

# Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring: Mentoring For Professional Development In Higher Education

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Mona Bryant-Shanklin  
Norma W. Brumage  
*Norfolk State University*

*The purpose of this paper is to discuss the refocusing of traditional pre-service/post-graduate education programs using the Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM). This mentoring model is particularly relevant as serviced-focused and less research intensive universities shift their mission and purpose of teaching to a scholar-teacher model for research development. The concept of mentoring has changed dramatically in the past decade as downsizing, reorganization, and uncertainty become a part of the daily functioning of higher education institutions. As traditionally defined, mentoring is a one-to-one relationship between a senior person and junior person, such as between a faculty member and a pre-service teacher candidate or practicing teacher. The authors assert that these relationships are changing in schools of education where teaching is now considered secondary to research in institutions that previously held teacher education as a principal objective.*

The supposition of this paper is the development of a mentor/mentee relationship where mentoring occurs between a senior person (faculty) and junior person (teacher candidate/practicing teacher). This relationship is elucidated using the Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM). This mentoring model is particularly relevant as some Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and less research-intensive universities shift their mission and purpose of teaching to a scholar-teacher model for research development. Even though mentoring was not recognized for its benefits by many researchers and human relation specialists until the 1980's, mentoring was held in high esteem and viewed as the method of choice in schools of education. This perspective was particularly true in schools of education at HBCUs where producing teachers was a major objective of these schools (Thomas, 2007). Both faculty and the teacher candidates/practicing teachers can benefit from this process as they endeavor to complete research, teaching, and service activities at some of the HBCUs and other less intensive research universities.

This relationship is elucidated using the Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM) for two reasons:

- 1) the emphasis of CREMM is on the collaborative process of mentoring between faculty members and pre-service teacher candidates or practicing teachers, and
- 2) the increased number of pre-service teacher candidates/practicing teachers who are non-traditional students enrolled in school of education programs at serviced-focused and less research intensive universities, particularly in graduate programs. The non-traditional, professional students bring with them classroom and world experiences. This paradigm impacts the relationships that are formed between faculty members and pre-service teacher candidates or practicing teachers that exceed the traditional teacher-student relationship.

In the scholar/teacher relationship, the major focus of the interaction is research development and educational enhancement for all participants. It is posited in this paper that both faculty members and pre-service teacher candidates or practicing teachers can benefit from this process as they endeavor to complete research, teaching, and service activities at service-focused and less research intensive universities. This model also supports the formalization of mentoring relationships beyond the individual universities as mentoring partnerships can be established among diverse groups of faculty at multiple colleges and universities to conduct collaborative research projects.

### **Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of this paper, the following terms will be used to explicate the understanding of the central concepts presented:

- Mentoring is a process involving two or more individuals working together to develop the careers and abilities of all participants.
- “The Culture of Teaching” involves educating pre-service students and post-graduate professionals in their understanding of the issues that impact the learning progression of diverse students in education. Similarly, relative to mentoring, these pre-service students and professionals can develop a comprehensive construct of diversity and intercultural relationships.
- “Cultural Responsiveness” acknowledges the legitimacies of cultural heritages both as legacies that affect students’ dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and the

formal curriculum (Gay, 2000).

- A scholar-teacher model of education provides university faculty and pre-service students/professional educators' opportunities to produce and increase relevant research in the academy.

This paper will provide a review of the literature that introduces and supports a collaborative and structured scholar/teacher mentoring program.

## **Literature Review**

### **Concepts and Processes of Mentoring**

Mentoring relationships have existed for centuries and were first identified in Greek mythology. The term “mentor” has its roots in Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*. The poem began as the aging King Laertes Odysseus, King of Ithaca, gave his crown to his son, Odysseus. Odysseus left his family and kingdom to fight in the Trojan War, entrusting his son, Telemachus, to his friend and advisor, Mentor. Subsequently, it became Mentor’s primary responsibility to serve as Telemachus’ teacher, role model, trusted advisor, counselor, and father figure. The relationship between Mentor and Telemachus in *The Odyssey* helped formulate some understanding of the initial process of mentoring Summer-Ewing (1994).

In recent years, the concept of mentoring has changed dramatically, particularly as downsizing, reorganization, and uncertainty has invaded businesses and educational organizations. The definition of mentoring as a one-to-one relationship between a faculty member and pre-service teacher candidates or practicing teachers has expanded to include relationships that extend beyond the immediate parameters of the university (Goodyear, 2009). Currently, mentoring in some higher education institutions includes a research focus due to the change in faculty roles at service-focused and less research-intensive institutions.

In a contemporary context, the definition of mentoring the mentor-mentee relationship is viewed as being more inclusive than before and expanded beyond developing one’s career. Mentoring now includes the personal relationship between the mentor and mentee (Thomas, 2001). While mentoring was not recognized for its benefits by researchers and human relation specialists until the 1980’s, it was viewed as the method of choice in schools of education. This perspective was particularly true in schools of education where producing teachers was a major objective. Colleges that were known for producing teachers created a culture of teaching (Thomas, 2007). One of the major methods used to teach teachers and other educators was that of mentoring (Kram, 1985). Moreover, successful mentoring relationships can assist individuals in learning the culture of the organization (Goodyear, 2009).

Mentoring is a process involving two or more individuals working together to develop the abilities of one individual. The context of the mentoring relationship can focus on career and/or personal development. In spite of its importance in the world of education, most of the empirical research on mentoring has been conducted in the business sector. These studies have indicated that having a mentor is an important factor in leadership development (O’Dell, 1990). Additionally, a mentor can instruct on how to best perform job tasks and responsibilities (Thomas, 2001).

While it is commonly believed that mentoring consists of formal programs where senior or experienced employees are asked to mentor junior employees, mentoring can be more diverse and multi-dimensional. Kram (1985) found that most career professionals have a developmental network of individuals who provide mentoring functions. The developmental network shifts the

focus of mentoring from the top-down approach wherein mentors are assigned to a more independent approach with the focus on the mentee. This latter approach provides more accountability and responsibility to mentees as they manipulate their developmental networks for specific career and personal needs. In addition, this mentoring approach supports the concept that one's career success can be actualized depending on how diverse and strong the developed network becomes (Goodyear, 2009).

According to Jacobi (1991), mentoring in higher education has included faculty members who provided informal mentoring to students. In addition, peer mentoring programs in many post-secondary education organizations use a traditional, business model of mentoring where the mentor-mentee relationship is structured as coach-mentor, and then career sponsor. The mentor's primary role in this model is defined as "someone who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a 'junior,' through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times promoting or sponsoring" (Zey, 1991). This concept of mentoring was divided into eight different definitions: (1) a more advanced or experienced individual guiding a less experienced individual; (2) an older individual guiding a younger individual; (3) a faculty member guiding a student; (4) an individual providing academic advising; (5) an individual who shares (his/her) experiences with another individual; (6) an individual who actively interacts with another individual; (7) an experienced individual guiding a group of individuals; and (8) an experience, older individual who guides a younger, less experienced individual by internet resources.

According to Sands, Parson, and Duane (1991), mentoring has become a buzzword in higher education over the past two decades. Mentoring from this perspective has been defined as a formal relationship established to achieve career support, role modeling, and encouragement. Mentoring has also been defined as a process by which mentees are guided, taught, and influenced in important ways (Darling, 1985).

### **Benefits of Mentoring**

In a collaborative model of mentoring, it was found to benefit both participants. The mentee receives assistance and guidance and the mentor is able to leave a legacy as well as gain from the mentee's own experiences (Kram, 1985). During the 1990s, when there were dramatic changes in higher education in Australia and the United Kingdom, faculty found themselves having to undergo changes in their work ethic wherein research activities were no longer viewed as a major part of their duties. This revolutionary change found the faculty undergoing stressful experiences as they were compelled to produce scholarship at less research-intensive institutions. This paradigm shift, as a result, found faculty seeking mentoring programs that were designed and funded to match less experienced researchers with more experienced researchers. The change and mission of higher education institutions in Australia and United Kingdom generated a more formal mentoring process to foster a culture of scholarship at less intensive research universities. Johnston and McCormack (1997) found that all participants reported positive perceptions of the mentoring experience.

One of the benefits of this mentoring program mentoring program included the acquisition of desired research skills. Mentees were able to secure contacts with individuals, directly and indirectly, who assisted them in acquiring the necessary writing skills to acquire grants and disseminate research. Mentees described their mentors as people: (a) with whom they could share ideas, (b) who gave them ideas about how to manage time, and (c) who helped them to integrate

their teaching and research interests (Johnston & McCormack, 1997). In sum, the benefits of mentoring proved to be as advantageous for the faculty mentor as for the mentee.

Another fundamental component of mentoring relationships is reciprocity. Shore, Toyokawa, and Anderson (2008) defined reciprocity for mentoring relationships as: “Reciprocity in the mentor-mentee relationship exists whenever the mentor desires, expects, requires, or accepts tangible or interpersonal benefits from the mentee -- beyond those financial benefits ordinarily required to compensate for the provision of professional services --in exchange for the benefits that mentor imparts to the mentee as a necessary part of mentoring” (Shore et al., p. 17). The authors also believed that there are some situations in mentoring relationship that affect the appropriateness of an expectation of reciprocity, especially if mentoring relationships were viewed within context-specific constructs. Specifically, there is a basic assumption about reciprocity where the appropriateness of the expectation in any mentoring relationship varies as a function of the context. According to Shore and colleagues (2008), the ethics of reciprocity are determined by the contexts in which the mentoring relationship occurs. Contexts, such as academic research apprenticeship, gender, and culture were viewed as challenges when mentoring relationships were formed in higher education.

In most instances, the beginning of a mentoring relationship is consensual where both the mentor and mentee have assented to collaborate and cooperate in professionally appropriate ways. It is expected that both the mentor and mentee have similar levels of maturity and experiences to pursue the mentoring partnership. When there are significant disparities in the developmental levels of the researchers, the mentor cannot ethically expect the same degree of productivity from the mentee. Awareness of this concern may prompt dialogue initiated by the mentor about the expectations and level of reciprocity that is required of the mentee (Shore et al., 2008).

### **Scholar-Teacher Mentoring**

Scholar/teacher mentoring can be hierarchal or equitable in nature. These dynamics provide for university faculty, whose focus now includes a stronger emphasis on research, to work with pre-service teacher candidates or practicing teachers who can become viable practitioners and outstanding teacher researchers. These dynamics also provide for opportunities to allow greater involvement by university faculty and students in relevant research and leadership affiliations. This type of relationship-building is supportive of an environment that increases stimulation for all involved (Mullen & Hutinger, 2008).

### **Mentoring and Diversity**

In the last 10 years, the minority population increased by 35% compared to 3.4% increase for the Caucasians, non-Hispanic population. According to Census projections, within 20 years, over one-third of the U.S. population will be comprised of people from minority groups (Girves, Zepada, & Gwathmey, 2005). Mainstream perceptions of diversity in the academy have been shown as pejorative with stereotypes, such as the belief that minorities and women are less able and less talented (Thomas, 2001). Mentors can assist in developing strategies to assist minorities and women in confronting and overcoming social and organizational cultural barriers in higher education organizations. Ragins and Kram (2007) found that individuals were most successful engaging in mentoring relationships if they had positive attitudes towards diversity and had some prior experiences in racially heterogeneous interactions.

Clutterbuck and Ragins (2002) identified the concept of diversified mentoring relationships as interactions that comprise mentors and mentees who differ with regards to power

differences in the organization. The behavior of the mentor in both formal and informal mentoring relationships varies as a function of the composition of the relationship. Thus, a mentor's behavior can positively or negatively affect the mentee's career and professional development contingent on the mentor's perceptions and behavior (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

### **Promoting the Research Culture in Higher Education through Mentoring Pre-service and Professional Education**

The academic culture of faculty in higher education consists of teaching, research, and service in the context of the university's mission and purpose. Faculty workloads also include some aspect of governance of the university and committee service. These additional responsibilities may range from minimal to several hours of involvement to complete the tasks assigned. Currently, in many higher education institutions, a climate of decreased funding, downsizing of faculty, increased workloads, and reduced availability of funding for academic development and research prevails (Adams, 2002). These conditions impact all faculty as scholars endeavor to remain solvent in the academy.

The Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM) is particularly relevant as some serviced-focused and less research intensive universities shift their mission and purpose of teaching to a scholar-teacher model for research development. The next section of the paper will describe the creation and purpose of the Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM), a systems theory model developed by Brumage & Bryant-Shanklin (2011). In 2010, these researchers created the Interagent Collaborative Responsive Mentoring Model (ICRM), a collaborative mentoring process involving a formal mentoring program for faculty-to-faculty interactions and the development of research in the academy (Brumage & Bryant-Shanklin, 2010). See Figure 1. CREMM involves a formal mentoring program for scholar/teacher development in higher education organizations.

There are several theories that can be applied to mentoring relationships in higher education, but few theories incorporate the elements of organizational change for faculty-student relationships (Bierema & Merriam, 2002; Budge, 2006; Mullen & Hutinger, 2008). Change to a student mentoring model is suggested as an integral process for creating a research and leadership culture in some serviced-focused and less intensive research universities. According to Hardwick (2005), prior studies have observed that mentoring programs cannot be imposed, but instead, must be created, nurtured, and sustained by those individuals involved.

Framing the CREMM model included a systems theory concept that describes the organization (university) and requires dynamic equilibrium to produce a stable system (i.e. one that is functioning optimally). In systems theory, Senge (2006) advocated for the use of systems maps --diagrams that show the key elements of systems and how they connect. There are four key characteristics that are core to systems theory:

1. Systems are goal oriented with a specific function.
2. Systems have inputs from their environment on which they act; not only is there impact from broader systems upon lesser systems but the opposite is also true.
3. Any change anywhere will impact "the system."
4. Systems have products.

Systems theory provides the *strategies* for educational changes provided that the coordinated efforts and needs of primary stakeholders are addressed. It is posited in the CREMM model that using system theory with the faculty -to-student/professional educator mentoring model,

effective and observable cultural changes in higher education organizations can be attained.

CREMM also includes some components of the Thousand and Villa's (1995) Managing Complex Change Model. In this change model, the elements of vision, skills, incentive, resources, or action plan must all be present for effective change to take place. On the contrary, if any of the elements are missing, confusion, anxiety, resistance, frustration, or treadmill will result. Time and effort are wasted, and the organization may find itself in the same status as it began or even in a lesser position. When negative outcomes occur in organizational changes, the decision makers must again earn the trust of stakeholders to move forward.

The model for CREMM is presented in Figure 2. In CREMM are the university systems and a fluid feedback loop between university faculty and pre-service students/professional educators. This change model is a part of the overarching institutional change for research-based productivity. For the purpose of this paper, the change expected is a shift in the emphasis on teaching as a mark of success to the manifestation of research projects and accountability. Thus, the involvement of research activities by faculty and teacher candidates/practicing teachers in the academy will assume precedence over or equal status with teaching and service. If the feedback loops remain open and incentives for change are maintained, there should be optimal opportunities for success and productivity of significant research outcomes.

A unique characteristic of CREMM is the relationship between faculty and teacher candidates/practicing teachers. The formal mentoring relationship becomes more research-focused and equitable in academic goals as opposed to a traditional dyadic interaction. This structure could include one or more faculty mentors from the same department who work collaboratively with cohorts of students internally and in cross-discipline research activities at the university. These dynamics would give the mentoring relationship multiple perspectives as follows:

- 1) diverse perspectives and scope of knowledge;
- 2) reciprocity of learning experiences from all participants in the mentoring relationship; and
- 3) open participation by all faculty and students/post-graduate professional, regardless of their academic position at the university, as they seek to expand their levels of expertise in new content areas of academic research.

Most importantly, all participants in the mentoring relationship will commit to a mutually agreed research activities that will manifest final research products. It is postulated that this level of productivity will result in personal satisfaction for both faculty and student participants and give them new skills and perspectives for meeting the requirements of institutional requisites for research acquisition and leadership.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper was to discuss the refocusing of traditional pre-service /post-graduate education programs using the Collaborative Responsive Education Mentoring Model (CREMM). This mentoring model is particularly relevant as some serviced-focused and less intensive research universities shift their mission and purpose of teaching to a scholar-teacher model for research development. The collaborative mentoring process involves a formal mentoring program for faculty-to-student interactions. Ultimately, the mutual goal for all participants is the development of salient research activities in the academy. The concept of mentoring is held in high esteem and viewed as "the method of choice" in schools of education where producing teachers is the primary objective (Thomas, 2007). Currently, mentoring in some

service-focused and less intensive research universities now includes a research focus because of the change in roles of the faculty and goals of the organization (Goodyear, 2009). Specifically, the type of mentoring is one that exists in a scholar-teacher model where the primary purpose of the relationship is to augment faculty and teacher candidates/practicing teachers' interaction for research training and professional development (Brumage & Shanklin, 2011).

The Collaborative Responsive Educator Mentoring Model (CREMM) can be used in post secondary institutions to address systems changes in higher education organizations to establish a culture for research in the academy. It is posited that both faculty and teacher candidates/practicing teachers can benefit from this process as they endeavor to complete research, teaching, and service activities. This model also supports the formalization of mentoring relationships beyond the individual universities as formal mentoring partnerships are established between colleges and universities to conduct collaborative research.

Some faculty member and teacher candidates/practicing teachers may view this change in foci in some higher education institutions as a potentially tumultuous transition if the correct elements for change are not included and monitored. The Collaborative Responsive Educator Mentoring Model (CREMM) is one method for assisting faculty and students at higher education institutions to make a paradigm shift to align with the mission and purpose of institutions. If colleges and universities are to make a smooth transition from the primary purpose of teaching and service to research, formal faculty-to-student mentoring programs must exist. The Collaborative Responsive Educator Mentoring Model (CREMM) can be one intervention to engage and use the talents of both faculty mentors as well as mentees.

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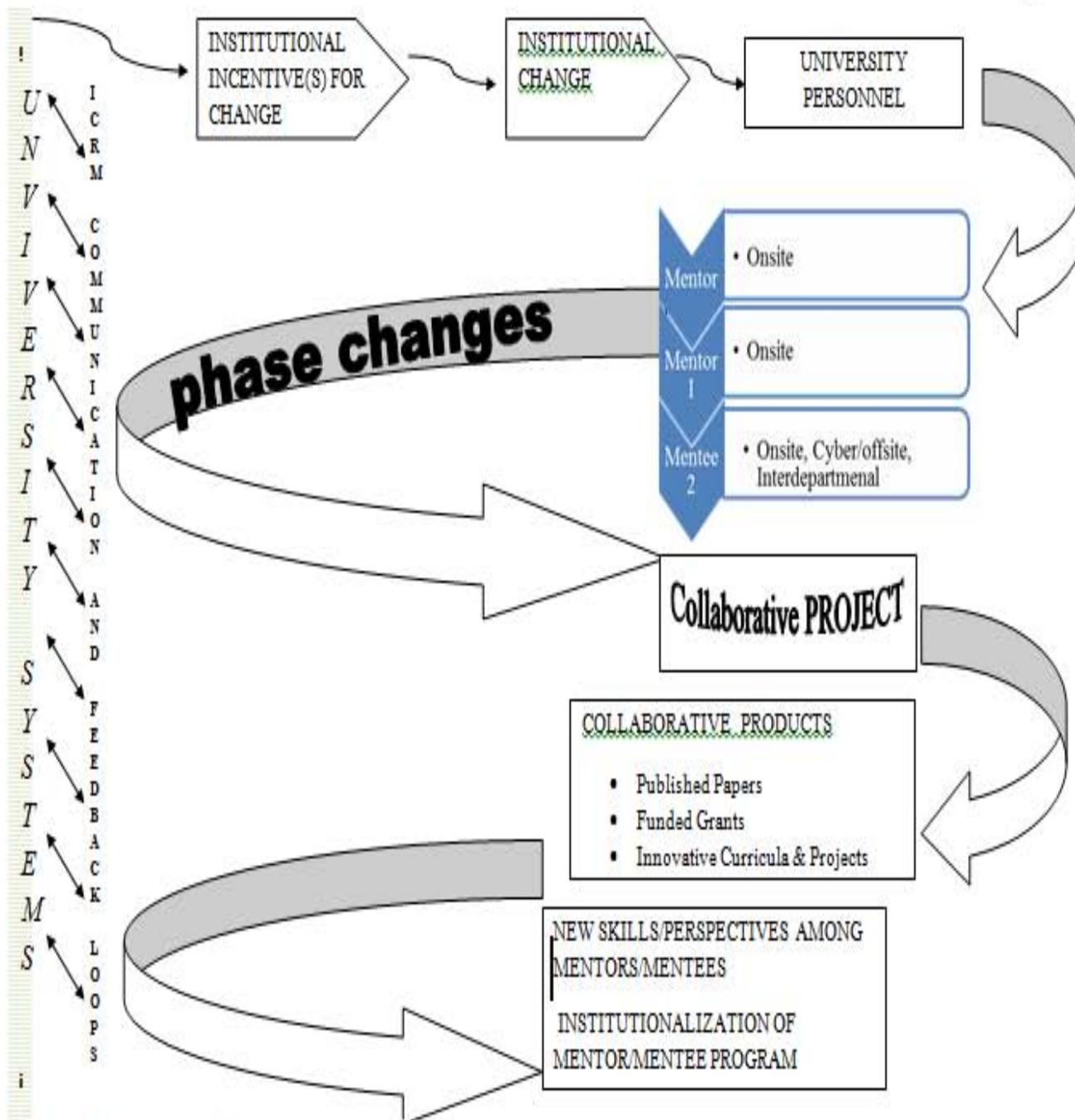


Figure 1: A schematic of ICRM

