Lindenwood University
Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Dissertations | Theses & Dissertations

Fall 12-2014

A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University

Sherrill Rayford
Lindenwood University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations

 Part of the Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons

Recommended Citation

Rayford, Sherrill, "A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University" (2014). *Dissertations*. 355.
https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations/355

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses & Dissertations at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact phuffman@lindenwood.edu.

A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University

by

Sherrill Rayford

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University

by

Sherrill Rayford

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

Stephen Sherblom — 12-5-14

Dr. Stephen Sherblom, Dissertation Chair — Date

Yvonne Gibbs — 12-5-14

Dr. Yvonne Gibbs, Committee Member — Date

Shane J. Williamson — 12-5-14

Dr. Shane Williamson, Committee Member — Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Sherrill Yvonne Rayford

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Acknowledgements

I thank my Chair, Dr. Stephen Sherblom and the members of my committee, Drs. Yvonne Gibbs and Shane Williamson. Each individual brought a personality, professionalism, and level of encouragement that helped me complete this dissertation. I appreciate the time and effort that was extended to help me think critically about my developing research skills. I also thank the individuals at the university where this study was conducted—I used the facility, volunteer students, and volunteer faculty members as participants. I am especially thankful for being able to graduate with a doctorate degree – a testimony of faith and perseverance to motivate others never to give up on goals or dreams.

Last, I want to thank my husband, Cleveland, and my sons Gene and Phillip, for encouraging and supporting me to make what was once a dream into a goal and ultimately a reality.

Abstract

This qualitative study analyzed mentoring experiences and perceptions of females enrolled in a doctorate program of education, including a Principal Investigator-led peer mentoring group. The snowball technique generated 20 participants who were interviewed for a two-part study to share mentoring experiences by responding to Research Question One: What are the mentoring experiences of a sample of female students enrolled in an Educational leadership doctoral program at a Midwestern University? The conceptual framework explored experiences and perceptions of women at the doctoral level, mentoring support systems, and barriers to doctoral completion. Additional interviews were sought from faculty named as providing mentoring support for students. Faculty shared best practices of mentoring female doctoral students. The second part of the study was a voluntary peer-mentoring group. Research Question Two examined: What are the experiences of a group of doctoral students voluntarily participating in an experimental peer mentoring group in the same doctoral program in education? Emerging themes were participants' varied perceptions of what constituted their unique mentoring needs, how to define or recognize a mentoring relationship, and why participants did not participate in accessible mentoring opportunities. Findings indicated a range of responses and experiences about mentoring, including for some participants, the perception of not having mentoring. A significant finding in the study was that women desired to be mentored but have different perceptions of what constitutes mentoring. Additionally, women who felt they were mentored expressed positive comments about the professors who mentored them as well as positive experiences as doctoral students. Students who perceived themselves as not being mentored expressed

more negative concerns about the doctoral program process. Recommendations are offered on ways the doctoral program can better support both formal and informal mentoring at the doctoral level. Future research focusing on women and mentoring perceptions and experiences at the doctoral level is needed, whether men at the doctoral level have similar or contrasting mentoring needs as women, how diversity of faculty impacts African American women's mentoring experiences, whether female students benefit from being mentored by female faculty, and how peer mentoring groups can be implemented or academically improved for doctoral students.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter One discusses the purpose and rationale for this study and why the Principal Investigator (PI) thought a study on women and mentoring at the doctoral level was important. While women comprise a greater percentage of doctoral students than ever before, little research has explored their experience. Doctoral programs are without question one of the most challenging educational settings, and as such, assistance in the form of mentoring is often cited as a key to student success (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). It is important, then, to explore how well women doctoral students are being mentored.

Women comprised 46% percent of enrollment numbers in postsecondary programs in the United States in 2001, but women completed masters and doctoral degrees at "2 percent points lower" than men (Freeman, 2004). The exception was more women obtained doctoral degrees in education, but little research exists exploring how they matriculated through doctoral programs or what challenges they might face (Freeman, 2004; Heinrich, 1995). That the number of women in doctoral programs increased but without an increase in completion rates has created a gap in the literature that is yet to be explained (Turner & Thompson, 1993). This study focused specifically on this gap. Chesler and Chesler (2002) stated that mentoring could be a component of success that increased the retention and equity of educational experiences for women. This investigation of the mentoring of women at the doctoral level sought to determine how this sample of women was mentored, or more broadly, what types of factors constituted these women's mentoring experiences.

The research about women and mentoring revealed studies related to the educational experiences of African American females (Williams, Brewley, Reed, White,

& Davis-Haley, 2005), but a gap existed in literature documenting the educational experiences of white female students. In contrast with studies on African American women, another study included the educational experiences of Asian women, usually classified as a minority group in the U. S., as a "majority" female experience (Turner & Thompson, 1993). Thus, the fact that the current study investigated doctoral experiences from the perspectives of different women was significant because it explored mentoring differences and similarities in a doctoral program that was not evident in current literature. The PI hopes the female doctoral students' perspectives gained from this study enables institutions of higher learning and professors to learn new ways to best support and address the academic needs of female doctoral students. Additionally, information gained from this study may enable institutions to retain and increase the number of female students completing doctoral degrees.

The fact that graduate students benefit from academic support and mentoring was repeatedly referenced in the literature (Kador & Lewis, 2007; Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999; Luna & Cullen, 1998; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Kelly and Schweitzer (1999) found that minorities without a mentor had a less favorable perception of the school environment as compared to foreign or international students. One explanation was that mentoring was a support for minority students during graduate school, which encouraged schools to develop mentoring plans that could enable degree completion (Padilla, 1994). One aspect of this study was that it provided a discussion environment for women to share personal accounts of their mentoring experience and what constituted an effective mentoring relationship at the doctorate level. A similar study (Townsend, 1994) ascertained that mentoring programs needed to solicit students' experiences to learn more

about mentoring. A study on women and doctoral mentoring experiences was needed as most educational research focused on undergraduate students' experiences (Heinrich, 1995; Kador & Lewis, 2003). Experiences at the undergraduate level were not applicable to graduate students due to differences in participants' ages, motives for seeking a degree, career aspirations, individual life events, and schooling experiences (Cooke, Sims, & Peyrefitte, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mentoring experiences of a group of female doctoral students in one Educational Leadership program at a Midwestern University. These included their perceptions of mentoring in the program, types of mentoring experienced (formal and informal), mentoring support systems in and out of the program (peer, family, online), and evidence of the benefits of mentoring for feeling successful in the doctoral program. An extension of this purpose was embodied in the second phase of the research plan where the PI attempted to deepen her understanding of mentoring by facilitating mentoring among a group of doctoral volunteers (both male and female students).

Rationale

Historically, women have not had the same opportunity as men to obtain an education in the United States (Davis, 1983). From 2000 to 2010, however, the number of women enrolled in higher education increased 39% (Freeman, 2004). Despite these gains, research showed that there were still fewer women than men in the professoriate, and fewer women of color in graduate school (Freeman, 2004). Traditionally, the mentor – mentee relationship in higher education was between a male professor and a male

doctoral student, and much of the higher education research on mentoring reflected that focus (Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007). This suggested that in a 21st century doctoral program many potential professor-student pairings would be between individuals of differing sex and/or race, which has not been much studied. The increased enrollment of women in doctoral programs, then, presented a potential challenge to mentoring-as-usual (Douglas, 1997), and it was worth studying how a sample of women students navigated these challenges by documenting what difference, if any, these changing demographics would make to improve mentoring in a multi-cultural doctoral program. A failure of mentoring at the graduate level may lead to fewer doctoral candidates completing degrees, already a serious problem nationally where women currently graduate at lower rates (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). This study sought to generate understandings regarding how best to support the increasing number of women students, including understanding how they support each other.

Research Questions

1. [Part 1] What are the mentoring experiences of a sample of female students enrolled in an Educational Leadership doctoral program at a Midwestern University?
2. [Part 2] What are the experiences of a group of doctoral students voluntarily participating in an experimental peer mentoring group in the same doctoral program in education?

Research sub-questions included inquiring into students' perceived need for mentoring, their current conception of and expectations regarding mentoring in higher education, their interactions with faculty and other institutional supports, their attempts to

generate support for themselves, and their participation in informal mentoring with other students.

As in any research dependent on participants sharing their experiences and understandings of something, what this study revealed was dependent on what participants were willing to divulge. The PI exercised no control over what forms of mentoring that were currently being experienced by fellow students and only some influence in what students might have been willing to share. For these reasons, an exploratory framework was proposed where some of the details of the later part of the study were dependent on what the first part of the study revealed (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The first part of the study consisted of interviews with a sample of female doctoral students about their experiences with mentoring. As participants identified faculty members who mentored them, the PI attempted to address a further cluster of questions regarding how a mentor thought about and went about a mentoring relationship from his or her end of the relationship: goals, professional concepts, and practices. This was done by conducting interviews with the faculty identified by participants. If participants identified peer mentoring relationships during their interviews, the PI endeavored to explore these findings by addressing a cluster of questions regarding how the peer mentoring worked, what kinds of benefits students experienced, how the mentoring started, and what sustained the mentoring. In some cases this led to interviews with those students identified by participants as their peer mentors.

The second part of the study revolved around crafting a conscious attempt at supporting mentoring based partly on the insights gained in the first part of the study

(though not all interviews were done before the second part of the study commenced). The context was the course, Capstone III, a required research course taken at the end of students' coursework. This course met weekly throughout the semester. With the cooperation of the Capstone III professors, the PI attempted to facilitate a mentorin*g* group in the hour following the professors' presentations and engagement of the students. Participation in the mentoring group was voluntary and open to all students (female and male). Additionally, the Capstone III classes were open to doctoral students who were beyond Capstone III, and the mentoring group was open to all these students.

The PI viewed her role as *facilitator* of the mentoring group, not teacher, or counselor, or supervisor; the PI sought to help participants help themselves and help one another. There were at least three ways the PI imagined facilitating growth in mentoring: (a) providing a forum in which students felt free to express what they thought and felt regarding their frustrations with mentoring and their current needs (where they might express things to fellow students that they might not to faculty), (b) forming writing support teams that met weekly to hold each other accountable to writing (similar to writing supports the doctoral program did periodically with students), and (c) create groups for reading and offering editorial feedback or discussing methodological and conceptual issues. The PI was open to other forms of assistance that the students themselves articulated.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was the underrepresentation of males (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Another limitation was the non-generalizability of the geographic location of the study. The study took place at a private Midwestern University located in a suburb

outside a large metropolitan city; interview comments might have differed if the interviews had been conducted at a public or private university within the confines of the metropolitan area. Another limitation was that the participants' prior mentoring experiences at the undergraduate level might have impacted their perceptions of mentoring at the doctoral level. A further limitation was that participants were in different years of study in a relatively new doctoral program.

Definition of Terms

Mentoring is a relationship where a student receives guidance, feedback, and professional support from a *mentor* – usually someone with more experience in the same profession. This may include giving moral support and career advancement advice, and the mentor may develop a social desire to see the mentee succeed as a human being (Thomas et al., 2007). *Formal* and *informal* are two types of mentoring (Douglas, 1997). An informal mentoring relationship develops among peers (Douglas, 1997; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). In contrast, formal mentoring relationships are usually established by organizations for the support of their students (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). Although the participants, purposes and time for formal mentoring have a projected duration of one-year in the work world, there is the desire that a formal mentoring relationship could develop into an informal mentoring relationship that continues to benefit the mentee (Inzer & Crawford, 2005). In the study program, mentoring might include faculty support or research courses, one's academic advisor, and dissertation committee members, especially the chair.

Summary

This chapter described the historical context where women are currently working and where females have entered doctoral programs in unprecedented numbers. Mentoring at the doctoral level, however, remains an under-studied topic. Chapter Two reviews related literatures, and then Chapter Three describes how the PI went about studying a group of doctoral students, mostly women, and their experience with mentoring.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Chapter Two briefly reviews the educational experience of women in the United States from 1746 to modern society setting the context for understanding the present situation in which women students find themselves. The origin of mentoring is investigated, definitions of mentoring presented, mentors' and mentees' roles discussed, and models of mentoring are elaborated. The chapter concludes with a review of studies on different aspects of women's educational experience and mentoring.

There is no consensus regarding how women were historically educated in the United States (Conway, 1974). Even conducting research about women as scholars was not a subject of much interest in early America (Woody, 1966). One historical view has proposed that women, after years of limited educational rights, have gained educational equity with men (Conway, 1974). Some researchers who had written about the early history of women and education in America erroneously assumed that institutions of higher education in "colonial America" granted women the right to be educated; this assumption was based on the democratic idea of inclusiveness – not studies (Conway, 1974, p. 1). Puritans allowed women to read for religious reasons; for example, Anne Bradstreet could write after completion of her household duties; but the pursuit of education for enlightenment or intellectual growth was discouraged (Conway, 1974). Similar to white women in early colonial society, slave women were forbidden the right to obtain an education (McClelland, 1992).

The negative perception and relevance of a woman's need to be educated extended throughout early development of America as a country and as far back as the Renaissance (Conway, 1974). During the Renaissance, an interest developed in society

to increase educational knowledge that aided secular beliefs; however, women were excluded from those educational opportunities (Clabaugh, 2010). Martin Luther wrote that women "are chiefly created to bear children and be the pleasure, joy, and solace of their husbands" (Clabaugh, 2010, p. 172). Later, Luther commented that society needed to read and understand the Bible as a connection to soul salvation, which encompassed women and an opportunity for them to learn to read (Clabaugh, 2010). In contrast, Benjamin Franklin's writings did not limit women's roles to being spiritual beings like many of his peers, but he wrote that women have less ability to be rational than men (Conway, 1974). In 1746, Franklin's writings connected a woman's ability to learn from male acquaintances she met while in the role of being a wife (Conway, 1974). His texts demonstrated an agreement with society's perception of a woman's role in society as largely domestic, limited her chances for formal academic study (Conway, 1974; Lerner, 1993). For more than 2,000 years, women were denied the right to cognitively develop as men (Lerner, 1993). Lerner (1993) further stated, "women are almost universally educationally disadvantaged in comparison with their brothers, and education is, for those few women able to obtain it, distinctly a class privilege" (p. 22).

By the 1790s, the family had become the primary unit for instructing the populace, and the need for children to be guided and educated evolved into an acceptance of women as teachers and educators (Conway, 1974). Early women scholars celebrated the role of women as teachers who educated the young and serviced the family; women's roles supported rather than challenged the ideas of men (Conway, 1974; Davis, 1983). By 1830, women's higher educational opportunities existed to serve the needs of early ministers or prepared women for future wedlock rather than educational growth or

attainment. Oberlin College, one of the first coeducational institutions, utilized women students to complete domestic labor tasks that were usually done by women, to allow male students to focus on academic studies (Conway, 1974). Women were not encouraged to pursue intellectual scholarship (Davis, 1983).

A positive societal change regarding the education of women happened after the Civil War when women voiced a similarity of the role and confinement of caring for children to the role of a slave's lack of freedom and confinement when there was slavery (Conway, 1974; Davis, 1983; McClelland, 1992). Sisters, Angelina and Sarah Grimke spoke publicly to illegally diverse crowds about the need for equal rights of women and ending slavery (Davis, 1983) but found opposition from proponents of slavery and continued perception of women's roles, which were often connected to volunteer or philanthropical needs (Conway, 1974).

During the Reformation and middle of the 18th century, it became more acceptable in society to educate women; however, many men continued to believe a woman's role was to take care of the family because women were perceived to be intellectually inferior to men (Clabaugh, 2010). By the 1890s, as the number of educated women increased, educational institutions changed so the curriculum for women imitated the curriculum of "male elite schools on the East Coast" (Conway, 1974, p. 8), and women graduates rejected the customary roles of caring for children and assisting men; a new group of women became socially independent where almost seventy percent remained single and advanced their own career (Conway, 1974). Although many people accepted the traditional role of a woman, the women who sought the independence of a career were not forced to live the defined roles that women had been forced to live in

earlier American society (Conway, 1974; Davis, 1983; Stubblefield, 1994). French artist, Paul Gauguin, stated, "Woman, . . . our mother, our daughter, our sister, has the right to earn her living" (Clabaugh, 2010, p. 176). Ultimately, views of women's quest to become educated in the United States changed; women no longer served or competed with men but could define themselves by an intellectual view as learned individuals (Conway, 1974; Davis, 1983; Stubblefield, 1994).

In the 20th century opportunities that once prevented women from academic pursuits diminished significantly in the industrialized world (Clabaugh, 2010). In the 21st century, there are countries in the world where women still struggle to become educated (Clabaugh, 2010). However, the acceptance of educating women [especially in the United States] is a societal norm (Clabaugh, 2010).

Prior studies evaluated the impact, importance, and necessity of mentoring to positive educational experiences and degree completion rates of students (Davis, 2007; Kador & Lewis, 2007; Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Mentoring was defined in this study, as it generally is in the field, as a relationship where a student receives guidance, feedback, and professional support from a mentor to further the career advancement of the mentee. Additionally, the mentor may develop a social desire to see the mentee succeed as a human being (Thomas et al., 2007).

Turner and Thompson (1993) found a dearth of minority women, about 3.6% of Black women completing doctorates in 1984-85. The scarcity was frequently attributed to dilapidated schools, poor prior academic support systems, and the lure of higher paying salaries in fields such as healthcare and legal businesses (Turner & Thompson, 1993). White females also constituted an underrepresented group in graduate school

degree completion in 1984-85 with a completion rate of 27.1% (Turner & Thompson, 1993). The low rate of degree completion among all women suggested that race and gender have been inhibitors of doctoral completion (Ainsberg & Harrington, 1988). Compared to men, women had a higher entrance and completion rate for bachelors and masters degrees, but fewer degrees were awarded to women at the doctoral level (Freeman, 2004). From 2000 to 2010, the number of women enrolled in baccalaureate programs increased to 62%, and Black enrollment increased from 9 to 14% (Freeman, 2004). To alleviate existing gaps in literature regarding female graduate students, it was argued that studies should determine how students, especially women, complete graduate studies at the doctoral level (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999, p. 130).

One study concluded, "Mentoring is the heart of success in graduate education" (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999, p. 130). Another study concluded mentoring benefited most students; however, the process of mentoring was a nonnegotiable for students who were not Caucasians (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Undergrad professors who were seen as "nurturing and advising" reportedly made "black students more comfortable, more confident, more likely to attend graduate school, and succeed in a career" (Townsend, 1994, p. 86). Mentoring was one of the components a successful student experienced in a graduate school study (Clark & Corcoran, 1986). A study by Michalak (1999) determined that after a period of irregularity in use, mentoring seemed revived as an academic strategy. In a similar study about graduate school success and completion rates, the Council of Graduate Schools (2012) found mentoring connected to the completion rate of graduate school, and mentoring support was especially important to meet the needs of African American graduate students.

Mentoring Origin

The idea of mentoring began as an approach to support an apprentice (Young & Wright, 2001); Telemachus, a fictional character in *The Odyssey* received emotional support and guidance from a man named Mentor during the absence of Ulysses, Telemachus' father, who was at war (Johnson & Nelson, 2000). Although a mythological Greek story, the supportive relationship displayed by Mentor became known as Mentor-ing, and provided a framework for thinking about teacher-student relationships (Johnson & Nelson, 2000; Young & Wright, 2001). Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) confirmed that the idea of mentoring originated from Greek folklore. Because the connection Mentor had with Odysseus' son could not be recreated as a concept, mentoring practices differed to meet the needs of a mentor and mentee relationship (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2011; Young & Wright, 2001). That Mentor, and later Athena, assisted Telemachus in different ways caused mentoring to be defined by a mentee's particular complex needs, one reason definitions of mentoring differ today (Johnson & Nelson, 2000). In a contrasting view about the role of Mentor in the development of Telechamus, a study by Mueller (2004) found that Mentor was actually the goddess, Athena, disguised as a male, and she imparted wisdom to Odysseus' son.

Mentoring Definitions

One participant in a study defined mentoring as diverse positions a mentor took to accommodate needs of the mentee (Patton, 2009). In this study, mentoring evolved during the rapport a student obtained from guidance, supervision, advice, and specialized support from a mentor, and the mentor desired the mentee to succeed in life. (Thomas et al., 2007). Formal and informal are two types of mentoring (Douglas, 1997). An

informal mentoring relationship develops among peers (Douglas, 1997; Inzer & Crawford, 2005); whereas formal mentoring relationships, created to provide support, are usually established by organizations (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Inzer & Crawford, 2005).

At the university where this study took place, mentoring might have included faculty support or research courses, one's academic advisor, and dissertation committee members, especially the chair. "Mentoring was also defined as a process whereby one guides, leads, supports, teaches, and challenges other individuals to facilitate their personal, educational, and professional growth and development through mutual, and professional growth and development through mutual respect and trust" (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008, p. 208). A commonality in most definitions is the mentor provides some form of support for the mentee (Inzer & Crawford, 2005; Thomas et al., 2007).

Another researcher's study described mentoring abstractly and acknowledged the difficulty researchers have with agreeing to one unified definition (Petersen, 2007). Crow and Matthews (1988) defined mentoring as a leadership role where an individual is informed, involved, and dedicated to the coaching of a mentee who will ultimately be inspired to develop a similar mentoring mindset. Adams (1998) connected mentoring to advising an individual and nurturing their professional and occupational progress. Young and Wright (2001) stated mentoring has common descriptors such as nurturing and guiding, processes that benefit an individual's professional career development. In another study about African American males, mentoring was an important deterrence to dropping out; formal mentoring helped the African American males feel more connected to the campus environment (LaVant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997). In another study related

to African Americans and mentoring, mentoring was described as "activities and interactions that may be related to work, skill acquisition, and social or emotional aspects of the mentor protégé" (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2011, p. 550). Mentoring was found to provide the psychosocial and technical support of an individual's development (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) found that numerous interpretations of mentoring fail to recognize the importance of the process of mentoring. In a study about organizational support for employees, mentoring was a pertinent factor in organizational success (Hudson-Davies, Parker, & Byrom, 2002; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1988). Although interpretations of mentoring differed, a study found the mentoring received by women was an important aspect of their occupational attainment, quality of life, and academic experience (Chesler & Chesler, 2002).

The Mentee's Role

In a study by Young and Wright (2001), the mentee was referred to as a protégée and defined characteristics of the mentor- protégée relationship. The protégée learned that he or she must be an active relationship participant who shared responsibility, not one relying solely on the mentor to assume all leadership roles in the relationship. The protégé must learn to navigate or anticipate pitfalls that could develop during the relationship and be prepared to take steps to lessen the impact of relationship challenges (Young & Wright, 2001). It is important, however, to know steps to have a productive mentoring relationship (Young & Wright, 2001).

A productive mentoring relationship reportedly included several components (Young & Wright, 2001); one component had the mentee determine if a mentoring relationship need was a professional or individualistic need. Determination focused on

the mentee's personal goals and what productive attributes he or she added to the mentoring relationship (Young & Wright, 2001). Identified components aided the mentee in selecting a mentor who met those relationship needs through a personal meeting approach, the best venue for communication (Young & Wright, 2001). Finally, mentor and mentee agreed on professional responsibilities such as procedures for meeting, communication needs for the relationship, and relationship expectations (Young & Wright, 2001).

"Friendship" was not typically a factor in mentoring relationships although those relationships are harmonious (Young & Wright, 2001, p. 5). A mentoring relationship did not exist for the purpose of resolving the mentor or mentee's private concerns (Young & Wright, 2001). Knowing the components of an effective mentoring relationship should alleviate future mentoring concerns. In a comparison study about organizational support for employees, mentoring was also considered a pertinent factor (Young & Wright, 2001).

The Mentor's Role

Doctoral candidates believed having a mentor was a significant factor in degree completion, that is, it was reported that students without a mentor experience had more difficulty progressing toward degree completion (Ellis, 2001). The mentor aided the mentee emotionally, contributed to the students' understanding of degree completion activities, and helped students have a more positive outlook on completing the doctoral degree process (Ellis, 2001). The mentor guided and motivated others to be successful (Johnson & Nelson, 2000; Young & Wright, 2001). Supporting a mentee's development afforded the mentor a sense of gratification, admiration of peers, and personal fulfillment

in helping another individual become successful (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). The successful mentor dedicated time for the mentoring relationship; afforded his or her mentee an opportunity to have his or her own persona; had expertise to provide as assistance of mentoring needs; and provided constructive positive feedback to aid the growth of the mentee (Rowley, 1999).

A mentor was attentive and knowledgeable in his or her field and able to provide solutions for their mentee's challenges (Young & Wright, 2000). A similar study found the knowledge African American students gain from faculty who mentor them was strongly indicative of the career and academic success of the students (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001), and if students had no mentor, "rejection and isolation" commenced (Davis, 2007, p. 218). The mentor's role was to "help with their adjustment to college, academic performance, and/or persistence decisions" (Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007, p. 71).

Young and Wright (2001) asserted that when a mentor willingly assumed responsibility for guiding the mentee's progression, a component of responsibility was anticipating how to help the mentee navigate roadblocks that hinder the mentee's success. An effective mentor could sympathize with the mentee while being compassionate, attentive, and with knowledge of how to respond to the mentee's needs (Whittenberg, 1998). Having a mentor with these specified qualities seemed to increase the likelihood of an effective relationship with the mentee.

Rowley (1999) defined mentoring as a formal relationship between mentor and mentee within a school setting. Paying attention to mentoring needs was one way to address the needs of the mentoring relationship (Rowley, 1999). An effective mentor

had the following attributes: leadership that evolved from mentoring instruction before the relationship began; instruction before the clarity of defined responsibilities to the mentee; tangible accountability of the mentoring relationship should exist in a written format (Rowley, 1999).

According to Wright-Harp and Cole (2008), the mentor made a pledge-like commitment to make sure the mentee was successful whereas the advisor did not. An example of commitment to the mentor's goal is "decreasing the number of students with the status of '"all but dissertation"' (ABD) and '"all but master's thesis"' (ABMT) (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008, p. 10). The mentor was understanding of the mentee's concerns, encouraged opportunities for personal reflective growth of the mentee, and desired the completion of a positive graduate school encounter that included degree completion (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Mentors displayed optimism and insight that transcended the mentee's unrecognized or limited vision of what he or she could accomplish (Rowley, 1999). Mentors sought opportunities to afford the mentee an opportunity to grow while providing feedback in communal as well as remote environments while using personal experiences to demonstrate struggles that prevented their mentee from being overwhelmed by encounters (Rowley, 1999).

Mentoring relationships should be structured to benefit mentor and mentee (Young & Wright, 2001). When the mentor and mentee had qualities both needed in the mentoring relationship, the association was usually productive (Young & Wright, 2001). Qualities included knowing the needs of the mentee, establishing clearly defined objectives for the mentoring relationship, and the commitment of time for a successful mentoring relationship (Young & Wright, 2001). Time was measured by a mentor's

willingness to be available for mentoring support, a necessary component of the mentee's skill acquisition and feedback in the form of constructive criticism (Young & Wright, 2001).

Furthermore, the successful mentor anticipated obstructions that could hinder the mentee, sought opportunities to benefit the mentee's professional development, and provided insights related to career advancement (Young & Wright, 2001). Ellis (2001) wrote that mentees satisfied with the support received from mentors did better in school than mentees without a mentor's support. The supportive mentors helped mentees meet closing dates, complete the doctoral degree process quicker, explore research opportunities, and have successful assessment completions (Ellis, 2001). In a piloted mentoring program of future pharmacists at the graduate level, mentored students showed an increased interest in pharmacy research, thought mentoring increased future employment opportunities, believed mentoring positively influenced how they interacted with other individuals, and left students with the intent to mentor other graduate students (Kiersma et al., 2012). Mentoring also reportedly increased students' reasoning skills (Kiersma et al., 2012).

Mentoring Models

A variety of mentoring models differentiated types of mentoring support a mentor provides a mentee. A mentoring support model developed at the University of Virginia to retain more of the African American student population increased the graduation rate to more than 70% within six years of model implementation (Townsend, 1994). Mentoring was the primary focus of the model although financial, professor, and institutional support were provided to assist students (Townsend, 1994). The research

team of Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) designed the "Cole and Wright-Harp Mentor Model" to aid students (p. 10). The model consisted of divisions devised to meet students' needs: "Academic Mentor, Research Mentor, Clinical Mentor, Peer Mentor, and Career/Professional Development Mentor" (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008, p. 10).

The Academic Mentor is often thought of similarly as the faculty advisor; however, there is a difference (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). The major difference is that the faculty advisor is more focused on the aspect of tracking a student's course of study (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). In contrast, "a mentor establishes both a professional and personal relationship that helps to facilitate the mentee's academic success" (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008, p. 10).

The Peer Mentor initiates interaction with a student at the start of the graduate school program by providing reinforcement and inspiration with the goal of degree attainment (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). The Peer Mentor's role is to assist students, and he or she should have good communication skills, be timely, ethical regarding university procedures, and not reveal private discussions (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Mentoring assistance could be comprised of assisting students with skills to solve problems and instructing students about rules and policies necessary to matriculate through graduate school (Kador & Lewis, 2007). Similarly, Petersen (2007) viewed the mentoring one does for a peer type of "Buddy System" (para. 4). In Petersen's mentoring model, the mentor explained an overview of the program, rules and routines, and the general culture of the school or work environment.

Wright-Harp and Cole (2008) suggested a mentor and mentee have the same academic program although the mentor should be more advanced in coursework, have an

academic area of proficiency for tutoring, be able to motivate the mentee through difficult academic or even times of personal challenge, and know when to refer the mentee to appropriate resource individuals when necessary. A student can act in the role of Peer Mentor to learn leadership experience in academics (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Finally, a Peer Mentor, according to Wright-Harp and Cole (2008), celebrated the success of the mentee. The Academic Mentor and Peer Mentor are two of the mentoring roles that can be studied to aid the success of African American graduate students.

A study by Smith (1995) about the challenging experiences of women in a doctoral program revealed five types of faculty mentors. There were (a) some faculty members who aspired for students to become independent thinkers and researchers; (b) some faculty mentors sought to academically develop only those students who shared the faculty member's viewpoints; (c) an elusive faculty member was one who did little to assist students, (d) some faculty only provided assistance that benefited the faculty member; and (e) the most unpleasant faculty mentor was frequently malicious or antagonistic, often harboring negative preconceived notions of a student's ability to be academically successful. Literature suggested students benefit most from the positive interactions and relationships developed with faculty members (Kuo, 2011).

One university that established mentoring approaches for faculty use was Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi. Faculty were presented the following methods for use when mentoring graduate students: (a) seek ways to help students expand cognitive abilities, (b) provide constructive criticism that allows students to be liberated inquirers of new academic information, (c) offer verbal responses to let students know they have adequate research skills, (d) require students to consult handbooks and

catalogues so they learn to be accountable for academic rules and deadlines, (e) be aware of the diverse needs of foreign students in academia, (f) utilize prior graduates and faculty connections for mentoring, (g) help students learn of monetary and employment opportunities, (h) encourage students to seek available professional development or travel opportunities to promote their development as active listeners or participators of new educational information, and (i) communicate with students so they understand and practice effective dissertation construction before submission of the draft to the final reading panel (Jackson State University, 20008). One aspect of the list was the reference to International students, another diverse population of students with mentoring needs (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). A comparative study about students in Taiwan found that adequate mentoring or advising increased students' rate of degree completion (Kuo, 2011).

Another mentoring model less suited for women was "The Heroic Journey" (Chesler & Chesler, 2002, p. 50). This model was structured to meet the needs of men and was structured in a scientific format (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). The structure encouraged the mentee to gravitate toward self-sufficiency and independence whereas mentoring relationship needs of women benefitted more from personal communication, nurturing, and a cooperative relationship with the mentor (Chesler & Chesler, 2002).

Peer mentoring was another form of mentoring women used to work cooperatively (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). In the peer mentoring relationship, women were not overly ambitious or antagonistic toward each other, and the nurturing relationship they got from interacting with one another may have conflicted with the formal peer mentoring needs of men (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). In contrast, problems

arose in women's peer mentoring relationship when it became more formal, had more faculty input, or one of the women became more productive than the other (Chesler & Chesler, 2002). Based on a review of the literature, a variety of mentoring types have been shown to exist. "The most common mentoring forms are carried out in-house, are formal, in the sense of being characterized by clear guidelines and well defined objectives, and take place on a one-to-one basis" (Hudson-Davies et al., 2002, p. 249). Other formats of mentoring were personal relationships developed between mentor and mentee, mentor and mentee relationships that developed within an organization such as a business, relationships that developed between peers, mentoring opportunities that developed from similar stakeholders, and mentoring that developed from the use of technology such as e-mail (Hudson-Davies et al., 2002).

Online Mentoring

Technological advances and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter made mentoring opportunities more readily available than one-to-one personal contact interactions. The National Black Association of Graduate Students (NBGSA, 2013) began as an organization to increase the number of Black students at the graduate level. The organization's membership included participation in the E-Mentoring Project, to increase the mentoring opportunities of students (NBGSA, 2013). Students chose to be mentored by a professor, fellow graduate student, or a working professional in the career field of the mentee (NBGSA, 2013). Email was the primary form of bimonthly communication for the mentoring relationship that was suggested to last for at least one year (NBGSA, 2013). MentorNet was a science and engineering affiliated organization that existed as another online mentoring opportunity for students (MentorNet, 2013). The

organization's goal was to use technology to provide mentoring support for women, minorities, and other students studying the sciences (MentorNet, 2013). Mentoring through technology afforded and increased opportunities for students to have mentoring at times or locations previously unavailable when restricted to face-to-face contact (Packard, 2003). Mentoring through the use of technology provided an opportunity for women to be mentored in a manner that was less traditional than the one-on-one format that comprised most traditional mentoring models.

Another study of current literature on e-mentoring found that an e-mentoring program would be more effective and accepted if participants believed they were more computer literate than students who preferred a traditional mentoring program (Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013). The study was unique because it focused on an existing, implemented e-mentoring program rather than the possibility of creating an e-mentoring program for mentee use (Panopoulos & Sarri, 2013). Findings included: a recognition that functioning technology could hinder e-mentoring effectiveness; younger male and female mentees adapted easily to the use of e-mentoring technology whereas older women had more struggles; and mentors perception of the relevance of an e-mentoring program was an important consideration, especially when mentors had been participating in a mentoring program that did not use e-mentoring (Panopolos & Sarri, 2013).

In another e-mentoring study about women and other students, mentoring was beneficial for the mentee even if the mentor had a different major or occupation (Mueller, 2004). For example, women mentors who majored in education were mentoring encouragers to women [mentees] who doubted they could be successful students in the field of science (Mueller, 2004). Mentoring support and encouragement from a mentor in

contrasting occupations were also relevant to most minorities and women who were significantly underrepresented in the field of engineering (Margolis & Fisher, 2002). The advice mentees gained was relevant even if the mentor had never received counseling information from the mentee (Mueller, 2004).

Women and Mentoring

Mentoring was not without challenges for both the mentor and mentee (Ellis, 2001). There were times when mentors and mentees did not have amicable relationships due to cultural and/or gender issues between them, resulting in mentors being perceived as uncaring or discriminatory, and mentees viewed the poor relationships as obstacles that negatively impacted doctoral completion (Ellis, 2001). In a similar study finding by Bierema and Merriam (2002), mentoring concerns were the demands of mentor and mentee's occupational duties, lack of relationship development due to personality or value differences, and one party believing there was a lack of commitment to the mentoring relationship. Additionally, "it appears that mentoring cannot be forced-like a blind date, merely pairing people up only rarely leads to the kind of relationship desired in a mentoring situation" (Bierema & Merriam, 2002, p. 213). Mentor and mentee relationships that had "Mutual respect, trust, . . . and comfort [were] essential components" for more successful mentoring relationships (Bierema & Merriam, 2002, p. 213). The challenges were alleviated when mentees sought support from other individuals, a process used at higher rates by Black mentees (Ellis, 2001).

General Mentoring Experiences

In further research, women found it more difficult than men to have mentoring relationships (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). There were fewer women to act in the

mentor's role, which made it difficult for women to have adequate role models to learn how to overcome obstacles in career advancement or deal with domestic concerns (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). The dearth in research about women doctoral students existed because men comprised most of the graduate level positions and were mentors for women students; fewer women were mentors, so fewer opportunities existed to learn mentoring concepts from women professors (Heinrich, 1995). Fewer women made it difficult to learn women's perceptions, so the male point of view dominated many mentoring groups, but when women were part of a supported work environment, other women profited (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989).

Women with mentors found it easier to deal with employment challenges (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). One challenge to young women's employment progression was a lack of mentoring opportunities from men because men feared being accused of inappropriate conduct (Ashford, 2013). Some men refused to mentor any women because of the possibility of being sued or being accused of sexual harassment (Ashford, 2013). Women were encouraged to be aware of some men's fears about mentoring, not to meet independently with the male mentor to lessen an opportunity for office gossiping, to bring family to job functions to demonstrate a family relationship to eliminate reasons for gossip about mentee and mentor meetings, to meet publicly with mentor, but not be deterred from finding a male mentor, especially in an employment field dominated by men (Ashford, 2013).

Mentoring: White Women

A study about White women and mentoring experienced in the work world had a similar finding connected to being a female employee as there were times the women

believed being a female inhibited opportunities they would have experienced if they had been accepted within the mostly male networks (Ellis, 2001). In the same study, Black women did not focus on being female or the lack of opportunities but feelings of being isolated as they abandoned their career (Ellis, 2001). Debord and Millner (1993) conducted a study that highlighted some of the differences of how Black and White women interpreted mentoring experiences differently. Black women graduate students expressed more concerns about race than White graduate students, and Black women participated less in on campus activities than white women (Debord & Millner, 1993).

Mentoring: African American Women

A study of mentoring experiences of Black women was mostly negative (Ellis, 2001). Black women reported classroom challenges from professors when they voiced concerns about issues related to Black cultural experiences (Ellis, 2001). One example referenced a dissertation draft where a professor took more than six months to read 10 pages (Ellis, 2001). Black women were less likely to have a close relationship with advisors and were disappointed when they found it difficult to write about cultural or contentious issues related to their backgrounds (Ellis, 2001). Black women found it difficult to obtain mentors for advisement during graduate studies, voiced frequent feelings of isolation during the graduate school process, and thought that few professors expressed an interest in them as degree candidates (Ellis, 2001).

Shalonda and Schweitzer (1999) commented on the research challenges of gathering information about African American mentoring relationships and the need for more mentoring studies because students who were mentored had a better academic experience. An aspect of providing mentoring for African American graduate students is

the scarcity of minorities [doing research] to write about the need of mentoring (Townsend, 1994; Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Even African American professionals who studied medicine were impacted by the lack of mentoring experiences of other African Americans who could have been mentors (Smallwood, 2006; Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). The Association of American Medical Colleges projected a continued decline of African American students applying to medical school that would be traced to an absence of mentoring opportunities (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008).

Without mentoring from minority faculty, an African American student may feel excluded from the academic environment (Felder, 2010). An African American doctoral student was disadvantaged socially and academically without mentoring support from a faculty advisor (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). At a conference in Atlanta, Georgia, entertainer Spike Lee and U. S. Secretary of Education Arnie Duncan discussed the need for more African American teachers to meet the mentoring needs of African American males (Walker, 2011). Although more women entered educational fields, the increase in minority faculty representation has not kept pace (Wright-Harp & Cole, 2008). Jan (2010) emphasized in the *Boston Globe* that Black faculty become the role models and mentors that Black students need as they share experiences and insight with the rest of the academic community. Other negative mentor encounters included mentors with poor academic skills, lack of prior mentoring knowledge, poor communication and socialization skills, personality clashes, inadequate knowledge of addressing specific mentee's needs, and mentor's inability to work with mentees of a different race (Eby, McManus, & Simon, 2000).

Another study found that when mentor and mentee were African American, there was less of or no need to explain a negative academic experience in detail because both parties had similar cultural experiences (Patton, 2009). The African American female mentor provided the African American mentee insights of how to navigate the academic culture at campuses with a less diverse population (Patton, 2009). Mentor insights included how to conduct one's self, dress, or speak to peers and professors to lessen the chance of being perceived negatively (Patton, 2009). Patton's (2009) study found that African American females preferred an African American woman or male as mentor but were concerned about gender issues when the mentor was a male.

Electronic Mentoring: Advantages

Synonyms for e-mentoring or electronic mentoring could be "telementoring, cybermentoring, or virtual mentoring . . . , which occurred through the mixture of . . . interactive web sites, e-mail, electronic newsletter, and discussion groups" (Mueller, 2004, p. 56). Electronic mentoring types mentioned in another study were "e-mail, listservs, chat groups, computer conferencing" or other mediums that aided the mentoring relationship (Bierema & Merriam, 2002, p. 211). These innovative forms of mentoring differed from traditional mentor and mentee meeting sessions but had advantages and challenges due to the use of technology (Mueller, 2004). Although the use of e-mentoring programs expanded, additional research needed must be conducted to determine program effectiveness (Emery, 1999).

Mueller's (2004) study imparted three forms of electronic mentoring: logistical, qualitative, managerial, and each form was perceived more efficient than the traditional face-to-face meetings between mentor and mentee. Logistical was electronic mentoring

that did not require mentor and mentee to commit to specific meeting places at designated times; furthermore, neither mentor not mentee were required to live in close proximity for any mentoring sessions to occur (Mueller, 2004).

Qualitative was the second form of electronic mentoring; an advantage of qualitative e-mentoring was the freedom it provided the mentor to complete mentoring activities (Mueller, 2004). For example, there were no established times for the mentor to check e-mail from the mentee, and not having to check e-mail at designated times did not constrain the mentor's other daily activities or time, frequently a negative aspect of face-to-face mentoring (Mueller, 2004). In other research by Sproull and Keisler (1986), communicating through e-mail concealed the participants' non-verbal actions, which lead to more open communication between mentor and mentee. When individuals communicated through computer but did not physically view one another, communication was found to be more open and fair (Sproull & Keisler, 1986). Therefore, mentoring through the use of e-mail was viewed as an effective way for mentor to provide responses for the mentee (Mueller, 2004).

Another advantage of qualitative was mentees who might have been too reserved to communicate with a professor face-to-face could communicate without reservations by using e-mail (Single & Mueller, 2001). Unlike traditional mentoring's need for the physical meeting between mentor and mentee, "email allows for a thoughtful, deliberate exchange of messages" and the opportunity for parties to think about conversations in more detail than traditional [face-to-face] mentoring with time constraints (Mueller, 2004, p. 57).

The third factor in an effective e-mentoring program was identified as "managerial advantages" because of cost-effectiveness (Mueller, 2004, p. 57). For example, a larger number of mentees could receive support simultaneously through e-mentoring because fewer resources were needed, transportation expenses could be lessened or eliminated, cohesive relationships between mentee and mentor increased, and a greater number of mentees [individual communication] could be supported when e-mail or other online resources were used (Mueller, 2004). For example, MentorNet [developed specifically for women] increased "300 mentoring pairs in 1997 to 2800 mentoring pairs in 2003 . . . because of the use of online resources" (Mueller, 2004, p. 58). The researcher did not share whether either of the three electronic mentoring components [logistical, qualitative, managerial] were more or less effective when or if used in isolation.

Mentoring Challenges: Electronic Mentoring

Computer malfunctions were the greatest logistical interruption for electronic mentoring between mentor and mentee, and those interruptions meant that no communication would occur unless an alternative method of communication had been established (Mueller, 2004). In Segall's (2000) study, he found a three-week lapse in e-mail communication between mentor and mentee severely hampered the mentoring relationship, which had to be restored after the lapse. Use of a telephone or a fax was recommended as alternative methods to prevent electronic mentoring interruption (Mueller, 2004).

Meetings where mentor and mentee interacted together allowed observation of body-language during communication; whereas solitary use of the computer for

communication without one-on-on interaction “can lead to misinterpretation and subsequently to miscommunication (e.g. of attempts at humor, ‘tone’ of an email or failure to clarify when the mentoring pair does not understand each other)” (Mueller, 2004, p. 58). To prevent a breakdown in mentoring communication, programs such as MentorNet assisted participants to review resources that would support the understanding of effective online communication (Mueller, 2004). Although electronic mentoring was effective, the complexity of knowledge gained in the mentoring relationship did not equal the information gained by the mentee as in a traditional mentoring relationship with person-to-person communication (Ensher, Huen, & Blanchard, 2003).

After studies by the National Science Foundation and European Union found in 2002 that mentoring was one of the suggested strategies to motivate and increase the number of women entering the fields of engineering and science, MentorNet was created as an electronic mentoring remedy (Mueller, 2004). Created in 1977, MentorNet was a storehouse of mentoring resources for women to use e-mail to get the support they needed while they completed science degrees at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels (Mueller, 2004; Single & Muller, 2001). The MentorNet program had “a resume database for students . . . One-on-One E-Mentoring Program . . . matches participants in year-long mentoring relationships . . . conducted via e-mail” (Mueller, 2004, p. 59).

Similar to MentorNet, Brown University developed a program for girls and women with interests in science; “Systems,” Girl Geeks MentorMatch, The Office of Women’s Business Ownership, and iVillage.com were other e-mentoring programs developed to assist women (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Although face-to-face

mentoring was the traditional way to mentor students, electronic mentoring has developed as an effective way to mentor women. In a contrasting study about women and mentoring, Bierema and Merriam (2002) wrote that few electronic mentoring programs existed for women; the existing programs were designed for school-aged girls or women who had not advanced to the doctoral level.

Mentoring Challenges: Cross-Race or Cross-Gender

Studies found mentoring beneficial when students and professors were of the same race (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Patton, 2009). However, "an automatic pairing of graduate students of color with same-race mentors is neither possible, given the numerical realities, nor necessarily desirable" (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001, p. 553). So, a relationship referred to as cross-race mentoring could benefit graduate students of color as teachers and students of different ethnicities are paired for a mentoring relationship (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). They suggested that a professor have some knowledge of ethnic issues and be aware of the needs of black women, especially if the mentor may not be from America (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001). Shalonda and Schweitzer (1999) expressed that minority students had a difficult time bonding with faculty members of a different race; however, White students typically did not have the same difficulty of forming a bond with faculty members since most faculty were White (Shalonda & Schweitzer, 1999).

A possible explanation for why a student could have bonding difficulty was that mentors elected to work with "protégés with whom they identify, typically based upon race, gender, and social class" (Wright & Wright, 1987, p., 206). A contrasting view was black students, especially those experiencing academic difficulties, could only find the

communal and nurturing academic support they need at historically black institutions, and these relationships were difficult to experience in cross-race mentoring (Townsend, 1994). Without mentoring, some students become discouraged and without proper support they often leave school (Townsend, 1994), so faculty must be aware of the needs of Black students and interact in ways to help students feel a part of the undergraduate campus culture (Townsend, 1994). They argued that when a faculty recognized the diverse academic needs of all students and had support from the postsecondary institution, attempts could be made to address the mentoring needs of underrepresented students (Townsend, 1994). In another study, Ellis (2001) recognized one way to address the absence of faculty of color was to learn strategies that aid the teaching and graduating of students of color because increasing the graduate pool of students of color might increase the number of professors of color and the likelihood of mentoring from professors of color (Ellis, 2001).

Students who received mentoring experienced a type of integration and graduated at higher rates from an academic program (Shultz, Colton, & Colton, 2005). However, the process was difficult for students because many institutions are not aware of the academic or cultural barriers that students experience (Shultz et al., 2005). Although, interventions such as "strong personal mentoring relationships with faculty . . ." helped students succeed, and "advising/mentoring" relationships have "the benefits that have been derived from student-faculty interactions in and outside of the classroom" (Shultz et al., 2005, p. 210).

Mentors assisted students to gain knowledge of the culture of the educational establishment (Shultz et al., 2005). In one program described, faculty members were

trained to recognize their biases, and to have an understanding of the differences within students of the same ethnic group (Schultz et al., 2005). Investigators concluded the section on mentoring by writing that "a trained, caring faculty member, providing sound guidance for academic programs, facilitates the transition of students of color into the institutional family" (Shultz et al., 2005, p. 213). This article aided the case study with information on how students of color were supported with mentoring strategies.

In a study of mentoring and business relationships, mentors and protégés of the same sex were more likely to work together on activities and have a more harmonious mentoring relationship (Feldman, Folks, & Turnley, 1999). Another cross-gender concern was the possibility that a sexual attraction could develop within the mentoring relationship (Eby et al., 2000). Attempts to socialize or communicate after work did not occur if mentor and mentee were cross-gender (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). Researchers inferred that the lack of after work socialization limited the possibility of sexually related contact or gossip (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). One way to curb the perception of sexual gossip was for the mentor to assume a parental role in the mentor-mentee relationship (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989). Cross-gender mentoring relationships may be less effective because of the lessened opportunity for social connections, usually for fear of some sexual impropriety (Ragins & McFarlin, 1989).

One cross-gender study of African American women with White male mentors was identified as less than productive by mentees because the mentoring relationship was one of strict professionalism, and the women felt their mentor never displayed a compassionate nature to make mentees feel more than workers (Patton, 2009). Although Patton's (2009) study found that some African American females did not have negative

concerns about white mentors, the majority of women found it difficult to communicate personal problems, felt white mentors did not understand or care about Black issues, or did not have confidence in their mentors. African American females had more positive mentoring relationships with White females but were concerned when White females did not understand some of the culturally related issues that an African American female would have understood (Patton, 2009).

Kanchews (2013) conducted a study of mentoring cross and same gender participants. In this study, women, not men, were the dominant mentors for a sample of children, it was found that women's mentoring sessions lasted longer, and there were more frequent meetings than prior studies where mentors were the same gender (Kanchews, 2013). However, Kanchews' study found there were no significant differences in the mentoring experiences of participants, whether same or gross gender participants were involved.

Another diverse study to determine if race and gender were relevant in mentoring relationships discovered minority groups preferred to select their own mentors, but mentoring relationships worked best if mentor and mentee had similar agreed upon outcomes for the mentoring relationship (Blake-Beard, 2011). Although race and gender were mentoring considerations for some participants, the race or gender of the mentor did not seem to impact the scholarly results of the mentee (Blake-Beard, 2011). Future studies may further explore issues of race, gender, and which characteristics mentees desire in mentors (Rhodes, 2013).

As most relationships between individuals evolve or conclude, mentoring relationships end or need to be restructured (Johnson & Nelson, 2000). Four mentoring

periods that lasted from a few months to more than five years were "cultivation, initiation, separation, and redefinition" (Johnson & Nelson, 2000). When the mentoring relationship eventually ended or changed after completion of mentee's goals, mentee and mentor experienced feelings of separation not unlike relationship loss experienced by participants in other close-knit interactions (Johnson & Nelson, 2000).

Summary

This review of the literature articulated how education has historically been a privilege, and not one generally extended to women, whether African American females as slaves or White women limited by the domestic roles of caring for the family. The history of mentoring was explored through a review of numerous studies articulating the impact of various factors on mentoring. Other aspects of mentoring discussed are mentoring models used by institutions, electronic mentoring, and cross-race or cross-gender components in mentoring relationships, and differing roles of the mentor and mentee affiliation. The coordination of these literatures provides a research basis for understanding the necessity of the present study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Data were collected from volunteers from the population of graduate student participants in the School of Education at a Midwestern University. In part one of the study, participants answered questions about mentoring, and five faculty members shared their mentoring experiences and perceptions of mentoring as professors who had taught most of the participants interviewed in part one of the study. The last part of Chapter Three reports the Principal Investigator's method to facilitate a peer-mentoring group. Results of the methodology are analyzed in Chapter Four.

An invitation was sent by university email to all female Educational Leadership doctoral students (Appendix H). Additionally, the Principal Investigator visited doctoral classes to recruit participants through making an announcement and handing out an information sheet describing the study (Appendix G). Lastly, students who agreed to participate were asked to pass on the invitation to their friends. Between these three methods, the Principal Investigator obtained the desired 20 student participants.
Data collection initially consisted of one-on-one interviews with all participants about their experiences with mentoring in the doctoral program (Appendix D). Based on an analysis of these interviews, The PI organized mentoring sessions to follow-up on themes presented in the interviews conducted in the preceding months (Appendix F). These mentoring groups were to be based on the participants reporting similar experiences, such as those completing the program while having significant family responsibilities; those who were less familiar with higher education upon entry; or other noted differences.

If participants described good mentoring relationships with faculty, there was an attempt to interview that faculty member (Appendix E) to learn about his or her practice

and philosophy of mentoring (Douglas, 1997). Professors were asked if the session could be audio recorded. The researcher listened to, transcribed, and analyzed the transcripts. If students reported good mentoring in their peer relationships, those relationships were explored to determine their practice and its benefits. Interviews for the first part of the study were conducted face-to-face or by telephone, and responses were audio recorded. Focus groups with these participants were conducted on campus, and there was no request for the Principal Investigator to conduct a focus group meeting in a more neutral environment.

Analysis

The researcher listened to and transcribed verbatim the interviews and analyzed transcripts. Analysis consisted of open coding, a process whereby each sentence in the transcript was interrogated and assigned a meaning relative to the research question (Maxwell, 2013). Relationships between codes or clusters of codes suggested larger themes (Shank, 2006).

The second part of the study consisted of attempting to facilitate peer mentoring and other types of mentoring among the students in Capstone III, the culminating research course. The PI took observational notes during the mentoring group meetings, but did not audio record discussions in order to preserve participant privacy. Confidentiality of all participants was maintained by all information being kept in a locked and secure location at the researcher's home.

The Research Site

The setting for this study was a private university located outside a large Midwestern metropolitan city. Although the university has numerous locations, this

study took place on the main campus where most of the doctoral classes for the education program are taught by a variety of professors. The doctoral program at this site has been in existence for less than 10 years. This Midwestern University has numerous academic college rankings and is recognized for providing a quality education. The university is located in a city recognized as a great place to live in the United States.

Participants

All participants were enrolled in the Educational Leadership doctorate program in education. Most of the participants shared experiences of working during the day as teachers or administrators in local systems although a few of the women were recent retirees of school districts. Additionally, some of the women were single-parents, grandparents, and one woman was a widow. During the interview participants were able to self-identify as White or African American females. All of the women commuted to the campus. Participants ranged from having completed as few as eight hours of program requirements, to one woman who had recently graduated from the program.

For the first part of the study, the PI identified a number of female students that were invited to participate, each of whom may know other possible participants; this method was called the *snowball method* (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Additionally, female doctoral students were emailed from a class list of students' names and invited to participate in the study. The PI also attended doctoral classes during the fall of 2013 to invite other students (Appendix G). For part two of the study, participants were recruited from Capstone III and by email (Appendix H) from the roster of post-Capstone III students. Participants gave a variety of responses when asked their year of study in the doctoral program. Students' doctoral work spanned from the completion of eight hours

to one participant being a recent graduate of the doctoral program. The PI attended Capstone III at the beginning of the semester (at the convenience of the professors) to explain the study to participants personally (Appendix G). The names of participants were not identified to protect their confidentiality.

Procedures

From the pool of identified participants, students in the doctoral program of education, the researcher asked volunteers to share mentoring experiences during an interview of approximately one hour. At least 20 students were sought as participants, and faculty members were also identified for participation in this study on mentoring. The first part of the study sought women in the doctoral program to interview. Faculty mentioned by women in the first part of the study were also asked to be interviewed. The second part of the study focused on the experiences and perceptions of a group of students participating in an attempted self-mentoring group. No money or other compensation was exchanged for students or faculty members participating in the study. The PI was a doctoral student attending classes with some of the participants.

Data Collection and Analysis

The methodology from this investigation was analyzed qualitatively to learn the mentoring perceptions and experiences of female graduate students at the doctoral level. Data were collected, coded, and themes were identified. Data were kept in the researcher's home under lock and key for one year. After one-year, the researcher hired a data shredder company to destroy everything related to the study. Complete findings or results of the data gained from this study were written in Chapter Four of the dissertation study.

Summary

This study addressed a gap in the literature (Shalonda & Schweitzer, 1999) by conducting interviews of female graduate students in the doctoral program at a Midwestern University to learn about the participants mentoring experiences and perceptions. A second part of the study focused on establishing a peer-mentoring group of doctoral students in the program. Themes evolved from the data that was collected and coded. Findings from this study can be examined to enlighten faculty members at institutions of how to improve the educational instructional needs of female doctoral students.

Chapter Four: Results

This chapter presents the findings of mentoring perceptions and experiences of participants in this qualitative study. The findings came from interview responses from female graduate students, select faculty members named by the graduate participants during their interviews, and the Principal Investigator's own experiences in attempting to coordinate peer mentoring group sessions for doctoral students.

General Qualitative Feedback

This qualitative study addressed mentoring in higher education from the perspective of women students. Women in a graduate school of education volunteered to be interviewed as participants. Faculty who were mentioned during students' interviews were invited and agreed to be interviewed themselves regarding their views and strategies for mentoring. The Principal Investigator coordinated weekly peer-mentoring sessions for interested graduate students in the school of education.

There were two research questions coinciding with the two parts of the study. The first question asked about participants' mentoring experiences and perceptions. The second question explored how participants would respond to peer mentoring opportunity sessions that the PI would create.

Research Question One

What are the mentoring experiences of a sample of female students enrolled in an Educational Leadership doctoral program at a Midwestern University?

The female graduate students interviewed were asked to answer nine interview questions (Appendix D), and these were coded and themes were identified.

Question 1 (part one) – Interview Responses

When asked to explain the mentoring they had experienced or want to experience to be successful as a doctoral student, students gave a variety of answers:

Four participants commented in ways that demonstrated no mentoring. The first participant said, “Mentoring would have helped.” The second participant voiced, "It would have been helpful if someone that has been through the program would help show the ins and outs.”

Another participant revealed,

> I have not experienced any mentoring . . . no specific programs . . . aiding females . . . Whomever decided the program did not think that mentoring was necessary. I think it [mentoring] is needed . . . program is rigorous and time consuming . . . depends on how a person approaches the program. If there was a program . . . would be easier to move through the various processes . . . getting data, writing, all that.

The last participant commented,

> I have not had anyone [mentor]. If it were possible, during . . . first year, . . . would have helped. I’ve been trying to figure . . . classes to take and things like that because the advisors are so overwhelmed . . . they can’t sit down and give you all their time with areas like that.

Nine participants shared comments about the supportive, encouraging mentoring they experienced from the dissertation committee or other professors at this Midwestern University. For example, one student reported that her chair had “got me unstuck [writing dissertation]; refined my ideas; . . . laid a good foundation [outline] for us to complete this dissertation.” A second participant stated her professor “explained APA

format," and a third participant commented the professor "gave feedback to be sure I am in the right direction." Another participant said, "For me personally, I have had all the mentoring I wanted through my chair, teachers, and advisors. I am satisfied with the mentors and mentoring . . . could have had more [mentoring] if I wanted." The next participant shared, "mentoring and the assistance was very effective. The key is you have to seek it [mentoring] . . . [students] will have great success with mentoring."

Three participants worked at the university and commented on mentoring opportunities that existed for them at work. Participant one said, "I am an employee [of the university] . . . [so I have more] opportunity to work closely with the professors." Participant two said, "I actually work for Dr. ___, and he has been my main mentor." Participant three said, "[My proximity to Dr. X] and other professors I work with allows for easy access and feedback." All 18 participants interviewed unanimously responded that mentoring was a positive experience for a doctoral student, when it happens.

Question 1 (part two) – Interview Responses

The first question about mentoring was intentionally broad to allow participants the freedom to focus on any part of mentoring. The PI asked two follow-up questions that were more specific:

How does mentoring relate to your positive or negative experiences as a doctoral student in this program? If mentoring was not a part of your experience, explain that perception. In explaining their positive view of mentoring, twelve participants viewed mentoring as a type of help or support system derived from interacting with a professor or peer. For example, several participants used the word "someone" in their responses. One participant one said, "Mentoring is a good thing . . . it helps to have someone to

explain the guidelines." The next participant stated, "It's really helpful . . . good mentoring . . . everyone needs someone to help them get through the program." Similarly, a third participant said she had a "positive outlook on mentoring" as it "made me feel . . . not on an island by myself."

Of four adverse perceptions about mentoring experiences, two of four participants shared they also experienced positive mentoring. Other participants voiced negative mentoring perceptions due to a perceived lack of mentoring support. One participant stated, "not enough support for me . . . through the program." Two participants commented, "[doctoral] program is lacking . . . support for little things [enrollment related] . . . like the best way to get books so you don't have to pay" and "Professor [Anonymous] . . . to create a handbook . . . will be helpful." Participant three similarly elaborated the need for, "sequential order to know what you are doing (writing the dissertation)."

Two doctoral participants stated they had no mentor. One participant said, "It would be great if there was something set up for people that have been in the program." The other participant stated, "I think it would be excellent to have someone mentor me . . . I have been looking. I do not have any ideas for someone to mentor me."

Question 2 - Interview Responses

Students shared the following responses when asked to explain what formal mentoring support programs they did or did not use as a campus support system:

Thirteen participants stated they never participated in a formal mentoring support program on campus; also, participants could not identify any existing mentoring support programs available for doctoral students. However, five of the 18 students stated they

attended a summer workshop to work on their dissertations. One of those participants commented, “I participated in two summer writing programs . . . formal [writing] . . . instruction.”

Question 3 - Interview Responses

Students shared a variety of responses when asked to explain informal types of mentoring they used that were not a part of the campus support system:

Participants voiced vastly different perceptions of what constituted informal mentoring. One participant considered her practice of meditation as a type of informal mentoring. She stated, “I meditate [on religion] every day . . . keeps me focused [on writing].”

Five participants considered family or friends as informal mentoring support. For example, “I come from a family of academics that remind me of what I need to do to get through the system.” Another participant shared, “I have . . . encouragement from my family and friends but nothing outside of that.”

Five participants felt professors at the university provided informal mentoring support. One participant said, “My chair . . . on my Facebook and Twitter page linked me to different information to help me . . . [they] helped me to be encouraged through the process [writing] to keep going.” A similar comment was, “faculty members’ . . . conversations about topic, interest, and methodology . . . [they were] willing to listen [to me].”

Two participants joined peer-created informal mentoring groups. One of the participants said, “I self-invited myself into this group [of students in my class] . . . [they

were] a little help. But, more help would have come from a [school] mentoring program."

Lastly, two participants found informal mentoring support from outside individuals who were aware of the dissertation writing process. Similarly, the participants commented, "people that already have their doctorate lending me help with statistics . . . off campus individuals; prior students that have graduated from the program."

Two participants stated they did not know of any forms of informal mentoring in the doctoral program. One participant explained, "I don't know of any outside [mentoring] . . . Possibly something on Twitter . . . [I] don't use or have time [for Twitter].

Question 4 - Interview Responses

When asked to explain what barriers, if any, had interfered with their doctoral progress and how they may have compensated participants shared a variety of responses:

Nine participants identified family concerns as barriers to doctoral progress. For example, one participant stated she became pregnant while working as a doctoral candidate, and three participants experienced the death of a loved one. One participant said, "my children [elementary age] are losing time with me." Similarly, another participant stated, "As a mother and wife, there are many distractions like kids or cooking." Likewise, another participant commented, "the time capacity is [limited] . . . to sit down and have dinner with your family or . . . going to spend time studying."

The second barrier was related to the doctoral program dissertation writing process. Three participants thought chairs were too slow in providing feedback on

dissertation drafts. For example, "You may have to wait to meet with an instructor . . . they have so many people they are helping [advising students]; . . . [we need] more professors to assist the doctoral students." Conversely, another participant believed "This program is designed more for K-12 people . . . not for people in higher ed and corporate ed."

Two participants thought doctoral writing [the format of dissertation writing] was a barrier and commented, "scholarly writing . . . at your level [doctoral] would help; trying to find out the writing style . . . why redo [revise multiple times] . . . if I am told how to do it [write the dissertation] the first time."

One participant believed she had no barriers and "a much easier time working with faculty than many of the other students . . . because of my professional relationship [employee of the university] with the faculty." Of the 15 participants who responded to the question about barriers to doctoral progress, a focus on the family and the dissertation writing process were participants' dominant responses. None of the participants shared how they compensated for the barriers.

Question 5 - Interview Responses

When asked to explain if they ever felt isolated or dealt with feelings of isolation in the doctoral program, participants shared a variety of responses:

Eight participants responded they never felt isolated as a student in the doctoral program. Seven participants felt isolated as a student while completing studies in the doctoral program. Four received support from other individuals. For example, one participant reasoned, "I hooked up [gathered] with some people . . . made friends . . .

worked together." Another participant dealt with feelings of isolation by "talking with university coworkers." In contrast, one participant voiced "[that] 95% of the time I felt isolated . . . no group [participation] . . . not connected with people . . . never met [anyone] outside of campus [this participant was a businesswoman, not an educator] . . . the majority of that [doctoral] program I felt isolated." Another participant stated she usually "cried while driving back home."

Because eight participants felt isolated and seven did not feel isolated, responses were almost equally divided. However, the one participant who worked at the university stated she had and used a support system. A commonality of the group with no isolation was the perception of support systems, expressions of self-reliance, and access to mentoring from university employees. The participants who felt isolated expressed the lack of a support system, did not know how to be self-reliant, and one expressed, "no one understands." During the interviews, the group with the support system expressed more positive interview responses while the group with the perception of less support still seemed troubled by their perceptions of isolation.

Question 6 - Interview Responses

Participants provided a variety of responses when they were asked to explain whether they felt being a woman positively or negatively impacted their doctoral studies. Thirteen of 17 participants responded that being a woman did not negatively impact their doctoral studies. One comment was "I don't see gender playing a role in the process." Two similar responses were, "Everyone, I think, was treated the same way," and "I don't think gender has much to do with the program." However, two participants further clarified their responses. One stated, "I think as a woman it is difficult to get the [same]

respect as opposed to a male." Another participant added, "I can be very emotional . . . [I] want perfection, and with the doctoral program . . . that could impact you [a student] negatively."

In contrast, five participants thought being a woman positively impacted their doctoral experiences. For example, "teachers [my professors] are good about being fair to both parties." Another participant expressed it was "positive because there is a higher percentage of women in the program. Two women of different ethnicities had similar insights about being a woman in the doctoral program. One participant thought "being . . . an African American woman . . . made me put my best foot forward [work harder]," while the other woman said, "blonde hair . . . [was a] stigmatism . . . [I] have to prove myself [student mentioned the dumb-blonde stereotype] . . . [it was] more difficult [to be accepted as being smart] for how I look . . . I try to find ways to compensate [to prove I am a good student]."

The high number of women who felt being a woman did not impact their graduate studies can only be analyzed from brief responses. However, most women did not focus on gender or consider being a woman a factor of significance in completing their degree requirements. For example, "All of my professors are men, and I work well with them . . . being a woman has made me feel more comfortable." One participant stated she had never thought of how "my gender . . . could impact something" until her leadership professor, a woman, commented that women could be "perceived as being emotional and cry."

Women who gave negative responses did not specifically focus on being a female student. For example, one participant talked about being a working mother, one

participant felt her business background was perceived differently from the educational majors, and the participant who mentioned respect commented, in general, “The males have more opportunities [professors acknowledge their responses, give more direct eye contact, praise their comments more than mine].” Another female commented, “people underestimate me [because of my race – African American].”

Although being a woman did not yield many negative responses about being female in the doctoral program, participants who commented about looks and ethnicity provided reflective or personal beliefs that being a female did impact their doctoral experiences.

Question 7 - Interview Responses

Participants who were asked to explain whether race or culture positively or negatively impacted their doctoral experiences gave a variety of answers:

Eleven of 15 participants did not perceive race as a negative factor in their doctoral experiences. Nine of the participants were African American. One participant voiced that the doctoral program was “inclusive, diverse, and contained different cultures.” Two participants who were African American women thought their culture was a positive asset. One said, “Education is very important to African Americans . . . Everyone is educated in my family . . . [this fact] impacted me for motivation . . . being a minority is more meaningful.” The second woman commented “there’s not a lot of . . . people my race [who graduate with doctorates] . . . A lot of them [African American students] go through it [graduate program] but [do] not come out of it [graduate].”

There were four negative experiences shared about perceived racial experiences. The first participant said she completed her master's in education and specialist degrees at the university, but for the

> first time I experienced racism here . . . always with assignments . . . [one] professor would not help me understand [would not assist during my meeting with him] . . . [I learned he] will email my white classmates and tell them how to do it [assignments] . . . For me, the professor will [would] always say do your assignment and there will be time to redo it . . . [he] could have told me [how to do the work] . . . and I would not have had to keep redoing the work.

Another participant shared,

> A couple of professors were biased towards me specifically because of my race [African American] as well as my choice for type of education [business in an education program]. I think it [treatment] was responded to in how I was graded [participant paused] interacted with in the particular course by the two [emphasis on the word two] professors.

The participant's response demonstrated she believed race was a negative factor in her doctoral experience.

Another participant commented, "In regards to [educational background] . . . students . . . your Caucasians, would have had more insight in the writing process maybe . . . the writing dynamics or they could have had more outside help [connections to people who had doctorate degrees]." Similarly, another participant shared, "Caucasians get through the program faster [writing the dissertation] than Black students or other minorities." Another participant believed her response was neutral about race but had

observed “in one class the African American male had to work harder than the African American female and how he presented himself.”

Most participants did not view race or culture as a deterrent in obtaining the doctorate degree. However, the participants who shared negative experiences seemed disappointed that they perceived different treatment from White students who seemed not to have the same experiences. None of the White women in the study voiced concerns about race. Four African American women expressed negative perceptions about race. Perhaps the African American women who made positive comments about race did not have negative experiences in the doctoral program or perhaps they had more support or were better writers. The importance of education within the African American culture was expressed as a positive factor in doctoral experiences.

Question 8 - Interview Responses

When asked to explain the ways they received mentoring from their advisor or dissertation chair while a doctoral student, respondents shared vastly different experiences:

Three participants were familiar with their chairs from prior work relationships or interactions. One participant stated, “He [my professor] was actually my high school principal, so I sought him out.” Another participant stated, “My advisor is not the same as my chair, but I can go to either of them . . . If I contact them, they will get back to me. My advisor is on my committee . . . [I] have known [him] for years.” Similarly, “[my chair] was awesome, and she thought I had the skills I needed to make it [graduate].”

Some participants found mentoring from their chairs to be highly effective. Three commented, “contact . . . regular basis . . . she was exceptional.” Another echoed,

"exceptional." Similarly, another participant revealed the "chair [gets] . . . in my face . . . will back off when I don't need her . . . her fire and drive are inspiring." Another participant shared her advisor and chair "have been my mentors throughout the program. They have met with me continuously and made sure I had a positive experience."

However, some participants perceived a variety of challenging experiences from interactions or a lack of interactions from their chairs or advisors. One participant stated her chair

> communicated mainly through email . . . only had one face-to-face meeting . . . [I] wish I could get feedback a little faster. My last draft was in August, and I feel uncomfortable reminding them . . . don't want to come off as nagging . . . nice to have feedback faster.

Another participant stated her chair left and she "did not get the same help" from the next chair. One participant stated she

> felt supported . . . got the information I needed but not the mentoring. You need someone that is sincere to tell you how to do certain parts of your study to get through the red tape and evaluate your study effectively. But, I don't think that's mentoring.

There were two participants who, combined, had their chairs changed a total of seven times. One of those participants shared, "When he was removed as my chair, it was like I could not make it anymore. I did not get the same help that he gave me. There was no one that wanted to aid me through the process." Additionally, two participants said they did not know particular questions to ask their advisor, and one of the two "always felt rushed." Two participants perceived their advisors served too many students

and "has to be overwhelmed with all of the other students." Another participant shared,

> I got mentoring from my advisor when he could give it. It [mentoring] wasn't once a week; it wasn't twice a week . . . as a student, I got more attention. But once you're out [of their class] . . . , it was here and there . . . it's when they could respond back, you know because of their [teaching] load, . . . and that's what puts them in the chair . . . maybe there needs to be an assistant.

Another echoed,

> I have not received any mentoring from my advisor . . . [I] try to make sure that he knows my name, and I have to make sure that he [chair] puts a face with my name . . . [I have had] 4 advisors . . . all [professors in the program] have too many people.

Only one participant said she did not have a chair.

Numerous participants reflected that their chairs serviced too many students or had a workload that impacted the time that could have been extended to helping the participants in a timely or frequent manner during the dissertation writing process. A common expression was that too many participants experienced frequent changing of their chairs or advisors, and the change did not positively help the student's perception of being effectively mentored. None of the participants expressed that they sought a change of chairs or advisors.

Question 9 (part one) – Interview Responses

As a continuation of this study on mentoring, the PI desired to facilitate a peer-mentoring group comprised of male and female volunteers, in the doctoral program. Students shared the following comments when asked to participate in the study:

Of 18 participants, seventeen responded positively but with a concern for time they could allocate for participation in the study. One participant said, "Yes, . . . as it relates to time and how it fits into my schedule." Another participant commented, "Sure . . . one of the detriments [participation] is time . . . but it [mentoring] would help the newer people." The third participant shared, "I would . . . just depends on when it is. . . " Only one participant stated she had no desire to participate in a peer-mentoring study. The participant voiced, "I have support of people on my committee . . . don't feel like I need additional support from people outside my committee with mentoring."

Faculty Responses – Women Students

Five professors were identified as providing mentoring for female doctoral students interviewed in the first part of this study (Appendix E). Professors named Smith, Mann, Jones, Hope, and Sadler [pseudonyms] were asked and agreed to participate in an interview to learn their mentoring practices at the university. Professors were asked to "Explain the process you use to mentor a student in the doctorate program."

Professor Smith stated

> Students get specific feedback on their work. The feedback was provided by keeping them in mind and making a mental note on their progress, and I . . . check by email, phone, or regular appointments . . . check on the student to see how they are doing.

The professor further commented, "Emailing allows you to keep in constant contact no matter where you are . . . face-to-face gives you that personal touch. I think mentoring is all about relationship and not the task."

Professor Mann mentored by

> Looking where they [students] are. I look at what they have. My priority is to salvage what the student has because sometimes a student will think they don't have something, and I will help the student to make sense of what they have. For example, students have different needs depending on where they are in the dissertation process. If a student has data, they need a different support from someone early in the process. Examples include the IRB or an idea for their study. I tend to see students more at the end of the process . . . I teach Capstone III; when I taught Capstone I [Capstone I, II, and III are dissertation writing and research classes at this Midwestern University], I focused on writing.

The professor reiterated it was "more helpful to reach a student where they are and take them from there."

Professor Jones thought it best

> To individualize the help I give students. I try to get their plans of what they are trying to get out of the doctoral program for what their dissertation is based on . . . create a plan of action for completing the dissertation . . . a logical plan that makes the most sense for a particular student. It is not a one-size fits all program . . . challenge students but move back when the challenge is too much, with help, and then challenge the student again . . . getting to the point where a dissertation is organized can be frustrating. The doctoral journey is an arduous one . . . help along the way can make them less stressful.

Professor Hope's mentoring approach was to provide feedback that

> Over the course of doing this, I would call it mirroring your intensity to where

> and when you're ready [in the dissertation process] and providing work on a regular basis. I'll be right there with you. If you are in a hurry, and I see you want things done, I'll mirror that . . . making it individualized . . . reminds me of cognitive coaching . . . other students may need something different. So, it's just making it individualized for the person and what they need and where they are in the process.

Likewise, Professor Sadler shared, "There are different types of mentoring . . . For example, direct and personal . . . This is an ongoing type in which I am providing support to individuals working on their dissertation, feedback and knowledge." The professor further added,

> On a superficial level, I mentor in the classroom, specifically with research courses. All students come through Capstone II at some point . . . The way that course is set up is for mentoring. In class sessions, I show how certain parts are supposed to be written, how they [students] should think about things, and larger components to the dissertation process. I may give feedback on the literature review and things to help, but it is for a shorter period of time. For one-on one time things, we have CORD meetings. The acronym is Conversation On Research Design, and that is a half-hour brainstorming session. We invite students to schedule so they can explore their topic, site, or learn what measures to use. Some of these people I have never seen . . . may never see again. The process with these meetings is to meet a person where they are and move them along. I think of mentoring as a capital 'M' when it is ongoing and a smaller 'm' when it is one semester.

A commonality was that professors recognized their students needed to be mentored in different ways. Several of the professors commented on how they practiced an individualized approach as they mentored doctoral students. Although each professor approached mentoring differently, they balanced the self-direction a student sought or needed to mentor students and provide feedback and support in diverse ways.

Faculty Responses – Challenges

Faculty members who were asked to discuss the challenges they experienced while mentoring doctoral students who shared miscellaneous mentoring responses. Five professors responded to the question. Three of the professors thought teaching students to write a dissertation was a challenge. For example, Professor Jones stated, "Communication is one of the most important difficult processes, specifically the dissertation." The professor sought to remedy the challenge by providing, "Details, quality of work, and making sure I am clear to the students are really important." Professor Sadler commented

> There are two challenges . . . students are not used to writing in a scholarly fashion. Students are used to getting straight A's and having people say nothing but wonderful things about their scholastic efforts. A second challenge is getting students to realize that unlike their masters or specialist program it's not a I come to class on Monday, and . . . do a little homework on Saturday . . . in order to get through the dissertation process, the students will have to get more involved. The work has to be done all along.

Professor Hope expressed

> The biggest challenge is when you feel the student is not engaged . . . really does not want to do it [dissertation] . . . I really do not know what to do in that regard. Somewhat less difficult if a student has had less exposure to higher education, culture, of academia, and expectation of writing. At this level, all writing is rewriting and many have not done rewriting before graduate school. They don't learn to correct their writing. A lot of what we do is acclimating people to a culture they are not familiar with . . . If someone wants to learn, it's not a difficult process. It's easy to mentor someone that is a very articulate person, strong writer, they know how to think logically, and self-directed.

Professor Mann shared

> You may not hear from a student for months or even years, and the student will come back and say they are ready to work. This is challenging when a student comes in when there are many other students. It is difficult to have 10 students working at the same time on this type of work . . . hard to have students that are so close and then they are not able to finish. I had a student five years ago who already had her data, and she has not finished. She is a great writer, but she just has not finished the writing.

Only Professor Smith thought there were no challenges to mentoring doctoral students.

> It is about building relationships with people. As adults we become colleagues in the end, and that's the fun part of working with adults. For struggles, there really is no struggle to coaching. I love what I do, but I think the struggle comes more from the student . . . any struggle for me is trying to maintain that focus so that the

> student can maintain focus to reach their goal. I wouldn't call it a struggle as much as the structure.

Of the comments from the professors, the major concerns were teaching writing for the dissertation and keeping students motivated, but all professors expressed an interest in helping students accomplish goals. Interestingly, none of the professors shared that they considered working collaboratively with one another to learn additional strategies to help students.

Faculty Responses – Women's Unique Mentoring Needs

When asked to explain any unique aspects of mentoring female doctoral students, faculty shared a variety of responses.

> Dr. Smith thought women were especially dedicated to complete doctoral studies. The women have a greater sense of persistence and tenacity to continue on their work with me. That might be my ability to work with them. I don't know. I see many women with average doctoral skills finish. I see many men with excellent skills not finish or are not finished yet. I don't change what I would say for a woman versus a man. I try to challenge and pull back to teach the student, male or female; that's the path that they are going to have to endure for the dissertation process.

Two female professors seemed to develop empathetic or bonding relationships mentoring female doctoral students. Professor Smith acknowledged

> As a female, you can relate to someone who has a child or someone who pulls away for female responsibilities . . . I know men are involved in the family, and I am not stereotyping but let me give an example. One student became a

> grandmother for the first time, and I can relate with that student. It is not that they cannot give their all, but life happens, and I can relate to that. I think that research would show that as females we still carry the bulk of the responsibility at home. I emphasize with mothers.

Professor Hope commented

> I have mentored male students . . . I have mentored more female students, and I get along with all of them . . . but with the female students there is a bonding that you feel from the start. Also, with females my mentee and I can become closer on two different levels, as a professor and student, and as two women that can identify with our struggles through the academic pathway and life experiences.

Three female professors commented on the aspect of mentoring women from the traditional view of a women's role as the primary caretaker in society.

Professor Hope asserted, "Ummm . . . I think women shoulder a lot of family responsibility . . . might be harder for women to get away from home . . . somewhere that you can do your work without being bothered."

Professor Smith shared

> I think that in our culture, males are acclimated to be more confident in the world than females . . . Well, this is the world. People come to graduate school, and it [graduate school] is not with family or friends, and in graduate school you are asked to stand up in a loud voice, and you put yourself out there, state your ideas and have people disagree with you . . . There are plenty of females who can do this, but as a generalization women may still be at a disadvantage with not being able to grow up with confidence in their ideas, voice, experience. Men have the

> same problem, but when I give advice, I give it to all students. I don't think that I am just talking to women or men. Based off social science, this is an issue more with women than men.

Professor Mann similarly commented, "research would show that as females we still carry the bulk of the responsibility at home. I empathize with mothers."

Although the question focused on unique aspects of mentoring females, professors shared perceptions about mentoring males in their comparisons. For example, Professor Hope said, "seems more females tend to come to the support systems; it appears males feel they can do this."

Professor Jones added

> There are also men that have that same problem [confidence]. When I give advice, I give it to all the students. I don't think that I am just talking to women or men. I have had many men in the class that don't speak much, but I would say that those men feel more confident when I talk to them one-to-one. It's not that they are reticent or feel they are not saying it right, but some women may not talk in class because they don't want to feel stupid. I am more likely to hear something like that from a woman . . . just hard to tell. Also, because of the program, education, we tend to have more women in the program than men, so it would not really be a fair comparison. I don't assume about someone based off of a stereotype based off of social science literature because that would make me a lousy teacher. I work based off the individual. Ethical mentoring requires offering as much as you can to all the students for what they need and not going in with assumptions for who needs what.

Overall, professors commented positively about teaching female students. There were no findings that were solely unique for teaching female students. There were female professors who empathized with some students' experiences. Professors, male and female, clarified responses not to appear biased against male students.

Faculty Responses – Sharing Race and Gender

Of the five professors, some thought they bonded more, empathized more, and better understood women students than male students. When asked if mentoring challenges differed when their race and/or gender differed from students' race and gender, faculty provided the following responses:

Professor Hope said

> I think there is a closer bond with female students. I have to think about race component, because it's usually not at the front of the mind . . . I really do not think differences in race have been part of the challenge or me needing to be different or my students needing to be different. I do think that gender has been a difference for me. Also, language may provide challenges for me being clear to a student.

Professor Sadler voiced,

> Nothing has stood out. I haven't noticed a difference between black women and black men versus white women and white men that I have worked with. I would say in our program one generalization that people make is that the assumption that either Black students from the city or poor White students from rural areas are not going to be able to write. That's a challenge. Some people just do not write well because they did not receive good instruction, but I would not say it's a cultural

thing. It's just whatever past experiences people have or don't have. I certainly don't see the cultural thing as standing in the way.

Professor Smith commented

> I just don't see that [race]. I am celebrating the student regardless of who they are. I just don't see it. I have successfully chaired females and different races, and I just don't see any differences. When I think about it, I do chair more female dissertations, but I think it's because there are more females in the program. I have chaired some males as well.

Professor Mann stated

> Based on the numbers, I think there are fewer African Americans statistically with doctorates. I am very fortunate to have two of my aunts have doctorates, and it was very encouraging to me when I was writing my dissertation. I try to be that person for my students. I will help by giving advice and not dictating how things should be done. Based on this, someone who was African American may not have [a role model] because there are fewer of them with doctorates.

Professor Jones considered it positive

> Working with women, and here primarily working with African American and white women, I have not had an issue. It's been a positive. Right now I am working with an African American person for their dissertation, and I have worked many years as a teacher and administrator within the African American community, and I think that has helped. I have a global understanding for how to help those individuals. I have heard that some of our African American female students feel the connection is not there with some of their professors. I don't

> think that it is that they [professors] are insensitive, but they [professors] just don't get it. I don't see the race as a separation.

Professors did not perceive race and gender as mentoring challenges. With the exception of one student who had challenges speaking English, primarily African American women were mentioned most in responses about race or gender. There were few details, specifically, about mentoring white female students. There were no African American professors interviewed [few on the doctoral faculty].

Faculty Responses– Cultural Differences and Gender Differences

Professors answered how they modified mentoring students from different cultures, races, or other gender shared the following responses:

Two professors responded they modified mentoring to make cultural connections with students. For example, "listening" was used as the technique to work with students of different cultures.

Professor Hope stated

> I try to listen because every student has a different motivation for finishing their dissertation, sometimes a family member or for other reasons. So, I think everyone is motivated in their own emotional way. Writing a dissertational is very emotional, and you invest so much in it. Depending on your culture, it can be very personal.

Professor Smith commented

> Honestly, I may adjust, but I do it naturally. I feel that my mentee should . . . talk to me freely about how life at home is different, life at work is different . . . In other words, if there are differences, I want to hear them, and I want the student to

> talk about them. Not really relating to race, every once in a while I have a student have a bad day or bad experience, and sometimes it is related to how they are treated at work or school where they work . . .sometimes they just want to talk before we get into professional work to just get something out . . . I don't think it's about race, but it's more culture.

Similarly, Professor Jones commented

> Well. . . yes. I think the way that I talk to students differs. If they were not raised in the United States, I cannot assume that with a foreign student. I try to focus on what is appropriate for them.

In contrast, another professor stated,

> I don't look at culture specifically but rather individual differences. I think if you look at someone from their culture, you are stereotyping them. Every student is unique . . . all bring fears, doubt, . . . and things they wonder about what they can accomplish.

When mentoring African American students, Professor Sadler commented

> I tend to raise examples about race or historical figures that they are likely to know from the black community. I do that for a couple of reasons . . . one, because it is partly communication and trying to find out how to reach students. Referring to things in the culture like the Civil Rights movement, particular figures, or when laws were changed connected with them but give them some sense of what I am sensitive to. So, I think I do this to put students at ease and let them know that I am aware of these things. A professor is in a power position, and if race is never mentioned, it is unconsciously sending a message

> that race is not important here...If a faculty member talks about it [race] as a part of American culture. . . I think it frees students to see that it is safe and acceptable . . . not always clear to talk about these things in our society.

Although one professor acknowledged using instructional references to African American societal contributions during instruction, none of the professors stated they modified their mentoring approach because a student was of a different race.

Faculty Responses: Campus Support

Professors asked to describe campus support systems that lessened their mentoring pressure mentioned the campus writing center as a support system. Professor Hope expressed

> I think that the writing center has more support for doctoral students, and we are offering classes for scholarly writing. When I think about this question, I think writing skills, and I think we could do better with that as a university through the writing center. If I don't get specific feedback from the students, I don't know what to change . . . I am willing to alter things to make them better.

Dr. Mann commented

> We have the writing center, but for doctoral students, there really is not that much out there. I think they can help in surface level things like passive voice or verb tense, but they are not really equipped to help with a dissertation . . . Some schools have a graduate writing center and tutors are trained for this.

Neither professor mentioned if writing center support took pressure off them.

Professor Smith viewed a student's committee as mentoring support.

> For example, each student has a committee, and that's part of the mentoring structure. Having a committee does take some of the pressure off of us in the program. Time is also an issue with the process. The campus helps undergraduates, but not masters and doctoral students.

Professor Jones shared

> Well . . . things like our CORD meetings and prospectus process were set up to specifically provide support and mentoring. I think it facilitates students without hitches or getting stuck for six months. Basically, we will have them sit in a room and we will help a person figure out whatever it is that they need to keep going.

In comparison, Professor Sadler mentioned

> Our CORD meetings on research design have dual purpose. They are for support for students on research design, and it creates growth. Dr. [Anonymous'] qualitative workshop and comprehensive exam for many years take some stress off students and provide additional information.

Professor Sadler further commented

> I never looked at mentoring as a pressure. It was just whoever came next. Overall, it releases stress. The Capstone I and II models for reducing stress that will inevitably be there. I think our summer workshops are the best place for doctoral students. It happens every day for a week or two, 40 hours a week, and those individuals [doctoral writers] always seem to finish their dissertations. I would say that's the best.

Two professors shared perceptions they thought would benefit doctoral students.

Professor Mann commented

> It's frustrating to sit on a committee and the other departments, science and business, don't think about things that our students need. Sometimes, it's the simple things that are overlooked. For example, the parking permit office that was only open until 5:00 p.m., and our classes start at 4:30 p.m.; most of our students come from jobs to class. It's little things like that would aid the students. It seems they are reaching traditional students . . . Also, people drive a long way to get here.

Professor Sadler stated

> There is another idea that I have had that we have not done anything with yet, but I have suggested to the dean that it might be good for certain fields to get some direct experience. This would be with the teachers or professor. I proposed a teaching fellow or research fellow. Someone that has taken my Capstone II course could approach me, and I could take them on as a fellow to become a professor at this level. This is something that a person could put on their CV. There is no money, but it's not going to cost you [money]. It would cost your time.

The professors who were interviewed perceived a variety of mentoring support systems in place to aid the doctoral students. Overall, the professors' comments focused on support for doctoral students rather than alleviating mentoring pressure for themselves.

Faculty Responses: Identified as Mentors

Faculty shared the following comments when asked if some students need less mentoring to be able to progress through the doctorate program:

The professors indicated that some students appeared to need less mentoring. Professor Jones shared

> Absolutely, there are some students that did not know how to write a dissertation when they came in, but it just comes naturally to them. They may also have access to a study that they want to do. For example, it may be part of their job, or it's close to what they are doing already. Those who need more help know what they are interested in but don't have access to it, and they may not know how to write a dissertation. I think it's more that their brain figures out that they have a five chapter dissertation and organizes it, logically, does well with their literature review, as well as methodology, and it's like their brain progresses in a logical fashion compared to most students. That is a very small group, and sometimes they don't want much mentoring.

Professor Mann commented

> Some students are very independent and get mentoring somewhere else. Sometimes face-to-face contact does not work. My goal is to make a student as independent as they can be. For example, I may meet with someone for once a week. However, I can't keep that up too long because of the quantity of students because it would be impossible, but I keep going for as much as I can with the student to meet their needs. It seems that students find their own way for what works for them.

Professor Hope voiced

> I have only met a few people that needed little guidance through the system, and those people were either science teachers that were used to doing experiments and

> math teachers and principals who have a very logical thought sequence. When it comes to the research process, the logical aspect may come easier to them because they do it more often.

Two professors thought students with self-driven attitudes needed less mentoring. Professor Sadler said the following

> I think people who are more familiar with the culture transition better into the process. For example, both my parents went to college. My father was the first person in the history of his family to go to college, . . . we heard him talking about going to college all the time. . . . Growing up we were told how much we would enjoy it [college] and have more of a career . . . So, a person that does not need as much mentoring is more self-directed, and they are able to take a little direction and run with it. Other people are unsure of themselves and need to check back with someone.

Professor Smith commented

> Some students needed less mentoring because I think it's just everyone's personality style. I have a male student that lives far away; he has finished all his course work, and I can only Skype with him . . . he is more self-driven. I have another male who lives farther, and he is very similar. The professor further commented, Some people need constant, positive feedback and others can go long periods without anything and still be productive. It's just who you are. Maybe it's a female thing, but males seem to come to the table with more confidence. I think women build their confidence greatly as they see they can do this and that

> [then they] think I should have never doubted myself. Men are coachable, but it's just different.

In contrast, Professor Hope stated

> I do not think it depends on your personality. In my opinion, it depends on what you bring to the table. For example, a person that has been practicing for years may be a little ahead of the game more than a person that is new.

Overall, interview responses from the professors demonstrated that some doctoral students need less mentoring than their peers.

Faculty Responses – Demographics of Program

Faculty shared the following comments that make up the demographics of the doctoral program:

Professors interviewed as mentors in the doctoral program had worked five or six years at the university where this study occurred. There are more male than female professors in the doctoral program. All of the professors named as mentors were White as are most of the professors in the doctoral program. The doctoral program at the university has been in existence for less than 10 years.

Research Question Two

What were the experiences of a group of doctoral students voluntarily participating in an experimental peer-mentoring group in the same doctoral program in education?

For the second part of the study, the PI invited students in the doctoral program to participate in a peer-mentoring group that she was facilitating. The intent of the peer-mentoring group was to provide students an opportunity to work collaboratively, mentor and support one another as students within the doctoral program, and reveal how a peer-

mentoring group can function at the doctoral level. After approval from the Dean of the School of Education, students in the doctoral program in education were sent emails asking them to volunteer to participate in the mentoring group. Sessions were scheduled to meet for one-hour in a reserved room in the university library after the conclusion of Capstone III. Many potential participants were enrolled in the writing class, and other all-but-dissertation (ABD) doctoral students also attended the class sessions. The email (Appendix H) stated that none of the sessions would be recorded, no participant's input or names would be shared, but participants were told that the PI would take notes during the sessions.

The first peer mentoring session was a focus group of five doctoral students, including the Principal Investigator. Students were at different stages of doctoral work. The Principal Investigator developed questions for the peer mentoring focus group (Appendix F), but most of the questions were not used because of the free flow of conversation among participants. Focus group members willingly shared mentoring experiences and perceptions. For example, three of the participants told stories of positive doctoral experiences while one participant constantly related unenthusiastic perceptions about the doctoral program. The experiences included having multiple doctoral dissertation committee chairs (one died), and the perception of the lack of needed support for dissertation writing from professors and chairs. Several professors were mentioned as positively providing mentoring support that enabled students to be successful in the doctoral program. A common concern that all participants expressed was the amount of time it took to get timely dissertation feedback. The focus group

participants were invited to attend future mentoring sessions at the same weekly time and place.

After the focus group meeting, there were 14 peer-mentoring sessions; but none of the sessions had more than two participants. When there were two participants, the PI was one of the individuals. Because there were four participants in the focus group, the PI thought there would be at least four or more participants in each of the mentoring sessions. The PI printed an agenda of 10 ideas that could possibly be discussed during the mentoring sessions. During one session, the PI planned to use a group mentoring strategy by Dr. Lois J. Zachary, "Exploring How to Get the Dissertation Done." The PI hoped to provide support for the participant in the focus group who was so discouraged about completing her dissertation. The PI stopped making possible new addendum discussion topics after the third session when she began to realize that there may not be new participants, especially when the PI saw peers in Capstone III not joining any of the sessions.

Later, the PI learned from one of the Focus Group participants that the four participants who came to the session came to support the PI in her study because she, like them, identified as a woman of color, and she told the PI the focus group participants wanted to support the study so that the PI would be successful gathering data. This was the one participant who came faithfully to each session and asked the PI later, in a concerned matter, if she had all her data. The only participants who attended the sessions were women of color that the PI either knew or had taken a class with during doctoral classes. There was no male of color and no White male or female at any of the peer-mentoring sessions.

The focus group session was late at night after the dissertation defense of one of the students who participated in the focus group. The PI did not consider that a participant who had just completed a practice defense and all the coursework in the program would be absent for future peer-mentoring sessions. The PI did mention that there would be other mentoring sessions but did not know whether anyone would return for another session although the participants seemed interested.

During the first mentoring session in October, the PI was the only student present for peer mentoring. Students in the Capstone III class were reminded of the peer mentoring opportunity and invited to participate, but none of the students chose to attend the mentoring session. The PI worked independently on her dissertation during the time for peer mentoring and documented reflections about the peer mentoring experience in a writing journal.

For the second session in October, the Capstone III professor and the PI mentioned the mentoring session that would take place after class ended. One participant from a class of seven chose to attend the mentoring session. She and the PI talked about her writing struggles, a death in the family, and her "serious lack of motivation" to get the dissertation writing done. The participant commented that she liked the idea of having someone to encourage her and hold her accountable for writing. She planned to attend the next week's session with her paper draft. They discussed the participant's need for a new chair and a committee, as her prior chair was deceased, and how important it is to work with a professor whose personality matches one's own personality. They made plans to meet the next week for peer mentoring.

One of the seven students in the Capstone III class met with the PI for the last peer-mentoring session in October. They talked about her paper for some time, especially Chapter One. Then they talked about the IRB process and discussed research questions. They briefly discussed the methodology section of their papers, and she encouraged the PI to bring her paper for discussion during the next peer-mentoring session. The participant from the prior session did not come, so the PI called her to let her know that her presence was missed.

In November, there were four sessions scheduled for mentoring. For the first session, though there were four students in Capstone III that night, no one came for peer mentoring following when class ended. The PI worked independently on her dissertation and wrote notes to email the dissertation chair. The PI had planned to talk about her own Chapter One that night with whoever came to peer mentor. As the PI drove home, the participant from the last session in October called to say prior activities prevented her from attending the session. They talked briefly about Chapter One, and the PI planned to bring her paper to the next peer-mentoring session.

The participant who came for peer mentoring the second week in November had also attended a peer mentoring session in October. The PI and participant talked about their Chapter One, and the participant shared that personal obligations interfered with her writing time. From time to time, they talked about teaching experiences, but got back on task and shared how they wrote their Chapter One. They made plans to meet the next week and talk more about Chapter One in more detail. For the third session in November, no one met the PI for peer mentoring. The PI worked on her dissertation independently and wrote journals to email to her chair. The participant who planned to

attend the session texted the PI to apologize for not being present. For the final peer-mentoring session in November, no one attended the session. The PI worked independently on her dissertation and wrote a journal entry for her chair.

In November, the Capstone III professor encouraged the PI to seek other doctoral students with peer-mentoring experience that might be available to participate in the study. The PI learned there was a participant in the Capstone III class who lived in a neighboring city next to where the PI lived. The classmate informed the PI that she wrote on her dissertation weekly at a local restaurant and invited the PI to be a writing partner. The PI accepted the invitation, and met with her on two occasions for writing. During the sessions they first talked about the status of their work. Then, they shared their writing progress, writing blocks, her collection of new data related to her study, and made plans to meet the next Sunday to keep writing. The PI reserved a room at the local library as a writing room for future peer-mentoring sessions. After the first two sessions, the peer was unable to meet again during the study. The PI worked independently during the remaining sessions in the library.

In December, there were two peer-mentoring sessions scheduled. The PI and the participant who attended the second session met and continued to talk about completion of her Chapter One. She shared her chair's comments about how to work toward completion of Chapter Three and how time away from writing seems to make her feel like she is starting anew with the process of writing the dissertation. They also talked about a peer who they had in common and how they planned to call and motivate the peer to attend class and continue working on her dissertation. The PI left the session feeling it was productive time well-spent.

The last peer mentoring session in December was also the night for students to present posters about their dissertations. There were also three practice dissertation defenses. There were no participants who came to the final peer-mentoring session. However, the PI recognized a peer who had been in an earlier class, and invited him to the peer-mentoring session. He stated that he would come but could stay for perhaps 10 to 15 minutes. The PI made notes to ask questions about his mentoring or lack of mentoring experiences and planned to ask how he was working toward completion of his dissertation. He did not come to the session as he had stated. The PI observed him watching a sports program on one of the big screen televisions as she left the library. All the participants in the peer-mentoring attempt were females.

Emerging Themes

There were three themes that emerged from the findings—female doctoral students need timely dissertation writing instruction and feedback, African American women have a negative view of their educational experiences when they are not mentored, and mentoring relationships should be conciliatory and have clearly defined goals. The emerging theme that linked most to the literature came from the responses of the African American female participants.

Emerging Theme One

One emerging theme in my study was that female participants desired writing support and timely dissertation feedback. All 18 participants stated during interviews that mentoring was a positive attribute for doctoral program success. One participant stated her professor “Gave feedback to be sure I am in the right direction” as another

participant shared the chair "refined my ideas." Another woman commented, "I wish I could get feedback . . . faster."

Emerging Theme Two

A second emerging theme was that African American female participants who believed they were inadequately mentored seemed to have mostly negative perceptions of their educational experiences. One woman commented, "A [mentoring] program . . . would [have] been easier." Another participant expressed, "It would be great if there were something set up for people."

Emerging Theme Three

The third emerging theme was that mentoring relationships work best when they are conciliatory and have clearly defined goals. Three participants used the same adjective to describe the positive mentoring relationship with their professor – "exceptional." Another participant, reflecting on her chair and advisor, "have met with me continuously . . . I had a positive experience."

Summary

Being cognizant of the mentoring experiences and perceptions of females at the doctoral level is important as more and more women participate in graduate studies. Knowing how women can best be mentored helps them be more productive students and helps academic institutions more adequately meet the needs of female students beyond undergraduate and master's studies. The next chapter discusses the results of the study presented here.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Reflection, and Conclusion

The PI began this study with the purpose of conducting research to inquire into the mentoring experiences and perceptions of a group of female students enrolled in a doctoral program in Educational Leadership. The PI accomplished this goal, interviewing 18 doctoral students and five of their faculty regarding mentoring. The research supported existing literature that different interpretations of mentoring exist; that students perceive differing kinds of mentoring being offered them; and that most students concur that mentoring is helpful.

Discussion

In the sample, all of the women believed it was necessary to be mentored at the doctoral level, and most of those women were nearly finished with their degree. Additionally, with the exception of one individual, all the women stated they would benefit from and participate formally in a mentoring program if it were available at their institution. Two groups of thought evolved from the research questions, and these two groups of thought were explained by each woman's perceptions or experiences about their own mentoring concepts.

Also, most of the women who reported that they had been mentored seemed to have acquired a chair early in their doctoral program. Typically, they selected the chair because they had known the individual from a prior job in education, so there was already some relationship of familiarity. Similarly, other women who reported being among the successfully mentored worked at the university and knew their chair prior to writing a dissertation. They shared that their positive mentoring experience was because chairs seemed like employment colleagues. Additionally, those same women stated that they

received immediate feedback when experiencing writing difficulty or needing direction when writing the dissertation. These students also kept the same chair during their time in the program.

One of the mentored students perceived herself as having an engaging personality that she believed made her an engaged individual who reached out to others. She felt students have to make things happen for themselves such as getting the mentoring they felt they needed. When the women who worked for the university did not see their chair at work, those students frequently emailed or telephoned their chair to get dissertation writing assistance. One woman used Skype to keep in regular contact with a committee member who lived in another state. These women seemed happy with the frequent, but often, brief instructional support they needed to keep writing. Even when these students voiced concerns about the rigor of writing, they seemed able to get the help they needed in a timely manner to have concerns addressed and continue writing.

The second group of women felt they had almost no mentoring. Some of these women commented they had no chair or doctoral dissertation committee members although they had taken most of all of the courses in their doctoral program of study. Some of the women had brief assignments with multiple chairs, and other women expressed they had difficulty finding a chair. Some reported that their initial chair had died, and when seeking other faculty to serve as chair. They experienced difficulty by being told the professor already had a high caseload of dissertation writing students, and one of the women had not been able to find a chair after asking three of her professors. Several months later, the woman was able to secure a chair when the doctoral program connected students to a chair earlier in the program. None of these women worked at the

university, and most were teachers in local public schools. These women, some with chairs and some without chairs, revealed they never got the timely feedback or directions they needed when writing, often waiting long periods, which impacted their graduation dates. One student had been waiting more than two months for feedback and felt it bothersome to email the professor due to the high caseload of students he had talked about earlier. These students spoke of few outside support contacts. One student joined a study group of two other women to have someone to interact with and get ideas about writing a dissertation, but the group had no off campus meetings. This woman stated a study group was not a mentoring group. She commented about getting much needed help with statistics from her professor; however, she said the help with statistics was not mentoring.

These students shared that they were often confused about the dissertation writing process and needed more explanatory support. Some of these women had tried to meet together but could only provide emotional rather than instructional support. Another woman who felt she had little mentoring from her chair communicated that she received mentoring from a committee member who had recently retired from the university.

Commonalities of the mentored and unmentored women are chair roles seem to be very important for students to progress through the dissertation writing process. Many of the students expressed a need for immediate, detailed information to progress through the program when experiencing writer's block. Also, most of the African American women's responses reflected a perception that they had more unmet mentoring needs or concerns than most of the white women students. For example, none of the African-American women with the perception of a lack of mentoring were employed at the

university. However, one African American woman spoke of having a job where she could get feedback from a White female colleague who had graduated from the same doctoral program.

Implications of Race and Mentoring

This study allowed participants to comment on whether they felt their race or culture positively or negatively impacted their educational experiences at the doctoral level. Although two African Americans spoke of concerns about a professor, only one thought race was a factor in her treatment. Another woman thought White women had more outside campus writing support or familiarity with dissertation writing. She commented that White women seemed to have someone to talk to or could often seen talking to professors. Yet, the majority of African American women did not seem to believe that race or culture kept them from being successful in the doctoral program.

Implications of Gender and Mentoring

Most of the women gave little consideration to the importance of gender. However, women students and the women faculty members seemed to have experiences in common, yet those experiences did not seem to lead to any form or expectation of preferential treatment by either of these groups.

One of the women perceived that male participation in class was more acknowledged than female participation, or male input seemed more respected in some classes. However, one complicating factor was that there are more males who are also principals in many educational doctorate classes, which might be why the woman perceived men were acknowledged more when discussing some educational issues. One of the professors commented during her interview, “male students just get it [dissertation]

done." Adequate insight cannot be provided about male reasoning on mentoring from the data collected. Also, most individuals strive to be politically correct or fair when dealing with gender and do not want to be accused of bias, which may lead to little frank conversation. The perception of how or if men would consider gender to be relevant or irrelevant was not answered in this study due to the lack of participants, but a future study would allow males to express their experiences and perceptions as students in a doctoral program.

Personal Reflections

At first, my goal was to learn about women and mentoring from a literal perspective of gathering data from interviews, yet the more I researched, the more I learned about myself as a woman educator and student. Although the focus of my efforts was to study mentoring in an objective manner, I also learned to reflect on the information that I compiled in a subjective manner. For example, an informative study I read mentioned that everyone develops a Composite Self, that is, their self is composed of several sides or aspects (Carr, 2013). The Composite Self allows an individual to realize that she or he may need several mentors for their various sides (Carr, 2013). No one person can be the all-knowing mentor for another individual. So, I learned from this article and my study that a student should not be dependent on mentoring from one individual or model but be knowledgeable of and seek mentoring opportunities from diverse individuals.

Although my initial thoughts were that mentoring experiences and perceptions would be comprised of literal responses from participants, after interviewing and interacting with participants, the idea of mentoring became less comprised of my

interpretations of concrete experiences and more about the abstract experiences and perceptions of participants. Additionally, I was enlightened when similar mentoring experiences were perceived but explained differently. Although I write frequently and encourage students to analyze to become better writers, I increased my own knowledge of analyzing responses, writing, and thinking about participants' responses while doing this study.

Next, I believe that working on a dissertation is a mentoring situation that develops from the chair/committee - student relationship while working on a dissertation. One cannot complete a dissertation without a mentor or mentoring. The mentoring to complete a dissertation usually comes from a professor or another individual who has successfully completed a dissertation. Although there are the professors who have their own views, usually based on their experience of what it takes to write a dissertation, there must be mentoring to complete the task.

From this study, another concern is getting stuck during the writing process and not having the immediate feedback to know how to move on or help oneself be successful. So, students seek professors who believe that asking a question to move on with writing is not indicative of incompetency. While gathering data for this study, I heard many students comment that they want immediate feedback for writing; however, in our program, the caseload of the professors seems to be preventing some students from getting the immediate feedback or support or mentoring that is desperately needed. Completing the dissertation with the help and support of other individuals is mentoring.

Although there are things that I would do differently if I were writing a dissertation again, I was pleased with most of the work that I did to complete my study. I

was able to easily get students to participate in the first part of the study, supervise a focus group, and witness many participants state they were pleased the focus of the study concerned women's needs related to mentoring. I was most disappointed that there was not enough participation or interest in the peer mentoring sessions for students in the second part of the study. I do not know what I could have done differently to change the results. I think that the late start time of the session and fact that most of the participants were teachers who worked during the day made for limited participation. Honestly, I do not know if I would have been able to participate in a peer mentoring session if I had not been conducting this study.

For example, my work of grading papers and reading for the next day's lesson always extended beyond the late hour after I got home from the doctoral class of the day. Perhaps if a professor had been present at the peer mentoring sessions there would have been more cooperation. However, there were professors who provided an opportunity for students with unfinished dissertations to get weekly writing assistance during my Capstone III class, but attendance was often sparse. I thought that participants were limited by time they could extend for peer mentoring sessions because many of them were educators who needed to prepare lessons for the next day; however, participation in the two summer writing programs had been limited at times, and many of those same educators were not working because school was not in session during the summer, so I do not know what would have increased attendance in the peer mentoring sessions.

I had no male participation in the mentoring session attempts although my chair and Capstone III professors sought to be sure male students were involved in the study to prevent bias. Male participation may have shown a difference in opinions about

mentoring from male or female professors. I do not know how I could have included more men in the peer mentoring sessions but think responses about male experiences and perceptions of mentoring at the university would have expressed how males were mentored differently from females at the doctoral level.

Something I would do differently is asking more follow-up questions. One follow-up question would have allowed students to explain why opportunities to aid dissertation completion were not frequently attended or viewed as mentoring (summer writing workshops, Capstone classes, and working with their chair and committee members). What I surmised is that some students think professors at the summer program are helpful and kind and can offer general information about the dissertation writing process, but those professors cannot provide the specific clarifying information or edits within the dissertation that can only be supplied by their dissertation chair.

After holistically reflecting on all the points in the Personal Reflections section of Chapter Five, I realized the focus group, although only one session, revealed more data to analyze than I first considered. Originally, I believed sparse participation occurred in the peer mentoring sessions because of the lateness of the 7:00 p.m. Monday night timeframe. However, the focus group was also conducted about the same time – late at night. It was convenient for participants to attended peer mentoring sessions because they were already in Capstone III the night peer mentoring sessions were scheduled, but most students decided not to participate. I think students elected not to attend the sessions because they may have envisioned too much of a time commitment for what possibly would have evolved from the sessions.

I based my thoughts about the time commitment on a major consistency that I learned from this study. The consistency is that there is no agreed upon definition or experience or perception of what constitutes mentoring. Because of students' differences and beliefs about what constitutes mentoring, it is possible that participation was low because students only operated on what they thought might happen during peer mentoring sessions.

For example, I learned the African American participants attended the focus group because two of them told me they wanted to "help" me gather data. So, they received what they thought would happen in the focus group that night, the assistance of a peer to be successful. During the focus group, formal mentoring happened because of organized planning for the session, an agenda, meeting date, appointed time, and a location established at the university. However, there was also informal mentoring- a group of women who informally discussed and planned to meet to help a peer get her data.

Another point of successful participation for the African American women was they viewed themselves as having a voice about what they perceived was or was not happening in the doctoral program that impacted their success as doctoral students. Even though the hour was late, the women seemed enthusiastic about participating in the focus group, making comments, and took advantage of an opportunity to express their opinions.

Although commonalities were the women's race and all but one were educators, each woman was in a different stage of the program and shared somewhat different explanations for why they were at a particular stage. One woman completed a practice defense that night. Although two of the women had completed all of their background

courses and believed that the death of someone they cared about severely impacted their mindset to be successful students, I realize how frank these women were in sharing how much they believed they needed mentoring but did not know how to be advocates for themselves.

So, perhaps there was little peer mentoring participation because other students did not know how to communicate to get the mentoring they felt they needed. It can be difficult to work to improve others' performance or support others through mentoring when one does not understand what mentoring is for one's own needs. Two of the women, after four years, did not have an approved IRB application. It seems plausible that the students not participating in the peer mentoring were also at different stages of doctoral completion and did not believe they would learn anything from peers that would advance dissertation completion.

Reflectively, I also think I missed so much rich data that was generated during the focus group. Although I took observation notes, at the end of my study, after listening several times to interview responses, I gleaned new insights. I was so busy trying to be a facilitator during the focus group, getting signatures on consent forms, being cognizant of time, making sure all questions I created were responded to, it was difficult to take detailed notes. Yet, part of writing a dissertation is learning what to leave for future research after you conclude writing. Also, I would have asked the focus group members to explain in-depth their follow-up responses.

During my research I read that good mentoring relationships have members who feel comfortable within the relationship and have similar goals. The focus group members all wanted to complete their doctorate, and they were comfortable talking to one

another. To me, these actions demonstrate peer mentoring, so I was able to conduct at least one very successful peer mentoring session, although I did not know it at the time.

Because of the students' participation during the focus group, I thought peer-mentoring attendance would be similar. However, future sessions usually had one participant, but perhaps that one participant attended because she committed to continue working with me, or perhaps she was getting some form of support that I did not understand at the time. What I believe now is that peer mentoring can have several individuals or two individuals and be successful as long as the needs of the participants are being met. I and the one participant who came to most of my peer-mentoring sessions continued to communicate primarily through text messages and offered one another words of encouragement. So, almost one-year later, my attempts at peer mentoring have had a lasting effect.

During this study, I also learned that focus groups are beneficial for underrepresented groups. Perhaps this is why the women appeared comfortable sharing responses. All in all, I think the focus group was representative of peer mentoring although I did not understand that until reflectively thinking about what I learned near the conclusion of dissertation writing.

Mentoring: Informal and Formal

Two participants commented that they did not know of any informal forms of mentoring support. One participant made a reference to the use of Twitter, but both participants seemed to have no additional outside mentoring. Of course, they may simply not know what to do to get informal mentoring support. The other student shared she did not have time to use Twitter, but perhaps she does not know how to use Twitter as a form

of informal support. Of the students who said they get their own support, one had so much support that she did not want to participate in the peer-mentoring support group, and the other student works for the university and has immediate access to her chair and other individuals who have written a dissertation. In the positive responses about informal mentoring, a commonality is an available and immediate support. The students who reported experiencing no informal mentoring seemed not to have the perception of getting immediate writing support when needed.

So, another question was whether participants thought they received needed support from their chairs. In several instances, students had new chairs assigned for a variety of reasons. It seemed that once students developed a relationship with a chair, if that chair was lost it was very difficult for some students to recover in a mental manner that did not impact them academically. Several of the students who had new chairs commented that the prior relationship could not be duplicated. One participant commented on the duty of the chair to evaluate the dissertation and cut through red tape. I wish I had asked what red tape meant in this context. I think the student may be referring to the chair assisting and getting IRB approval, which is often a major hurdle and accomplishment for many doctoral students. However, there seems to be a relationship developed with some chairs, not really considered mentoring by the students, which cannot be replaced. Also, since some of the participants still lamented the death of their chairs during the interviews, I wonder if more could have been done as mental support for those students, or because most of the students were older, did anyone think of how the deaths of some faculty members might have impacted many of the students.

What I ultimately am left to keep considering is how many interpretations there are of mentoring based on students' experiences.

Students Who Were Positive about Mentoring

Students who worked with a partner or group seemed to have better impressions of some form of mentoring, whereas students who did not have a close work association with another individual or group seemed to have less than impressionable thoughts about mentoring. Also, it seemed that students who did not get "stuck" writing or could easily have writing support when it was needed seemed to have positive perceptions about mentoring. Students who seemed to be strong advocates for themselves to take charge of their learning seemed to have better perceptions about mentoring. One participant commented that she did not wait for things to happen for her but felt she had to make sure that her academic needs were met. In addition, many of the female students seemed to assume that male students got more mentoring. In a future study I would allow them to explain why they thought males seemed to get more mentoring or perhaps have an easier time getting mentoring.

That students had completed Capstone I, II, or III were not viewed as mentoring by the majority of participants in this study. A question that I would ask if doing this study again is why there was the perception that the Capstone classes were not considered a form of mentoring. Perhaps students considered these sessions as background classes they were paying for as a part of the formal program courses and not mentoring. Students do have a dissertation chair and committee; however, it was difficult to tell how the relationship impacts what students believe mentoring to be. It did appear the students who got feedback from their chair quicker than students who had to wait for longer

periods seemed more satisfied with their chair or committee relationships. I did ask one of the faculty members how she provided immediate feedback for students, and she revealed she used her cell phone to provide immediate feedback. She commented that she, as a doctoral student, had wanted immediate feedback and did not see why she should not use her cell phone to provide quick feedback to students. This professor seemed extremely comfortable with using the cell phone to provide feedback, and it impressed me that she did not feel she was on call 24/7 to aid students. This professor was named numerous times during students' interviews for helping students feel she cared about them and their dissertation completion.

Alignment with the Literature Review

Currently, the number of women in higher education continues to increase; however, women's matriculation in the fields of science and engineering continue to lag behind the program completion rate of men (Institute of Education Sciences, 2013). Because Conway's 1974 study was based on assumptions due to an existing gap in literature about women's education, the responses gained from women's interviews in this study closes a gap in the literature by providing current insights into how women learn at the doctoral level. Additionally, learning about women's mentoring perceptions and experiences may lead to an enrollment increase and retention of female students in science and engineering where female students graduate in fewer numbers than male students (Institute of Education Sciences, 2013).

Furthermore, literature reviewed for this study found that women need mentoring to have positive educational experiences (Kador & Lewis, 2007). In this study, the finding was that women overwhelmingly desired to be mentored. That the finding in this

study is similar to previous literature about the importance of women's mentoring needs provides insight for educational institutions to meet the educational needs of female students. In Turner and Thompson's (1993) study, race and gender were thought to be inhibitors to doctoral degree completion rates, but this study found that women did not perceive race and gender as detractors to doctoral degree completion. However, mentoring was considered a necessity for minority students to be successful, and the African American women in this study desired to be mentored.

Discussion of Emerging Themes

There were three themes that emerged from the findings—female doctoral students need timely dissertation writing instruction and feedback, African American women have a negative view of their educational experiences when they are not mentored, and mentoring relationships should be conciliatory and have clearly defined goals. The three themes that evolved from the study were reflective of some of the research literature from Chapter Two. For example, one need was for a writing program to be tailored to assist doctoral students with the specific needs of dissertation writing; the study participants expected that need to be met. Some of the participants interviewed perceived that the lack of a writing program impacted the time that it took them to complete their dissertation or to graduate at a designated time. There was a writing center at this Midwestern University, but participants did not think it met the specialized needs of students writing dissertations. Also, most of the professors who were interviewed commented on the need of a writing center to meet the specific dissertation writing needs of doctoral students. Specifically, Professor Smith commented on the lack of campus support at this Midwestern University to meet the needs of doctoral students.

Overwhelmingly, participants in this study stated the desire for frequent and timely feedback to dissertation drafts. The lack of timely feedback from the chair was frequently viewed as a deterrent for writing. However, participants often sympathetically commented, even at the expense of their immediate writing needs, about the large number of students doctoral faculty members were expected to chair.

The second emerging theme was African American women have a negative view of their educational experiences when they are not mentored. There were differences among student participants in what constitutes effective mentoring or what defines mentoring. For example, African American females were the largest number of participants who felt they were not mentored. Many of those African American women participated in the focus group for this study where they were vocal about the mentoring they felt they needed but were not getting to be successful as doctoral students. The views of the female participants mirrored research findings that African American women have a negative view of their educational experiences when they are not mentored. The perception of mentoring concerns shared by the African American female participants in this study were aligned with the literature findings of several researchers (Ellis, 2001; Felder, 2010; Shalonda & Schweitzer, 1999).

The third emerging theme in this study was that mentoring relationships should be conciliatory and have clearly defined goals. What constitutes mentoring differed based upon the individual's perceptions and experiences. Although mentoring definitions varied among participants in this study, a commonality was that participants viewed mentoring as some form of a relationship, similar to the definition of mentoring in most studies (Petersen, 2007; Young & Wright, 2001).

Limitations

First, the research in this study came from a small number of women and professors at one university, in the Midwestern United States. What I found might not be the same finding in a larger sample or with a more diverse or less diverse population of students and professors. Although I met the required number of participants to do the study, a larger pool of participants in the study would have provided more diversity of perceptions about what constitutes mentoring. Also, the fact that no men participated in the study meant that male voices were missing in this study of graduate school mentoring experiences and perceptions.

Second, this research was also done at a private university, and different views may have yielded from a public university. Also, the university has a relatively new doctoral program in education, about five years, and a longer, more established program may have had faculty members who had worked longer with a particular group where different responses might have resulted.

Recommendations for Future Research

I have several recommendations for future studies. One recommendation would be to study how men are mentored at the doctoral level to determine if male needs differed from female student needs. Since no males participated in any aspect of the study, their participation would have provided additional mentoring details.

Also, more research needs to be done to more fully learn about the mentoring experiences of white females. I found an abundance of literature about mentoring and African American women. Yet, I found sparse literature on white females and mentoring

although there are usually more white females than African American females on many campuses and universities.

The female participants and the professors seemed to differ as to what constitutes mentoring; a discussion of the subject between of the two groups could produce more information. Since women desired more explicit mentoring, research on a professor led formal mentoring program could benefit all students. Findings from this study could be part of the initial framework for such a program.

Another study recommendation is to evaluate mentoring at an institution with a more diverse faculty to learn how a more diverse faculty mentors students. The small number of minority faculty members for interviewing limited this study. An institution with more diverse faculty members would have allowed the principal researcher to analyze possible differences in mentoring.

Similar studies in the future that are longer, have a narrower scope, or have greater numbers of participants would be beneficial. The duration of this mentoring study could have been longer. The study lasted for two semesters, and a longer time would have added more participants and yielded additional data from participants. Another study that focuses solely on mentoring by faculty members would add more insights into how faculty mentors go about successfully working closely with students. In particular, more data on how or if gender is a factor would be of interest. Including a greater number of professors in the study would be useful to explore the diverse ways students can be mentored.

I believe that further studies should be conducted on mentoring needs of different ethnic groups of women graduate students. The participants of this study did not

represent a variety of ethnicities. Perhaps a study of mentoring programs with a greater variety of other ethnicities such as Asian and Hispanic women would provide increased information on how to serve their cultural mentoring needs. Future research will enable institutions of higher education to learn how to develop mentoring relationships that will best serve all students.

Recommendations for Practice

I recommend more accountability from professors and the university. Either the university needs to admit fewer students so professors have fewer dissertation students to manage, or the education program needs to monitor what it has in place that is believed to assist students. If students are stating they are not getting dissertation feedback in a timely manner, a modification needs to occur. Also, some of the women in the program are mature lifelong learners, several have young children, some are single parents, other women have deceased husbands or illnesses of concern, and a few women still lamented the death of the three chair persons that occurred early in the program's origin. These life challenges should be considered if they are greatly impacting graduation rates of the women in the program. Perhaps long delays to provide dissertation feedback could be addressed quicker with the use of technology. For example, the professor named most for providing immediate feedback used a cell phone to immediately respond to students' work. This professor was very comfortable with using a cell phone as an instructional tool and commented how the phone allowed quicker feedback for most students' questions. Also, the regular email response of a paragraph or page could provide quicker formative feedback than having students await summative feedback of an entire chapter. I found it very beneficial that my chair explained the writing process for chapters and

asked me to provide passages for review rather than allowing me to write pages and pages that could be off task. This had happened when I first began writing my dissertation, and I had little understanding of the dissertation writing process.

I recommend students be assisted in selecting a chair. It would be helpful to know how to select a chair, the most important person to a student completing a dissertation. Knowing how to select a chair, early in the program, may assist students with developing a topic, completing the IRB application, etc. And, if chairs have to be changed, it should not be overlooked that student and chair may need adjustment time. Additionally, perhaps institutions should not randomly assign students to professors for such long-term mentoring tasks like doctoral research and dissertation writing. Instead, mentoring relationships between students and professors should be based on some form of communication or knowledge. For example, a student doing a quantitative study would probably work best with a professor who has expertise doing qualitative research.

Last, not to detract from the idea of student independence or self-direction, but an orientation program that lasts for more than one session might benefit all students. Since learning to write the dissertation is a long process, the repetition of hearing the same information more than once or from different individuals might be beneficial. In my second dissertation-writing course, a student speaker provided beneficial information that helped me immensely. Having a panel of students during a speaker series to talk about completing the dissertation may be a great addition to the program's formal mentoring components. Otherwise, information that does not come from the chair is learned in bits and pieces. Information that helps doctoral students ultimately helps their professors, too.

Conclusion

The findings from this study suggest that mentoring of women is important at the doctoral level. However, participants' responses demonstrate there are various interpretations of mentoring. Some participants viewed mentoring as the traditional face-to-face interaction between mentor and mentee. A few participants thought social media such as Twitter could act as a mentoring medium. At first, even I thought there was no mentoring at the institution because of my limited definition of mentoring, essentially one-on-one instruction to complete an agreed upon task. During this study students and faculty members had different ideas about what constitutes mentoring. The women in this study did not view instructional support as mentoring, and faculty members within the same education department were not in agreement regarding what constitutes mentoring. The only definite mentoring program is probably one where participants know the objective of the program is mentoring, which may not be frequently done. Similarly, although informal mentoring occurs frequently between peers or between a professor and a student, almost no one specifically calls an informal mentoring relationship "informal mentoring." These differences in perception are similar to difficulties in determining the appropriate definition of mentoring. After concluding the study, I found there is formal and informal mentoring of most women students at the doctoral level, but most women desire to have more explicit opportunities to be mentored.

References

Adams, H. G. (1998). *The mentorship briefing guide: Handbook for establishing and implementing a mentoring program*. Norfolk, VA: H.G. Adams & Associates.

Ainsberg, N., & Harrington, M. (1988). *Women of academe: Outsiders in the sacred grove.* Amhert, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Ashford, K. (2013, May). *The Lolita effect: Are male execs too nervous to mentor young women?* Retrieved from http://www.learnvest.com/2013/05/are-maleexecutives-too-nervous-to-mentor-younger-women/

Bierema, L. L., & Merriam, S. B. (2002, Spring). E-mentoring: Using computer mediated communication to enhance the mentoring process. *Innovative Higher Education, 26*(3), 211-227.

Blake-Beard, S. (2011). Matching by race and gender in mentoring relationships: Keeping our eyes on the prize. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*(3), 622-643.

Chao, G., Walz, P. M., & Gardner, P. D. (1992, September). Formal and informal mentorships: A comparison on mentoring functions and contrast with nonmentored counterparts. *Personnel Psychology*, *45*(3), 619-636.

Chesler, N., & Chesler, M. (2002, January). Gender-informed mentoring strategies for women engineering scholars: On establishing a caring community. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 49-55.

Clabaugh, G. C. (2010, Spring). A history of male attitudes toward educating women. *Educational Horizons*, 164-178.

Clark, S., & Corcoran, M. (1986, January/February). Perspectives on the professional socialization of women faculty. *Journal of Higher Education, 57*, 21-43.

Conway, J. K. (1974, Spring). Perspectives on the history of women's education in the United States. *History of Education Society, 14*(1), 1-12.

Cooke, D. J., Sims, R. L., & Peyrefitte, J. (1995). The relationship between graduate students and attrition. *The Journal of Psychology, 129*(6), 677-688.

Council of Graduate Schools. (2012). *Doctoral initiative on minority retention and completion.* Retrieved from http://www.cgsnet.org/phd-completion-project

Crow, G. M. & Matthews. L. J. (1988). *Finding one's way: How mentoring can lead to a dynamic leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Davidson, M., & Foster-Johnson, L. (2001). Mentoring in the preparation of graduate researchers of color. *Review of Educational Research, 71*(4), 549-574.

Davis, A. (1983). *Women race and class*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Davis, J. (2007, Fall/Winter). Access to academe: The importance of mentoring to black students. *The Negro Educational Review, 58*(3-4), 217-231.

Debord, L. W. & Millner, S. M. (1993). Educational experiences of African American graduate students on a traditionally white campus. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 26(1), 60-71.

Dixon-Reeves, R. (2003). Mentoring as a precursor to incorporation: An assessment of the mentoring experience of recently minted Ph.D.s. *Journal of Black Studies, 34*(1), 12-27.

Douglas, C. A. (1997). Formal mentoring programs in organizations: An annotated bibliography. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Eby, L. T., McManus, S. E., & Simon, S. A. (2000). The protege's perspective regarding negative mentoring experiences: The development of a taxonomy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 57*, 1-2.

Ellis, E. (2001). *Race, gender and the graduate student experience: Recent research.* Retrieved from http://www.diversityweb.org

Emery, K. A. (1999). Online mentoring: A review of literature and programs, available online. Retrieved from http://www.homestead.com

Ensher, E. Huen, C. & Blanchard, A. (2003). Online mentoring and computer-mediated communication: New directions in research. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*, 264-288.

Felder, P. (2010, March). On doctoral student development: Exploring faculty mentoring in the shaping of African American students. *The Qualitative Report, 15*(2), 455-474.

Feldman, D. C., Folks, W. R., & Turnley, W. H. (1999). Mentor-protege diversity and its impact on international internship experiences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 20*, 597-611.

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Freeman, C. E. (2004). Institute of Education Sciences. *Trends in educational equity of girls and women*. Retrieved July 25, 2013, from National Center of Educational Statistics: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/equity/Section7.asp

Heinrich, K. T. (1995, July/August). Doctoral advisement relationships between women. *Journal of Higher Education, 66*(4), 447-469.

Hudson-Davies, R. H., Parker, C., & Byrom, J. (2002). Towards a healthy high street: Developing mentoring schemes for smaller retailers. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 34*(7), 248-254.

Institute of Education Sciences. (2013). *Trends in educational equity of girls and women*. Retrieved July 25, 2013, from National Center of Educational Statistics: http:// nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/equity/Section7.asp

Inzer, L. D., & Crawford, C. D. (2005). A review of formal and informal mentoring: Processes, problems, and design. *Journal of Leadership Education, 4*(1), 31-50.

Jackson State University. (2008). The effective graduate advisor: Best practices for mentoring graduate students: Retrieved June 8, 2011, fromhttp://www.jsums.edu/~gadmappl

Jan, T. (2010, February 16). *A point of thought: Colleges lacking on faculty diversity*. Retrieved from http://boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2010/02/16/ boston_area_short_on_black_hispanic_professors/

Johnson, B. W., & Nelson, N. (2000). Mentor-protege relationships in graduate training: Some ethical concerns. *Ethics & Behavior, 9*(3), 189-210.

Kador, J. T., & Lewis, C. (2007, Winter). The role of mentors/advisors in the doctoral training of African American students at predominately white universities: Implications for doctoral training. *Essays in Education, 19*, 100-118.

Kanchews, S. (2013). An investigation of same-gender versus cross-gender matches. *Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring.* Retrieved 2013, from http://chronicle. umbmentoring.org/gender-matching-an-investigation-of-same-versuscross-gender-matches/

Kelly, S., & Schweitzer, J. H. (1999, March). Mentoring within a graduate school setting. *College Student Journal, 33*(1), 130-149.

Kiersma, M. E., Nicholas, H., Chen, A. M., Melton, B., Marwa, N., & Plake, K. S. (2012). A graduate student mentoring program to develop interest in research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 76*(6), 1-9.

Kuo, Y. (2011, February). Reflections from the field: Applying a proposal guideline in mentoring English major undergraduate researchers in Taiwan. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring, 9*(1), 76-82.

LaVant, B. D., Anderson, J. L., & Tiggs, J. W. (1997). Retaining African American men through mentoring initiatives. *In New Directions for Student Services, 80*.

Lerner, G. (1993). The creation of feminist consciousness: *From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Luna, G., & Cullen, D. (1998). Do graduate students need mentoring? *College Student Journal, 32*(3), 322-330.

Margolis, J., & Fisher, A. (2002). *Unlocking the clubhouse.* Cambridge, NY: MIT Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA.

McClelland, A. E. (1992). *The education of women in the United States.* New York, NY: Garland Publishing.

MentorNet. (2013). *Power of 2.* Retrieved from http://www.mentornet.net

MentorNet Evaluation Reports. (2000-2001). Retrieved from http://www.MentorNet.net/Documents/about/Results/Evaluation/

Michalack, C. (1999). Is the mentoring idea making a comeback? *Hydrocarbon Processing, 78*(9), 25.

Mueller, S. (2004). Electronic mentoring as an example for the use of information and communications. *European Journal of Engineering Education, 29*(1), 53-63.

National Black Graduate Student Association. (2013). *Dr. Todd C. Shaw E-Mentoring Project*. Retrieved from www.nbgsa.org/index.php/dr-todd

Packard, B. (2003). Student training promotes mentoring awareness and action. *Career Development Quarterly, 51*(4), 335.

Padilla, A. (1994). Ethnic minority scholars, research, and mentoring. *Educational Researcher, 2*(4), 24-27.

Panopoulos, A. S., & Sarri, K. (2013). E-mentoring: The adoption process and innovation challenge. *International Journal of Information Management, 33*, 217-226.

Patton, L. D. (2009). My sister's keeper: A qualittive examination of mentoring experiences among African American women in graduate and professional schools. *The Journal of Higher Education, 80*(5), 511-536.

Petersen, L. K. (2007, February). What is the meaning and purpose of mentoring? *The Mentoring Leadership and Resource Network*. Retrieved from http://www.mentors.net/03library/purposeofmentoring.html

Ragins, B. R. & McFarlin, D. B. (1989, August). An investigation of cross-gender mentoring relationships. *Academy of Management Proceedings, 1*, 58-62.

Rhodes, J. (2013). Matching by race and gender in STEM-based mentoring relationships. *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring.* Retrieved from http://chronicle.umbmentoring.org/3907/a/

Rowley, J. B. (1999, May). The good mentor. *Educational Leadership, 56*(8), 20-22.

Segall, R. (2000). Online shrinks. *Psychology Today, 32,* 38-44.

Single, P. B., & Mueller, C. B. (2001). When email and mentoring unite: The Implemention of a nationwide electronic mentoring program. *American Society for Training and Development,* 107-122.

Shalonda, K., & Schweitzer, J. (1999). Mentoring within a graduate school setting. *College Student Journal, 33*(1), 130-149.

Shank, G. D. (2006). Qualitative research: *A personal skills approach* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Shultz, E., Colton, G., & Colton, C. (2005). The adventor program: Advisement and mentoring for students of color in higher education. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling Education & Development, 402*(2), 208-218.

Smallwood, C. (2006). The bumphy path to the Ph.D. *Chronicle of Higher Education,* A21-A22.

Smith, B. (1995, April 20). *Hidden rules, secret agendas: Challenges facing contemporary women doctoral students*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Sproull, L., & Keisler, S. (1986). Reducing social context cues: Electronic mail in Organizational communication. *Management Science, 17,* 1492-1512.

Strayhorn, T. L., & Terrell, M. C. (2007). Mentoring and satisfaction with college for Black students. *Negro Educational Review, 58*(1/2), 69-83.

Stubblefield, H. W., & Keane, P. (1994). *Adult education in the American experience: From the Colonial period to the present*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Thomas, K. M., Willis, L. A., & Davis, J. (2007). Mentoring minority graduate students: Issues and strategies for institutions, faculty, and students. *Equal Opportunities International, 26*(3), 178-192.

Townsend, L. (1994). How universities successfully retain and graduate Black students. *The Journal of Backs in Higher Education, 4*, 85-89.

Turner, C., & Thompson, J. (1993, Spring). Socializing women doctoral students: Minority and majority experiences. *The Review of Higher Education, 16*(3), 355-370.

Walker, B. (2011, February 1). *Spike Lee pushes for more Black male educators.* Retrieved from http://www.eureb.com

Whitely, W., Dreher, G. F., & Dougherty, G. F. (1988). Relationship of career mentoring and scoioeconomic origin to managers' and professionals' early career progress. *Academy of Management Journal, 34*(2), 331-351.

Whittenberg, P. M. (1998). Successful mentoring in a correctional environment. *Federal Probation*, 62(2), 75-81.

Williams, M., Brewley, D., Reed, R., White, D., & Davis-Hanley, R. (2005). Learning to read each other: Black female graduate students share their experiences at a White research 1 institution. *The Urban Review, 37*(3), 181-199.

Woody, T. (1966). A history of women’s education in the United States. New York,

NY: Octagon Books.

Wright, C., & Wright, S. (1987). The role of mentors in the career development of young professionals. *Family Relations, 36*(2), 204-208.

Wright-Harp, W., & Cole, P. (2008, Spring). A mentoring model for enhancing success in graduate education. *Contemporary Issues in Communication Science Disorders, 35*, 4-16.

Young, C. Y., & Wright, J. (2001, September). Mentoring: The Components for success. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 28*(3), 202-206.

Appendix A

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities [PART 1]

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

"A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University"

Principal Investigator Sherrill Rayford
Telephone: xxx-xxx-xxxx E-mail: sr646@lionmail.lindenwood.edu

Participant_____ Contact info _____

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sherrill Rayford under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Sherblom. The purpose of this research is to investigate the mentoring experiences of a group of female students enrolled in an educational leadership program at a mid-western university.

2. a) Your participation will involve

- Volunteer to participate in study interviews and sign a consent form.
- Agree to interview location on campus or during a telephone interview.
- Answer questions PI asks about mentoring experiences while enrolled in the doctoral program.

b) The amount of time involved in your voluntary participation will be about one hour, and no remuneration will be provided for participation.

Approximately [20 subjects] will be involved in this first part of the research study.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about mentoring graduate students and may help society.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Sherrill Rayford at xxx-xxx-xxxx or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Stephen Sherblom at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature Date	Participant's Printed Name
_____	_____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date	Investigator Printed Name

Revised 1-21-2010

Appendix B

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities [PART 2]

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

"A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University"

Principal Investigator: Sherrill Rayford
Telephone: xxx-xxx-xxxx E-mail: sr646@lindenwood.edu

Participant_____ Contact info _____

3. You are invited to participate in a mentoring support group conducted by Sherrill Rayford under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Sherblom, and with the cooperation of the Capstone III professors. The purpose of this research overall is to investigate the mentoring experiences of a group of doctoral students enrolled in an educational leadership program at a mid-western university. The purpose of this portion of the research is to study the possibilities involved in creating alternative informal mentoring opportunities in the Capstone III class.

4. a) Your participation will involve:

   - Volunteering to participate in mentoring group and signing a consent form.
   - Participate in mentoring support group in designated location on campus.
   - Share responses about mentoring during group session.
   - Plan to meet no more than one hour on a weekly basis, if desired.

   b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be restricted to one hour per week during the Capstone III course period, and no remuneration will be provided.

   Approximately [15-60] graduate students will be involved in this research.

   There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

3.There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about mentoring graduate students and may help society.

4. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Sherrill Rayford at xxx-xxx-xxxx or the Supervising Faculty, (Dr. Stephen Sherblom at xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

_____	_____
Participant's Signature Date	Participant's Printed Name
_____	_____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date	Investigator Printed Name

Revised 1-21-2

Appendix C

Application for Expedited IRB Review of Research Proposal Involving Human Subjects

Proposal #

1. Title of Project: A Qualitative Analysis of Mentoring Experiences and Perceptions of Female Students Enrolled in a Doctoral Program in Education at a Midwestern University

2. List the names of all primary investigators/faculty advisors and their contact information in the table below.

Name	Email	Phone Number	Department	Student/Faculty
Sherrill Rayford	sr646@lionmail.lindenwood.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx	English Chair/ Normandy High School	Ed.D. Student
Dr. Stephen A. Sherblom	SSherblom@lindenwood.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx	Associate Professor of Education/ Lindenwood University	Dissertation Chair
Dr. Shane Williamson	swilliamson@lindenwood.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx	Dean, First-Year Programs/Lindenwood University	Committee Member
Dr. Yvonne Gibbs	YGibbs@lindenwood.edu	xxx-xxx-xxxx	Department Chair for School of Education Advanced Programs	Committee Member

4. Anticipated starting date for this project: upon approval Anticipated ending date: 7.2014
(collection of *primary* data – data you collect yourself - cannot begin without IRB approval. Completion/Amendment form required yearly, even if stated anticipated ending date is more than one year in the future.)

5. Please define any terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader:

Mentoring- a relationship where a student receives guidance, feedback, and professional support from a mentor; moral support and career advancement advice are provided, and the mentor may develop a social desire to see the mentee succeed as a human being (Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007). Formal and informal are two types of mentoring (Douglas, 1997). An informal mentoring relationship develops among peers

(Douglas, 1997; Inzer & Crawford, 2005); formal mentoring relationships, created to provide support, are usually established by organizations (Chao, G., Walz, P. M., & Gardner, P. D., 1992; Inzer & Crawford, 2005). In our program, mentoring might include faculty support or research courses, one's academic advisor, and dissertation committee members, especially the Chair.

6. State the purpose of this proposed project (*what do you want to accomplish?*):

The purpose of this study is to investigate the mentoring experiences of a group of female doctoral students in one Educational Leadership program at a mid-western university: their perceptions of mentoring in the program; types of mentoring experienced (formal and informal); mentoring support systems in and out of the program (peer, family, online); and evidence of the benefits of mentoring for feeling successful in the doctoral program (perceiving themselves as knowing how to move ahead and complete the dissertation, and perhaps more) wherever students are in program completion.

An extension of this purpose is embodied in part 2 of the research plan where the Principle Investigator will deepen her understanding of mentoring by attempting to facilitate mentoring among a group of doctoral volunteers (who will, by the nature of the research context, be potentially both male and female students).

7. State the rationale for this proposed project (*why is this worth accomplishing?*):

Historically, women have not had the same opportunity as men to obtain an education in the United States (Davis, 1983). From 2000 to 2010, however, the number of women enrolled in higher education increased 39 percent (National Center for Education Statistics). Despite these gains, research shows that there are still fewer women than men in the professoriate, and fewer women of color in graduate school

(nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_337.asp). Traditionally, the mentor – mentee relationship in higher education was between a male professor and a male doctoral student, and much of the higher education research on mentoring reflects that focus (Willis & Davis, 2007). This suggests that in a 21st Century doctoral program many potential professor-student pairings will be between individuals of differing sex and/or race – which has not been much studied. The increased enrollment of women in doctoral programs, then, presents a potential challenge to mentoring-as-usual (Douglas, 1997), and it is worth studying how a sample of women students navigates these challenges. Documenting what difference, if any, these changing demographics make could improve mentoring in a multi-cultural doctoral program such as our own. A failure of mentoring at the graduate level may lead to fewer doctoral candidates completing degrees, already a serious problem nationally where women currently graduate at lower rates (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). This study seeks to generate understandings regarding how best to support the increasing number of women students, including understanding how they support each other.

8. State the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) of the proposed project:

3. [Part 1] What are the mentoring experiences of a sample of female students enrolled in an Educational Leadership doctoral program at a Midwestern University?
4. [Part 2] What are the experiences of a group of doctoral students voluntarily participating in an experimental peer mentoring group in the same doctoral program in Education?

Sub-questions include students' perceived need for mentoring; their current conception of and expectations regarding mentoring in higher education; their interactions with

institutional supports including faculty; their attempts to generate support for themselves; and their participation in informal mentoring with other students.

As in any research dependent on participants sharing with you their experience and understanding of something, what this study will reveal is dependent on what participants are willing to reveal to me. I have no control over what forms of mentoring are currently being experienced by my fellow students and only some influence in what they might be willing to share with me. For these reasons, I am proposing an exploratory framework where some of the details of the later part of the study will be worked out on the basis of what the first part of the study reveals (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

The first part of the study will consist of interviews with a sample of female doctoral students about their experience with mentoring. If participants identify faculty members who have mentored them I will attempt to address a further cluster of questions regarding how a mentor thinks about and goes about a mentoring relationship from their end of the relationship: goals, professional concepts, and practices. This would be done by conducting interviews with those faculty identified by participants. If participants identify peer mentoring relationships during their interviews I will endeavor to explore these findings by addressing a cluster of questions regarding how the peer mentoring worked, what kinds of benefits students experienced, how the mentoring started, and what sustains the mentoring. This may lead to interviews with those students identified by participants as their peer-mentors.

The second part of the study revolves around crafting a conscious attempt at supporting mentoring based partly on the insights gained in the first part of the study (though not all interviews will necessarily be done before the second part of the study

commences). The context will be the course Capstone III, a required research course taken at the end of students' coursework. This course meets weekly throughout the semester. With the cooperation of the Capstone III professors (Dr. Kania-Gosche and Dr. Wisdom) I will facilitate a *mentoring group* in the hour following their presentations and engagement of the students. Participation in the mentoring group will be voluntary and open to all students (female and male). Additionally, the Capstone III classes themselves are open to doctoral students who are beyond Capstone III, and the mentoring group likewise would be open to all these students.

As Principle Investigator, I see my role as *facilitator* of the mentoring group, not teacher, or counselor, or supervisor – I will help participants help themselves and help each other. There are at least three ways I can imagine facilitating growth in mentoring: (i) providing a forum in which students feel free to express what they think and feel regarding their frustrations with mentoring and their current needs (where they may express things to fellow students that they might not to faculty); (ii) forming writing support teams that meet weekly and hold each other accountable to writing (similar to writing supports Dr. Kania-Gosche does periodically with students); and (iii) create groups for reading and offering editorial feedback or discussing methodological and conceptual issues. I am open to other forms of assistance that the students themselves may articulate.

9. Has this research project been reviewed or is it currently being reviewed by an IRB at another institution? ☐ Yes, already approved ☐ Yes, pending LU IRB approval
X☐ No

If yes, please state where the application has been/will be reviewed. Provide a copy of the disposition in the appendix if the application was approved.

10. What is the PI's relationship with the participants in the study or research site? If you have no relationship, indicate that. Explain how any coercion will be reduced or how the identities of the participants will remain anonymous if the PI is a superior.

What is your relationship with the participants in the study or research site? If you have no relationship, indicate that. Explain how any coercion will be reduced or how the identities of the participants will remain anonymous if you are a superior.

I am not a supervisor or superior for any of the participants – I am a peer, a doctoral student just like the participants. A relationship that I share with some participants is that I self-identify as a student with some African American heritage, and we may have had similar experiences as a woman of color.

As stated above, if the study leads me to faculty who are identified by participants as mentors, I will invite them to participate as well. My relationship to faculty is either as a former student or as a stranger, neither of which should complicate my research relationships with them.

11. Participants involved in the study:

a. Indicate <u>the minimum and maximum number</u> of persons, of what type, will be recruited as participants in this study.

I will seek a minimum 20 participants in Part 1, being sure to include both Caucasian and African-American women, the two dominant cultural groups in our program. Women of other backgrounds will not be turned away. Additionally, I want to be free to invite faculty members who may be mentioned by participants as valuable mentors to participate in interviews as well. Any such faculty participants will count as part of my minimum 20 participants.

When I facilitate the mentoring group in Capstone III (described in #8 above) additional students, female as well as male, may request to participate, so I am requesting permission for a maximum of 60 doctoral student participants – though I am not attempting to reach this number.

LU participants	0	Undergraduate students (Lindenwood Participant Pool)*
	15-60	Graduate students*
	0-10	Faculty and/or staff*

**Any survey of LU faculty, staff, or students requires approval by the Provost after IRB approval has been granted. Electronic surveys of LU faculty, staff, or students must use the University's Survey Monkey account, which must be created by an authorized administrator.*

Non-LU participants	0	Adults

Secondary Data	0	Population size
	0	Sample Size

b. From what source(s) will the potential participants be recruited?

Study participants in Part 1 will be female students enrolled in or who have recently completed the Lindenwood doctoral program in educational Leadership, to be recruited by email and from classes meeting this fall. Participants in Part 2 will be students in Capstone III in the fall of 2013 or post-Cap III students who will be invited to attend.

c. Describe the process of participant recruitment.

For Part 1 I have already identified a number of female students who I will invite to participate, each of whom may know others – this method is dubbed the *snowball method* - (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Additionally, female doctoral students will be emailed an invitation to participate in this study.

The PI will attend doctoral classes beginning in August to invite others if needed (Appendix D). Part two participants will be recruited from Capstone III and by email from the roster of post-Capstone III students (Appendix E). As Principle Investigator I will attend Capstone III at the beginning of the semester (at the convenience of the Professors) to explain the study to participants personally (variation of Appendix E).

d. Will any potential participants be excluded?

X☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain why and how.

All female doctoral students are welcome to participate in part one; all students present in Capstone III (female and male) may participate in the mentoring groups in part two.

e. Where will the study take place?

X☐ On LU's campus – in-person interviews, focus groups, and mentoring group in Capstone III. X☐ Off campus – telephone interview

For the interviews, students will be asked if they want to meet at a designated location on the university campus. For the interviews, students will be asked if they want to meet at a designated location on the university campus. As an alternative, students will have the option of doing a telephone interview.

As an alternative, students will have the option of doing a telephone interview.

12. Methodology/procedures:

a. Provide a sequential description of the procedures to be used in this study.

An invitation will be sent by university email to all female LU Educational Leadership doctoral students (same as Appendix D). Additionally, the Principle Investigator will visit doctoral classes to recruit participants through making an announcement and handing out an information sheet describing the study (appendix D). Lastly, students who agree to participate will be asked to pass on the invitation to their friends. Between these three methods, the Principle Investigator (PI) trusts she can get a minimum of 20 student participants.

Data collection, initially, consists of one-on-one interviews with all participants about their experiences with mentoring in the doctoral program (see appendix A). Based on my analysis of these interviews, I will organize focus groups to follow up on themes presented in the interviews in the months following (Appendix C). These groupings may be based on the participants reporting similar experience, such as those completing the program while having significant family responsibilities; those who were less familiar with higher education upon entry; or other noted differences.

If participants describe good mentoring relationships with Lindenwood faculty the PI will attempt to interview that faculty member (see appendix B) to learn about his or

her practice and philosophy of mentoring (Douglas, 1997). Professors will be asked if the session can be audio recorded. The researcher will listen to, transcribe, and analyze the transcripts. If students report good mentoring in their peer relationships, those relationships will be explored as well to determine their practice and its benefits. Interviews for the first part of the study will be conducted on campus or by telephone, and responses will be audio recorded. Focus groups with these participants will be conducted on campus, unless a group of students requests talking in a more neutral environment. The researcher will listen to and transcribe verbatim the interviews and analyze the coded transcripts. Analysis will consist of open coding, a process whereby each sentence in the transcript is interrogated and assigned a meaning relative to the Research Question (Maxwell, 2013). Relationships between codes or clusters of codes suggest larger themes (Shank, 2006).

The second part of the study will consist of attempting to facilitate peer mentoring and other types of mentoring among the students in Capstone III. I will take observational notes during the mentoring group meetings but I will not audio record discussions to preserve privacy.

Confidentiality of all participants will be maintained by all information being kept in a locked and secure location at the researcher's home.

b. Which of the following data-gathering procedures will be used?
Provide a copy of all materials to be used in this study with application.

☐ Observing participants (i.e., in a classroom, playground, school board meeting, etc.)
When? Students may be observed engaging in peer-mentoring in Part 1; and in Capstone III and the mentoring group in Part 2.
Where? Designated classroom announced during Cap III or wherever participants choose to gather

For how long? Probably the length of the interaction; one semester in Cap III
How often? weekly
What data will be recorded? Interviews and focus groups will be audio-recorded; the mentoring group will not be recorded but the PI will take notes and keep a journal. Consent forms will be gathered from participants

☐ Survey / questionnaire: ☐ paper ☐ email or web based
Source of survey:

X☐ Interview(s) X☐(in person) X ☐(by telephone)
With participants in Part 1

X☐ Focus group(s) with participants in Part 1

X☐ Audiorecording interviews & focus groups ☐ Videorecording

☐ Analysis of deidentified secondary data - specify source (who gathered data initially and for what purpose):

☐ Other (specify):

13. Will the results of this research be made accessible to participants, institutions, or schools/district? ☐ Yes X☐ No

If yes, explain how.

14. Potential benefits and compensation from the study:

a. Describe any anticipated compensation to participants (money, grades, extra credit).

There is no anticipated compensation for participants.

15. Potential risks from the study:

a. Explain the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and confidentiality of data during the data gathering phase of the research, in the storage of data, and in the release of the findings.

Participants will be asked to select a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Data will remain confidential and not be shared during the data gathering process, except with Dissertation Committee members assisting the PI in analysis. Information will be stored in a secure location in the home of the PI. There will be no formal release of findings other than inclusion of information in the PI's dissertation.

b. How will confidentiality be explained to participants?

Participants will be told that information they share will not be revealed or discussed during or after the study. Participants will be told that information related to the study will be locked in a secure location at the home of the PI until it is destroyed.

c. Indicate the duration and location of secure data storage and the method to be used for final disposition of the data.

Paper Records
X☐ Data will be retained until completion of project and then destroyed.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where?

Audio/Video Recordings
X☐ Audio/video tapes will be erased after completion of project.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where?

Electronic Data (computer files)
X ☐ Electronic data will be erased after completion of project.
☐ Data will be retained indefinitely in a secure location.
Where?

16. All supporting materials/documentation for this application are to be uploaded to IRBNet and attached to the package with your protocol and your credentials. Please indicate which appendices are included with your application. Submission of an incomplete application package will result in the application being returned to you unevaluated.

X Recruitment materials: A copy of any posters, fliers, advertisements, letters, telephone, or other verbal scripts used to recruit/gain access to participants.

X Data gathering materials: A copy of all surveys, questionnaires, interview questions, focus group questions, or any standardized tests used to collect data.

Permission if using a copyrighted instrument

X Informed Consent Form: Adult

Information/Cover letters used in studies involving surveys or questionnaires

Permission letter from research site

X Certificate from NIH IRB training for all students and faculty

X IRBNet electronic signature of faculty/student

Adapted, in part, from LU Ethics Form 8/03
Revised 9/08 Revised 3/09 Revised 1-21-2010, 10-24-2011, 8-8-2012, 9-17-2012

Appendix D

Interview Protocol for Female Doctoral Students

1. Explain the mentoring you experience or want to experience to be successful as a doctoral student. How does mentoring relate to your positive or negative experiences as a doctoral student in this program? If mentoring was not a part of your experience, explain that perception.

2. What formal mentoring support programs on-campus have you participated in as a doctoral student? Explain the experience. If you have not participated in an on-campus mentoring support program, explain why you have not participated.

3. Explain any informal types of mentoring you use that are not a part of the campus support system.

4. Explain what barriers, if any, interfered with your doctoral progress and how you may have compensated?

5. Have you have ever felt isolated as a student in the doctoral program? If so, how did you deal with feelings of isolation?

6. Do you feel that being a woman impacted your doctoral studies in a positive or negative way? Explain.

7. Explain whether your race or culture positively or negatively impacted your doctoral experience.

8. Explain the ways you received mentoring from your advisor or dissertation chair as a doctoral student.

9. Would you be willing to participate in a peer mentoring group as a continuation of this study on mentoring? What is your present year in the doctoral program?

Appendix E

Interview Protocol for Mentoring Faculty

1. Explain the process you use to mentor a student in the doctorate program.
2. What are the challenges you experience mentoring doctoral students, and how do you address those challenges?
3. Explain any unique aspects of mentoring female doctoral students.
4. Are those challenges different if your gender and race do not match the student's?
5. Explain if or how you modify your mentoring of students who come from different cultures or races than yours, or are the other gender.
6. Describe any campus support systems you think mentor students. Does that take some of that pressure to mentor students off of you?
7. Do you think some students need less mentoring to be able to progress through the doctorate program? Why?
8. How many years have you been a professor in the doctoral program?

Appendix F

Possible Focus Group Discussion Prompts

1. What kind of orientation did you receive upon entering the doctoral program regarding possible mentoring options?
2. Tell me your insider view on being a doctoral student now that you have experienced it.
3. What are characteristics of a supportive Doctoral Dissertation Committee Chair?
4. What campus support system is most beneficial when working on a dissertation?
5. How have you developed your writing skills to complete a dissertation?
6. Explain how the doctoral program differs from your masters program.
7. Have you engaged in any kind of peer-mentoring with other doctoral students?

[Additional discussion prompts will develop from the first part of the study or during the group sessions.]

Appendix G

Basic Script for Part 1 Visits to Doctoral Classes to Invite Female Participants

My name is Sherrill Rayford and I am a doctoral student in the Lindenwood Educational Leadership Program. I am conducting my dissertation research investigating the mentoring experiences of female doctoral students in the Lindenwood program. I am focusing on women students particularly because the numbers of female students in doctoral programs has increased dramatically in recent years and this is partly an exploration of how well that is working.

Your participation would involve conducting an interview with me about your experiences, which should take no more than 45 minutes. There are **No risks** associated with this study and the things you say to me will remain confidential and you will remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and there is NO penalty for withdrawing participation at any time. My contact information is on the sheet I am handing out. Please email me or call me if you are willing to be interviewed. Thank you!

Appendix H

Email Invitation to Participants for the Mentoring Group: Capstone III - Fall 2013

My name is Sherrill Rayford and I am a doctoral student in the Lindenwood Educational Leadership Program. I am conducting my Doctoral research investigating the mentoring experiences of Lindenwood students, under the guidance of Dr. Stephen Sherblom. Part of my study will take place in Capstone III during the fall 2013 semester. In coordination with Dr. Kania-Gosche and Dr. Wisdom I will be facilitating a mentoring group for doctoral students from 7:00-8:00 pm, following the conclusion of the Capstone III presentation or activity of the day. The mentoring group is open to all students in the doctoral program.

The mentoring group will be a place for students to talk about their mentoring needs, and hopefully to get some of those needs met. With the assistance of the faculty I am prepared to facilitate the creation of groups of students to support each other's writing and/or research – based upon what you need and how you like to work.

No risks are associated with this study; your participation is voluntary and there is NO penalty for withdrawing participation at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Sherrill Rayford, xxx-xxx-xxxx, or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Stephen Sherblom, xxx-xxx-xxxx. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Vitae

Sherrill Rayford graduated from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock with a Bachelor of Science in Education. She earned a Master of Arts in English at the University of Central Arkansas. Her anticipated graduation date from Lindenwood University's Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Instructional Leadership is December 2014.

Presently working as a classroom teacher, Sherrill performed the responsibilities of department chair, facilitator of a Professional Learning Community, and was Lead Teacher at a gifted school. She is a member of several teaching organizations, honor societies, and the author of a recently published digital book in the Kindle Store, *Journaling Prompts for Reluctant Writers*.