

Can Mentoring As A Mutually Developmental Relationship Exist In Organizations?

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Most literature portrays mentoring as a means to enhance or maintain organizational stability. Thus, mentoring is viewed as a mechanism to achieve organizational goals. From this perspective, HRD scholars may be ignoring an elementary aspect of mentoring – a deeply personal, developmental relationship between two individuals. This paper explores the reciprocal nature of mentoring as a means of achieving mutual emancipation with the possibility of diminishing impediments such relationships might encounter in organizations.

Keywords: Mentoring, Leadership Development, Critical Perspective

Mentoring is featured prominently in the theory, research, and practice of human resource development and, as such, it is worth exploring the orientations used to describe the process and report the results of these partnerships as depicted in HRD literature. Typically scholars and practitioners structure their discussions from participants' standpoints (i.e., the mentor, the protégé, or the dyad) in terms of the relationship and its mechanics; yet the ultimate purpose is ostensibly to optimize organizational returns on investment accrued from fostering mentoring programs. Through mentoring interventions geared toward promotion, assimilation, or greater skills-based competencies of its membership, organizations report the following benefits:

- Enhancing leadership development (Darwin, 2000);
- Facilitating managerial succession (Zey, 1991);
- Improving organizational communication (Darwin, 2000; Forret, Turban, & Dougherty, 1996; Hale, 2000);
- Perpetuating values and culture (Scandura, Tegeda, Werther, & Lankau, 1996);
- Increasing productivity (Darwin, 2000; Hegstad & Wentling, 2004);
- Reducing workforce turnover through high employee satisfaction, participation, motivation, and development (Scandura et al., 1996).

Almost by definition, then, mentoring is a mechanism for achieving or maintaining organizational stability through promotion and elitism, control and regulation of social order and integration, or performance-driven training. Mentoring, in this context, “reflect[s] the power and interests inherent within sponsoring organizations [potentially] at the cost of employee or human interests” (Hansman, 2003, p. 104). Douglas and McCauley (1999) found that, in 246 randomly selected organizations of 500 or more employees, more than a third of mentoring programs were intended to socialize new managers; this socialization process can be seen as an attempt by the organization to create loyalists in support of organizational beliefs and practices (Carden & Callahan, In Press). Another third of these programs were designed to ensure the best possible people were selected and trained for key organizational positions. In other words, two-thirds of formal mentoring programs supported organizational interests. Less than 10% of mentoring programs (8%) actually focused on providing specific skills or knowledge identified as needs by the participants. Certainly these understandings do not deny individual development occurs within mentoring partnerships situated in an organization; rather they speak to the reality of the relationship's purpose—that organizational interests are likely to be served when mentoring programs are sponsored by organizations.

But does this picture of mentoring praxis “fit” within the fundamental principles of HRD? Consider the following definition of human resource development as delineated by its governing academy:

Human Resource Development (HRD) shall be taken to mean a process that includes the principles, methods, and techniques used to assess and meet the *learning* [emphasis added] and organization development needs of *employees* [emphasis added] and their organizations. Human Resource Development has the goal of fostering long-term, work-related learning in organizations for the purposes of advancing *individuals* [emphasis added] and organizations (Academy of Human Resource Development, 2005).

While organizational interests are certainly relevant and important for HRD professionals to acknowledge and address, given this definition of HRD, individual interests are equally important. Thus, we argue that mentoring programs should be focused on meeting the needs of individual employees more than 8% of the time.

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Analyzing HRD mentoring literature while incorporating this description of the field reveals a conspicuous absence: mentoring is a deeply personal, developmental relationship between two *individuals*. Certainly these relationships may come to fruition in an organizational setting but the intent of the partnership, in the purist form, is not to satisfy the needs of the host. Instead, individuals engage one another so that both the mentor and protégé grow their knowledge base and realize their full potential together. Mentoring in this way “focuses on our real learning needs on a specific and personal level” (Gibbons, 2000, p. 18). The organizational setting is not excluded from the discussion but is relevant only as the context of such relationships’ existence.

So how is a marriage of individuals and organizations in mentoring achieved? Giddens (1981) states “all human action is carried on by knowledgeable agents who both construct the social world through their action, but yet whose action is conditioned and constrained by the very world of their creation” (p. 54). If we agree that organizations are composed of people and constitute a “social world” (Blau & Scott, 2005) and mentoring occurs in such organizational settings, then Giddens’ statement is a framework for considering the challenges such developmental partnerships may encounter in an organizational context. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to: (1) explore the reciprocal and personally fulfilling nature of mentoring partnerships achieved through a learning orientation and (2) reflect on how such mutually developmental relationships may exist and flourish from an individualist perspective within the constraints of organizational life.

A Typical HRD Perspective of Mentoring

Mentoring is considered a valuable intervention for HRD practitioners in the three fundamental areas of career development, training and development, and organizational development. Furthermore, while HRD scholars do incorporate many of the concepts of mentoring from the fields of psychology and sociology, they usually do so through a management orientation. It is within such a framework the following sections describe the mentoring relationship from two perspectives: the traditional informal inception versus a formal organizational program.

“Traditional” Informal Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring in a traditional sense is “an intense interpersonal exchange between a more senior, experienced, and knowledgeable employee (i.e., the mentor) who provides advice, counsel, feedback, and support related to career and personal development and less experienced employees” (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002, p. 130). Furthermore, mentoring is not necessarily an overt process, meaning it “may or may not be publicly recognized or observable, and the members may not even recognize the mentoring component of their relationship until it is brought to their attention” (Ragins, 1997, p. 484). The partnership develops organically with the mentor and protégé discovering one another and making a connection (Kram, 1983). Therefore, participants select their partners using their own personal set of criteria to judge one another’s qualifications and together they establish their own rules for interacting based upon their individual developmental goals. Generally, mentoring relationships are long-term affiliations with an unspecified duration (Gibson, 2004). The lifespan is determined by the context, content, and concentration of the relationship.

The evolution of the mentoring partnership may be described by the four developmental phases of initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition (Kram, 1983). Progressing through these phases, mentors help protégés achieve their desired results through developmental activities in the form of career functions (i.e., sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure-and-visibility, and challenging work assignments) and psychosocial functions (i.e., role modeling, acceptance-and-confirmation, counseling, and friendship). Which functions are used may vary throughout the life-cycle of the relationship (Ragins, 1997). In the end, these developmental partners mutually determine whether the partnership has achieved the desired outcomes and if the association should end or evolve into a different type of relationship.

Formal “Workplace” Mentoring Programs

While organizations have yet to adopt a cookie-cutter approach to formal mentoring programs, a review of the HRD literature does provide a somewhat generic picture of how the traditional relationship is adapted as a tactic for improved performance and competitive advantage. Typically the mutation entails removing many of the spontaneous aspects associated with a traditional partnership, as described by Ragins and Cotton (1999). For example, rather than leaving the mentor and protégé to their own devices, organizations may attempt to control the initiation of the relationship by determining: (1) the appropriate candidates to engage in the mentoring process; (2) who will be paired with whom; and (3) the purpose for engaging in the endeavor. Furthermore, the formal program structures typically include prescriptions regarding the duration, the manner, and the frequency of interaction in order to achieve relatively short-term organizational objectives. Finally, the nature and quality of the partnership may be affected by the organization’s influence on the members themselves. In other words, mentors and protégés may engage in a mentoring relationship in order to achieve “success” in their organization. As such, they may opt to

participate in formal programs so they may enhance their visibility, gain recognition, or fulfill a job requirement versus collaborating with a developmental partner to satisfy a personal need or pursue a mutual interest.

A Mutually and Personally Developmental Perspective of Mentoring

The previous section clearly illustrates mentoring relationships that exist to develop *protégés* so *organizations* fostering such affiliations (be it informally or formally) may benefit. As such, both the traditional mentoring model and its formal program offspring “sometimes seem to neglect relationship or collaborative inquiry” (Diamond & Mullen, 1997, p. 52). Inherent in such a perspective “are unchallenged assumptions about knowledge and power. Learning [is] a means of transmitting knowledge to the protégés, and the mentor’s primary role [is] to maintain culture” (Darwin, 2000, p. 198). Yet recalling the definition of HRD emphasizes learning and requires considering not only the organization but the people that comprise its membership. In this way, mentorship becomes not only *developmental* but *personal*; involving *both* of the individuals engaged in the process and insinuates the presence of two essential elements: learning and reciprocity.

Emphasizing learning is an opportunity to introduce another perspective of mentoring from the field of education in addition to social sciences and organizational management. But taking such a path does not come without challenges. As Merriam (1983) states, “mentoring appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings” (p. 169). In an attempt to address the absence of an all-encompassing definition, Jacobi (1991) synthesizes the attributes from the three fields into five least common denominators to describe mentoring relationships—helping relationships, developmental activities, reciprocity, personal involvement, and experience. These descriptors, supplemented with the observations of other scholars, are discussed in the following paragraphs. Such a discussion provides a foundation for exploring how the learning aspects of mentoring transform the partnership into a mutually developmental relationship.

Jacobi’s (1991) first least common denominator states mentoring partnerships are “helping relationships” (p. 513) centering around mentors supporting and assisting protégés in the successful achievement of a personal goal which is, generally speaking, broad and relatively long-term in nature. This helping aspect is interpreted by many scholars as generativity, a key motivation of mentors to engage in these relationships. It is “a reaching out beyond one’s own immediate concerns to embrace the welfare of society and of future generations. Generativity involves an element of selflessness” (Zanden, 1978). Thus “mentoring is viewed less as a role and more as the character of the relationship” (Darwin, 2000, p. 208).

In the second of the five least common denominators, the functions mentors employ to “help” protégés vary from relationship to relationship and may involve any combination of activities that provide “(a) emotional and psychological support, (b) direct assistance ..., and (c) role modeling” (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). For the protégé, the consequences of these activities may include: “(1) increased clarity of professional identity (one’s unique talents and contributions at work); (2) increased clarity of personal values, strengths, and weaknesses; and (3) increased awareness of developmental needs, reactions, and patterns of behavior” (Higgins & Kram, 2001, p. 278). As such, the protégé’s growth becomes a personal learning experience that is not confined to context of the relationship but encompasses the totality of their life experiences. When this is the case “the fundamental nature of mentoring is more about developing a whole person than in developing specific skills or knowledge” (Garvey, 1997, p. 8).

Up to this point, the emphasis has been on the benefits protégés rather than mentors gain from mentoring relationships, but Jacobi (1991) addresses this in her third least common denominator of reciprocity. When mentoring relationships are based in intimacy, trust, and mutual dependency, both the mentor and the protégé have opportunities to engage in reflective practice (Garvey, 1997). For example, such relationships “enable the mentor to rationalize problems through disclosure and debate, while at the same time the mentee learns about the problems” (p. 4). In this context, the emphasis is on the dyadic nature of the partnership which suggests both members contribute, learn, and experience personal development (Ragins, 1997) with outcomes either “emotional or tangible in nature” (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). Like protégés then, mentors have the opportunity to experience personal learning.

The fourth least common denominator is “mentoring relationships are personal” (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). What makes mentoring different from other developmental relationships (e.g., student-teacher, coach-athlete, etc.) is a vested interest of the partners in one another (Clawson, 1996). “Both parties ... recognize the importance of what one can teach the other in not just one but several aspects of life, over time, and ... both are willing to engage in the relationship” (p. 9). In other words, mentoring results in development that cannot occur through any means other than the exchange that comes from a special connection of individuals who have an influence upon one another – that being *both* the mentor upon the protégé and the protégé upon the mentor.

Finally, Jacobi's (1991) last least common denominator highlights the intrinsic value of the mentor's "greater experience, influence, and achievement within a particular organization or environment" (p. 513) in comparison to that of the protégé. In this context, Hale (2000) describes a process that melds the mentor's experiences and knowledge with that of the protégé's, resulting in opportunities for personal growth through self-questioning and insights. "Protégés learn from their mentors ... not only how to do their jobs better, but also how to manage their organizational careers better, and how to balance and manage their lives better" (Clawson, 1996, p. 9). Experience, influence, and achievement in this light are not an imbalance of power but rather a springboard for the learning process and personal development.

Mentoring in Organizational Life

Mentoring typified in HRD literature (i.e., membership development for the benefit of the organization) is now supplemented with the depiction of a personal relationship between two individuals that is mutually developmental. This new mentoring paradigm is "an active process in which curiosity is encouraged and learning becomes a dynamic, reciprocal, and participatory process ... about knowing differently, and change is more likely to occur as a result of individual learning" (Darwin, 2000, p. 202).

So how can HRD professionals infuse this new mentoring model into their practice? Again, the definition of HRD frames a course of action, that being an eye on *both* the individuals participating in the relationship and the organizational setting. Furthermore, a more in-depth look at Giddens' (1979) work as described by Callahan (2004) serves as lens through which to do so.

Guided by the constructs of Giddens' (1979) structuration theory, organizations may be described as dynamic social systems comprised of people interacting with one another and bound by structures (Callahan, 2004). These structures are built on rules and demonstrations of power. The rules come in two forms: (1) "legitimation [which] is about how things should be" (p. 1430) and (2) "signification [which] is about how things should *appear* to be" (p. 1430). Power is characterized as "authoritative and allocative" (p. 1430). That is to say, power is exerted by either having control over people or having control over the distribution of physical, non-human resources. From this basis, the synthesis of Giddens' (1979) theoretical elements in operation is explained as follows:

In the process of interacting with one another, people consciously and unconsciously create rules and establish power relationships. These rules and relationships serve as the structures that frame social systems until continued interactions among actors redefine the structures. This process is called structuration (Callahan, 2004, p. 1429).

So when HRD professionals adopt a perspective of mentoring as a reciprocal, learning relationship and are guided by the concepts of structuration, their practice is affected in two ways. First, they construct a new framework for critiquing the use of mentoring as an intervention and second, they develop a new benchmark for measuring the "success" of the intervention results. From this viewpoint, the *purpose* of the learning shifts from an investment in human capital to humanistic education "to enhance personal growth and develop human potential [while acknowledging that] human development is often constrained by the existing system and structure" (Yang, 2004, p. 136).

In order to explore this proposition further, the following sections include illustrations of mentoring within the context of the three foundational areas of HRD (i.e. training and development, organizational development, and career development). Included are "typical" examples of mentoring interventions and the effects of those interventions on the participants. This discussion is juxtaposed against mentoring as a mutually developmental relationship with the possibility for individual personal fulfillment along with structural change.

Training and Development

Mentoring programs are becoming a staple method for training and development departments to solidify transfer of training into the workplace and foster acquisition of "soft" skills. With this in mind, consider the definitions of "train" and "develop" found in Webster's New World College Dictionary (2002):

- Train -- (3) to subject to certain action, exercises, etc. in order to bring to a desired condition; (4) to guide or control the mental, moral, etc. development of; (5) to instruct so as to make proficient or qualified; (6) to discipline or condition (p. 1518).
- Develop -- (1) to build up or expand; (2) to make stronger or more effective; strengthen; (3) to bring (something latent or hypothetical) into activity or reality; (4) to cause (one's personality, a bud, etc) to unfold or evolve gradually (p. 394).

Training. When there is an emphasis on "training" rather than "development," mentoring becomes a solution for the practical problem of perpetuating the organization's viability in the market place (Gibb, 1994). Rather than a being a developmental relationship, mentoring becomes a mechanism for transferring technical and organizational

knowledge in a linear manner, one organizational member at a time – mentor to protégé (Darwin, 2000). Furthermore, the intervention is fraught with regulation and control. The participants' individual learning needs are only met to the extent that it will enable them to do their job better or function more effectively in the workplace environment. Knowledge is a resource and control over what is learned becomes a part of the structure.

Learning. Pointing to the pitfalls of mentoring presented in the previous paragraph, Darwin (2000) continues to flesh out the argument in the following observation:

Most people work in a competitive environment yet often are asked to collaborate and care for one another. They are told to engage in intentional learning that requires self-reflection and yet are asked to do more with less. They are asked to take risks, yet organizational culture does not support risk taking (p. 207).

This scenario reinforces the inadequacy of mentoring limited to conveying “technical job knowledge and declarative and procedural information about an organization” (Lankau & Scandura, 2002, p. 779). Rather, the conditions described call for a more robust model that promotes both personal learning and learning to learn by both participants. More specifically, personal learning comes through “self-reflection, self-disclosure, active listening, empathy, and feedback” (Lankau & Scandura, 2002, p. 780) while learning to learn (Rawson, 2000) may be described as the “resolute questioning of external apparent givens and internal perceptions and the mutual influence of the one on the other” (p. 227). But regardless of terminology, the construct is one of “formulating new ways of understanding, of interacting with others, and of self-perception, resulting in personal development” (Lankau & Scandura, 2002, p. 780). This is the crux of reflective practice and the means by which people are able to alter the rules and power relationships that govern their organizational lives.

Organizational Development

How an entity's culture is affected by change is a primary concern of HRD professionals practicing in the arena of organizational development. Furthermore, mentoring programs are interventions frequently used to deal with the effects of such change on culture, regardless of whether the goal is culture creation, maintenance, or perpetuation. As such, understanding the intricacies and ramifications of mentoring in this application is informed by the following definition:

The culture of a group [is] a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2004, pp. 373-374).

Embedded in a group's culture are customs and traditions, group norms, espoused values, rules of the game, and integrating symbols (Schein, 2004). This list of characteristics illustrates Giddens' rules of structure. Furthermore, with individuals' assimilation into the group's shared aspects comes culture “as a mechanism of social control” (Schein, 2004, p. 374) and another connection with Giddens' structure – this time through the concept of power.

Alienation. In today's organizations, change is often associated with how entities will deal with the challenges of diversity. With this in mind, consider the following proposition:

In the face of workplace diversity, mentor/protégé dyads offer an intense, yet durable approach to inculcating corporate values From the organization's perspective, value and culture transmission may be a subtle, not easily measured, but powerful mechanism for ensuring employee loyalty and commitment (Scandura et al., 1996, p. 53).

Certainly, such a scenario demonstrates mentoring to meet organizational needs, namely the maintaining status quo. But perhaps the more critical concern is whether mentoring in this vein is truly a means for embracing diversity. Is it a mechanism for fostering inclusion or a method of achieving assimilation? The insinuation in this case is protégés “uncritically accept their mentors' and their organizations' or institutions' cultural norms and values” (Hansman, 2002, p. 46). The result is protégés suppressing their personal ideals and ethics rather than suffering the consequences of being “different” (Zagumny, 1993). As such, diversity disappears as protégés mask their uniqueness and engage in group-think behavior as a means of survival. From this perspective, mentoring defines the boundaries and reinforces the repercussions of alienation and is contrary to the principle of developing the whole person (Gibb, 1994).

Emancipation. In contrast to the dominating and organizationally-bound presentation of mentoring in the previous section, Hansman (2003) presents an intriguing alternative in which protégés are integral agents in forming organizational culture. In her scenario, the mentoring relationship “as a product of social construction” (p. 105) is a way illuminating how knowledge is viewed in the entity thus making the power structure visible. Learning through mentoring in this situation becomes a reciprocal proposition. Protégés are encouraged to “challenge [the] assumptions and perspectives” (Mott, 2002, p. 13) of their mentors so that together the partners can “explore the cultural practices and norms at play” (Hansman, 2002, p. 46) and challenge the status quo. Hence, mentors cultivate a legitimate voice for protégés and the mentoring process becomes not only a mechanism for helping protégés deal

with the effects of organizational change but becomes a means of promoting their participation in what changes are made and how those changes are implemented (Mott, 2002). In this way, critical thinking and reflective practice replaces propaganda and blind acceptance and dominance and dependency give way to dialogue and collaboration.

Career Development

Finally, “more research on mentoring has been on issues related to career development than on the other major domains comprising HRD” (Hezlett & Gibson, 2005, p. 452). Most of this literature is based on Kram’s (1983) seminal model that stipulates career development is one of two major categories of mentor functions. During activities related to this function “a young manager is assisted in learning the ropes of organizational life and in preparing for advancement opportunities” (pp. 613-614). In return, “the mentor gains recognition and respect, confirmation and support from the protégé, and internal satisfaction” (Gibson, 2004, p. 261). Consequently, organizations sponsoring mentoring programs that target career development supplement their succession plans (Zey, 1991) with individuals theoretically prepared to take on vacant leadership roles (Darwin, 2000). No doubt this is a significant reason for the proliferation of formalized programs in Corporate America over the last decade.

Domination. A typical portrayal of mentoring in career development epitomizes individual development for the benefit of the organization. Reciprocity exists as an “I’ll scratch your back if you scratch mine” attitude present in both the participant-organization relationship as well as between the participants themselves. This attitude represents power as demonstrated by “control over persons, information, and organizational resources, which also involve the development of authority, credibility, and perceived expertise” (Ragins, 1997, p. 487). Therein one finds parallels to Giddens’ (1979) power in structures.

But the issue of power is further exacerbated by the participant selection processes inherent in most mentoring programs. Eligibility (of both mentors and protégés) is often restricted to individuals already deemed top performers in the organization (Hansman, 2003). Furthermore, “only those who best represent dominate cultural values may be chosen to serve as mentors, which may also cause the unquestioning replication of organizational values and culture by a new generation of employees” (p. 102). Embedded in this statement is evidence of structuration exhibited in Giddens’ (1981) proposition that “all human action is ... conditioned and constrained by the very world of their creation” (p. 54). In this scenario, diversity is absent in the mentored path to career advancement and disenfranchised groups remain marginalized. Stated another way, the status quo of the organization is therefore maintained through domination.

Empowerment. Darwin (2000) describes an alternative to the previous depiction of mentoring in career development with her proposed model that shuns reliance on authority and dependence “associated with recycling of power within workplace relations” (p. 203). Mentoring such as this exists in an organizational setting that embraces the development of its membership in an egalitarian way -- by acquiring knowledge through learning based in debate and freedom from the fear of making mistakes.

[In this climate,] mentoring becomes a collaborative, dynamic, and creative partnership of coequals, founded on openness, vulnerability, and the ability of both parties to take risks with one another beyond their professional roles. Relationships become opportunities for dialogue, and expert and learner become arbitrary delineations (Darwin, 2000, p. 206).

Mentorship in this way is individualized and reciprocal and it facilitates advancement that is democratic and fulfilling. And as such, mentoring for career development becomes a mechanism for re-defining the power relations that govern the organizational structure.

Conclusion

In reflecting on mentoring and its impact on individuals within an organizational setting and considering how it may unfold in the future, it seems fitting to conclude this discussion with two parting thoughts from Giddens (1985):

- “All human beings are knowledgeable agents. That is to say, all social actors know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives” (p. 281).
- “Structure is not to be equated with constraint but is always both constraining and enabling” (p. 25).

Furthermore, consider that in 1996 Clawson speculated that forthcoming changes in organizational environments would constitute the need for a new paradigm of mentoring. In the decade that has passed since then, many of the trends he posited are coming to fruition. These trends include a movement toward service versus production, employees more focused on their quality of life rather than the demands of work, and an emphasis on personal fulfillment and intrinsic reward. Additionally, the hierarchy in many organizations is flatter and now features peer-development pairs, bottom-up or reciprocal relationships, heterogeneous workgroups, and team management models. It is not surprising that the advent of these changes are accompanied by a new set of “ethical

dilemmas in the mentoring process [which] requires that HRD take on a role that combines strategic intervention and advocacy” (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 573).

Therefore, HRD professionals have a new impetus for re-evaluating the use of mentorship as an intervention. But informed by Giddens and armed with a model of mutually developmental partnerships, practitioners have an opportunity to ensure mentoring that (1) develops the “whole person” based on growth goals established by the individual rather than the organization and (2) promotes replacing organizational impediments with the achievement of social justice in the workplace. Creating, managing, and perpetuating mentoring programs that accomplish these goals are realized by HRD professionals explicitly incorporating building blocks that support the objectives into all phases of the program development process. The following offers some practical, but far from all-inclusive, suggestions for doing so.

For example, key questions during the needs assessment reveal leadership’s commitment to a program that incorporates *both* mentor and protégé learning and development, “not simply [a program] to benefit the organization’s image or to ensure compliance with the prevailing culture” (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 574) and is an opportunity for HRD professionals to begin the campaign for equitable mentoring. As program development progresses, addressing “who” has access to the program (both mentors and protégés) – or rather, who is excluded – is an integral design element that has implications for participants’ career development as well as the evolution of the organization’s culture. The question here may be are employees at all levels of the organization afforded opportunities for participating in developmental mentoring relationships? Furthermore, during the implementation phase practitioners may incorporate participant “training or coaching in active listening, conflict resolution, cultural diversity, team dynamics, or problem solving” (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 577) in order to facilitate mentoring relationship hallmarks of the personal reflection, self-awareness, inclusiveness, and empowerment proposed in this paper. Finally, “good practice suggests that evaluation would assess if the mentoring program is fulfilling its goals and objectives” (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 578). Perhaps the key issue here is not waiting until the end to make this assessment but rather employing continuous methods that take the pulse of participants as well as the organization throughout the tenure of the program to ensure its integrity.

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