A for questions). They were recorded on an iPhone using the Otter app. The Otter app recorded and transcribed the interviews. The researcher emailed the transcriptions to herself to review. The researcher gathered qualitative data by listening to the interviews while reading the transcripts, and made a few edits to correct the app misinterpreting a few words within the transcription. The researcher emailed the transcriptions and recordings to the participants for review within 36 hours of each interview. All participants accepted the transcriptions as accurate. Interview responses were then analyzed for common phrases, words or ideas expressed. These commonalities were then reviewed for patterns; from this process four main themes emerged.

Research Questions and Results/Data

The research questions addressed the following: what is the participants' experience of group mentoring programs and what do participants value as important characteristics of a mentorship program? The coding process highlighted four main themes, three were directly addressed by the interview questions, the fourth was an unexpected theme mentioned in a

majority of the interviews. The themes that emerged were: feelings regarding group mentoring, importance of the social aspects of group mentoring, important characteristics of group mentoring, and, the feeling of currently having informal group mentoring within the department.

Themes:	Patterns	Phrases/Codes
1. Positive Feelings and Attitudes Regarding Group Mentoring	1a. Favorable, past experience 1b. Feel the department has group mentoring 1c. Wish there was more of an opportunity	*past experience * Feelings of informally having this in the department *Previously participated in a different field *Positive experience *Favorable due to past experience *Good *Favorable, feeling of informally having this *In favor of them *Wish there was more of an opportunity
2. Social Aspects of Group Mentoring	2a. Not necessary, but important 2b. Support, growth, acceptance 2c. Commonality	*important *more integrated into the department, *accountability *more committed *Finding commonalities, cooking, social media, more comfortable reaching out with other questions. *Important, but not necessary *Knowing strengths and weakness *Important to share anxieties, concerns, reactions & emotions *Support *Growth *Acceptance *Important as once you get to know someone, there's a sense of responsibility between two people *Important to feel connected
3. Important Characteristics of Group Mentoring	3a. Openness 3b. Commitment 3c. Unconditional Positive Regard	*Respect *Available II *Direct *Kind *Constructive *Communication *Open door policy *Openness *Share *Willingness to put yourself out there and try new things *To contribute to another person's growth *Encourages strengths *Empathetic *Involved in all aspects, personal, home life bc that impacts your performance at work *Someone to understand the work/life balance *Acceptance *Warmth *Person centered, Rogerian *Establishing boundaries between too casual or too rigid.

		*Setting expectations for the relationship
4. Informal Group Mentoring	4a. Open and available 4b. Informally 4c. Currently have informally	*Sense of attachment due to being an alumni, feels comfortable on campus *Feelings of informally having this in the department IIII *Joining the department in the last 10 years III *More social in the beginning of being hired *BBQs *Lived closer together *Kids of similar ages *Coffee meetings, discussing research *Informally when joining the department 20 years ago *Discussing teaching style/tactics *Checking in on "how are you doing?" *Being friends *Informally with the department head

Feelings Regarding Group Mentoring

The interview questions measured participants feelings and attitudes regarding group mentor programs. Participant's awareness of group mentoring programs ranged from previous experience to unaware. There were 2 of 6 interviewees who had a previous positive experience, 3 were unaware, and another 2 had mild awareness of group mentoring. Participant 1 stated

We did a group mentor, one year, every Thursday, we called it our therapy session. And I felt like it was pretty good. It was helpful to be able to engage with others who are going through something so move it I am going through and learning. But to have to be at two facilitators with us who had been there for a long time to have them help guide us through that learning curve.

Participant 2 discussed feeling as though the faculty reached out to them when they were first hired, this gave them the feeling of currently having a group mentor mentality within the department.

I would say, the older faculty in the department, especially the ones that came just before me, like two or three years before me, were very great in reaching out. And I thought that

was really important, because they had all just gone through the steps that I would be going

through.

Participant 6 expressed a desire for more of an opportunity to interact with faculty as a whole.

I wish there was more of an opportunity or more of a I like the idea of it. And I wish there

was more of that support on campus for that. The support that is on campus, it's not like

you are assigned someone really, there's kind of a loose affiliations that form.

Interviewees also mentioned different aspects of the department they felt were social but

assisted them in their teaching. These aspects included the ability to pop into someone's office

to ask a quick question, annual holiday events, and having coffee together. Participant 6 is the

newest member of the department, having joined within the last 3 years. They are becoming

more social on campus as a whole, attending faculty coffee hours and meeting people from

different departments.

Social Aspects of Group Mentoring

When discussing the social aspects of group mentoring; the interviewees discussed the

importance of this aspect within the mentor relationship. They described the group mentor

relationship(s) as being supportive, feeling connected and a safe place to share feelings. Other

aspects discussed were sharing common interests, having a sense of responsibility to each other,

accepting differences and contributing to the growth of each other.

Participant 2 stated the idea as getting to know each other, stating, "I don't think they're

necessary, but they do fill an important role, because you get to know each other as people."

Participant 4 discussed the feelings of growth and acceptance by discussing their previous

experience.

It was the place where, with my keeping clients confidential, where I could

talk about my own anxieties, and concerns, and reactions, and emotions with colleagues

who both affirm them and supported my growth. And we could laugh together, we

could cry together. And it was it was the social aspect as much as the professional

expertise and clinical growth aspect.

Participant 5 discussed uncovering commonalities between themselves and full-time professors

as a way to make connections They recalled, "we have similar interests such as cooking, baking

and are connected on social media."

Interviewees thought the social aspect of a mentoring relationship were important to help the

relationship be the most productive. One participant mentioned knowing what was happening in

a person's home life could impact their professional life. Participant 2 mentioned a mentor

asking questions such as "what's going on at home? …. what's going on in your personal life? ….

how's your marriage? ….. all that stuff that affects you as a person, that can contribute to

whether or not you're doing a good job? I mean, I just think that's important." While this same

participant stated in the past they had more formal mentors, the one they cherished was on a

more personal level.

Important Characteristics of Group Mentoring

When the interviewees discussed the basic important characteristics in a mentor

relationship, they mentioned being available, including face to face, email and phone calls.

Interviewees desired a warm and encouraging relationship. This includes open communication

and being direct. The relationship should contribute to professional and personal growth.

Participant 3 discussed an openness and willingness to yourself and your mentee.

An openness just to be a good listener…I think just an openness, a willingness to try

things, a willingness to put yourself on the line a little bit, to, to improve yourself, but

also, to contribute to the growth of other people in the group.

Participant 1 stressed the importance of committing to be a mentor.

Respect, be direct, but be kind. So be able to say what you need to say, but do it in a

constructive way. I feel like the biggest thing for me is availability, like be available.

And it doesn't have to be face to face, it could really be email or phone or multiple

modalities.

Carl Roger's theory of unconditional positive regard was discussed in participant 4's interview.

I would say, acceptance of an individual for where they are being not critical. But that

doesn't mean not offering tips for improvement, about performance. unconditional

positive regard.

Participant 1 also mentioned wanting a mentor who can do what they are mentoring about,

knowledge and commitment were important for them. Participant 4 included the importance of

the mentor also being a clinician, as they looked at the mentor relationship as more therapeutic.

Participant 6 mentioned establishing boundaries. The interviewee felt being too close to a

mentor could sidetrack professional growth, while being too formal could restrict learning more

or how to interact with one's fellow teachers.

Informal Group Mentoring

One aspect all interviewees mentioned is feeling as though the department has an

informal group mentoring feel to it, which was interesting to hear. The participants ranged in

experience, but this informal group mentoring was mentioned from tenured professors and

adjuncts.

Participant 5 revealed a feeling of comfort with the department head, and valued "open communication, like, feeling that they're available. I know, can go to [dept head], for any reason." Participant 4 continued on this theme by stating:

> I should also add, informally, when I joined the Department of Psychology at [University name], there were numerous people. I can think of four individuals in the department at that time. One still here, that would regularly pop into my office and say, 'how are you doing? You know, how was your class?'

Participant 2 discussed how the department has an informal group mentoring climate currently, and stated, "it has happened kind of organically here, not in a formalized way." The majority discussed being able to ask questions to others as well as the department head. Participate 2 mentioned attending outside social events, such as BBQs, meeting for coffee, play dates with kids and living in the same area as each other. Participants 4, 6 and 5 discussed getting together to discuss teaching styles, classroom managements, research ideas, and simply checking in with each other. The idea of being friends with fellow professors was also discussed. Participant 1 discussed the university being their alma mater, and feeling connected to the department due to being a graduate.

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to gather thoughts regarding group mentoring and social aspects, specifically experience and value of mentoring programs for adjunct professors. There is a growing number of adjunct professors every year (AAUP, 2017), and little research into mentor programs for adjunct professors. This study examined factors full-time and adjunct professors found important within the mentor relationship. Three main themes emerged based on a priori topics within the research questions: an awareness regarding group mentoring, the

social aspects of mentoring, and important characteristics of a mentor. A fourth theme of currently having informal group mentor relationship(s) within the department developed through the interviews. The majority of participants are aware of and have positive feelings regarding group mentor programs. All participants had positive statements regarding the social aspects of mentoring, Participant 2 discussed the importance of one's mentor being aware of all aspects of their life, as home will impact work and vice-versa. Important characteristics of mentors brought up comments such as openness, respect, availability, positive, constructive criticism, and importantly, Participant 1 mentioned committing to becoming a mentor, to be active in the relationship. The fourth theme of informal mentors was discussed many times in the interview process. Professors felt comfortable approaching each other with questions, seeking out the department head for advice and for getting together at each other's homes. This was interesting to the researcher, is it due to being a psychology department where open communication, trust, and sharing of feelings is valued while the study of human behavior and thought is researched? Are other departments organized similarly, is there the same sense of comradery?

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study focused on group mentor programs in the psychology department at a four-year public university. Specifically, the study researched the past experiences of the participants in group mentoring programs, what characteristics were valued within the mentorship program and how do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors? The number of adjunct professors at American public universities are increasing every year, yet, currently there is little research pertaining to mentor programs specifically for adjunct professors. There is some research into group mentor programs for faculty and how they have a positive impact in providing professional and personal growth among full time professors. This finding aligns with Franko (2006), who found the more successful the mentor/mentee relationship is, the higher career satisfaction is.

The study was conducted at a medium size public university in New England. The participants were full-time and adjunct professors in the psychology department. The study focused on the participants' experiences of group mentoring programs and what participants valued as important characteristics of a mentorship program. Six participants were interviewed one on one with six to nine questions (Appendix A). The researcher used the Otter application to record and transcribe the interviews. The transcripts were then coded for themes by the researcher. An analysis of the interviews produced four main themes. Three of the themes were embedded in the interview questions, the fourth theme developed with each participant during the course of the interview.

Findings

The research questions uncovered four main themes. The first question asked what is the past experience of the participants in group mentor programs? The second question asked what characteristics were valued within the mentorship relationship? The third question focused on how the social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors. The four themes that emerged were past experience with group mentor programs, important characteristics of the mentor relationship, importance of social aspects in group mentoring, and feelings of informal group mentoring within the department.

Theme 1: Feelings Regarding Group Mentor Programs

Four of the six interviewees had an awareness of group mentoring programs, with two of the four having previous positive experiences. It was also mentioned how professors feel comfortable asking each other for advice and being informally social. One example included feeling comfortable stopping into a colleague's office to ask a quick question or having coffee together. One interviewee expressed an interest in having more opportunity to engage with fellow professors through informal campus networking.

Theme 2: Important Characteristics of Mentor Relationships

The participants highlighted the importance of mentors being available, respectful, and having a willingness to participate fully. Other factors such as listening, being kind, offering constructive criticism, acceptance and having knowledge about the subject matter were also discussed during the interview process. Boundaries was mentioned by participant 6, they felt without healthy boundaries the relationship could sway either too friendly or too rigid. Participant 6 also said they would be willing to be a mentor, but desired a training program, an evaluation of their own performance and guidelines for the mentor relationship.

Both findings are backed by previous research by Lankau and Scandura (2002), they found the most important characteristic of mentoring is that it is a collaborative process, wherein both the mentor and the mentee are working together. Gary Crow (2001) also states that mentoring is an active process in which the mentee and the mentor are actively engaged with each other in learning. Knippelmeyer and Torraco (2007, p. 3) defined mentoring as "an interpersonal relationship that fosters support between a mentor and protégé." Knippelmeyer and Torraco continued on to define a mentor's role as one that provides knowledge, structure, reinforcement and guidance to their mentee. This relationship is built on the mutual aspects of trust and respect.

Research question 3 is how do the social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors?

Theme 3: Social Aspects of Group Mentoring

When discussing social aspects of group mentoring the interviewees discussed the importance of having a place to express anxieties and concerns in a confidential environment. The concept of having things in common, as well as getting to know each other personally was represented. Participant 2 mentioned the importance of understanding a person's personal life in order to fully help them professionally. Participant 2 found this helpful, as personal life impacts professional life and vice versa. Franko (2006), revealed personal connections provide more satisfaction at work, and Angelique et al. (2002) discovered new professors were able to learn about their new community which helped them feel at home after relocating.

Theme 4: Culture of the Department

The fourth theme emerged from almost all of the participants. They characterized the department as having an existing culture of an informal group mentoring structure; this was

repeated throughout the interviews. Five of the six interviewees mentioned at some point feeling as though the department has open doors, good communication, and described how the concept of group mentoring organically occurred within the department. Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002), researched the New Scholar Network, (NSN), group at Penn State, this group was instrumental in introducing relocated members to their new community, and informally provided a social outlet, and some professors began friendships. The importance of informal networking and friendships are described by the professors from the NSN as they engaged in social activities outside of the college campus. They discussed coffee shops, restaurants and cultural events. Angelique, et. al. (2002) also discovered the groups discussed personal and family responsibilities while offering emotional support.

Limitations

Limitations to the data is the small sample size, only six professors were interviewed within the department. The research was done in a psychology department, this may have impacted the feelings of being interconnected and the ability to express these feelings. Participant 4 discussed having the viewpoint from a clinical therapist perspective. Participant 4 touched upon having a Rogerian understanding of mentoring, as in the importance of having unconditional positive regard for your mentor/mentee.

Implications

Themes 1 and 2 express the importance of previous experience and what the participants valued as important characteristics of the mentor relationship. The participants that had previous experience were positive ones. From those experiences, they were able to highlight what they felt were the important characteristics of a mentor relationship. The experiences provided insight into openness, communication, acceptance and working together. These findings align with

previous research by Lankau and Scandura (2002) and Crow (2001) into mentor relationships leading to collaboration and friendship. This provides a basic foundation for how the social aspects of these mentor programs contribute to personal and professional growth of the mentor and mentee.

Themes 3 and 4 delve deeper into the social aspects of group mentor programs, and the current culture of the department. Participants discussed having a safe place to express their anxieties and concerns with each other and the importance of understanding how a colleague's personal life impacts their professional life. Franko (2006), highlighted how the personal connections at work increase career satisfaction. Theme 4 uncovered the culture of the department. Many participants mentioned feeling the department currently has an informal group mentor climate. Participants discussed feeling comfortable popping into a colleague's office, scheduling coffee meetings and asking for teaching advice.   Angelique, et al (2002), found an informal element to a program at Penn State, where the group began friendships and to socialize outside of campus events.

This study was done in a psychology department, leading the researcher to wonder if a culture of counseling adds to the willingness of expressing feelings and thoughts, as well as feeling more of the interaction between personal and professional growth. Many of the viewpoints pertained to psychology theory, such as Carl Rogers and unconditional positive regard, acceptance and confidentiality.

Recommendations for Action

The four themes suggest the importance of the social aspects within any mentor relationship. The idea of group mentor programs within this department is accepted informally and there is interest in participating in a formal program. Recommendations include

having more social events off campus to encourage forming relationships and to host a workshop each semester on different topics. Interviewees mentioned seeking out advice pertaining to a variety of topics from fellow professors. Having a department workshop once a semester would deepen relationships, professors would be able to connect with fellow professors they may not have previously interacted with, and adjunct and full-time professors could learn from each other. Beane-Katner (2015) researched a mentor program that was developed at a health sciences college. This program was designed to include workshops, talks and one-on-one meetings. Mentees and mentors reported finding the workshops informative, helpful and reported overall satisfaction with the program. Combining additional chances to socially interact with a structured workshop would encourage the initial organic growth of the informal group mentor relationships. Leaning too far in either direction could undo the positive feelings surrounding the group mentor process. Eagan, et al. (2015) reported 73% of adjuncts want more opportunities for professional development. Committing to a program of workshops, discussion-based speakers, and time for informal socialization would provide the professional development adjuncts are requesting. Thirolf, 2012, discovered adjuncts are highly satisfied when engaging with students, but not with the full-time faculty. Providing opportunities for more interaction will increase the time adjuncts and full-time spend together and encourage professional and personal connections to develop.

Recommendations for Further Study

Further research would be beneficial to discover if informal mentor relationships exist across a variety of departments on campus. Is there any difference pertaining to the subject matter of the department? This study was completed in a psychology department, does that impact the way professors communicate, value, or conduct themselves? Research could also

explore the leadership strategies of the head of the department vs. other departments. Is their leadership seen as transformative in nature, what about their style creates these relationships?

Conclusion

This study focused what is the past experiences of the participants in group mentoring programs, what characteristics were valued within the mentorship program and how do social aspects of group mentoring impact adjunct and full-time professors? What was discovered is that mentor programs are seen as valuable, if certain conditions are present. Some of the valued traits were respect, availability, communication and openness. These findings tied in with the overall feelings regarding the social aspects of group mentoring programs. The interviewees found the social aspects were important, especially for feeling accepted, allowing for personal and professional growth and a safe way to share concerns, emotions and anxieties. Most professors identified feeling as though they currently have a culture of an informal group mentoring program within the department. Having this existing connection would assist in creating more opportunities for connections to be made. Harnessing this feeling and culture would assist in developing more ways to have the department come together in a more open, inclusive way. Interviewees mentioned feeling comfortable talking to each one-on-one, but rarely in group settings. To bring the mentor experience from informal to formalized would be a delicate balance between structure and keeping the informal organic feeling. Creating informal ways of getting the department together may assist in the continued organic growth of benefiting from social aspects of group mentoring without the negatives of time management and depersonalization.

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Appendix A
Interview Questions for Full Time Faculty

1. How long have you been at your current position?

2. What was your career path?

3. What are your thoughts regarding group mentor programs?

4. Do you believe the social aspects of a mentor relationship are important?

5. Do you have a past or current mentor? How would you describe that relationship?

6. What do you think are important characteristics of a mentor/mentee relationship?

7. Are you interested in participating in a group mentor program in the future?

8. Do you feel adjunct professors are as engaged as full-time faculty?

9. What do feel would be the most important advice for adjunct professors?

Interview Questions for Adjunct Faculty

1. What was your career path to becoming an adjunct professor?

2. What are your thoughts regarding group mentor programs?

3. Do you believe the social aspects of a mentor relationship are important?

4. Do you have a past or current mentor? How would you describe that relationship?

5. What do you think are important characteristics of a mentor/mentee relationship?

6. Are you interested in participating in a group mentor program in the future?

Appendix B

Email and Flyer Invitation

You Are Invited to participate in a doctoral research study titled: Mentors and Social Relationships: The Impact on Adjunct Professors.

The first event will be, xx/xx/xxxx, @xx am, in the psychology department office.

The second event will be, xx/xx/xxxx, @ xx pm, at

██████████████████████████████████

Volunteers will be requested for interviews following the second event.

Please RSVP to Amy Egan @ aegan@westfield.me.edu

Please review the attached consent form, sign, and return to the envelope in Amy Egan's mailbox.

Mentors & WSU

My name is Amy Egan. I am a Doctoral Candidate in The University of New England

Educational Leadership program. You are invited to participate in a doctoral research study

titled: Mentors and Social Relationships: The Impact on Adjunct Professors. This study will

focus on whether the social aspects of group mentoring programs increase feelings of

engagement and commitment to the institution for adjunct professors and if a mentoring program

for adjunct professors increases a sense of belonging to the faculty as a whole for adjunct

participants.

The study involves two events, one formal on-campus meeting and one informal social event. At

the events, attendees will be requested to volunteer for an interview. These interviews will be

recorded, hand transcribed by the researcher and coded for themes surrounding important aspects

of the mentor/mentee relationship.

Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. The

study is anonymous, your identity and location will be kept confidential. Transcribed interviews

will be submitted to the interviewees to be reviewed.

If you would like to participate in the study, please read and sign the Informed Consent form

below and return to the researcher in the envelope located in Amy Egan's mailbox.

Thank you for your time and participation,

Amy Egan

Appendix D

	Quote
P1 favorable, past experience	"We did a group mentor, one year, every Thursday, we called it our therapy session. And I felt like it was pretty good. It was helpful to be able to engage with others who are going through something so move it I am going through and learning. But to have to be at two facilitators with us who had been there for a long time to have them help guide us through that learning curve."
P2 Feel the department has group mentoring	"I would say, the older faculty in the department,

	especially the ones that came just before me, like two or three years before me, were very great in reaching out. And I thought that was really important, because they had all just gone through the steps that I would be going through"
P6 Wish there was more of an opportunity	"I wish there was more of an opportunity or more of a I like the idea of it. And I wish there was more of that support on campus for that. The support that is campuses, kinda of it's not like you are assigned someone really, there's kind of a loose affiliations that form."

	Quote
P2 Not necessary, but important	"I don't think they're necessary, but they do fill an important role, because you get to know each other as people."
P4 Support, growth, acceptance	"it was the it was the place where, with my keeping clients confidential, where I could talk about my own anxieties, and concerns, and reactions, and emotions with colleagues who both affirm them and supported my growth. And we could laugh together, we could cry together. And it was it was the social aspect as much as the professional expertise and clinical growth aspect.
P5 Commonality	similar interests, cooking, social media

	Quotes
P3 Openness	" an openness just to be a good listener….I think just an openness, a willingness to try things, a willingness to put yourself on the line a little bit, to, to improve yourself, but also, to contribute to the growth of other people in the group."
P1 Need to commit to being a mentor	"respect, Be direct, but be kind. So be able to say what you need to say, but do it in a constructive way. I feel like the biggest thing for me is availability, like be available. And it doesn't have to be face to face, it could really be email or phone or multiple modalities"

P4 Unconditional positive regard	"I would say, acceptance of an individual for where they are being not critical. But that doesn't mean not offering tips for improvement, about performance. unconditional positive regard."

	Quotes
P5 Open and available	"open communication, like, feeling that they're available. I know, can go to [dept head], for any reason."
P4 Informally	"I should also add, informally, when I joined The Department of Psychology at [University name] , there were numerous people. I can think of four individuals in the department at that time. One still here, that would regularly pop into my office and say, how are you doing? You know, how was your class?"
P2 Currently have informally	"it has happened kind of organically here, not in a formalized way."