

**CREATING SPACES FOR
MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**

by

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ABSTRACT

Many adults learn enhanced work skills and develop professional capacities through workplace mentoring. The perceived value of these partnerships is so persuasive that organizations wanting to use mentoring for employee training and development will often do so by implementing formal programs. Some authors suggest that the mechanistic matching and planned curricula which characterizes formal mentoring is counter-intuitive. Organizations could be better served by creating physical and conceptual spaces which foster informal mentoring. Such an approach could be achieved by identifying and implementing conditions and processes that initiate and sustain informal mentoring partnerships.

Of particular interest in this study was the impact of physical space on mentoring. As such, the study was structured to identify those environments and circumstances that lead to the initiation of informal mentoring relationships in the workplace, and then to make recommendations on how to create such conditions. A structured interview was used to learn about the mentoring experiences of 48 female and male faculty and staff of various ages in different departments with varying levels of work responsibility at a public post-secondary educational institution. Study participants were asked about the locations, activities, content and tone of their early and later mentoring interactions. They were also asked for the details about the influence of these variables on their partnerships.

Of ten locations mentioned, the most valuable spaces for beginning mentoring interaction were found to be private or shared offices and food service venues; other important locations included the telephone, educational settings such as classrooms, labs or clinical training sites, and meeting rooms. When occupying these places, mentoring partners engaged in activities such as discussion, working on projects, and sharing food and drink. Discussion content was primarily work related and included issues such as education and task completion. Other discussion topics included work responsibilities, strategizing, career development and personal issues. Participants established rapport through the positive, relaxed tone of their interactions which they described as humorous, informal, challenging, focused, friendly and fun. Mentoring resulted from these interactions because of the opportunity for private dialogue, the participants got to know one another, their encounters were pleasant and enjoyable, and

meaningful outcomes such as problem solving or capacity development were realized. It was discovered that mentoring relationships began and progressed similarly -- irrespective of age, gender, gender composition of the partnership, the reporting relationship between the partners or the hierarchy of position held by the participants. Locations and spaces of partners' interactions -- a central focus of the study -- were found to have surprisingly little impact on the initiation and evolution of their mentoring relationships.

As their mentoring relationships continued and evolved, the locations where the partners interacted did not change substantially. Their activities continued to be primarily work related but came to include recreational and social pastimes such as going for coffee or lunch, and playing sports. Later on, the topics discussed by partners were as often non-work related as they were work related and began to include subjects such as health, family, educational issues and career development. The positive upbeat tone of the initial interactions prevailed and became more relaxed, informal and casual.

The common experiences of these participants provided information that can be used by other organizations to structure their employee environments in ways to encourage mentoring. Specifically, they can (1) promulgate policies of encouraging and supporting informal mentoring, (2) design office spaces to put people in contact with one another and to encourage interaction, and (3) provide employees with unstructured time to engage in mentoring activities.

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CHAPTER ONE

SURVEY OF MENTORING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Introduction

Many of my colleagues have mentoring relationships and through those partnerships develop their professional and personal capacities. I too would like the opportunity to learn through mentoring but have been unsuccessful in establishing such an association. Some organizations address this issue by implementing formal programs that match individuals wanting a mentor, people like myself, with those who have expertise and experience to share. Although, this approach to mentoring would address my desire to have a mentor, it is not the type of mentoring I seek. I am interested in developing the deep, personal and meaningful connection facilitated by attraction and interest characteristic of the informal partnerships of my colleagues. Seeing others engaged in and benefiting from mentoring made me wonder where, how and why these associations begin. If I understood the conditions that initiate and sustain these partnerships, I might have a better chance of forging one myself. To identify the environment I was looking for, I could use the experiences of my colleagues to learn about what fosters and sustains an informal mentoring partnership. Specifically, I was interested in where their partnerships began and what happens in these places to spark the initiation of the relationship. Along with others, I could use this information to identify work situations more likely to support mentoring and organizations could use it to create environments that promote such associations.

Articulating the environments and processes that instigate mentoring associations can provide insight into where, how and why such partnerships arise and progress. This study identifies these conditions by talking to people about the locations, activities, content and tone of their initial and later mentoring interactions. Study participants were also asked to describe how these variables influenced their partnerships. Mentoring theory and practice as well as the influence of place on social relationships is used as a framework for this investigation.

Mentoring involves complex socially mediated interactions that occur between people in particular environments. As such, the practice is influenced by the participants and the contexts in which they occur. While this complexity makes it difficult to establish a solitary definition, any discussion of mentoring requires a definitional framework to facilitate both understanding and application. Regardless of the definition adopted, mentoring is perceived to be an effective and enriching developmental relationship. The perceived value of mentoring has promoted the proliferation of formal programs in

business, industry and education. The weaknesses of formal programs are too often overlooked as organizations seek to capitalize on the potential gains of mentoring. However, it may be possible for organizations to reap the benefits of mentoring while still honouring the interpersonal, idiosyncratic nature of such relationships by understanding and creating the physical and conceptual spaces that initiate and sustain such partnerships.

Workplace mentoring relationships develop within a physical context and an organizational culture. The research and writing of authors from many academic disciplines shows there are relationships between environments, and the interpersonal relations and social structures that develop within those contexts. These relationships are reciprocal in that the physical and atmospheric conditions of environments influence the numbers and types of interactions people have, which in turn impacts the associations that develop. The resulting associations and social structures then influence decisions on the programming of physical spaces. As a product of interpersonal interaction, mentoring relationships are clearly influenced by physical and conceptual spaces in which they are contextualized and embedded. The question is, how? The nature of this influence is examined and articulated in this study. As such, the goals and objectives of the study were:

1. to articulate and understand the conditions that instigate mentoring;
2. to document the circumstances that sustain established mentoring partnerships;
3. to clarify the influence of place, activity, content and tone on the development and progression of mentoring;
4. to provide guidelines for improving organizational environments and systems that encourage mentoring.

To achieve these goals, this study report is comprised of seven chapters. The remainder of Chapter One summarizes recent research on formal and informal mentoring. Chapter Two reviews research and writing on the relationship between place and people, their interpersonal relations and their social structures. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used for the study. Chapter Four reports the research findings related to the study participants and their mentoring relationships. The locations, activities, content and tone of the participants early mentoring interactions are reported in Chapter Five. Chapter Six describes the research findings related to the locations, activities, content

and tone of the participants later mentoring interactions. The final chapter explores the significance of the findings and provides recommendations on strategies for fostering mentoring.

Exploring Notions of Mentoring

Definitions of Mentoring

Homer's *Odyssey* records that while Odysseus was off at war, his old and trusted friend, Mentor, was entrusted with the care, education and guidance of Odysseus' young son, Telemachus. From the story of Mentor and Telemachus, "mentoring" came to be known as a relationship between an older, more experienced person and someone who is younger and less experienced. Typically, the older person takes responsibility for the growth, development and advancement of the younger person by investing time, sharing experience and wisdom, acting as a role model, offering advice, providing protection, furnishing guidance and finding opportunities for the young learner. However, this interpretation of the story, and resulting construction of the concept of mentoring is not universal. It has been adapted and reinterpreted to reflect the plurality of human experience and the demands of the various situations in which it occurs. As a result there is no single definition of mentoring. It has been defined tightly as:

... a complex, interactive process occurring between individuals of differing levels of experience and expertise which incorporates interpersonal or psychosocial development, career and / or educational development, and socialization functions into the relationship. This one-to-one relationship is itself developmental and proceeds through a series of stages which help to determine both the conditions affecting and the outcomes of the process. To the extent that the parameters of mutuality and compatibility exist in the relationship, the potential outcomes of respect, professionalism, collegiality and role fulfillment will result (Caldwell, 1993, p.10-11).

and more loosely as "a close personal relationship between two individuals that involves caring, teaching and guidance" (Wunsch, 1994, p. 10).

Instrumental Conceptions of Mentoring

The conception of mentoring described by the story of Mentor and Telemachus is widespread and used extensively as a framework in business and education research. In her examination of alternative forms of mentoring in the changing business context, Eby invokes the understanding of mentoring described by Kram: "mentoring is typically defined as a relationship between a senior organizational member (the mentor) and a junior member of the organization (the protégé) that is designed to help the protégé advance within the organization" (Kram as cited in Eby, 1997, p.126). Fleming also utilizes a similar framework in her investigation of how mentoring can be pivotal in helping women advance into educational administration positions. "Mentoring is an intense, caring relationship in which an older experienced person (mentor) sponsors a younger promising associate (protégé or mentee) to promote both the professional and personal development of this protégé" (Fleming, 1991, p.27).

There are several assumptions built into this conception of mentoring. Most predominantly, this notion assumes mentorships are forged between a senior and a junior person. This understanding of mentoring also assumes one member of the dyad, the mentor, will have more experience and expertise than his or her partner, the mentee. Through mentoring interactions, the mentee acquires and is guided by the knowledge and expertise of the mentor. "Buried beneath the surface of these features is mentoring's hierarchical nature built on the assumption that those with more experience can help guide those with less experience" (Semeniuk, 2000, p. 413).

In addition to suppositions about who participates in mentoring relationships, there are assumptions about what mentors and mentees do. Mentors sponsor their mentees. They actively create opportunities for their mentees to be seen by influential members of the organization and demonstrate their skills and capabilities. Through these activities, mentors can orchestrate or at least influence the advancement of mentees to more responsible positions within the organization. As mentees take advantage of the opportunities created by their mentors in the workplace, mentors protect their mentees when they make mistakes and shelter them from organizational politics. "The knowledge and wisdom of the mentor is acquired by the protégé and is applied in the workplace with the support, and under the protective umbrella, of the mentor" (Fleming, 1991, p.28).

This commonly used conception of mentoring also suggests mentors provide advice to mentees on work assignments and career decisions. Mentors may actually guide their mentees in the way they work and the decisions they make. The job of the mentee is to follow the advice and guidance provided by the mentor.

Lastly, this conception of mentoring assumes the desired outcome is career and personal advancement. That is, by following the advice and benefiting from the sponsorship and protection provided by a mentor, a mentee will be given the opportunity and ability to move into more senior positions. It is assumed the participants sense of satisfaction and accomplishment will come from the mentees career achievement.

Career advancement gives purpose and structure to mentoring relationships. The emphasis on career advancement was realistic and appropriate when organizations had clear hierarchical structures. Individuals could join an organization at the beginning of their career and work with that organization for their entire working life making incremental steps upwards in the organization. In this context it was possible to have a mentor who could show a junior member the ropes, provide advice, and guidance, share inside knowledge and even provide some sponsorship and protection, all of which would facilitate the climb up the corporate ladder. However, features of the work environment have changed dramatically challenging this notion of mentoring.

The Work Context at the Beginning of the 21st Century

Overview

In the past decade, private and public organizations, have undergone significant changes "in organizational structure, work design and corporate strategy including downsizing, corporate restructuring and participative work structures such as work teams" (Eby, 1997, p.125). Additionally, the nature of work has changed:

we are moving into an era of global, information technology driven organizations; success will depend on the speed with which new information is applied to current operations, problems and opportunities; storage, transfer and retrieval of information is essentially technology driven, but application of that information is people-driven; applying information effectively means that people – and

organizations – will need to learn to do things differently as a result of the new information...(Parsloe & Wray, 2000, p.17).

As a result, career paths and experiences of work are dramatically different from what they once were. Organizations are flatter, so there are fewer opportunities for advancement to senior positions. "A series of upward moves with steadily increasing power, status and security is a thing of the past" (Fritts, 1998, p.19). Workers need to find challenges and rewards in their work rather than in more senior positions. Downsizing and rightsizing are common corporate strategies that foster instability and compel people to work with different organizations throughout their careers. Thus workforce participation requires people to change how and where they work. "To be marketable both within and outside one's organization, individuals will have to develop a diversified set of skills that will easily be transportable to other organizations" (Eby, 1997, p.125). Finally, the nature of work is constantly changing. To keep up employees need to continually update and adapt their existing skill sets and develop new ones. Learning continuously has become a necessity of the new work environment.

Mentoring in the Current Work Context

The notion of mentoring as a relationship between a junior and senior organizational member to facilitate career advancement does not fit well with today's work context. There is no longer a corporate ladder to climb, no assurances a senior employee has more knowledge, skill, or experience than a junior one, and no guarantees a senior member of an organization has the kind of knowledge, skill and experience that can be helpful to a junior member. Mentoring needs to be conceptualized differently to be meaningful and viable in today's work context. "Now the information age demands a wide range of cognitive, interpersonal, and technical skills and mentoring is changing to cope with these expanded needs" (Kerka, 1998).

Conceptions of mentoring that focus on the notion of learning for development and growth fit better with the conditions of today's work environment. Shea's definition of mentoring captures this notion. He defines mentoring as "a developmental, caring, sharing and helping relationship where one person invests time, know-how, and effort in enhancing another person's growth, knowledge and skills, and responds to critical needs in the life of that person in ways that prepare the individual for greater productivity or

achievement" (Shea, 1994, 13). Otto suggests that, "the mentoring relationship is one that provides an environment that supports adults while they continue to learn and develop themselves" (Otto, 1994, p. 16). Parsloe and Wray's definition of mentoring, "a process which supports learning and, development thus performance improvements for either an individual, team or business" (Parsloe & Wray, 2000, p.83), also reflects the shift in how mentoring is seen. However, they suggest that their conceptualization reflects the European definition of mentoring "where the prime focus is on personal growth and learning" (Parsloe & Wray, 2000, p. 10), not the changes in the characteristics of work. Regardless, these new views reflect an understanding of mentoring that is consistent the conditions of today's work context.

To keep pace with the changing conditions of the work environment, the components of mentoring have shifted. Mentoring relationships are no longer expected to be formed between an older, more experienced person and a younger, less experienced person who needs the guidance, sponsorship and protection of a mentor to achieve career advancement. Instead they are seen to be supportive and sharing relationships between two people to facilitate professional and personal learning, development, growth and achievement. The roles and responsibilities of mentoring partners are different and the expected outcomes have changed.

Developmental notions of mentoring suggest mentors support their partners by providing support, listening, asking questions, and giving permission. "The mentor can listen to the problem, assist in clarifying the issue, help the employee identify a solution and encourage the mentee's new behaviour" (Shea, 1994, p.19-20). Both mentor and mentee share with each other. They share workplace experiences, knowledge and expertise as well as responsibility for making the relationship work. By sharing their knowledge and expertise, new understandings and perspectives emerge for both mentor and mentee, and shared responsibility for the success of the relationship creates a connection or bond.

Ideas about the outcomes of a mentoring relationship have also changed. Learning, development, and growth are now seen to be important outcomes of the partnership. Career advancement is no longer required to qualify a workplace relationship as mentoring. Learning is a particularly important, if not fundamental, outcome in the new

mentoring paradigm. Shared work experiences create opportunities for mentors to share their knowledge and expertise with mentees. As mentors share their experiences and knowledge, mentees have the opportunity to learn, develop knowledge and capacities by internalizing the process and constructing their own understandings. "Mentoring supports much of what is known about how individuals learn, including the socially constructed nature of learning and the importance of experiential, situated learning experiences... Mentors provide authentic, experiential learning opportunities as well as an intense interpersonal relationship through which social learning takes place" (Kerka, 1998, p.2).

As mentees learn from the experiences they have with their mentoring partner, they are able to construct new knowledge, understandings and capacities, which takes them to a new level of capability. Each mentee moves "from one level of performance to a new and different level of performance" (Parsloe & Wray, 2000, p.31). Personal and professional growth has been identified as another important outcome in the developmental mentoring paradigm. "Adults who work with mentors grow in their own sense of intellectual competence as well as their sense of purpose, their feelings of autonomy, and their personal integrity" (Bova, 1984, p.16).

Learning, development, and growth facilitated by mentoring leads to improved professional and personal achievement. Mentees develop the confidence and capacity to do things they could or would not have done, which allows them to better manage their current work situation, or move on to more challenging positions. This results in satisfaction, as well as new opportunities for learning. The developmental notion of mentoring acknowledges the demands and limitations of today's work context by broadening the composition of the dyad to include partnerships between people who can learn from each other regardless of organizational status and age. In contrast to previous definitions, this one endorses both situational and one-on-one learning and downplays career advancement while emphasizing learning, growth, and development.

Definitional Ambiguities

Definitions of mentoring tend to address psychosocial and / or instrumental functions of the partnership. They attempt to describe the nature, activities, context and outcomes of

the relationship. Definitions derived from this approach are broad and diverse, which is problematic as it leads to ambiguity. It is difficult to talk about mentoring if there is no agreement about what it is. Because of the ascribed value to mentoring, there seems to be a hesitation to limit what types of relationships qualify as mentoring. As a result, an endless number of definitions are accepted as being descriptive of the phenomenon which Semeniuk (2000) suggests stretches the term so far it becomes almost meaningless. The proliferation of definitions opens the door for broad, all-encompassing definitions like Wunsch's that leave people uncertain about whether they are thinking and talking about the same idea.

Another problem caused by definitional ambiguity is it weakens the utility of research on mentoring. If there is no agreement on what mentoring is, how can it be studied? This problem is multi-faceted. Because mentoring is a widely used and highly recognizable term, some researchers only use the term to describe the field of inquiry. They fail to provide an exact definition used as the framework for their research. Without knowing the definitional framework it is impossible to determine if the research even falls within the ever-widening domain called mentoring. Other researchers provide a definitional framework for their work. However, the findings are limited to mentoring relationships and experiences that are described by the definitional framework. As a result, it is difficult to build a cohesive body of knowledge.

The seeds of empirical study have been cast too broadly to yield a harvest of cumulative knowledge given the inconsistent, idiosyncratic definitions of mentoring...employed. The absence of a definitional consensus is stymieing efforts to synthesize empirical findings into a coherent body of knowledge and to identify important unanswered questions (Healy as cited in Mertz, 2001, p.4).

There is no realistic remedy for the problem of definitional ambiguity. The only possible remedy for the problem would be to establish a universally accepted definition for the concept. Given the diversity and plurality of human experience, a universally accepted definition of mentoring is not likely to be proffered or accepted. There are some benefits to having multiple understandings of mentoring; it allows the possibility of seeing and understanding it from different perspectives, which can enrich the body of knowledge. It is important to recognize that not having a universally accepted definition of mentoring does not give researchers license to leave the term or concept undefined. It is important

to use a definition to ground research so the contribution of the research can be located appropriately in the spectrum of conceptions of mentoring. Therefore, researchers must be mindful to ground research with a definitional framework and recognize the limitations imposed by that framework.

This research project addresses the problem of definitional ambiguity by examining various conceptions of mentoring relationships in the context of today's work environment; it adopts a definitional framework relevant to the current work context, meaningful to the purpose of the study and the context of the investigation, which is a public post-secondary institution.

For the purposes of this research study, mentoring is defined as:

learning, helping, sharing, supportive, developmental, nurturing relationships where the participants invest time, know-how, and effort in ways that enhance the knowledge, skill, and professional capacity of one or both members of the partnership resulting in greater satisfaction, productivity, or achievement in the work they do at British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT).

In adopting this definitional framework, it is recognized that the findings of the study are limited to mentoring relationships of this kind in work environments with features similar to BCIT.

The Perceived Value of Mentoring

Regardless of the conceptualization of mentoring used, there is a prevailing, unquestioned belief that mentoring is effective and enriching. It is believed that participants, their organizations, and society benefit in many ways from mentoring relationships. These beliefs seem to permeate all conceptions of mentoring.

The personal, professional, and societal gains attributed to mentoring are extensive. Some of the suggested benefits of mentoring include:

- the creation opportunities for learner centred learning;
- the creation of opportunities for situated learning;
- the possible career advancement for mentees;

- the opportunity for mentors to continue to make contributions and feel important during their mid-late career phase;
- faster promotions for mentees;
- a greater sense of career satisfaction for both members of the dyad;
- skill development for mentees;
- intellectual growth for mentees;
- the creations of a more caring and civil work environment;
- higher incomes for mentees;
- development of better coping mechanisms for mentees;
- reduction in social isolation;
- a sense of satisfaction for the mentor having helped someone;
- the preservation of intellectual capital and institutional knowledge in organizations;
- a contribution to organizational recruitment and retention;
- development of confidence for the mentee;
- increase in work productivity for both the mentor and mentee.

Explorations of the benefits of mentoring tend to focus on the outcomes realized by the participants, "the benefits of mentoring are the enhanced growth and development of both those who serve as mentors and those who are mentored" (Schulz, 1995, p.66), the intrinsic worth of the relationship, "...being mentored has positive effects on a person's career progression, mentored employees tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, get faster promotions, and make higher salaries" (Burlew, 1991, p.213), or the usefulness for the organization, "mentoring is seen as an inexpensive way to achieve a number of goals: create more future leaders in an institution, improve management and staff relationships, meet diversity goals and replace an aging work force while developing a line of succession" (Jossi, 1997, p.52). However, the evidence to support the suggested outcomes of mentoring relationships is not very strong. "One wonders if there is an underlying assumption that the face validity of mentoring requires no evaluation" (Poldre, 1994, p. 189).

Measuring the outcomes, positive or negative, of mentoring relationships is difficult for several reasons. First, definitional ambiguity makes it difficult to measure the outcomes of mentoring. Because it is unclear what it is, attributing a personal or professional

change to interactions and behaviours referred to as mentoring is problematic. Attributing an outcome to mentoring requires clear identification of the parameters of the activity otherwise it is possible the perceived change could actually be ascribed to an interaction or behaviour that is not mentoring. "The phenomenon of mentoring is not clearly conceptualized, leading to confusion as to just what is being measured or offered as an ingredient in success" (Merriam, 1983, p.169).

The messy social nature of mentoring is another challenge facing the identification and measurement of the apparent benefits of such partnerships. Because mentoring is an unpredictable, socially mediated exchange between two unique individuals within a particular context, it is impossible to control for all of the possible variables that could contribute to the outcomes of the relationship. Therefore it is unreasonable to suggest particular outcomes can be expected from or attributed to mentoring relationships. "The protégé and mentor interact, and they, in turn, influence and are influenced by other components of the organization. Further, these interactions and influences occur in a convoluted if not chaotic manner. Therefore, an assessment can rarely isolate a single factor or simply sum up several factors" (Murray, 1991, p. 165).

Finally, identification and measurement of the outcomes of mentoring is compromised by the research and evaluation techniques used. For the most part, research and evaluation of mentoring relies on testimonials or opinions from those who have been fortunate enough to have had such a relationship (Merriam, 1983). However, this technique does not allow for comparison to the experiences of those who have not had a mentoring relationship making it impossible to know if mentoring is crucial to professional learning, growth and development or simply a different path leading to the same destination.

This does not suggest that the perceived benefits of mentoring are not real. Substantial work has been done that provides evidence to support the argument there are positive gains to be realized from mentoring. However, there are limitations to the conclusions which gives cause to taking the benefits of mentoring on faith (Shea, 1994). Taking the gains of mentoring on faith is neither an uncommon nor an unjustifiable practice. "No solid quantifiable data appears to exist on mentoring's precise influence on

organizations, but companies figure it's a good idea because it makes everyone involved feel good" (Jossi, 1997, p.52).

Still, it is a problem to assume mentoring relationships, interactions and, behaviours result in certain positive gains. It "perpetuates a uniformity of perspective which, however inadvertently, deters criticism" (Semeniuk, 2000, p.413). It also prescribes the experience of mentoring and eliminates the opportunity to view it differently. Those who engage in mentoring relationships come to expect certain experiences and outcomes, and feel disappointed when their expectations are not met. Assumptions about the value of mentoring also undermine the legitimacy of the construct. We live in a world of scientific inquiry, which requires clear articulation of the construct being measured along with objective measurement of the function and its impact. Failure to articulate the phenomena and quantify the outcomes while insisting they exist undermines the legitimacy of mentoring in a world guided by scientific inquiry. Finally, the assumed benefits of the construct has allowed the natural quality of mentoring to be subverted.

Because it is believed mentoring relationships can realize an extensive list of benefits, it is thought by educators, human resource professionals, and organizations that mentoring can be used to achieve an endless number of goals including: advancing the interests of special groups and populations; conserving and transferring special know-how; encouraging mentee contribution; bringing employees together in a new social environment; helping individuals reach their full potential; enhancing competitive position; developing a civil society (Shea, 1994, p. 17-21); and enhancing corporate recruitment and retention. Attracted by the promise of cheap and meaningful learner-centred training with guaranteed results, organizations attempt to capture and use the power of mentoring by implementing formal mentoring programs.

Formal Mentoring

Exploring Formal Mentoring

Formalized mentoring programs essentially manufacture mentoring experiences because an external party creates the relationship. They are intentional, structured programs that bring a mentor and mentee together for a particular purpose. Murray calls formal mentoring 'facilitated' mentoring and defines it as "a structure and series of

processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the results for the proteges, the mentors and the organization with the primary purpose of systematically developing the skills and leadership abilities of the less-experienced members of an organization" (Murray, 1991, p.5). These programs can include strategies for matching pairs, training for mentors and mentees, articulated objectives, scheduled meetings and an evaluation process.

A range of techniques are used in the matching of mentoring pairs. Some programs create lists with profiles of mentors and make the lists available to potential proteges to choose from. Other programs control the process entirely; both mentors and mentees complete a questionnaire on personality, goals and interests. The program manager or committee then uses these profiles to make an appropriate match. In this way formal mentoring forces a match.

Training is another element of most formal mentoring programs. "Training needs to be undertaken to orient individuals to the program, to minimize vagueness in responsibilities, and to broaden an understanding of the roles of both the mentor and protégé" (Gaskill-Ricketts, 1993, p. 155). Many would argue that training is the key to a successful program. Mentor training can include information on the role and responsibilities of being a mentor as well as limitations to the role. It may also include exploration of helpful behaviours, techniques, and activities. Role-play activities that provide the opportunity to learn and become comfortable in the role of mentor may also be part of the process. Protege training can be very similar to mentor training, addressing similar topics from the mentee perspective.

There are typically articulated objectives for formal mentoring program. Because they are created within an organizational context, organizational needs often dominate the goals of the program. The objectives for the program should be clearly identified and understood prior to undertaking the development and implementation of the program. In addition to overall program goals, many programs also have objectives for each mentee and possibly the mentor.

To ensure program goals are met, some programs will schedule meetings for participants or provide guidelines for frequency and duration of work sessions. In her book, *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program*, Murray suggests the objectives of the partnership should determine the meeting type and schedule. "Consider the specific activities to be accomplished and ease of contact when establishing meeting times and types" (Murray, 1991, p.156).

The final component of the formal mentoring program is an evaluation process. The evaluation is designed to determine if the stated objectives have been met, and also identify opportunities for improvement. With evaluation data, "the organization can continually assess statistical outcomes, achievement of objectives for the commitment, costs, training effectiveness and long-term value (Kerr, Schulze & Woodward, 1995, p.39). Common evaluation strategies include pre- and post-participation surveys and interviews.

Formal mentoring programs require resources for implementation and management, and success is difficult to measure. So, what are the incentives for an educator, a human resource professional, or an organization to invest such an uncertain venture?

Rationale for Formal Mentoring

There are several reasons an organization may choose to implement a formal mentoring program despite the uncertain pay-off. The most common reason is a belief the organization and its members will benefit from mentoring. Organizations see the opportunity to reap some desirable benefits for a relatively small investment. Further, organizational leaders tend to believe the gains are assured because the element of chance characteristic of informal mentoring relationships is eliminated. By matching partners and guiding the relationship, it is thought organizations are more likely to benefit from mentoring because there is a guarantee the relationship will get started.

Proponents of formal mentoring believe that once the mentoring relationship is initiated it is only a matter of time before participants and organizations will see the pay-off.

Formal mentoring programs are also seen to offer the opportunity for equal participation. Fleming (1991) suggests that mentors are more likely to choose mentees like themselves. There are fewer women and minorities in roles that would allow them to

function as mentors, as a result women and minorities are less likely to find mentoring partners. Formal programs eliminate this problem because mentors are either selected by or matched with a mentee. "Mentor programs ensure the extension of mentoring to groups that have had the most difficult time finding seniors to serve as sponsors, namely women and minorities" (Burlew, 1991, p.213).

Finally, organizations may choose to implement formal mentoring programs because it ensures the resources required to initiate and sustain these relationships are being used productively. Informal mentoring relationships, which are not facilitated or supported by the organization, still impact time and productivity. In such cases, partners spend time together building their relationship and working towards the goals they have set for themselves, which may take them away from assigned duties. As well, there are no assurances resources used and outcomes realized by an informal mentoring relationship will benefit the organization. However, formal mentoring programs have articulated objectives that reflect the training and development needs of the organization, so the time and resources invested will result in a pay-off for the sponsoring organization.

Although there are several justifications for implementing formal mentoring programs, there is little evidence to support their success or value. "Structuring the mentoring process may be uncommon because there is a lack of data on just how cost-effective it is. Many organizations that have implemented mentoring programs do not have ways to measure the program's direct impact on productivity or individual performance" (Murray, 1991, p.27). An examination of several studies on formal mentoring programs suggests that they may not be as successful as many would like to think they are. In her study of a program that matched women in a management development program with women working in business, Sloane-Seale (1997) found that two-thirds of the pairs indicated the program was unsuccessful due to lack of formal guidelines, deficient focus in the relationship, inadequate time, inappropriate matching of pairs and insufficient mentee input into mentor selection.

In another case, the New Faculty Project examined new hires' satisfaction with mentoring in five institutions of higher education. They examined both formally facilitated and informal mentoring relationships and found that "in general, faculty who originally found a mentor reported strong relationships over time while those who were assigned a

mentor reported less need for one" (Bode, 1999, p. 129-130), and "mentoring relationships that began when one party sought out the other rather than being assigned appeared to be more long-lasting" (Bode, 1999, p. 131). These findings suggest that formally facilitated mentoring relationships are of a different quality and less enduring than informal ones. Despite the outward impression that formal mentoring programs are highly successful, the undertone suggests this is not always the case.

Problems with Formal Mentoring

The notion of planning a program to facilitate natural and inherently informal mentoring is problematic. First, planned mentoring programs disregard the element of attraction and mutual interest, which is the feature that makes the relationship both unique and successful. It is attraction that gets a mentoring relationship started. This attraction allows pairs to build trust, respect, and rapport; in turn, the affinity between mentoring partners creates conditions that facilitate learning, growth and development. Formal programs supplant the element of attraction and chip away at the core of the mentoring relationship. "It would seem that the forced matching of mentors and proteges ignores a characteristic crucial to the more intense mentor relationship – that the two people involved are attracted to each other and wish to work together" (Merriam, 1983, p. 171). Even programs that allow mentees to select their mentors based on written profiles disregard human nature, and our need to see, hear, and experience other people to know if we like them.

Another problem with planned mentoring programs is that they fail to address the development of trust and respect. This is an important ingredient in a relationship where two people will be sharing personal information, identifying needs, giving and receiving feedback, and working toward personal and professional improvement. While Wunsch aptly points out that "informal mentoring relies on natural selection, personality congruence, and happenstance. It usually evolves slowly over time as pairs learn to know and trust one another" (Wunsch, 1994, p.29), she goes on to suggest that this is problematic. She argues that "rather than simply viewing mentoring in terms of a relationship between two individuals, it needs to be conceptualized as a process... that can be defined, planned and evaluated" (Wunsch, 1994, p. 29). This strips mentoring of its fundamental characteristic, a one-on-one relationship between people.

Conceptualizing mentoring as a formulaic process presumes that "...mentoring is a set of identifiable skills which can be taught to one group, the mentors, in order to assist the second group, the protégés" (Semeniuk, 2000, p. 410). It suggests that the dynamics and outcomes of bringing two people together in a developmental relationship can be predicted and controlled. This notion disregards the reality that mentoring is a social process involving unique individuals.

Further, individuals are neglected in another way by formal mentoring programs. Because formal mentoring programs are organizationally sponsored, they are typically organization centred. If an organization is investing the resources required to establish such a program, it will be looking for measurable outcomes to support its mandate. Unfortunately, these outcomes may or may not coincide with the needs of participants. As a result, the needs of participants become secondary to those of the organization.

Finally, formal mentoring programs often misuse the word 'mentoring'. In these programs, the word may be used to describe a relationship and activities closer to apprenticeship, coaching or training. 'Mentoring' already struggles with definitional ambiguity. Using the term to describe formally constructed partnerships with identifiable timeframes and outcomes that may serve the sponsoring organization more than the people involved contributes to the problem of definitional ambiguity.

Explorations of mentoring are framed in extremes, either as serendipitous happenings or formal arrangements. However, we are not well served by these extremes. When mentoring begins serendipitously, purity of the concept is maintained and acknowledgement that it is a human endeavor is achieved, however initiation of such partnerships is entirely reliant on chance and circumstance. Without good fortune, people will not get the opportunity to have a mentoring experience during their careers. On the other hand, by stripping mentoring down to a controlled process, the experience is robbed of its very essence. The relationship between two people and the resultant growth is the key to successful mentoring.

Exploring Alternatives to Formal Mentoring

Fortunately, there are alternatives to the extreme options of naturally developed or formally facilitated mentoring. Fostered mentoring occurs when an organization is able to create the right climate to allow such relationships to get started on their own. It is an approach with many benefits. The greatest advantage is that mutual interest and attraction are the primary factors influencing the initiation of the partnership. Therefore, the relationship is more likely to develop into a trusting and caring partnership that can facilitate meaningful learning. Initial attraction is often stimulated by recognition of traits and beliefs we are comfortable with, namely our own. As mentoring partners get to know each other, their initial interest is reinforced by seeing they share characteristics and beliefs with their partner. Next, trust and mutual respect begins to develop between the mentoring partners, which lays the foundation for interactions that contribute to career and personal growth. Fostered mentoring does not intervene in the natural development of the partnership, but instead nurtures it by creating the right conditions.

Another advantage of the fostered mentoring approach is it is participant centred. The purpose that brings mentoring partners together will focus on the interests and needs of the participants. Interactions will be driven by the learning needs of the participants and will provide opportunities for situated learning, facilitating achievement of identified goals. If the learning facilitated by the relationship is meaningful to the participants, it is more likely to be enjoyable and genuine. Participants are likely to learn more and internalize what they learn when it is meaningful and important to them. Even though the focus of the mentoring partnership is on the goals and interests of the participants, the relationships and the outcomes may also benefit the organization. The contributions of an informal mentoring relationship may not have the outcomes an organization is seeking however, the partnerships will most likely be work related resulting in some form of professional development.

Fostered mentoring is also less onerous to manage than formal programs. Organizations are not required to undertake extensive needs assessment to identify detailed objectives for the program because the purpose of the partnerships is determined by the participants themselves. Training and orientation is also different; it tends to focus on awareness and promotion rather than development of mentoring skills. As well,

organizations are not required to implement strategies for matching pairs. In these ways, a fostered mentoring system is less of a burden to an organization.

Finally, fostered mentoring honours the essence of mentoring. It acknowledges that relationships are formed between people who are unique individuals; and, as result, the interactions people have and the outcomes of those exchanges are unpredictable but valuable in ways that are meaningful to those involved. Thus, fostered mentoring is able to work with, not against, the social nature of mentoring.

To move towards fostered mentoring, it is necessary to understand how these informal relationships begin. This requires examining the places where mentoring relationships begin and understanding what is important about these places. It is also necessary to identify what happens in those places; what mentoring partners do together, what they talk about and what their interactions are like. It is important to understand not only what happens but also the significance of the activities, content and tone characteristic of these interactions. By understanding then replicating these conditions, it may be possible to facilitate the initiation of informal mentoring relationships. Organizations can create conditions that will encourage the development of meaningful, productive and enduring mentoring relationships without intervention or control. To this end, Chapter Two shifts from a focus on mentoring itself to a summary of literature involving spatial contexts and human interaction theories which provide insight into the relationship between space and mentoring.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INFLUENCE OF PLACE AND SPACE ON MENTORING

Relevance of a Discussion about Place and Space

The premise of this study is that an organization seeking to use mentoring as a training strategy, a tool for staff development or a method of facilitating organizational growth, could do so by identifying then replicating the conditions that foster the development and maintenance of existing informal partnerships within the organization. The interactions between workplace mentoring partners occur in a physical environment and an organizational culture. This context creates the opportunities, climate and time for interactions characteristic of informal mentoring relationships. As such, understanding the relevance and influence of physical and conceptual space on people, their behaviour and their interpersonal interactions is fundamental to creating environments and conditions conducive to the development and continuation of informal mentoring relationships.

Clarification of Terms and Concepts

Place and space are complex constructs. Generally there is a physicality associated with the term place as illustrated by the definition found in the Gage Canadian Dictionary: "a particular part of space of a definite or indefinite size..." (Gage, 1983, p. 860). The complexity of this notion is succinctly captured in Malpas' definition of place. He suggests the noun 'place' embodies five main senses which are: "(i) a definite but open space, particularly bounded, open space within a city or town; (ii) a more generalized sense of space, extension, dimensionality or 'room' (and understood as identical with a certain conception of space, place may, in this sense be opposed to time); (iii) location or position within some order (whether it be spatial or some other kind of ordering, hierarchical or not); (iv) a particular locale or environment that has a character of its own; and (v) an abode or that within which something exists or within which it dwells" (Malpas, 1999, p. 21-22). There is a sense of physicality embedded in several, but not all, notions of place. For this research, place will be used to refer to physical locality; a particular

location within a physically bound part of space. Defining place in this way begs the question, 'what is meant by space?'.

Space is defined in the Gage Canadian Dictionary as: "the unlimited room or expanse extending in all directions and in which all things exist; extent of area or volume; a limited place or area; ... a time in which to do something, opportunity" (Gage, p. 1076). Malpas suggests that "space can be taken to mean simply 'room' or extension, whether physical or non-physical" (Malpas, 1999, p. 23). As such, the term space can refer to either a physical or a conceptual realm. For the purposes of this paper, space is examined as a non-physical notion of opportunity, time and atmosphere in which to do something or behave in a particular way.

Because space can be used to refer to either a conceptual or a physical realm, it is often used interchangeably with place. So, there are several explorations of the influence of physical place on people, their social processes and their social structures that use the term space when referring to a physical locale. Not only is there an overlap in the concepts reflected by the terms place and space, there is a conceptual connection between the ideas. Space encapsulates the expanse of both physical and conceptual space available as far, as wide and as deep as one can imagine. Because place refers to a definitive, bounded part of this expanse, place is actually part of space. Further, place influences the conceptual space that creates opportunities for things to happen. The space that allows something to happen is shaped by the place in which that event occurs. The outcomes of these events or social processes in turn influence the physical places in which human events occur. The relationship between space, place and people is therefor a complex system of influence and outcome.

The Influence of Place

The influence of place on people and society touches almost every academic discipline. As a result, there are extensive explorations and analyses of the relationship between place and people. These explorations provide insight into the different ways in which place is thought to influence people and people are thought to shape the physical environments in which they function. These explorations demonstrate the relationship between people and place as well as the significance and effect of the connection.

Place and Ecological Psychology

Early psychological research relied heavily on clinical experimentation to understand and map human behaviour. Although valuable in describing the physiological basis of human behaviour, it failed to provide contextualized explanations. Clinical experimentation was unable to answer, "how do environments select and shape the people who inhabit them?" (Barker, 1968, p.3). Ecological psychology endeavours to address this question through the observation and analysis of human behaviour in the real-life environment in which it occurs. Barker suggests that, "in order to study environment-behaviour relations on any level, the environment and the behaviour must be described and measured independently" (Barker, 1968, p.7). Utilizing this technique to observe human behaviour in context, Barker concluded that there are "extra-individual units with great coercive power over the behaviour that occurs within them" (Barker, 1968, p. 17). In other words, understanding an environment can more effectively predict the behaviour of an individual in that context than having knowledge of the conduct tendencies of that person. This early research clearly establishes the influence of place on human behaviour.

Place and Geographical Research

Prior to the 1960's, geography focused on understanding the features and characteristics of particular regions and how those places came to be as they are (Massey, 1985). When positivism began to dominate academic thought, geography focused on the science of studying "spatial relations devoid of social content" (Massey, 1985, p. 11). In the 1970's it was recognized this position could not be sustained because there "are no such things as purely spatial processes; there are only particular social processes operating over space" (Massey, 1985, p. 11). Emerging from the notions of the 1970's, was the argument that not only is space a social construct but social relations are produced in a physical place. "... spatial structure is now seen not merely as an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather as a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced" (Gregory & Urry, 1985, p. 3). The interconnectedness between place and people is now a common feature of geographical research and writing.

Place in Philosophical Writing

The exploration of the relationship between people and place in philosophical thought is rich and deep. Many philosophers have delved into the significance of this relationship and it gives a background to the impact of space and place on mentoring relationships. Some examples drawn from Malpas' book, *Place and Experience*, will be used to demonstrate a range of ideas found in philosophical writing. Philosopher Gaston Bachelard explored the relationship between place and people extensively and concluded that "the life of the mind is given from the places and the spaces in which human beings dwell and those places themselves shape and influence the human memories, feelings and thoughts" (Malpas, 1999, p. 5). Bachelard's idea is that there is a reciprocal influence between the human mind and the places in which people live their lives. "The spaces of inner and outer - of mind and world - are transformed into the other as inner space is externalized and outer space brought within" (Malpas, 1999, p. 5).

Another perspective suggests the relationship between human beings and the environment is even more significant. Cognitive and social processes may actually be shaped by the physical surroundings in which those activities take place. "It is not merely human identity that is tied to place or locality, but the very possibility of being the sort of creature that can engage with a world (and more particularly with the objects and events within it), that can think about that world, and that can find itself in that world" (Heidegger & Merleau-Ponty as cited in Malpas, 1999, p. 8). Mark Johnson's work makes a similar argument. He explores "the prevalence of modes of thinking that are reliant on notions of place and space as part of a more general thesis concerning the way in which the body, and the structures associated with it are actually determinative of patterns of thinking and understanding" (Malpas, 1999, p. 11). He writes that, "as animals we have bodies connected to the natural world, such that our consciousness and rationality are tied to our bodily orientations and interactions in and with our environment" (Johnson as cited in Malpas, 1999, p. 11).

Cavell further suggests that, "... without a grasp of the places and spaces in which others can be encountered it is arguable whether there can be any relations to others at all - and if no relation to others, then no relation to the self either" (Cavell as cited in Malpas, 1999, p.12). Places shape not only human identity but also cognition and social processes; existence itself is tied to place. A common thread runs through these

philosophical examinations which is summarized nicely by Malpas: "We not only experience ourselves and other things in relation to places and spaces, but that the very structure of the mind is intrinsically tied to locality and spatiality" (Malpas, 1999, p.11). If mentoring is intended to have a positive impact on the mind and human experience, creating suitable places and spaces for such relationships is essential.

Notions of Place in Science

Like the discipline of philosophy, science also acknowledges the influence of place on human experience. Doctors of classical medicine commonly viewed a persons' health in its environmental context. Then, around the beginning of the 20th century, "the wisdom of the ages concerning the relationship between place and human state was eclipsed by technological changes" (Gallagher, 1993, p. 13). As well, psychotherapy lead scientists to an inward orientation, and they began to disregard the potential influence of place on people, their social processes and their social structures. However, modern scientists are now rediscovering and confirming that "our actions, thoughts and feelings are indeed shaped not just by our genes and neurochemistry, history and relationships, but also by our surroundings" (Gallagher, 1993, p. 12). The development of cell function demonstrates this connection. "What a cell will be is determined not just by what it is but also by what its neighbors are; through various constituents it is sensitive to, the gene's microenvironment influences its workings" (Gallagher, 1993, p. 15). It follows that, "like those of other living things, our structure, development and behaviour rise from a genetic foundation sunk in an environmental context" (Gallagher, 1993, p. 16). Clearly, environment is determinant in human experience.

Place and Architecture

The field of architecture is particularly cognizant of the relationship between people and place. The buildings, in which people live and work, have a significant impact on their lives. The way in which space within these structures is programmed is determinant of experience within that space. Since architects and designers program the spaces in which human life is lived, their work affects both individuals and society.

Architecture and Society

In his book, *The Social Logic of Space*, Hillier examines the relationship between architecture and society.

Buildings may be comparable to other artifacts in that they assemble elements into a physical object with a certain form; but they are incomparable in that they also create and order the empty volumes of space resulting from that object into a pattern. It is this ordering of space that is the purpose of building, not the physical object itself" (Hillier, 1984, p.1).

Hillier argues the way a building is designed and constructed orders space and thus dictates the social interactions that occur in that environment. "The ordering of space in buildings is really about the ordering of relations between people" (Hillier, 1984, p.1-2). An example of the significance of this relationship is the urban environment. Buildings are designed and constructed so people are visually and physically separated from each other which limits interaction and prohibits the development of community. Previously, it was believed that, "separation was good for community, that hierarchization of space was good for relations between groups, and that space could only be important to society by virtue of being identified with a particular, preferably small group who would prefer to keep their domain free of strangers" (Hillier, 1984, p. 29). Unfortunately, the behaviours and social relations which resulted from the design of physical structures based on these assumptions were dysfunctional resulting in isolation and anonymity.

Through his research, Hillier concluded there was a systematic and predictable relationship between social variables and architectural design, which he called 'space syntax'. Space syntax is a scientific method that allows architects to determine how their buildings will help or hinder human contact.

Aided by precise computer analyses that are able, by a complex calculation of access points and lines of sight, to produce a plan detailing the most and least integrated spaces in a given environment. The significance of this plan is that those spaces most highly integrated are likely become the interactional 'hotspots', whereas those least integrated are most likely to be those areas of the site which are least used for interactive purposes, (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 577).

The number and pattern of interactions people have with one another shapes the social relations and structures characteristic of a particular society. As such, architecture is an active contributor to the organization and functioning of a society.

The problem with Hillier's analysis is he looks only at the effect of building design on society, social structures and social relations. He fails to examine the converse influence of people and society on architecture. The relationship between people, society and architecture is dynamic and reflexive; there is a back and forth between the built landscape and human experience. As Winston Churchill remarked, "first we shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us" (Pearson & Richards, 1994, p. 3). To describe this dynamic relationship, Pearson and Richards use the theory of structuration: "Social structures (as embodied by traditions and social rules) have a dialectical relationship with human actions. Structures are both the medium and the outcomes of social practices" (Pearson & Richards, 1994, p. 3). Hall, in *The Hidden Dimension*, echoes this: "The relationship between man and the cultural dimension is one in which both man and his environment participate in molding each other. Man is now in the position of actually creating the total world in which he lives.... In creating this world he is actually determining what kind of an organism he will be.... It also means that, in a very deep sense, our cities are creating different types of people in their slums, mental hospitals, prisons and suburbs" (Hall, 1966, p.4).

Architecture and the Individual

Building design affects not only social structures and relations, but also individuals, their cognitive processes, behaviour and, their mental state. In her article, 'How Places Affect People', Gallagher refers to the influence of place on human behaviour as 'behaviour setting' by which the environment communicates messages that signal people to behave in particular ways. "Whatever our individual personalities or recent experiences ... we are apt to act business like in an office, reflective in a church or museum, and social in a restaurant", (Gallagher, 1999, p. 76). Further, qualities of locations such as light can affect a person's mood or performance. For example, people who live in northern regions that receive less light during the winter months are more likely to develop symptoms of depression. This is particularly true for those who live or work in spaces with little natural light. Clearly, the influence of space on people is real and tangible.

So what does this mean? Place and the events therein are inextricably linked. The conditions of a particular environment, whether natural or programmed, influence the social structures that develop and the interpersonal interactions that occur in that place. The thoughts, feelings and actions of the people are all affected by environment. It then follows that office and workplace design influence the nature of an organization and the exchanges and relationships workers in an organization have, including mentoring.

The Influence of Place on Informal Mentoring Relationships

Examining the influence of place on the initiation and development of informal mentoring relationships is breaking new ground. Based on extensive readings of the literature on mentoring, space, place, and architecture, it appears there has been little if any research on the influence of place on the initiation and continuation of informal mentoring relationships in the workplace. However, there has been some research on the relationship between office design and interaction in the workplace. This research is useful in understanding the effect of the physical environment on informal mentoring, an interpersonal interaction.

Office Design and Interaction in the Workplace

Two recent studies about the relationship between office design and interaction will help shed light on the need for appropriate spaces for mentoring.

'The Design Implications of Social Interaction in a Workplace Setting' conducted in 1991, examined the number and locations of interactions between workers in a particular work environment. In addition it examined how these encounters facilitated completion of tasks and achievement of organizational goals. The premise of the study was, 'space', in its various modes of arrangement and alignment, is increasingly understood to be an 'active', or at least a participating, component of any activity taking place within it. "... workspace is hence no longer simply the site of collaborative activity but is actually an intrinsic part of this collaboration" (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 573). Backhouse and Drew observed and recorded both quantitative data, such as the number and location of interactions, and qualitative data, such as the content or purpose of the exchanges.

The observations revealed that encounters between workers occurred most often in highly integrated locations, that is open spaces close to pathways of movement. The majority of these interactions were "neither planned ahead, nor immediately expected; neither were they always with the person who might be formally the object of consultation. They were usually the product of opportunity or chance created by incidental proximity" (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 579). As workers pursued completion of a task, they were sometimes required to leave their workstation to initiate consultation with someone else. Once a person is in transit, he or she becomes available to be engaged by others. There is then a "shift in the individual's attention and work orientation away from one task towards another that was unplanned and was undertaken at another's behest" (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 579). These interactions facilitate the completion of work tasks. "As such, the accomplishment of 'work' is often a contingent and unplanned process" (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 580). Although it may appear this process is entirely random, it is not. Instead it is "related to an individual's historically demonstrated competence in the pending task, his or her formal status, and to his or her specific spatial position within the overall configuration" (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 580).

The implication of these findings is that it is necessary for co-workers to consult with one another to successfully complete their work, and the workplace must be designed to encourage these meetings. "It follows that in order to facilitate optimum efficiency the designed environment should be built around strategic positions and their actual and potential lines of sight. In other words, what an individual can see will condition his or her entry into, and the extent of, collaborative participation." (Backhouse & Drew, 1991, p. 580).

A more recent study, 'The Space of Innovation: Interaction and Communication in the Workplace', attempts to better understand the 'work system' and how spatial structures can lead to the innovation required by organizations in the current economy. The premise of this study was, "the critical information leading to genuine innovations came from outside the immediate work group but from within the organization" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.195). Chance meetings between people within an organization are fundamental to competitive success, and office design contributes to these encounters.

Studies suggest workspaces with few barriers between workers and paths of movement allow for greater chances of meeting. The problem with these findings is designers may attempt to increase interaction simply by "maximizing integration and visibility which may be inadequate to deal with the reality of organizational function in the work environment" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.196). The examination of two office environments illustrates the complex nature of human interactions despite improved spatial design.

In the first organization studied, a new building was designed to bring "the main circulation routes directly adjacent to the street on either side of the building and to equalize the size of the floor plate on either side on each floor" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.198). Observations of the workers in this building showed "the number of people talking within a business unit's area depended first and foremost on the density of movement within the area" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.200). As well, "the increased integration of the new building resulted in a reduced need to leave the work station in order to gain the benefit of interaction" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.200).

The second organization studied randomly assigned workers from different departments and disciplines to workstations in an open design environment in order to encourage collaboration. It was found again "a person's location directly affects the possibility of contact with others. The more accessible spaces in the building have a greater number of people both visible and directly reachable" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p. 207). Also, patterns of movement were affected by the layout of the office space. "The degree to which a space is deep or shallow from all other spaces in the office determines the level of movement through that space. Shallower or more 'integrated' spaces carry greater levels of movement than deeper 'segregated' spaces (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.213). Additionally, human behaviour can affect the possibility of encounters. "People who are moving behave in one of two ways. They either walk through 'looking straight ahead' indicating that they are not available or they turn to look at the general work areas as they pass indicating availability for conversation. Similarly, those working at their desks either 'keep their heads down' indicating that they do not want to be disturbed or they look up as people pass indicating availability" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p.213-214). Finally, work also requires an environment that allows for quiet concentration and extended periods of uninterrupted time. "Not all work

is interactive between people. No matter how good the ideas that emerge from group discussions are, at some point they have to be turned into a real product" (Penn, Desyllas & Vaughan, 1998, p. 216). Obviously, this creates a challenge for the office designer. Both studies illustrate that office design is not the only variable that influences or shapes workplace behaviour. The work process is influenced by several factors, only one of which is office layout and design.

Office Design and Informal Mentoring Relationships

So, what do these findings tell us about the influence of place on the initiation and development of informal mentoring relationships? First, office design influences the numbers and types of interactions between people in the workplace. Interaction is the medium through which informal mentoring relationships are initiated and sustained. Therefore, office design can play an active role in the initiation and development of mentoring partnerships in the workplace. Second, workplaces with open spaces that are highly integrated and have circulation routes that bring workers in close proximity with each other encourage interaction. As such, work environments with these features are better suited to encouraging and supporting mentoring partnerships. Third, organizations wanting to encourage informal mentoring can do so by creating work environments that encourage interaction.

Notions of Conceptual Space

Introduction

Physical space contributes to the beginning of informal mentoring, as do the non-physical features of an environment. The intangible attributes of a given environment have a strong effect on people and their actions. bell hooks explains how such qualities can facilitate political resistance.

Postmodern culture with its decentred subject can be the space where ties are severed or it can provide the occasion for new and varied forms of bonding. To some extent, ruptures, surfaces, contextuality, and a host of other happenings create gaps that make space for oppositional practices which no longer require intellectuals to be confined to narrow separate spheres with no meaningful connection to the world of the everyday...a space is there for critical exchange... and this may very well

be 'the' central future location of resistance struggle, a meeting place where new and radical happenings can occur" (bell hooks as cited in Soja, 1993).

Like political resistance, mentoring relationships need space, that is the right atmosphere, opportunity and freedom.

Atmosphere: A Component of Conceptual Space

Atmosphere is defined as "a mental and moral environment; surrounding influence" (Gage, p. 70). Places, events and activities have an atmosphere associated with them and offices are no exception. The atmosphere of an environment is created by the physical structure of the place and the people within it. Atmosphere may also be affected by external structures and people with an influencing affect on that environment. As such, the physicality and atmosphere of a setting are linked, each impacting the other and both influencing what happens in that environment. Work environments may be solemn, cheerful, competitive, collaborative, serious or fun. The atmosphere may be signaled in overt physical ways by closing doors, punching time clocks or dressing in a particular way. It may also be signaled in subtler, but psychologically perceptible ways such as tone of voice, facial expression, or posture. "All of us are sensitive to subtle changes in the demeanor of the other person as he responds to what we are saying or doing" (Hall, 1966, p.5). The atmosphere in a particular office effects what happens there by influencing what people are encouraged to say or do.

An office with a positive collaborative atmosphere will make it easier for people to establish informal mentoring relationships. While competitive and individualist workplaces may make it difficult to initiate informal mentoring. Thus, the tone of an office environment can permit or prohibit behaviours that initiate and sustain informal mentoring relationships.

Opportunity: A Component of Conceptual Space

Opportunity refers to free, unstructured time in which to do something. Mentoring requires conversation, discussion and interaction through which partners learn about each other, discuss work or personal issues and solve problems. For informal mentoring relationships to develop in the work environment, people need free unstructured time to

engage in these activities. The encounters that lead to these interactions commonly occur informally and spontaneously. Since interactions between potential mentoring partners are contingent, people need the opportunity to be available to engage in these interactions. Therefore, unstructured time is key to the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Freedom: A Component of Conceptual Space

Freedom is closely linked to opportunity because time is of little value if it cannot be used in ways that have personal meaning and importance. Freedom is integral to conceptual space for mentoring relationships in two ways. First, to engage in conversation, discussion and interaction, people need time and freedom from scrutiny. People need to feel comfortable sitting around the office chatting or going for coffee without being watched or having to justify the way in which they are using their unstructured time. Secondly, informal mentoring relationships are highly individualized, so people need the freedom to explore topics and issues meaningful and relevant to those involved in the partnership. As a result, conceptual space must offer opportunity accompanied by freedom in order to create the right conditions for mentoring partnerships to grow.

Conclusion

The way in which a space is structured and the atmosphere of a place influence the people and the social processes in that environment. The architectural programming of office space influences the frequency and nature of interaction between colleagues which in turn shapes the relationships that develop. Therefore, workplace design plays an active role in the development of mentoring partnerships. Like office design, the non-physical attributes of the work environment influence the development of mentoring relationships in the workplace. The perceived tone of an office will tell people if mentoring and the behaviours that support these partnerships are encouraged or discouraged. Free, unstructured time gives people the opportunity to engage in behaviours that can foster enriching and valuable systems and relationships such as mentoring. Freedom gives people latitude to use their time as they see fit and to find activities that are meaningful and valuable to them. Like office design, these conditions,

atmosphere, opportunity and freedom, are active participants in the initiation of informal mentoring relationships in the workplace.

Malpas wrote "there is good reason to suppose that the human relationship to place is a fundamental structure in what makes possible the sort of life that is characteristically human" (Malpas, 1999, p.13). If there is good reason to think that place influences human life, it is reasonable to conclude that place and space will influence mentoring. This research study explores this premise in the context of British Columbia's public post-secondary education system. Faculty and staff members at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) involved in informal mentoring relationships were asked about the conditions and processes surrounding the initiation of their partnerships. They were asked to describe where they met with their mentoring partner, what activities they engaged in, what they talked about, what the tone of the interactions was, and how these factors contributed to the foundation and continuation of their relationships.

The research was conducted at BCIT, which is a publicly funded post-secondary institution that has recently undergone leadership change. Labour strife, organizational division, employee distrust and overall poor morale characterized the era prior to the change in leadership. Like many organizations, BCIT is facing significant staff change over due to baby boomer retirement. It is expected that 40% of the faculty and staff at BCIT will retire within the next five years. As a result of the damaged organizational climate and anticipated staffing crisis, the BCIT executive has entertained and undertaken several organizational development initiatives. One such initiative is the implementation of either a coaching or a mentoring program making it an ideal time to examine the current mentoring practices of the organization and to explore opportunities to create a system based on the notions of creating places and spaces that spark the initiation and nurture the continuation of mentoring relationships.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Purposes of the Study

This study set out to investigate a way of encouraging and supporting mentoring relationships among faculty and staff members at an institute of higher education using the attributes of naturally formed mentoring partnerships without the structured intervention characteristic of planned programs. It was hypothesized this could be achieved by creating circumstances conducive to the development of naturally formed mentoring relationships then exposing people to those conditions. This required identifying the conditions and processes that initiate and support naturally formed partnerships and, understanding the influence of these factors on the development of mentoring. The purposes of this study were to: identify the conditions present as informal mentoring relationships begin; determine ways in which these variables facilitate the development of mentoring associations; ascertain the conditions characteristic of established partnerships; and, determine how these factors help to sustain an established relationship. The purposes were framed by several questions.

The first question was, how do existing informal mentoring relationships begin? This question was broken into two parts: (1) what are the initial interactions between people engaged in mentoring like?, (2) how do these interactions contribute to the development of their partnerships? The second question was, what supports and maintains existing informal mentoring relationships? Again, the question was broken into two: (1) what are the attributes of the interactions between established mentoring partners?, (2) how do these features contribute to the continuation of the partnerships? Associated to this line of inquiry was the third question, how do the patterns of interaction characteristic of informal mentoring relationships change over time? Specifically, were there differences in the conditions and interactions characteristic of the initial and later interactions between mentoring partners?

The information that emerged from responses to the first two questions revealed patterns representative of the experiences of most but perhaps not all people. To

effectively encourage informal mentoring by creating circumstances that foster the development of such partnerships, the conditions must work for individuals. To be sure the elements, identified as characteristic of naturally formed mentoring relationships, were true for individuals and not just the overall sample, this study also set out to determine if there were significant differences in the experiences of: mentors and mentees; people in same-sex and cross-gendered partnerships; people in the same and different departments from their mentoring partner; those who are senior, equal or junior to their mentoring partner; and females and males.

Structure of the Study

This study was conducted with faculty and staff members at British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), a publicly funded post-secondary institution with 15,000 full-time students and 1,500 faculty and staff. The study involved talking with faculty and staff members engaged in informal mentoring relationships. Participants were asked about the physical places where they interacted with their partners, the types of activities they engaged in during their mentoring interactions, the substance of the discussions they had, and the nature of these interactions. The data collected from the interviews was analyzed to identify the patterns characteristic of the experiences of those interviewed. These patterns were used to identify the conditions and processes that initiate and sustain informal relationships and to make recommendations on how organizations can encourage such associations without creating or controlling the partnerships.

Data Collection Strategy

Data Collection Instrument

A structured interview, which used a combination of closed, open ended and scaled response questions, was selected for data collection (Appendix 1). The open ended questions allowed respondents to describe their experiences in their own words. The closed and scaled response questions captured their experiences in standardized terms that could facilitate comparisons. The interview started with some general background questions, moved on to a series of items about initial mentoring interactions which were followed by the same line of inquiry regarding later exchanges. The interview concluded

with a series of demographic items and three questions related to the viability of encouraging mentoring at BCIT.

The closed questions were used to collect information about age, gender and department. Scaled items were used to get a standardized response pattern for the activities, content and tone of the interactions between partners. This standardized response pattern was supplemented by the use of open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to get a somewhat unbiased and a more comprehensive description of conditions that initiate and sustain mentoring partnerships. Open-ended questions were also used to gain insight into how the features of these partnerships contribute to the development and maintenance of the relationships. Diversity of experience was also captured by the open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to describe their experiences in their own words first to ensure their responses were not influenced by the scaled items. These questions were then followed by the scaled response items.

Pilot of Data Collection Instrument

The interview methodology was piloted with three people known to have an informal mentoring experience. At the beginning of the first interview, the respondent was told he would be asked questions about the location, activities, content and tone of his mentoring interactions related to his relationship currently then to the beginning of his partnership. After answering the current phase items and a few of the beginning phase questions, the respondent started to get confused and asked if he hadn't already answered the questions. It was also at this point the respondent became somewhat fatigued and started to lose concentration. At the conclusion of the initial interview, the respondent suggested participants be told more clearly they would be answering the same questions twice – once related to their relationship currently and once again related to the beginning of their partnership.

At the beginning of the next interview, the second respondent was told she would be answering a series of questions related to the location, activities, content and tone of her mentoring interactions. The respondent was also told she would be asked the same questions twice - once related to her relationship currently and once related to the

beginning of her relationship. Clarifying with the respondent that she would hear the same questions twice was helpful and eliminated the surprise of being asked the same questions twice. However, it was necessary for the interviewer to remind the respondent of which phase of her relationship she should be recalling when answering each question. A different confusion arose in the second pilot interview. The second respondent indicated she had a mentoring partnership in the past but this relationship changed and was now more of a friendship. This made it difficult for her to answer the questions related to the current status of the relationship; she no longer viewed the relationship as mentoring but the questions were about mentoring interactions. To overcome this problem, it was decided respondents would be asked to answer the 'current' questions according to the time at which the relationship was well established.

Like the first and second pilot respondent, the third pilot participant was told she would be answering a series of questions related to the location, activities, content and tone of her mentoring interactions. She was also told she would be asked the same questions twice - once related to her relationship currently and once related to the beginning of her partnership. The order in which the questions were asked was changed. This time, they were asked by alternating between the current and beginning phases.

Regardless of the order in which the questions were presented, it was necessary for the interviewer to remind respondents of which phase they should be thinking of as they answered the questions. Because the order of the items appeared to be insignificant, the order of the questions was changed slightly. The interview would be started with background questions, move into questions related to the beginning of the partnership followed by the items related to the established phase of the relationship. This order was adopted to ensure respondents were fresh when answering questions about the beginning of their mentoring relationship because these items would require the greatest amount of recollection. The interview would conclude with the demographic questions.

Other issues that arose from the pilot were related to the way in which questions were worded. The responses given were very close to what was expected, as long as a description of what the questions were related to was provided. For example, before asking the questions related to location of interaction, it was important for the interviewer to explain that the next several questions were related to the physical places where the

mentoring exchanges occurred. To ensure each respondent was given an adequate introductory description for each section – physical location, activities, content and nature of interactions – a guide with an introductory statement for each section was created (Appendix 2).

The question that started the interview was originally worded, "What is your mentoring partner's name?" The purpose of the question was to give the interviewer a name to use when referring to the respondents' mentoring partner. One of the pilot participants was hesitant to give the name of their partner so early in the interview. So, the wording of the question was changed to, "Can we use your mentoring partner's name during this interview?" Followed by, "What is his or her name?"

The other issue that arose during the pilot was the absence of two questions which proved to be significant. Each section of the interview concluded with a question related to how the place, activity, content or tone of the mentoring interactions was significant to the development or maintenance of the relationship. In the version of the template used during the pilot, this question was omitted for the content section of the established phase of the relationship. The question was added to the final version of the interview template.

Another question that had not been incorporated into the pilot interview template related to the reasons the mentoring partners were able to establish this type of a relationship. This was required to answer the identified research questions so, the following was added to the interview template, "Why do you think your relationship with your mentoring partner developed into a mentoring relationship?". The amended interview template was used for the remaining interviews.

Interview Protocol

Data was collected through one-on-one, in-person interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted in a private office or space in the department of the respondent. A couple of interviews occurred in the private office of the interviewer, a few took place at a food service venue on campus and two happened at non-work venues. Each interview began with some general chitchat to put both the respondent and the interviewer at

ease. The interviewer would then provide some background information about the study including the underlying theory and purpose of the research. Participants were then asked to read the following description of informal mentoring and state whether it described a relationship they had with a BCIT colleague:

Learning, helping, sharing, supportive, developmental or nurturing relationships where the participants invest time, know-how and effort in ways that enhance the knowledge, skill and professional capacity of one or both members of the partnership resulting in greater satisfaction, productivity or achievement in the work they do at BCIT.

If respondents agreed the definition described a relationship they had with a BCIT colleague, they were asked to read and sign the letter of informed consent. (Appendix 3). The interviewer then explained the structure of the interview. Respondents were told they would be asked about their mentoring relationship starting with some general background questions which would be followed by items related to the physical places, content and tone characteristic of the initial interactions. Respondents were told they would then be asked to answer these questions a second time related to the later stage of their partnership and this line of inquiry would be followed by some demographic items. The interviewer would then start asking the questions.

The questions were presented to each respondent in the same order. If questions needed to be rephrased or clarified, the interviewer attempted to use the same alternate wording. Responses to the closed and open-ended questions were recorded on the interview template by the interviewer. Responses to the open ended questions were recorded verbatim and were often read back to ensure what was recorded accurately reflected what was said. When it was time for participants to respond to the scaled items, the interview template was given to respondents to record their responses. Respondents were asked to read a question that corresponded with a series of scaled items, then circle the word or words for each item that best described their experience. When the respondents were finished, the interviewer would take back the interview template and continue by asking the next question. Each interview lasted approximately one hour.

Sampling Technique

The primary sampling technique used in the study was the snowball sampling technique. The snowball was initiated with people known by the interviewer who were engaged in an informal mentoring relationship at BCIT. The initial people contacted by the interviewer were from several different instructional and service departments at the Institute. To grow the snowball, at the end of each interview respondents were asked if the interviewer could contact the mentoring partner who had been the subject of the discussion. Respondents were also asked if they knew of anyone else at the Institute who might have an informal mentoring association with a BCIT colleague. An introductory e-mail was then sent to these individuals asking if they were involved in an informal mentoring relationship with a BCIT colleague and, if they were, would they be interested in participating in the study (Appendix 4). The interviewer would follow-up with each contact by calling two days after the initial e-mail had been sent to book an appointment to see the participant. Forty-four of the 75 people contacted agreed participate in the study.

The snowball sampling technique was employed because it was the most likely way people involved in mentoring relationships would be identified. Because the criteria for participation was involvement in an informal mentoring relationship, knowledge and awareness of this type of association would be greater among those who were involved in such a partnership. This technique also gave the interviewer the opportunity to contact potential respondents directly and encourage them to participate in the study.

A secondary sampling technique of volunteer selection was employed. A request for volunteers was posted on the Institutes' electronic announcement system. An announcement calling for volunteer participants was sent to every BCIT faculty and staff member with an e-mail account (Appendix 5). Four people responded to the announcement and offered to participate in the study. At the end of the interviews with the volunteer participants, they too were asked if their mentoring partner could be contacted and if they knew of anyone else at BCIT who might be involved in this type of a relationship. The volunteer selection technique was used to find participants and places to start several snowballs. Starting several snowballs with different people reduced the bias embedded in snowball sampling.

Data Analysis

Data collected through the interviews was initially entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. These data were later transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which was then used to analyze both the quantitative and the qualitative data. The responses for the qualitative questions were compiled and printed for analysis using Microsoft Excel.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The analysis of the quantitative data began with descriptive statistics for the numerical and scaled items. For each question, frequency, percent, number, mean (where applicable), and standard deviation were processed. Then, an exploration of the associations between some of the numerical and scaled item variables using crosstabulations was completed. Chi-square and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to identify the statistical significance of the associations. That is, to rule out that the associations between some of the variables that described the participants were due to chance alone.

Next, differences in the responses given for the scaled items by different constituents within the sample were explored. This was done by running an ANOVA for each scaled item using the variables of role (mentor, equal or mentee), gender composition of partnership (same-sex or cross-gendered), departmental relationship (same department or different department), reporting relationship to partner (partner is supervisor or partner is not supervisor), reporting relationship of partner (respondent is partners supervisor or respondent is not partners supervisor), hierarchy (respondent is senior, equal or junior to mentoring partner), and gender. This procedure was used to reveal differences in the conditions and interactions characteristic of the relationships studied. However, the respondents could not be defined by a single variable. For example, female respondents were not just women. They were women with a particular role within their partnership. To determine if consideration of several variables revealed differences in the experiences described by the responses given for the scaled items, two-way ANOVA's were run for each scaled item using combinations of variables such as role of respondent and gender of respondent, hierarchy within the relationship and role of respondent, and role of respondent and gender composition of the partnership.

The final phase in the quantitative data analysis was identifying differences in the features and characteristics of initial and later interactions. This was done using paired sample t-tests. Because the scaled items were used by respondents to describe their initial and later interactions were identical, the responses for the early interactions could be matched with the responses for the later interactions facilitating the t-test comparison.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

An inductive process of analysis was used to analyze the qualitative information gathered from the participants. When answering the open-ended questions, respondents provided one to four distinct statements. All statements were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet with each distinct response being entered into a separate cell. The analysis of the qualitative data was handled one question at a time, beginning with a reading of the responses for a given question. After the statements for the question were read, a series of descriptive themes that captured the meaning of what was being communicated, were identified. The responses for the question were read a second time and coded according to the identified descriptive categories. After the second reading of the responses and the first attempt to code them, adjustments were made to the coding scheme. The responses for each question were read again and coded according to the adjusted categories.

A clean set of data along with the descriptive themes for nine of the 18 questions was given to a second rater for coding. Agreement between the raters ranged from 73.2% to 86.8% with the average being 79.2%. This inter-rater reliability was slightly lower than the desirable 80% - 90%. The disagreement likely stemmed from the fact that many of the responses given were rather cryptic as they captured only a small part of a long, complex conversation about their experiences. Since one of the raters was the interviewer, she had greater insight into what was being communicated by the cryptic statements that the other rater would not have had, resulting in some coding disagreements.

The final step in the analysis of the qualitative data was to use SPSS to process response frequencies, percent and number for each question. Because respondents gave multiple responses for each question, this analysis was done using the multiple response function in SPSS. Like the analysis of the quantitative data, another

component of the qualitative data analysis was to identify and explore differences in the pattern of responses for different groups within the sample. Crosstabulations showing the numbers of responses for each descriptive theme for: mentors, equals and mentees; respondents in same-sex and cross-gendered partnerships; respondents in the same and different departments from their mentoring partners; respondents who were senior, equal or junior to their mentoring partners; and, female and male respondents, were compiled. Comparisons and conclusions were drawn from this analysis.

Threats to Validity

There are threats to validity embedded in the methodology utilized in the study - sample and reactive bias. The first threat to validity is sample bias. Given the nature of the research questions and the context in which the study was conducted, random sampling was not feasible. Participants were required to have a particular association with a colleague that could only be identified through direct contact or volunteer selection. As a result, snowball sampling and volunteer selection were the sampling techniques employed. The sample resulting from the use of these techniques may be biased. Participants recruited through the snowball technique are more likely to know one another, work in the same departments and have common traits. As a result, the sample may be comprised of similar people that are not representative of all faculty and staff members at BCIT, the target group. The secondary sampling technique utilized, volunteer selection, may also contribute to a biased sample. Those who volunteered may have particular traits or interests which could make them different from, and therefore non-representative, of the larger, target group. However, the influence of volunteer selection bias on the sample for this particular study would be very minor, as only four of the 48 participants (.08%) were volunteers.

Another threat to validity affecting this study is reactive bias. The official nature of the interview with the interviewer taking notes may have influenced the responses given by the participants. As well, what happened during the interview may also have affected the data collected. Responses given by participants may have been influenced by the background information provided at the beginning of the interview. They may also have been shaped by the tone of voice and facial expressions used by the interviewer as the questions were being asked and the responses were being recorded. The information

offered by respondents may also have been swayed by the way in which the interviewer read back the responses recorded or probed for more information. As a result, the threat to validity caused by reactive bias is embedded in the study.

Limitations to Generalizability

Any sample bias embedded in this research affects the generalizability of the findings within the site of the study. Because it is possible the sample is not representative of the target group, all faculty and staff members at BCIT, the conclusions based on the data collected must be made with caution. Nevertheless, it is likely the findings are representative because the sample is relatively large and is comprised of faculty and staff members from different departments, in different roles, engaged in different relationships.

There are also limitations to the more global generalizations that can be drawn from the findings of the study. The research was conducted within a single organization in the business of providing practical hands-on education at the post-secondary level. This organization is of a particular size, comprised of people with similar professional goals and ideas, and it has a unique institutional culture. What is learned from those who work in this environment is influenced by and reflective of this particular organization. Therefore it is possible the information gathered and conclusions drawn may not apply universally to organizations distinctly different from BCIT.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Information about Study Participants

The study sample consisted of 48 BCIT faculty and staff members. Of the 48 interviewees, 27 (56.3%) were women and 21 (43.6%) were men. At the beginning of their mentoring partnerships, the average age of respondents was 39 years ($SD = 9.56$). Respondents became involved in their relationships as young as 22 years and as old as 56 years. The most common age at which respondents became involved in mentoring was 42 years. Participants had worked at BCIT for an average 6.7 years when their associations began. For seven respondents, their relationships began immediately upon commencement of employment at BCIT while one respondent became involved after 24 years of service at the Institute.

There are four distinct employee groups at BCIT: Management, BCGEU Support Staff, BCGEU Faculty and Faculty and Staff Association Teaching and non-Teaching Faculty. As illustrated by Table 1, respondents from each employee group were interviewed. The number of people interviewed from each employee group was approximately proportional to the representative size of the group at the Institute.

Table 1

Employee Groups in Sample

Employee Group	Frequency	Percent of Sample	Institutional Representation
Management	7	14.6	9.7
BCGEU Support	13	27.1	30.9
BCGEU Faculty	6	12.5	17.6
Faculty & Staff	21	43.8	41.8
Total	48	100	100

BCIT has eight educational schools as well as numerous service groups and divisions. People from seven of the eight schools and several service groups were interviewed. However, not all schools and service groups were represented in the study. As well, there were some areas better represented than others. For example, there were more respondents from the School of Business than any other school and more from Student Services than any other service division.

Nature of the Mentoring Partnerships

Gender Composition of Partnerships

Thirty-three respondents (68.8%) had mentoring partners of the same sex while 15 (31.3%) had partners of the opposite sex. Table 2 shows female respondents were more likely than male respondents to have a partner of the opposite sex and that this association was not likely due to chance.

Table 2

Relationship between Respondent Gender & Gender Composition of the Partnerships

Gender of Partner	Gender of Respondent			Chi-Square		
	Female	Male	Total	Value	df	sig
Female	15	3	18	5.001	1	.025
Male	12	18	30			

Reporting Relationship within Partnerships

To learn if informal mentoring partnerships at BCIT formed between employees that had a reporting relationship, respondents were asked if they were supervisor or supervisee to their partner. At the beginning of their association, 31 (64.5%) respondents had no reporting relationship with their partner; they were neither supervised by nor supervisor to their partner. Seventeen respondents (35.4%) had some type of a reporting relationship with their partner. Of the 17 who had a reporting relationship with their partner, six (35.3%) were their partners' direct supervisor while 11 (64.7%) were supervised by their partner.

Hierarchy within Partnerships

Some notions of mentoring suggest partnerships form between senior and junior organizational members while others suggest these associations form between people with an identified difference in their level of skill or experience in a particular area (Kram, Parsloe & Wray, 2000). To test these assertions, respondents were asked to identify if the position they held at the beginning of their relationship was junior, equal or senior to that of their partner in terms of institutional hierarchy and level of responsibility. At the beginning of their associations, 22 (45.8%) were junior to, 16 (33.3%) equal to, and 10 (20.8%) senior to their partner.

Departmental Relationship

Within each school and service division at BCIT there are numerous departments. To determine if informal mentoring partnerships form more often between those working in the same or different departments, respondents were asked to identify if they worked in the same department as their partner. At the beginning of their associations, 33 (68.8%) worked in the same department while 15 (31.3%) worked in a different department from their partner. This finding indicates the physical proximity created by working together makes it easier for people to forge informal mentoring relationships.

Knowledge of the Relationship

Respondents were asked if their partner knew they regarded the relationship as mentoring. This question was asked to identify the level of awareness about these types of associations and how well they were articulated. Thirty-three (68.8%) respondents thought their partner would know they perceived the relationship to be mentoring while 15 (31.3%) indicated their partners probably did not know.

Duration of the Relationships

The mentoring relationships of respondents had lasted an average of 5.3 years ($SD = 4.45$). The most common duration was three years. Some respondents were involved in very long lasting relationships, with the longest being 20 years. Others were just beginning their mentoring partnerships so the duration of those relationships was much shorter with the shortest being .2 years or 2.4 months.

Role of Respondents

Mentors, Equals and Mentees

To describe their role within their mentoring partnership, respondents were given the following five-point scale:

Mostly the mentor	Somewhat the mentor	Equally mentor and mentee	Somewhat the mentee	Mostly the mentee
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This five-point scale was collapsed into three: mentors, equals and mentees. Mentor included 'mostly the mentor' and 'somewhat the mentor', equals refers to 'equally the

mentor and mentee', and mentee included 'mostly the mentee' and 'somewhat the mentee'. Twenty (41.7%) respondents described themselves as mentors, five (10.4%) as equally the mentor and mentee and 23 (47.9%) as mentees. Respondents who described themselves as being equally the mentor and mentee will be referred to as 'equals'.

Gender, Departmental and Role Relationships

Tables 3 and 4 reveal more about the mentors, equals and mentees who participated in the study including their gender; the departmental relationship they had with their partner, the gender composition within their partnership, their average age and their average years of service at BCIT. Table 3 shows that mentor, equal and mentee roles were the same regardless of gender, departmental relationship and gender composition of the partnership.

Table 3

Gender, Departmental and Role Relationships

	Role of Respondent			Chi-Square		
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Value	df	sig
Gender				1.606	2	.448
Female	10	2	15			
Male	10	3	8			
Dept. Relationship				.443	2	.801
Same Dept.	14	4	14			
Different Dept.	6	1	8			
Gender of Partnership				2.952	2	.229
Same-sex	14	5	14			
Cross-gendered	6		9			

Table 4 shows that when there was a clear mentor-mentee relationship, mentors were consistently older than their mentees by about 10 years. Respondents who identified themselves as mentors had worked at BCIT longer than equals and mentees. In summary, the mentors interviewed were older and had more years of service than mentees and equals.

Table 4

Age and Years of Service for Mentors, Equals and Mentees

	Role of Respondent			ANOVA		sig
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	df	F	
Age				2	6.838	.003
Mean	44	41	34			
Number	20	5	23			
SD	7.9	11.03	8.55			
Years of Service				2	7.765	.001
Mean	10.9	3.7	3.7			
Number	20	5	23			
SD	8.01	3.93	4.684			

Role and Reporting Relationship

To determine if mentors were more likely to be supervisors to their partners and mentees more likely to be supervised by their partners, respondents were asked about the reporting structure of their relationship. Of the 20 mentors in the respondent group, five (25%) were supervisors to their partners and 15 (75%) had no reporting relationship with their partner. No respondents in the role of mentor reported to their partner. Of the five equals, one (20%) was supervisor to their partner, one (20%) was supervised by their partner and the remaining three (60%), had no reporting relationship with their partner. Of the 23 mentees, ten (43.5%) reported to their partner and there was no reporting relationship for the remaining 13 (56.5%). Table 5 shows that when a reporting relationship existed, mentors were more likely to be supervisors to and mentees to be supervised by their partners. Equals were most likely to have no reporting relationship with their partner.

Table 5

Relationship Between Role and Reporting Structure within Partnerships

	Role of Respondent			Chi-Square		sig
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Value	df	
Reporting relationship to partner				11.475	2	.003
Supervisor	0	1	10			
Not supervisor	20	4	13			
Reporting relationship of respondent				6.400	2	.041
Supervisor	5	1	0			
Not supervisor	15	4	23			

Role and Hierarchy of Position

To test if there was an association between the status of the respondent and their role within the partnership, respondents were asked about the hierarchy of the positions they and their partner held. This association was explored to determine if mentors were more likely to be in positions senior to their partner and mentees in positions junior to their partner. Table 6 shows that it is significant 17 respondents in the role of mentee were in positions junior to their partner and eight in the role of mentor were in positions senior to their partner. This finding confirms respondents in the role of mentor were more likely to hold a senior position while those in the role of mentee were more likely to be in a junior position.

Table 6

Relationship Between Role and Hierarchy of Position

	Respondent Role			Value	Chi-Square	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee		df	sig
Hierarchy				18.788	4	.001
Partner is senior to me	3	2	17			
Partner is equal to me	9	1	6			
Partner is junior to me	8	2	0			

Initial Encounters

Places Where Partners Met

Most, 43 (91.5%), respondents met their mentoring partners at BCIT. Of the 43 respondents who met their mentoring partners at the Institute most, 31 (65.9%), were able to recall where this occurred. However, 12 of the 43 (25.5%) were not able to specify the location where they met their partner. Of the 31 respondents able to recall where they first met their mentoring partner, 26 (60.5%) met in their own or their partners office, three (6.9%) met in a classroom and two (4.6%) met in a meeting room. Two respondents (4.6%) met their partners at another organization before they started working at the Institute and another two (4.6%) met their partners at a clinical training site.

Timeframe for Development of Mentoring

To identify how quickly mentoring relationships begin after an initial meeting, respondents were asked when their partnership developed into mentoring. Respondents had known their partners for an average of three years before the relationships developed into mentoring. Mentoring began immediately for 10 respondents while the relationships of six participants started 10 or more years after the first meeting. One of these partnerships began 18 years after the initial meeting.

Number and Frequency of Initial Interactions

Knowing the number of interactions that initiate an informal mentoring relationship can determine if these associations begin suddenly or more slowly. When asked if their mentoring relationship developed as a result of a single or several interactions, only two respondents (4.2%) reported that their partnership began following a single interaction. Most respondents (95.8%) mentoring partnerships started after several interactions. Twenty-nine (60.4%) participants reported that their initial mentoring interactions were very regular in nature, typically daily, several times per week or weekly. Nineteen (39.6%) respondents had more sporadic interactions with their partner, occurring at irregular intervals whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Reasons Relationships Developed into Mentoring

In the workplace, people have regular or sporadic interactions with people all the time. So, what allows the association between two people to develop into something different from the relationship they have with others? To answer this question, participants were asked why they thought the relationship they had with their partner developed into mentoring. Respondents offered 119 responses with each providing one to four distinct reasons why they believed their relationship developed into mentoring.

The responses given fell into 11 themes: **circumstances** presented by the work environment, **traits** of the people involved, shared **similarities**, recognition of **expertise**, **sought involvement**, **compatibility**, recognition of **potential**, mutual **respect**, **receptiveness** to input, **willingness** to interact, and **attitude**.

The most common (15.9%) reason given by respondents was **circumstances** presented by the work environment. That is, there was something about the situation in which the members of the partnership found themselves which facilitated the development of their mentoring relationship as illustrated by, "I had new challenges which created opportunities for my mentoring partner in areas where I had experience", "there were time constraints and the more informal mentoring relationship lent itself well to the project" and "we were thrown together". The next most common (12.6%) explanation given by respondents was the personal **traits** of their mentoring partner. There were compelling characteristics, beliefs or behaviours in the other person that made the partnership possible, which was captured by respondents who said, "he believes in promoting women and wanted to do that", "because she is an excellent role model" and "because she is a very empowering person". **Similarities** (11.8%) and **expertise** (11.8%) were the next most common facilitators of the mentoring relationships. Shared **similarities** is the idea partners shared values, beliefs, goals, interests, ethics which was reflected by statements such as, "we were like minded", "we had similar backgrounds so we saw the world in similar ways" and "because I believe that philosophically we share similar perspectives". Recognition of **expertise** is the match between a learning need and existing expertise. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "she had some clear goals and I saw I could help her achieve these goals", "he had experience in this area" and "his broad experience and knowledge".

Other themes which explained why the acquaintanceships developed into mentoring partnerships included sought involvement, compatibility, recognition of potential, mutual respect, receptiveness to input, willingness to interact and attitude. The theme **sought involvement** is the notion that one member of the dyad actively sought guidance, input, information, collaboration which was captured by respondents who said, "he was a seeker – he wanted info and advice", "I actively pursued the guidance" and "he pushed to seek that type of a relationship". The theme **compatibility** acknowledges that the partners got along well and felt an affinity for one another which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "we discovered we worked well together", "chemistry" and "we got along". The theme recognition of **potential** refers to an acknowledgement of capacity for growth and development in the other person which was informed by respondents who said, "he saw potential in me", "she had faith in my abilities" and "he saw my

potential". The conceptual theme mutual **respect** refers to a developed regard for the other person, their work and their professional capabilities which was illustrated by statements such as, "I very quickly came to respect him through observing him in meetings" and "I had respect for how he got things done". **Receptiveness** to input pertains to a demonstrated willingness to hear suggestions and utilize advice which was reflected in statements such as, "I was very willing to hear what he had to say", "he was receptive to what I had to offer" and "his enthusiasm for learning how to teach and approach situations". **Willingness** to interact is a demonstrated desire to share knowledge and expertise which was illustrated by the statements, "willingness on his part to help-out a new colleague", "he sought counsel and I am not reluctant to give it" and "we got to know each other by talking about where I wanted to go and he took that and ran with it and suggested ways to achieve my goals". **Attitude** refers to something about the respondents themselves that made the partnership possible such as "my willingness to go beyond the minimum" and "I'm not judgmental". Table 7 summarizes the frequencies of the responses for each conceptual theme.

Table 7

Reasons Relationships Developed into Mentoring

Category	Count	Percent
Circumstances of work environment	19	15.9
Traits of partner	15	12.6
Shared similarities	14	11.8
Recognition of expertise	14	11.8
Sought Involvement	11	9.2
Compatibility	10	8.4
Recognition of potential	9	7.6
Mutual respect	8	6.7
Receptiveness to input	7	5.9
Willingness to interact	7	5.9
Personal attitude	5	4.2
Total	119	100.0

Differences in Reasons Relationships Developed into Mentoring

Study participants were different from each other and engaged in unique partnerships. To determine if this influenced the reasons why the relationships developed into mentoring, a comparison of the response patterns was made. The number of cases was contrasted with the number of responses given by: mentors, mentees, and equals; respondents in same-sex and cross-gendered partnerships; those in the same and those in different departments from their partners; participants that were senior, equal or junior

to their partners; and, men and women, for each theme. Obvious differences were noted. Table 8 shows some of the interesting differences in the response patterns including:

- Mentees gave more responses that fell into the traits theme than mentors and equals, 13-2-0 respectively.
- Respondents in same-sex partnerships gave more circumstance and similarities theme responses than those in cross-gendered partnerships, 12-1 and 11-3 respectively.
- Those with partners in the same department gave more circumstances and traits responses than those in departments different from their mentoring partner, 17-2 and 12-3 respectively.
- Respondents whose partner was in a position senior to them gave more responses that fell into the traits theme than those with a partner equal or junior to them, 11-3-1.
- Those in positions equal to their partner gave more similarities theme responses than those in positions junior or senior to their partner, 11-1-2 respectively.
- Female respondents gave more traits theme responses than male respondents. Male respondents gave more responses that fell into the similarities theme, 11-4 and 3-11 respectively.

Table 8

Response Patterns for Reasons Relationships Developed into Mentoring

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Circumstance	9	3	7	12	1	17	2	8	7	4	11	8
Traits	2	0	13	9	6	12	3	11	3	1	11	4
Expertise	9	0	5	8	5	7	7	4	5	4	9	5
Similarities	7	3	4	11	3	5	2	1	11	2	3	11
Sought	7	0	4	5	5	5	5	5	2	4	8	3
Compatibility	4	1	5	8	2	8	2	3	7	0	4	5
Potential	2	0	7	3	5	9	5	5	4	0	5	4
Respect	2	1	5	7	1	5	2	5	2	1	1	7
Receptive	5	0	2	5	2	5	2	2	3	2	4	3
Willingness	1	0	5	5	2	3	4	5	1	1	5	2
Attitude	2	0	3	5	0	1	4	1	4	0	3	2
Other	0	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	1	2	1
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

The theme "traits" was more important to respondents in a senior position within the mentoring relationship along with women and those in engaged in a partnership with someone from the same department. Circumstances played a more significant role in the development of mentoring relationships between partners of the same gender and

partners working in the same department. Similarities was more important to respondents in positions equal to their partner and to male respondents. These differences reflect the plurality of human experience.

Summary

The informal mentoring relationships of the respondents developed most often between co-workers who met in an office environment at the Institute. It was common for the partnerships to form between those who worked in the same department and interacted regularly. A reporting relationship between the partners was not common. However, when a reporting relationship existed, mentors were most likely to be supervisors to their partner and mentees were most likely to be supervised by their partner. Although a reporting relationship was not common, there was likely to be a hierarchical difference in the positions held. Mentors were usually senior to and mentees junior to their partners.

The development of informal mentoring relationships among faculty and staff members at BCIT was facilitated by: conditions of the work environment; circumstances in which the members of the partnerships found themselves; recognition and admiration of another person's traits; a match between an identified learning need and established skills or expertise; and, identification of similar beliefs, values, interests and goals.

What are the situations that bring potential mentoring partners together? How do people come to know things about their partners that encourage them to engage in mentoring with that person? Chapter Five examines the locations where mentoring partners interact and what happens in those places. This examination will facilitate an understanding of how potential mentoring partners make connections that lead to the development of such partnerships.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PLACE, CONTENT, ACTIVITIES AND TONE OF INITIAL MENTORING INTERACTIONS

Introduction

Interactions that initiate and establish informal mentoring relationships are complex and multifaceted. Deconstructing these interactions into components and examining each will reveal the nature of initial mentoring exchanges. This examination of initial mentoring interactions breaks the exchanges into four distinct components – place, activities, content and tone. The features and contribution of each component are explored and reported here. Using this information, the exchanges are reconstructed resulting in a rich description of what happens between mentoring partners during their initial interactions. This thick description is intended to provide insight into how and informal mentoring relationships begin.

Places Where Informal Mentoring Relationships Began

It has been established that informal mentoring relationships among faculty and staff members at BCIT form after several interactions. These interactions have a physical context. This section explores that context and the influence of place on the development of mentoring partnerships. The purpose is to understand the role of physical place in bringing mentoring partners together and how it helps people make connections that facilitate the development of mentoring.

Physical Places

When asked where their initial mentoring interactions occurred, respondents provided 100 responses that fell into 10 categories: **office, shared office, phone, on-campus eating establishments, recreational facilities, meeting rooms, educational settings, public spaces on-campus** and **departmental areas**.

The **office** category refers to private or semi-private (shared with one other person) offices. **On-campus eating establishments** includes all cafeterias, snack bars, pubs

and coffee lounges at any BCIT campus. **Shared offices** refers to offices shared by the mentoring partners. The **phone** is the telephone. The **educational settings** category includes classrooms, labs, shops and clinical training sites. **Off-campus eating establishments** includes restaurants, pubs and bars off BCIT property. The **meeting rooms** category includes meeting and convention rooms at any BCIT campus. **Public space** on-campus refers to hallways, parking lots, outdoor walkways and outdoor spaces on BCIT property. The **recreational facilities** category refers to all campus recreational facilities including the gym, racquet courts, playing field, and tennis courts. The **departmental areas** category includes all shared departmental spaces such as photocopy or workrooms. Responses given by participants were typically one-word that matched the identified categories. Many respondents provided more than one response indicating initial mentoring interactions occurred in multiple locations.

Places of Initial Interactions

Initial mentoring interactions between respondents and their partners occurred in a variety of locations. Most commonly (38.8%) the initial interactions occurred in a private or semi-private office of the respondent or their partner. On-campus eating establishments were also a frequent location for interaction with 12.2% of the partners initial encounters occurring at a BCIT food service venue. It was also common for the initial interactions to occur in an office shared by the partners. Ten of the 100 responses (10.2%) fell into this category. Table 9 summarizes the frequencies of responses for each category.

Table 9

Locations Where Initial Mentoring Interactions Occurred

Category	Count	Percent
Private or semi-private office	38	38.8
On-campus eating establishment	12	12.2
Shared Office	10	10.2
Phone	8	8.2
Educational Setting	8	8.2
Off-campus eating establishment	5	5.1
Meeting room	5	5.1
Public spaces on-campus	5	5.1
Campus recreational facilities	4	4.1
Around Department	3	3.1
Total	98	100

Differences in Place of Initial Interactions

The physical environment in which this study was conducted was an educational institution with buildings filled with classrooms, meeting rooms and offices. This context limited the number of possible locales for mentoring interactions. To verify there was not a great deal of variety in the places where exchanges between mentoring partners occurred, a comparison of the response patterns was made. Table 10 shows the responses were fairly evenly distributed supporting the notion that the places where initial mentoring interactions occurred was very similar for participants. However, there were some notable differences, including the following:

- No respondents in cross-gendered partnerships had their initial interactions in a shared office or a recreational setting.
- Initial interactions between mentoring partners in departments different from each other did not occur in shared offices or educational settings, instead they were more likely to occur in meeting rooms and recreational settings.
- The initial interactions of female respondents and their partners were less likely to occur in recreational settings than those of male respondents and their partners.

Table 10

Response Patterns for Locations Where Initial Mentoring Interactions Occurred

Category	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Office	18	3	17	25	13	23	15	16	13	9	18	20
On-campus	5	3	3	5	5	7	5	4	2	6	7	5
Shrd Office	4	2	4	10	0	9	1	3	5	2	5	4
Phone	5	0	3	4	4	5	2	4	1	3	4	4
Ed. Setting	3	1	4	7	1	8	0	3	4	1	3	5
Off-campus	3	1	1	4	1	2	3	1	2	2	2	3
Meeting	0	1	4	4	1	1	4	3	2	0	4	1
Public	2	1	2	4	1	3	2	1	4	0	1	4
Recreational	1	0	3	4	0	0	4	1	2	1	0	4
Dept.	2	0	1	1	2	3	0	2	1	0	3	0
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Although there were some differences in the patterns of where the initial interactions occurred, there were few substantial differences in the responses provided for the dominant categories. Because there are few differences in the number and distribution of responses for the dominant categories, it is suggested the encounters which initiate an informal mentoring relationship at BCIT are most likely to occur in a private or semi-private office, at an eating establishment on campus or in a shared office.

Significance of Place

Even though there are identifiable patterns to where informal mentoring relationships begin at BCIT, these locations may be insignificant to the development of a partnership. That is, the locations may be of no help to potential partners in making the physical and cognitive connections that facilitate the development of these associations. However, when asked if they believed the location of their initial mentoring interactions was significant to the development of their partnership, most respondents (83%) thought place was important. The following section explores the ways in which place was significant to the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Reasons Physical Place was Significant

The location of initial mentoring interactions was significant for reasons that fell into 9 conceptual themes: offered **privacy**, offered **convenience**, surroundings were **comfortable**, **NOT**, places were **relevant** to partnership, facilitated **regular** interaction, facilitated **getting acquainted**, allowed for **uninterrupted** interaction, and revealed **expertise**. Table 11 summarizes the frequencies of responses for each conceptual theme.

Table 11

Reasons Locations of Initial Mentoring Interactions were Significant to the Development of Mentoring

Theme	Count	Percent
Offered privacy	17	23.3
Offered convenience	14	19.2
Comfortable	11	15.1
NOT	9	12.3
Relevant to partnership	7	9.6
Regular interaction	5	6.8
Facilitated getting acquainted	5	6.8
Uninterrupted interaction	3	4.1
Revealed expertise	2	2.7
Total	73	100.0

The privacy offered by the locations where the initial interactions occurred was of greatest significance (23.3%) to the development of mentoring. **Privacy** is the notion place permitted private, one-on-one, confidential interactions which allowed for a freedom of expression. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "the key is that the interactions were between the two of us only", "privacy and confidentiality" and "allowed for freedom in what was discussed". The seclusion created by private and

semi-private offices, food service venues and shared offices allowed the mentoring partners to engage freely in candid discussions. Privacy was of such fundamental importance in the development of informal mentoring, one respondent and his partner would leave their work environment so they could engage in private conversation. "We had adjacent offices but they were two person offices which detracted from us having private conversations so we would leave the building".

The convenience offered by the places where the initial interactions occurred was of the next greatest importance (19.2%). **Convenience** is the idea close physical proximity made interacting easy, which was suggested by the statements, "our common work place offered convenience", "because we were conveniently accessible to each other" and "because where we met was so convenient it happened naturally". Being able to interact without having to go far or make complicated arrangements was helpful to the development of the mentoring relationships studied because it made interaction simple.

The third most common (15.1%) reason place was significant to the development of the relationships was comfort with the physical surroundings. The surroundings were **comfortable** is the notion the environment in which the interactions occurred set a tone for informal, relaxed, comfortable exchange. This was captured by statements such as, "meeting in his office regularly created a comfortable rapport", "they were relaxed environments for natural tendencies to show through" and "we were both comfortable with our surroundings". Although respondents talked about the comfort created by the physical environment, there was no mention of the esthetics, such as acoustics, lighting, smell, colour, or layout, of the locations.

It should also be noted that 12.3% of the responses indicated place was not significant, making it the fourth most common reason. The **NOT** theme suggests the mentoring relationship would have developed regardless of where the interactions occurred as demonstrated by, "it wasn't, it would have developed regardless of place" and "it wasn't, it would have happened and developed regardless of where because I saw characteristics I admired in him".

Relevant to the partnership, regular interaction, facilitated getting acquainted, uninterrupted interaction and revealed expertise were other themes used by

respondents to describe the significance of place in the development of mentoring.

Relevant to the partnership is the idea the place was pertinent to the purpose of the relationships which was illustrated by, "let me see what I wanted to do" and "a reminder of why I was there". The conceptual theme facilitated **regular** interaction refers to the close physical proximity allowing the partners to have regular interactions which was described by, "close proximity allowed us minute by minute interaction", "being close together gave the opportunity to ask questions and interact regularly" and "close proximity so I did have to have daily interactions with her". Facilitated **getting acquainted** is the notion of place creating opportunities for partners to get to know one another as illustrated by "discovered that we worked well together", "we got to see each other in action all the time" and "I got to know her". **Uninterrupted** refers to the environment allowing for discussion and interaction free from disruption which was informed by statements such as, "the fact that we had a place that had space and we wouldn't be interrupted was good" and "there were never interruptions". Revealed **expertise** is the idea the places where the interactions occurred created opportunities for demonstration of relevant knowledge, expertise and understanding which was described by, "gave me confidence that they had the knowledge I was looking for".

Differences in Significance of Place

The respondent group consisted of individuals with unique traits and experiences. Table 12 shows the impact of these variables on the reasons given for why the place where the interactions occurred was significant. The importance of place was similar for most groups represented in the sample. As would be expected there were a few notable differences, including the following:

- Those in cross-gendered partnerships gave fewer responses that fell into the private and convenient themes.
- Respondents in departments different from their mentoring partner gave no responses that fell into the convenient theme. Being in different departments does not afford the close physical proximity that facilitates convenient interaction.
- Respondents in positions junior or equal to their partner gave no responses that fell into the relevant theme in comparison to those in positions senior to their partner.

Variance in responses reflects the diversity of human experience. Most respondents, but not all equally, identified privacy, convenience and comfort as the most important reasons why place was significant to the development of their mentoring relationships.

Table 12

Response Patterns for Reasons Place was Significant to Development of Mentoring

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Private	11	0	6	14	3	12	5	5	7	5	9	8
Convenient	5	3	6	12	2	14	0	6	7	1	8	6
Comfortable	3	1	7	8	3	6	5	5	6	0	4	7
NOT	4	1	4	7	2	6	3	3	2	4	3	6
Relevant	1	0	6	3	4	4	3	7	0	0	6	1
Regular	3	1	1	4	1	4	1	1	2	2	5	0
Acquainted	2	0	3	4	1	3	2	3	1	1	4	1
Uninterrupted	1	0	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	0	3	0
Expertise	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	0
Other	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	3
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Discussion of Place

Initial mentoring interactions were most likely to occur in private or semi-private offices, eating establishment's on-campus or in offices shared by mentoring partners because these places offer privacy, convenience and comfort. Although not mentioned by respondents, these locations may also facilitate mentoring relationships because they are places where people have unstructured time allowing for discussion and interaction. For example, faculty members with teaching responsibilities are required to spend a large portion of their working day in a classroom, lab or shop. Despite the amount of time spent in these locations, they were not the places where faculty members mentoring relationships began. Instead, the initial exchanges between mentoring partners occurred in locations that offered both time and conditions conducive to one-on-one interaction. This suggests it may not be the physicality of the place that is significant to the development of mentoring relationships but rather what the locations allow to happen.

Activities and Initial Mentoring Interactions

Knowing where initial mentoring interactions occur and the significance of these locations describes one component of how partners connect and establish their association. What mentoring partners do together is another part of the story. It is

simplistic to believe mentoring relationships begin simply because people are proximal to each other in private, convenient and comfortable places. To make the intellectual and emotional connections that fuel a mentoring relationship, the partners must be engaged with each other in some way. This section explores the ways in which mentoring partners engage with each other during their initial interactions and the importance of these activities to the development of their partnerships.

Initial Mentoring Activities

Nature of the Activities

To examine if the activities that initiate informal mentoring relationships were work related, social or recreational in nature, respondents were asked to describe what they did with their partners early on in the partnership. One might expect informal activities that create relaxed environments and allow people to make meaningful, personal connections to be characteristic of initial mentoring interactions. Responses to a series of scaled items indicate the activities illustrative of the initial interactions were actually work related, rarely recreational and sometimes social. These findings reveal the basis of the mentoring associations studied was work and these relationships began in a structured work environment. Table 13 outlines the items used by respondents to describe the activities they engaged in with their mentoring partners.

Table 13

Work, Recreational and Social Activity Frequency During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Work Related			48	4.27	.792
Never work related	1	2.1			
Rarely work related	0	0.0			
Sometimes work related	4	8.3			
Often work related	23	47.9			
Always work related	20	41.7			
Recreational			48	2.17	.953
Never recreational	14	29.2			
Rarely recreational	16	33.3			
Sometimes recreational	14	29.2			
Often recreational	4	8.3			
Always recreational	0	0.0			
Social			48	2.56	.796
Never social	4	8.3			
Rarely social	18	37.5			
Sometimes social	21	43.8			
Often social	5	10.4			
Always social	0	0.0			

Differences in Initial Mentoring Activities

Given the plurality of human experience, one would expect some differences in the response pattern for the various groups represented within the sample. Interestingly, there were no significant differences found. Respondents, regardless of their role, their gender, the status they held within the partnership and the reporting relationship they had with their partner, described the activities in very similar ways. The activities were often work related, rarely recreational and sometimes social. Tables 14 and 15 show a series of comparisons made to explore possible differences in response patterns and the findings of these comparisons. Table 14 shows the influence of single variables on the response pattern descriptive of the early interactions. Table 15 shows the interaction effects for several of the variables addressed in Table 14.

Table 14

Differences in Work, Recreational and Social Activity Frequency During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Scaled Item	Variable of Analysis			ANOVA		
	<u>Role</u>					
Activity	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	df	F	sig
Work related	4.45	3.80	4.22	2	1.477	.239
Recreational	2.10	3.00	2.04	2	2.270	.115
Social	2.65	2.80	2.43	2	.629	.538
	<u>Gender Composition of Partnership</u>					
Activity	Same-sex		Cross-gendered	df	F	sig
Work related	4.27		4.27	1	.001	.981
Recreational	2.30		1.87	1	2.219	.143
Social	2.55		2.60	1	.047	.829
	<u>Departmental Relationship</u>					
Activity	Same		Different	df	F	sig
Work related	4.15		4.53	1	2.472	.123
Recreational	2.15		2.20	1	.026	.872
Social	2.58		2.53	1	.029	.866
	<u>Reporting Relationship to Partner</u>					
Activity	Partner is supervisor		Partner is not supervisor	df	F	sig
Work related	4.17		4.24	1	.193	.663
Recreational	2.00		2.22	1	.431	.515
Social	2.36		2.62	1	.888	.351
	<u>Reporting Relationship of Partner</u>					
Activity	Partner's supervisor		Not partner's supervisor	df	F	sig
Work related	4.17		4.29	1	.116	.735
Recreational	2.00		2.19	1	.206	.652
Social	2.33		2.60	1	.562	.457
	<u>Hierarchy</u>					
Activity	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	df	F	sig
Work related	4.18	4.37	4.30	2	.275	.761
Recreational	2.14	2.31	2.00	2	.342	.712
Social	2.64	2.44	2.60	2	.294	.747
	<u>Gender of Respondents</u>					
Activity	Female		Male	df	F	sig
Work related	4.37		4.14	1	.974	.329
Recreational	2.04		2.33	1	1.146	.290
Social	2.56		2.57	1	.005	.946

Table 15

Variations in Work, Recreational and Social Activity Frequency During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Variables of Analysis			ANOVA		
Activity			df	F	sig
Activity	Work related	Role of respondent and gender of respondent	2	.119	.888
	Recreational		2	.059	.943
	Social		2	.157	.856
Activity	Work related	Hierarchy within relationship and role of respondent	3	.867	.466
	Recreational		3	.224	.879
	Social		3	.706	.554
Activity	Work related	Reporting relationship to partner and role of respondent	1	.355	.555
	Recreational		1	.119	.732
	Social		1	.742	.394
Activity	Work related	Reporting relationship of partner and gender of respondent	1	.181	.673
	Recreational		1	.288	.594
	Social		1	3.522	.067
Activity	Work related	Role of respondent and gender composition of partnership	1	1.710	.198
	Recreational		1	.044	.836
	Social		1	.842	.262

Specific Activities Characteristic of Initial Interactions

To better understand the work, recreational and social activities characteristic of the initial interactions, respondents were asked to use their own words to describe what they did with their partners early on in the relationship. The activities respondents engaged in with their mentoring partners fell into eight categories: **discussions** and conversations, working on **work projects**, **sharing food and drink**, completion of **work assignments** and duties, attending **meetings**, **recreational** activities, **social** activities and **training**.

The **discussions** category was informed by respondents who said, "sit around the office and talk", "discussions about work", and "seeking advice". The **work projects** category was reflected in statements such as "planning program implementation", "working on work projects" and "setting plans". Respondents who said, "went for lunch" and "going for coffee and eating", described the **sharing food and drink** category. The attending **meetings** category was illustrated by respondents who said, "committee meetings", "formal meetings" and "observation of meetings". The **training** theme was informed by respondents who said, "one-on-one training", and "discussed procedures in the department". Completion of **work assignments** and duties was described by statements such as, "daily work activities", "info sessions", and "specific tasks". The **recreational** activities category was reflected when respondents said, "played

racquetball", "running", and "played sports". The **social** activities category was captured by respondents who said, "went to dinner or a show", "social activities", and "go for a smoke". Table 16 shows the frequency of responses for each category.

Table 16

Specific Activities Characteristic of Initial Mentoring Interactions

Category	Count	Percent
Discussions	36	28.8
Work projects	35	28.0
Sharing food & drink	16	12.8
Meetings	11	8.8
Training	9	7.2
Work assignments	8	6.4
Recreational	5	4.0
Social	5	4.0
Total	125	100

As illustrated in Table 16, the most common (28.8%) way in which respondents engaged with their mentoring partner during their initial interactions was through discussion, a rather informal and unstructured medium. Working on projects, a more structured activity, was almost an equally common (28.0%) activity for the respondents to engage in with their partner. Sharing food and drink was the third most common activity for the partners to engage in, followed by attending meetings. Most respondents provided 2-3 responses that fell into 2 or more categories indicating that there were a variety of activities characteristic of the initial interactions. These activities were planned and structured or informal and unstructured.

Differences in Specific Activities

The descriptive responses given by participants to explicate the activities characteristic of their initial interactions were examined to reveal any differences that might exist. One would expect the initial mentoring activities between people in the same department might be different from those between people from different departments or, the activities characteristic of a same-sex mentoring partnerships could be different from those of cross-gendered partnerships. Through a comparison of the total cases to the responses for each theme, differences in the response patterns were identified. As illustrated by table 18, there were many similarities and few differences in the activities that initiated the relationships. Differences worthy of note include:

- Respondents in cross-gendered partnerships gave fewer work project responses than those in same-sex partnerships.
- Respondents in cross-gendered partnerships also gave fewer responses that fell into the training category than those in same-sex partnerships, which may be attributable to the departmental or reporting structure of the cross-gendered partnerships.
- Respondents in departments different from their mentoring partner gave fewer training responses than those in the same department as their partner likely because a person from another department would not have the knowledge and skills required for hard skill training.

Table 17

Response Patterns for Initial Mentoring Activities

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Discussions	11	4	12	22	14	26	10	20	11	5	26	10
Wrk. Projects	18	5	12	29	6	23	12	13	12	10	18	17
Food & drink	7	3	6	9	7	9	7	7	5	4	8	8
Meetings	5	2	4	7	4	5	6	5	3	3	5	6
Training	6	0	3	8	1	8	1	3	5	1	4	5
Assignments	4	1	3	5	3	4	4	4	1	3	6	2
Recreational	2	0	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	0	1	4
Social	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	3
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Importance of Activities in the Development of Mentoring

Knowing that respondents engaged in discussions, work projects and the sharing of food and drink provides insight into how mentoring partners pass time together during their initial interactions. However, it does not explain how these activities facilitated the development of their partnerships. The purpose of this section is to explore and understand how the activities characteristic of the initial interactions between mentoring partners contributed to the development of their relationship.

Reasons Activities were Important

According to respondents, initial interaction activities were important to the development of informal mentoring relationships for reasons that fell into the conceptual themes of, fostered **relationship development**, highlighted **capabilities**, created opportunities for **support**, proved to be **helpful**, demonstrated **commitment**, developed **trust**, provided **sustenance**, facilitated **getting acquainted**, facilitated **discussion**, revealed

commonalties and established **respect**. As illustrated by Table 19, 128 responses informed the reasons activities were important to the development of informal mentoring relationships. Most respondents (39), provided 2-4 responses that fell into 2 or more themes while nine gave 1-2 responses that fell into a single theme suggesting the activities were important to the development of the mentoring partnerships for many reasons.

Table 18

Reasons Activities were Important to the Development of Mentoring

Themes	Count	Percent
Facilitated relationship development	17	13.3
Highlighted capabilities	16	12.5
Opportunities for support	15	11.7
Proved helpful	12	9.4
Demonstrated commitment	12	9.4
Developed trust	11	8.6
Provided sustenance	11	8.6
Facilitated getting acquainted	10	7.8
Facilitated discussion	9	7.0
Revealed commonalties	9	7.0
Established respect	6	4.7
Total	128	100

The most common (13.3%) reason the activities were meaningful in the development of the mentoring relationship was they fostered **relationship development**. This theme refers to the activities giving the partners an opportunity to establish the basis of their relationship including their style of communication and the reasons they were engaging with each other. This theme was reflected by respondents who said, "helped to develop a personal relationship", "developed a partnership" and "provided an informal, safety net of trust where we could develop our own forms of communication". The next most common (12.5%) reason activities were significant was demonstration of **capabilities**. Engaging in activities together gave the mentoring partners the opportunity to see and assess each other's capabilities. If the demonstrated capabilities met expectations, the participants were probably more likely to invest some resources in the partnership. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "understood the politics of the institute", "it built confidence that he was competent and had something to offer" and "established that I had knowledge and expertise that could help her". The third most common (11.7%) reason the activities were important was they created opportunities for **support**. Meaning, engaging in activity together created opportunities for support,

encouragement, feedback and teaching which was informed by respondents who said, "we encouraged each other", "provided her with support and acknowledgement that she could do this job", and "creates teachable moments".

Other reasons engaging in activity was important included, it proved to be helpful, demonstrated commitment, developed trust, provided sustenance, facilitated getting acquainted, facilitated discussion, revealed commonalties and established respect. Proved **helpful** means the activities created opportunities to work on finding solutions and experience success which was described by respondents who said, "saw value in combining ideas and saw the pay-off", "my goals were met" and "he saw the success of the strategies which made his life easier". Demonstrated **commitment** is an evident willingness or receptiveness to being involved in a mentoring partnership which was described by respondents who said, "he was willing to be supportive and provide feedback", "indicated she was a happy recipient of feedback" and, "it showed me she was willing to share her knowledge and I was able to ask any questions I needed to". Developed **trust** refers to the development of a faith in one another which was illustrated by respondents who said, "developed confidence and discretion", "built trust through experience", and "created a sense of trust". Provided **sustenance** is the notion the activities themselves presented experiences and issues for discussion as illustrated by "provided fodder for the relationship", "presents issues for investigation", and "were at the heart of the relationship". Facilitated **getting acquainted** is the idea activities created opportunities for the partners to get to know each other including traits, characteristics and behaviours which was illustrated by respondents who said, "allowed us to get to know each other", "getting to know him on a different level", and "it was an opportunity to get to know him". Facilitated **discussion** refers to the activities creating time for conversation and dialogue which was illustrated by respondents who said, "opportunities were there for us to talk and we used them", "extended periods of uninterrupted time to discuss issues", and "gave us time to talk about things". The conceptual theme revealed **commonalties** suggests activities drew out common interests, experiences, beliefs, values and goals which was informed by respondents who said, "identified that we had similar ideas and beliefs", "we discovered how much we had in common", and "discovered that we shared personal characteristics and values which helped". The conceptual theme established **respect** is the notion activities helped to develop a mutual regard and esteem which was informed by respondents who said,

"spent time talking about work issues because we respected each others opinions", "we developed a mutual respect for each other" and "admiration and respect for one another developed".

Differences in Reasons Activities were Important

To test if there were differences in the contribution of activities to the development of mentoring, the response pattern for each theme was analyzed. Table 19 shows there were very few meaningful differences. The reasons activities were important to the development of their mentoring relationship were given fairly evenly by respondents, regardless of their gender, their role, the status of their position in comparison to that of their partner and the departmental relationship they had with their partner. Differences worth noting include the following:

- Respondents in cross-gendered partnerships gave fewer responses that fell into the capabilities and support themes than one would expect in comparison to respondents in same-sex partnerships.
- Respondents in the same department as their partner gave more support and respect responses those in departments different from their partners.
- Male respondents gave no respect responses in comparison to six given by female respondents.

Table 19

Response Patterns for Importance of Activities

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Relationship	11	1	5	11	6	12	5	5	7	5	7	10
Capabilities	6	0	10	14	2	10	6	6	8	2	10	6
Support	6	3	6	13	2	13	2	8	4	3	10	5
Helpful	6	1	5	8	4	7	5	3	5	4	8	4
Commitment	3	0	9	9	3	9	3	5	6	1	6	6
Trust	8	1	2	8	3	6	5	3	5	3	5	6
Sustenance	6	2	3	8	3	7	4	5	2	4	7	4
Acquainted	4	1	5	7	3	6	4	5	4	1	6	4
Discussion	4	2	3	4	5	6	3	2	5	2	3	6
Common	5	1	3	7	2	7	2	3	5	1	4	5
Respect	2	1	3	5	1	6	0	4	1	1	6	0
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

The noted differences show that although there are dominant reasons engaging in activity contributes to the development of mentoring, these explanations cannot be said

to describe the experiences of all respondents. For example, the opportunity for support was a more significant variable in the development of mentoring for respondents in same-sex partnership and those in the same department as their partner. However, the notable differences occur in less dominant conceptual themes indicating activities influenced the development of informal mentoring relationships in similar but not identical ways for the participants.

Discussion of Activities

There were distinguishable patterns in the activities characteristic of initial mentoring interactions and the importance of these. Activities that initiated the informal mentoring relationships were most often work related. These work-related activities were typically discussions about work issues. Other common work-related activities included working on projects and attending meetings. Initial mentoring activities also involved social pastimes such as going for lunch or coffee. Although not as common, some mentoring partners engaged in recreational activities, such as playing sports or running, during their initial interactions. Engaging with each other through these activities helped the partners establish the foundation of their relationship. It also gave the partners the opportunity to demonstrate and observe professional and personal capabilities, establishing both worthiness and confidence. Doing things together also created opportunities to either give support or be the recipient of support, which facilitated positive experience generating a sense of well being and feelings of empowerment. The activities mentoring partners engaged in during their initial interactions allowed the participants to figure-out the basis of their connection, get to know and understand each other and, contribute positively to each other.

Content of Initial Interactions

Identifying the locations and what goes on in these places during initial mentoring encounters and understanding the ways in which place and activities contribute to the development of these associations thickens the description of how informal mentoring begins. However, the story is not yet complete. Understanding what partners talk about and work on as they engage with each other through work, social and recreational activities is the next chapter in the story of how mentoring relationships begin. The

purpose of this section is to investigate the substance of the initial interactions and identify how the content facilitates connections that foster a mentoring partnership.

Substance of Initial Discussions

Topics Mentoring Partners Discussed

One would expect the substance of discussions between mentoring partners to be very diverse given the individuality of the respondents, their work and the relationships in which they were involved. To get a general sense of what mentoring partners talked about during their initial interactions, respondents were given a series of scaled items to describe the content of their discussions. The responses revealed the substance of the initial interactions was mostly work related. During these work related conversations the topics discussed were often related to opportunities, sometimes or often related to problems, sometimes related to interpersonal interactions, and sometimes related to technical skills. Table 20 outlines the items given to respondents to describe the content of their initial interactions and the frequency for each item.

Table 20

Content Saturation for Work and Non-work Discussions During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Work Related			48	4.38	.937
Mostly non-work related	1	2.1			
Somewhat non-work related	1	2.1			
Equally work and non-work	6	12.5			
Somewhat work related	11	22.9			
Mostly work related	29	60.4			
Opportunities			48	3.58	.710
Never related to opportunities	0	0.0			
Rarely related to opportunities	3	6.3			
Sometimes related to opportunities	17	35.4			
Often related to opportunities	25	52.1			
Always related to opportunities	3	6.3			
Problems			48	3.50	.715
Never related to problems	0	0.0			
Rarely related to problems	3	6.3			
Sometimes related to problems	21	43.8			
Often related to problems	21	43.8			
Always related to problems	3	6.3			
Interpersonal interactions			48	3.19	.734
Never related to interpersonal interactions	1	2.1			
Rarely related to interpersonal interactions	5	10.4			
Sometimes related to interpersonal interactions	27	56.3			
Often related to interpersonal interactions	14	29.2			
Always related to interpersonal interactions	1	2.1			
Technical Skills			48	3.02	.911
Never related to technical skills	2	4.2			
Rarely related to technical skills	12	25.0			
Sometimes related to technical skills	18	37.5			
Often related to technical skills	15	31.3			
Always related to technical skills	1	2.1			

Differences in Topics Discussed

Did mentoring partners working in the same department discuss different issues than those working in different departments? Did respondents in same-sex partnerships discuss different things than those in cross-gendered partnerships? To determine if these differences existed, the scale item response patterns were analyzed. Tables 21 and 22 show the comparisons and the results. Table 21 shows the influence of single variables on the response pattern descriptive of the early interactions. Table 22 shows the interaction effects between several of the variables addressed in Table 21. The findings indicate there were only a few significant differences in the ways respondents described the content of their initial interactions including the following:

- Mentors talked about problems with their mentoring partners more often than equals and mentees.

- Those in positions senior to their partner also discussed problems with their mentoring partners less than respondents in positions equal or junior to their partner.
- Female respondents discussed interpersonal interactions more than male respondents did.

Even with the statistically significant differences taken into consideration, the dominant response pattern still captures the experience of most respondents. There were not enough statistically significant differences on enough items to suggest that the dominant response pattern does not describe the content of the initial interactions between mentoring partners.

Table 21

Differences in Content Saturation for Work and Non-work Discussions During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Variable of Analysis				ANOVA		
Content Item	Mentor	Role Equal	Mentee	df	F	sig
Work	4.55	4.40	4.22	2	.667	.518
Opportunities	3.75	3.80	3.39	2	1.673	.119
Problems	3.80	3.40	3.26	2	3.418	.041
Interpersonal	3.25	3.40	3.09	2	.487	.618
Technical	3.05	2.80	3.04	2	.158	.854
<u>Gender Composition of Partnership</u>						
Content Item	Same-sex	Cross-gendered		df	F	sig
Work	4.36	4.40		1	.015	.902
Opportunities	3.55	3.67		1	.296	.589
Problems	3.55	3.40		1	.422	.519
Interpersonal	3.18	3.20		1	.006	.938
Technical	3.03	3.00		1	.011	.916
<u>Departmental Relationship</u>						
Content Item	Same	Different		df	F	sig
Work	4.36	4.40		1	.015	.902
Opportunities	3.58	3.60		1	.012	.914
Problems	3.55	3.40		1	.422	.519
Interpersonal	3.09	3.40		1	1.863	.179
Technical	3.06	2.93		1	.198	.658
<u>Reporting Relationship to Partner</u>						
Content Item	Partner is supervisor	Partner is not supervisor		df	F	sig
Work	4.27	4.41		1	.167	.685
Opportunities	3.45	3.62		1	.465	.499
Problems	3.18	3.59		1	2.946	.093
Interpersonal	3.27	3.16		1	.189	.666
Technical	2.64	3.14		1	2.632	.112
<u>Reporting Relationship of Partner</u>						
Content Item	Partner's supervisor	Not partner's supervisor		df	F	sig
Work	4.67	4.33		1	.660	.421
Opportunities	3.83	3.55		1	.848	.362
Problems	4.00	3.43		1	3.538	.066
Interpersonal	3.00	3.21		1	.442	.509
Technical	3.33	2.98		1	.804	.375
<u>Hierarchy</u>						
Content Item	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	df	F	sig
Work	4.27	4.25	4.80	2	1.320	.277
Opportunities	3.55	3.56	3.70	2	.167	.847
Problems	3.23	3.69	3.80	2	3.336	.045
Interpersonal	3.27	3.00	3.30	2	.781	.464
Technical	2.95	3.06	3.10	2	.109	.897
<u>Gender of Respondents</u>						
Content Item	Female		Male	df	F	sig
Work	4.30		4.48	1	.430	.515
Opportunities	3.48		3.71	1	1.279	.264
Problems	3.48		3.52	1	.041	.841
Interpersonal	3.44		2.86	1	8.825	.005
Technical	2.85		3.24	1	2.178	.147

Table 22

Variations in Content Saturation for Work and Non-work Discussions During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Variables of Analysis		ANOVA		
Content Item		df	F	sig
Work	Role of respondent and gender of respondent	2	.964	.390
Opportunities		2	1.510	.233
Problems		2	.028	.973
Interpersonal		2	1.206	.310
Technical		2	2.732	.077
Content Item		df	F	sig
Work	Hierarchy within relationship and role of respondent	3	.913	.433
Opportunities		3	1.482	.234
Problems		3	.282	.838
Interpersonal		3	.473	.703
Technical		3	.788	.508
Content Item		df	F	sig
Work	Reporting relationship of respondent and role of respondent	1	.334	.566
Opportunities		1	.043	.836
Problems		1	1.547	.220
Interpersonal		1	3.601	.064
Technical		1	2.373	.131
Content Item		df	F	sig
Work	Reporting relationship of partner and gender of respondent	1	.695	.409
Opportunities		1	.254	.617
Problems		1	.002	.966
Interpersonal		1	.091	.765
Technical		1	.038	.847
Content Item		df	F	sig
Work	Role of respondent and gender composition of partnership	1	.875	.355
Opportunities		1	.347	.559
Problems		1	2.677	.109
Interpersonal		1	1.059	.309
Technical		1	.473	.495

Details on the Content of Initial Discussions

Six scaled items could not capture the full diversity of topics and issues discussed by mentoring partners during their initial interactions. To better understand what types of opportunities, problems, interpersonal interactions and technical skills were discussed, respondents used their own words to describe the substance of their conversations. In describing the content of their initial mentoring discussions, respondents provided 141 responses which echoed the scaled item response pattern as 80% of the responses were specifically related to work activities, responsibilities and duties, 17% of were issues related to the workplace but not specifically about work, and 3% were about non-work issues. The descriptions provided by respondents could be categorized into ten themes: **conceptual** discussions, **educational** issues, **task completion**, **job tasks**, **work responsibilities**, **work systems**, **career** development and planning, **personal** issues, **interpersonal interactions**, capacity **development**.

As shown in Table 23, the discussions or work sessions were most often (20.6%) **conceptual**. These discussions would revolve around a topic area however, the intention of the conversation was not to solve a particular problem or learn how to do something specific. Instead, the discussion was a more general contemplation on and investigation of an issue which was illustrated by respondents who said, "critique the industry, we would rip it apart and fix it", "what do you think of...?", and "exploring how and why things happened". **Educational** issues, such as curriculum, teaching and students, were the next most common (19.9%) items discussed by respondents and their partners. This theme was informed by participants who said, "instructional practices", "how to address student issues", and "how to handle situations in teaching". The third most important (15.6%) conceptual theme reflected in the responses was **task completion**. This theme refers to strategies and techniques on how to complete a very specific task which was described when respondents said, "work related issues such as how to present proposals", "gave me direction on how to write" and "running a meeting and providing leadership for a group".

Table 23

Topics Discussed During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Theme	Count	Percent
Conceptual discussion	29	20.6
Educational Issues	28	19.9
Task completion	22	15.6
Job tasks	14	9.9
Work responsibilities	11	7.8
Work systems	11	7.8
Career planning	7	5.0
Personal issues	7	5.0
Interpersonal Interactions	6	4.3
Capacity development	6	4.3
Total	141	100.0

Other issues discussed included job tasks, work responsibilities, work systems, career planning, personal issues, interpersonal interactions and capacity development. Job **tasks** refers to work assignments and projects which was informed by respondents who said, "hiring instructors on short notice", marketing plans", "office organization". Work **responsibilities** included job responsibilities and duties which was described by, "responsibilities of the Program Head role such as registering students", "setting objectives for him and the job", and "daily tasks and job responsibilities". Work **systems** refers to navigation of departmental and institutional systems, which was informed by

respondents who said, "negotiating the institute bureaucracy", "discussed processes and institute culture" and "how things work at BCIT". **Career** planning and development refers to strategies for career growth and progression which was illustrated by statements such as, "helping me see an opportunity and prepare for it", "where I had been, where I wanted to go" and "career development and opportunities". **Personal** issues includes subjects related that individuals' own situation which was reflected by respondents who said, "our experiences", "our backgrounds including family" and "our backgrounds". **Interpersonal interactions** includes all discussions related exchanges and communications with others which was reflected by respondents who said, "how to develop partnerships with students and staff", "relationships" and "interpersonal interactions". Capacity **development** relates to strategies for skill and knowledge development which was informed by respondents who said; "confidence building", "my master's program" and "confidence building, encouraging her, making her believe she could do something even if she had doubts".

Variations in Content of Discussions

Possible differences in the substance of conversations between respondents and their mentoring partners were explored. One might expect some conceptual themes to be more common for some groups than others within the sample. Table 24 shows a series of comparisons that test this assertion. There were only a few noteworthy variations including:

- Respondents in cross-gendered partnerships gave fewer education-related responses in comparison to those in same-sex partnerships.
- Those in the same department as their mentoring partner gave significantly more education related responses than respondents in different departments. This difference likely existed because people from different instructional areas would be less apt to form a mentoring partnerships because they are neither physically nor functionally proximal to each other. Educational departments operate fairly independently from each other making it more difficult to make the connections that initiate mentoring relationships.
- Female respondents gave more task completion and job task responses than male respondents.

Overall, there was a great deal of consistency in the descriptions of what was discussed during initial mentoring interactions. The identified variations reflect the diversity of

human experience but do not undermine the presence of a dominant pattern which is the content of the initial exchanges was usually conceptual, education related and task oriented.

Table 24

Response Pattern for Topics Discussed During Initial Mentoring Interactions

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Conceptual	13	4	12	18	11	17	12	15	11	3	17	12
Ed. Issues	15	4	9	22	6	27	1	8	14	6	11	17
Task Compl.	9	1	9	12	7	11	8	8	6	5	13	6
Job Tasks	5	4	5	9	5	7	7	6	3	5	11	3
Responsibilit	5	1	5	9	2	9	2	5	3	3	9	2
Career	1	0	6	1	6	1	6	6	0	1	6	1
Personal	1	0	6	5	2	3	4	4	2	1	4	3
Interactions	3	0	3	4	2	2	4	1	3	2	2	4
Development	1	1	4	4	2	5	1	3	2	1	3	3
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Contribution of Content to Development of Mentoring

Many colleagues in higher education environments have conceptual discussions of work issues and conversations about educational issues. What was it about the discussion of these issues during their initial interactions that helped to establish the mentoring relationship? The purpose of this section is to answer that question and further the description of how mentoring relationships begin by articulating the contribution of content to the development of such associations.

Contribution of Content

The descriptions provided by participants of how of content contributed to the development of mentoring fit into the following eight themes: proved **helpful**, facilitated **understanding**, created **confidence**, established **respect**, **shared** values, developed **trust**, **comfortable** and demonstrated **interest**. Table 25 shows the frequency for each theme.

Table 25

Reasons Content of Initial Interactions was Significant to Development of Mentoring Relationship

Theme	Count	Percent
Proved helpful	32	26.4
Facilitated understanding	22	18.2
Created confidence	19	15.7
Established respect	12	9.9
Highlighted shared values	12	9.9
Developed trust	10	8.3
Comfortable	7	5.8
Demonstrated interest	7	5.8
Total	121	100.0

Mentioned most often (26.4%) by respondents was that what was discussed proved to be **helpful** to either member of the dyad. The discussions facilitated coping as well as stimulated growth and learning which was informed by respondents who said, "helped to develop creative solutions", "encouraged change", and "we started to see successes". The progress facilitated by the discussions would verify the utility of the partnership, justify the investment of resources and encourage further contributions, which helped the relationship move forward.

The next most cited (18.2%) reason was **understanding**. The issues discussed by the partners helped them to learn more about each other, developing a richer understanding of the others beliefs, values, goals, interests, motivations and behaviours. Through the topics discussed, the partners made connections that allowed them to establish a mentoring association which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "got to know each other very well so the relationship grows and strengthens", "learned how each other operated" and "helped me understand him and where he's coming from".

The third most common (15.7%) reason mentioned by respondents was **confidence**. Through the discussion of work and educational issues, respondents got the opportunity to learn their mentoring partner was knowledgeable, truthful, thoughtful and reliable which instilled a confidence in the person and the information they were sharing. This theme was illustrated by respondents who said, "once I discovered he was truthful and honest it confirmed I had picked the right person to seek advice from", "knowing my partner could make use of the resource – my expertise and experience", and "I found his suggestions and recommendations valuable".

The substance of the initial interactions contributed in other ways including establishing respect, identifying shared values, developing trust, creating comfort and demonstrating trust. Established **respect** refers to the development of mutual regard which was illustrated by statements such as, "came to respect him", "also helped develop our respect for each other" and "developed respect for him and the way he did things". **Shared** values refers to the discovery or confirmation of shared values, beliefs, ethics and interests which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "became clear that our beliefs lined-up", "found that we had things in common" and "we had similar goals and objectives". Developed **trust** is the establishment of faith in one another, which was informed by statements such as, "knew I could count on my mentoring partner and she would never let me down", "started to develop trust" and "developed trust". **Comfortable** is the notion the content allowed the partners to be at ease with each other which facilitated approachability. This was reflected by, "felt more comfortable sharing information and frustrations", "it made me comfortable asking for help in areas I needed help with", and "got more comfortable". Demonstrated **interest** refers to an evident receptiveness to helping or getting help through the relationship as described by, "I saw that he was interested in me so I felt I could ask for advice", "sent the message that she was supportive and cared about my work and me as an individual", and "demonstrated he was receptive".

The ways in which content contributed to the development of the partnerships were very similar to the reasons activities were important. The conceptual themes were given different names however, the underlying ideas for many of them were very similar. Even though the reasons activities and content were important contributing factors identified by respondents was similar, the response patterns were slightly different. Relationship development, capabilities and support, helpful and commitment were the most commonly mentioned reasons activities were important while helpful (similar to the conceptual theme helpful), understanding (similar to the conceptual theme getting acquainted), confidence (similar to the conceptual theme capabilities) were the most commonly cited reasons content was important. Figure 1 shows the parallels between themes and the differences in response patterns. For some respondents, activities were consequential for the reasons content was important for the majority of respondents and for some participants the content was crucial for the reasons most respondents thought the activities were important.

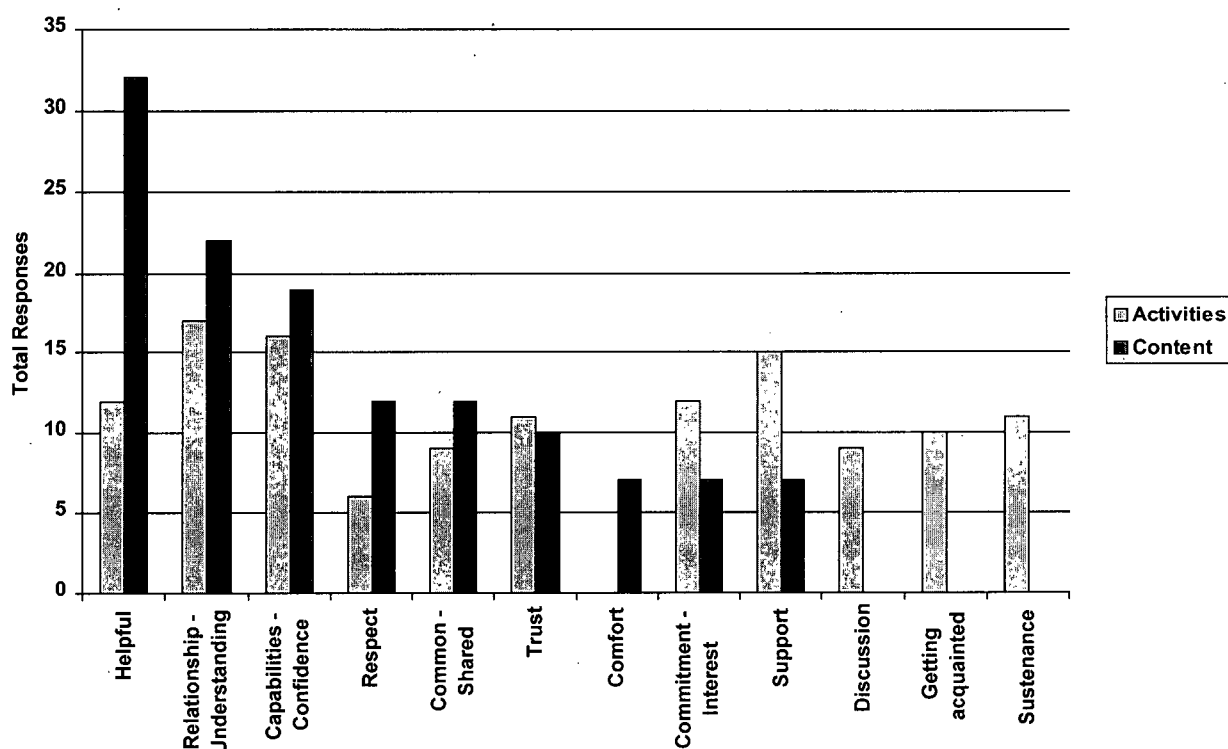


Figure 1. Impact of Activities and Content on Development of Mentoring

Differences in Reasons Content was Important

As suggested, not all respondents saw the contribution of content to the development of mentoring the same way. As such, one would expect some noticeable differences in how respondents described the influence of content on the development of their partnership. It was thought these differences might occur within the identifiable groups within the sample. To test this assertion, the responses given for each theme were compared with the total cases for various groups within the sample. The results of the comparisons are shown in Table 26. There were some notable differences in how respondents described the importance of content which are not reflected by the dominant response pattern including:

- For mentees, respect was given as a more common response than mentors and equals.
- Respondents in same-sex partnerships gave more understanding responses than those in cross-gendered partnerships.

- Interest was a more common reason given by respondents in the same department as their mentoring partner in comparison to those in different departments from their partners.
- Respondents that were junior to their mentoring partner gave no responses that fell into the respect category in comparison to those in positions equal or senior to their partner.
- Helpful was a more common reason given by female respondents in comparison to male respondents.

Table 26

Response Patterns for Contribution of Content to Development of Mentoring

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Helpful	17	1	14	20	12	22	10	15	12	5	21	11
Understand	10	4	8	18	4	16	6	14	4	4	12	10
Confidence	6	2	11	12	7	8	11	8	8	3	9	10
Respect	2	0	10	6	6	7	5	8	4	0	9	3
Shared	2	2	8	8	4	6	6	3	8	1	6	6
Trust	5	2	3	6	4	6	4	6	2	2	6	4
Comfortable	2	0	5	5	2	6	1	4	2	1	4	3
Interest	3	0	4	4	3	7	0	4	2	1	4	3
Other	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Although the differences are interesting, they are not substantial enough to challenge the presence of a dominant pattern that is reflective of the contribution of content to the development of informal relationships. However, these differences capture the variation of human experience and act as reminder that although identifiable dominant patterns are helpful in discussing general notions, they do not reflect the experiences of all people; particularly, when it comes to something as unique and personal as a mentoring partnership. This reinforces that informal mentoring relationships should be allowed to develop on their own and in their own way, and the role of facilitation should be limited to the creation of environments and conditions that can foster such natural tendencies.

Discussion of Content

When engaging in activities, mentoring partners discuss and work on issues that are meaningful to them. These topics were most often work related, and were dealt with in very conceptual ways. There was a general topic area, but there was no specific purpose or agenda for the discussion. For example, if problems or opportunities were

discussed, the conversation would not focus on exact solutions or specific opportunities. Instead, it would be a more general contemplation of and reflection on the issue. During their initial interactions, mentoring partners also dealt with very specific subjects. These were most often related to education and how to complete a task. Conversations about these topics contributed to the development of informal mentoring relationships in many ways. Most significantly, through discussion of subjects that were important and meaningful, the partners got to know each other in ways that allowed their association to develop into mentoring. For example, as educators, faculty members will hold fundamental beliefs and values about educational issues that guide their professional practice. Discussion of these issues during their initial interactions would be crucial to the development of a mentoring relationship. Because it is through discussion of such issues that philosophical positions will be revealed and where there is a match a connection will more likely be facilitated.

The ways in which content contributed to the development of mentoring were similar to the ways in which activities were important. This overlap likely occurred because separating what people talk about from what they are doing while they have those discussions is artificial. It is conceptually possible to separate activities from content however, experientially they may be difficult to distinguish. As a result, the reasons activities contribute to the development of an informal mentoring relationship were similar to the reasons content was important. The identified variance in the response pattern would suggest that although there were similarities in why activities and content help, there were differences in how they contribute. Activities helped get the relationship going by establishing a foundation, creating opportunities to assess qualifications for participation and facilitating assistance. Content helped by adding meaning to the connections made through engaging in activity together. It facilitated learning, growth, development and ultimately progress, it allowed for deeper understandings and connections, and it instilled confidence and belief.

Tone of Initial Interactions

Knowing the location, activities and substance characteristic of initial mentoring interactions and understanding how these variables contribute to the development of such relationships brings a complete description of the conditions that foster the development of these informal associations close. Identifying the tone of the initial interactions between partners will complete the description of how mentoring partners establish their relationships. The purpose of this section is to explore the tone of the interactions between mentoring partners and how it impacts developing partnerships.

Tone

The Nature of Initial Interactions

Interactions between people have an affective feel to them. There is an emotion or feeling embedded in the experience of an exchange. Tone refers to the characteristics of this feeling. It is meant to describe what initial interactions between mentoring partners are like and how they feel. Using a series of scaled items, the nature of the initial interactions was described as being not at all confrontational, very collaborative, rarely or sometimes pre-planned, somewhat instructive, initiated equally by the respondent and their mentoring partner, somewhat reciprocal, very illuminating, sometimes or often challenging, not at all unpleasant, very educational, somewhat serious and somewhat enjoyable. The initial interactions would also sometimes push respondents out of their 'comfort zone'. Table 27 outlines the items given to respondents to describe the tone of their initial interactions and the responses for each item.

Table 27
Intensity of Features Characteristic of Initial Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Confrontational	39	81.3	48	1.27	.664
Not at all confrontational	6	12.5			
Not very confrontational	2	4.2			
Somewhat confrontational	1	2.1			
Very confrontational	0	0.0			
Entirely confrontational	0	0.0			
Collaborative	0	0.0	48	3.44	8.38
Not at all collaborative	0	0.0			
Not very collaborative	7	14.6			
Somewhat collaborative	16	33.3			
Very collaborative	22	45.8			
Entirely collaborative	3	6.3			
Pre-planned	6	12.5	48	2.65	1.062
Never pre-planned	17	35.4			
Rarely pre-planned	16	33.3			
Sometimes pre-planned	6	12.5			
Often pre-planned	3	6.3			
Always pre-planned	0	0.0			
Instructive	2	4.2	48	3.27	.818
Not at all instructive	3	6.3			
Not very instructive	25	52.1			
Somewhat instructive	16	33.3			
Very instructive	2	4.2			
Entirely instructive	0	0.0			
Initiation	48	2.83	1.173		
Mostly initiated by me	6	12.5			
Somewhat by me	13	27.1			
Equally by me & partner	18	37.5			
Somewhat by partner	5	10.4			
Mostly by partner	6	12.5			
Reciprocal	1	2.1	48	3.17	.883
Not at all reciprocal	10	20.8			
Not very reciprocal	19	39.6			
Somewhat reciprocal	16	33.3			
Very reciprocal	2	4.2			
Entirely reciprocal	0	0.0			
Illuminating	1	2.1	48	3.4	.884
Not at all illuminating	6	12.5			
Not very illuminating	16	33.3			
Somewhat illuminating	23	47.9			
Very illuminating	2	4.2			
Entirely illuminating	0	0.0			

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Challenging	3	6.3	48	3.06	.998
Never challenging	11	22.9			
Rarely challenging	16	33.3			
Sometimes challenging	16	33.3			
Often challenging	2	4.2			
Always challenging	0	0.0			
Unpleasant	34	70.8	48	1.42	.739
Not at all unpleasant	9	18.8			
Not very unpleasant	4	8.3			
Somewhat unpleasant	1	2.1			
Very unpleasant	0	0.0			
Entirely unpleasant	0	0.0			
Educational	0	0.0	48	3.6	.765
Not at all educational	4	8.3			
Not very educational	15	31.3			
Somewhat educational	25	52.1			
Very educational	4	8.3			
Entirely educational	0	0.0			
Serious	1	2.1	48	3.08	.739
Not at all serious	7	14.6			
Not very serious	28	58.3			
Somewhat serious	11	22.9			
Very serious	1	2.1			
Entirely serious	0	0.0			
Push me out of my comfort zone	10	21.3	48	2.51	.997
Never push me out	10	21.3			
Rarely push me out	20	42.6			
Sometimes push me out	7	14.9			
Often push me out	0	0.0			
Always push me out	0	0.0			
Enjoyable	0	4.2	48	3.88	.733
Not at all enjoyable	2	20.8			
Not very enjoyable	10	58.3			
Somewhat enjoyable	28	16.7			
Very enjoyable	8	0.0			
Entirely enjoyable	0	0.0			

Variations in Tone

The descriptions of the tone provided by respondents were examined to determine if individual difference influenced the responses. It was thought the traits and characteristics of the respondents and the nature of the partnerships in which they were involved might influence the responses. Female and male respondents might describe the tone differently; mentors, equals and mentees could have different experiences; and, the tone of the interactions between partners in the same department may be unique from the tone between those in different departments. However, this was not the case. Tables 28 and 29 show a series of comparisons made to test the assertion there would be differences in the response patterns. Table 28 shows the influence of single variables on the response pattern descriptive of the early interactions. Table 29 shows the interaction effects between several of the variables addressed in Table 28. The results captured in the tables show there were only a few significant differences. The significant differences include the following:

- The tone of the initial interactions was more instructive for respondents in the role of equal in comparison to mentors and mentees.
- The tone was more confrontational for respondents whose partner was their supervisor.
- Tone was more serious for respondents who supervised their mentoring partner.
- Tone was also more serious for respondents who were in positions senior to their mentoring partner.
- Interactions pushed respondents in positions equal to their mentoring partner out of their comfort zone the least in comparison to those in positions senior or junior to their mentoring partner.

The noted differences are important to consider in understanding the experiences of those engaged in informal mentoring relationships. However, to argue the experience of one particular group within the sample is materially different from the norm would require significant differences in the response pattern for at least several items. Because this is not the case, the dominant response pattern generally reflects the experiences of those engaged in informal mentoring relationships.

Table 28
Differences in Intensity of Features Characteristic of Initial Mentoring Interactions

Variable of Analysis				ANOVA		
Content Item	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1.20	1.20	1.35	2	.306	.738
Collaborative	3.50	4.00	3.26	2	1.818	.174
Pre-planned	2.55	2.60	2.75	2	.169	.845
Instructive	3.35	4.00	3.04	2	3.250	.048
Initiation	3.05	2.60	2.70	2	.588	.560
Reciprocal	2.95	3.80	3.22	2	2.008	.146
Illuminating	3.30	4.00	3.35	2	1.477	.239
Challenging	2.85	3.40	3.17	2	.878	.423
Unpleasant	1.55	1.00	1.39	2	1.141	.329
Educational	3.45	3.80	3.70	2	.727	.489
Serious	3.25	3.40	2.87	2	2.013	.145
Comfort zone	2.30	2.40	2.73	2	.996	.378
Enjoyable	3.95	4.00	3.78	2	.350	.706

Variable of Analysis				ANOVA		
Content Item	Supervisor	Equal	X Supervisor	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1.64	1.16	1.16	1	4.991	.030
Collaborative	3.27	3.49	3.49	1	.567	.455
Pre-planned	2.82	2.59	2.59	1	.371	.545
Instructive	3.27	3.27	3.27	1	.000	.993
Initiation	3.27	2.70	2.70	1	2.047	.159
Reciprocal	3.16	3.18	3.18	1	.004	.949
Illuminating	3.55	3.35	3.35	1	.443	.509
Challenging	3.45	2.95	2.95	1	2.261	.139
Unpleasant	1.45	1.41	1.41	1	.037	.849
Educational	3.55	3.62	3.62	1	.082	.775
Serious	3.18	3.05	3.05	1	.249	.620
Comfort zone	2.70	2.46	2.46	1	.453	.505
Enjoyable	3.73	3.92	3.92	1	.574	.452

Variable of Analysis				ANOVA		
Content Item	Supervisor	Respondent	X Supervisor	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1.17	1.29	1.29	1	.176	.676
Collaborative	3.83	3.38	3.38	1	1.608	.211
Pre-planned	2.50	2.67	2.67	1	.127	.723
Instructive	3.33	3.26	3.26	1	.039	.844
Initiation	2.17	2.93	2.93	1	2.275	.138
Reciprocal	3.00	3.19	3.19	1	.240	.626
Illuminating	3.67	3.36	3.36	1	.702	.407
Challenging	2.50	3.14	3.14	1	2.236	.142
Unpleasant	1.33	1.43	1.43	1	.086	.771
Educational	3.33	3.64	3.64	1	.858	.359
Serious	3.67	3.00	3.00	1	4.600	.037
Comfort zone	2.67	2.49	2.49	1	.165	.686
Enjoyable	4.17	3.83	3.83	1	1.088	.302

Variable of Analysis				ANOVA		
Content Item	Sr.	Equal	Hierarchy	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1.14	1.06	Jr.	2	1.377	.263
Collaborative	3.18	3.63	3.70	2	2.078	.136
Pre-planned	2.73	2.75	2.30	2	.663	.520
Instructive	3.18	3.38	3.30	2	.258	.774
Initiation	3.09	2.56	2.70	2	1.022	.368
Reciprocal	3.18	3.25	3.00	2	.244	.784
Illuminating	3.36	3.44	3.40	2	.034	.966
Challenging	3.32	2.88	2.80	2	1.372	.264
Unpleasant	1.50	1.31	1.40	2	.292	.748
Educational	3.55	3.75	3.50	2	.438	.648
Serious	3.05	2.81	3.60	2	4.000	.025
Comfort zone	2.76	2.00	2.80	2	3.537	.038
Enjoyable	3.68	4.19	3.80	2	2.407	.102

Table 28 Continued
Differences in Intensity of Features Characteristic of Initial Mentoring Interactions

Content Item	Variable of Analysis		df	ANOVA	
	Gender			F	sig
	Female	Male			
Confrontational	1.33	1.19	1	.576	.452
Collaborative	3.33	3.57	1	.989	.325
Pre-planned	2.85	2.38	1	2.393	.129
Instructive	3.26	3.29	1	.012	.913
Initiation	3.00	2.62	1	1.253	.269
Reciprocal	3.07	3.29	1	.673	.416
Illuminating	3.22	3.62	1	2.706	.107
Challenging	3.04	3.10	1	.039	.844
Unpleasant	1.41	1.43	1	.009	.923
Educational	3.52	3.71	1	.771	.385
Serious	3.11	3.05	1	.086	.771
Comfort zone	2.42	2.62	1	.443	.509
Enjoyable	3.78	4.00	1	1.088	.302

Table 29
Variations in Intensity of Features Characteristic of Initial Mentoring Interactions

Variables of Analysis		ANOVA	
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	2	.654	.525
Collaborative	2	.028	.972
Pre-planned	2	1.337	.274
Instructive	2	.997	.378
Initiation	2	.916	.408
Reciprocal	2	1.491	.237
Illuminating	2	.377	.688
Challenging	2	.255	.776
Unpleasant	2	.036	.965
Educational	2	.340	.714
Serious	2	1.990	.149
Comfort zone	2	.515	.602
Enjoyable	2	.942	.398
Role of Respondent and gender of respondent			
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	3	.589	.626
Collaborative	3	.170	.916
Pre-planned	3	.574	.635
Instructive	3	.921	.439
Initiation	3	.530	.664
Reciprocal	3	.411	.476
Illuminating	3	.959	.421
Challenging	3	1.605	.203
Unpleasant	3	.135	.939
Educational	3	.891	.454
Serious	3	.979	.412
Comfort zone	3	.239	.869
Enjoyable	3	.113	.952
Hierarchy within relationship and role of respondent			
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1	.092	.763
Collaborative	1	.157	.694
Pre-planned	1	2.825	.100
Instructive	1	.041	.840
Initiation	1	.072	.790
Reciprocal	1	.172	.681
Illuminating	1	.147	.703
Challenging	1	.007	.936
Unpleasant	1	.047	.830
Educational	1	.957	.333
Serious	1	.102	.751
Comfort zone	1	.079	.779
Enjoyable	1	.129	.721
Reporting relationship of respondent and role of respondent			
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1	.092	.763
Collaborative	1	.157	.694
Pre-planned	1	2.825	.100
Instructive	1	.041	.840
Initiation	1	.072	.790
Reciprocal	1	.172	.681
Illuminating	1	.147	.703
Challenging	1	.007	.936
Unpleasant	1	.047	.830
Educational	1	.957	.333
Serious	1	.102	.751
Comfort zone	1	.079	.779
Enjoyable	1	.129	.721

Variable of Analysis		ANOVA	
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1	.513	.478
Collaborative	1	.413	.515
Pre-planned	1	.288	.594
Instructive	1	.153	.698
Initiation	1	.336	.565
Reciprocal	1	3.148	.083
Illuminating	1	.032	.860
Challenging	1	2.962	.092
Unpleasant	1	.512	.453
Educational	1	.612	.438
Serious	1	.454	.504
Comfort zone	1	.987	.326
Enjoyable	1	6.508	.014
Reporting relationship of partner and gender of respondent			
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1	1.078	.305
Collaborative	1	1.894	.176
Pre-planned	1	.541	.466
Instructive	1	.306	.583
Initiation	1	.069	.794
Reciprocal	1	.000	.989
Illuminating	1	.315	.577
Challenging	1	.157	.694
Unpleasant	1	.002	.961
Educational	1	.498	.484
Serious	1	.033	.856
Comfort zone	1	.396	.532
Enjoyable	1	1.337	.254
Role of respondent and gender composition of partnership			
Tone Item	df	F	sig
Confrontational	1	1.078	.305
Collaborative	1	1.894	.176
Pre-planned	1	.541	.466
Instructive	1	.306	.583
Initiation	1	.069	.794
Reciprocal	1	.000	.989
Illuminating	1	.315	.577
Challenging	1	.157	.694
Unpleasant	1	.002	.961
Educational	1	.498	.484
Serious	1	.033	.856
Comfort zone	1	.396	.532
Enjoyable	1	1.337	.254

Deeper Exploration of Tone

The experiences people have as they interact with each other is limitless and could certainly be different from the scaled item options given to respondents to describe the tone of their initial mentoring encounters. To capture the diversity of experience, respondents were asked to use their own words to describe the tone of their initial interactions. When using their own words, respondents described the tone of their initial interactions differently and there was little overlap between the scaled items and the words used by participants. They used words ranging from amicable to uncomfortable when describing the tone of their initial exchanges. Sixty percent of the descriptors could be categorized without diminishing the concept being communicated while the remaining 40% could not be categorized without losing the essence of what was being expressed. The most common descriptor of tone used by respondents was humorous followed by informal, focused, friendly, fun, reserved, comfortable, positive, hierarchical, enthusiastic, relaxed, open, straightforward, light, respectful, supportive, nervous, synergy, non-hierarchical, and approachable. Table 30 shows the frequencies for each descriptor.

Table 30

Tone of Initial Interactions

Descriptor	Count	Percent
Humorous	8	9.0
Informal	7	7.9
Focused	7	7.9
Friendly	6	6.7
Fun	6	6.7
Reserved	6	6.7
Comfortable	5	5.6
Positive	5	5.6
Hierarchical	4	4.5
Enthusiastic	4	4.5
Relaxed	4	4.5
Open	4	4.5
Straightforward	4	4.5
Light	3	3.4
Respectful	3	3.4
Supportive	3	3.4
Nervous	2	2.2
Receptive	2	2.2
Synergy	2	2.2
Non-hierarchical	2	2.2
Approachable	2	2.2
Total	89	100

Most respondents described the tone of their initial interactions in positive terms. However, the tone was not entirely positive for all respondents. Less than positive descriptors used by some participants included nervous, not necessarily positive,

threatening and uncomfortable. Only the term nervous was used more than once while all other descriptors were single occurrences. These descriptors reflect a level of hesitation and discomfort which was apparently not insurmountable, as the respondents were able to continue on with their mentoring partners and establish a successful relationship.

The exploration of the tone shows initial interactions between mentoring partners were generally positive. The exchanges were relaxed and informal which created a certain level of comfort making the interactions enjoyable. The tone of the initial interactions between mentoring partners was that of people who get along and work well together.

Impact of Tone on Development of Mentoring

The tone of an initial exchange is likely to have a significant impact on the development of a mentoring relationship. If the tone was positive, people would feel encouraged to pursue the relationship further whereas if the tone was negative, hurtful or unpleasant they would be less likely to seek involvement. The purpose of this section is to understand if this is the way in which tone contributes to the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Contribution of Tone to Development of Mentoring

As anticipated, the tone of the initial interactions did impact the development of the partnerships. In describing the impact of tone, respondents gave reasons that fell into nine conceptual themes: made it **easy**, encouraged **willingness**, **relationship** development, demonstrated **interest**, **enjoyable**, **supportive**, established **respect**, developed **trust**, and **facilitated** development. Table 31 illustrates the frequency for each of these themes.

Table 31

Reasons Tone of Initial Interaction was Significant to Development of Mentoring

Theme	Count	Percent
Easy	21	20.6
Willingness to engage	18	17.6
Relationship development	15	14.7
Demonstrated interest	10	9.8
Enjoyable way to spend time	8	7.8
Opportunities for support	8	7.8
Developed trust	8	7.8
Established respect	7	6.9
Facilitated development	7	6.9
Total	102	100

The most commonly (20.6%) cited explanation for the impact of tone was it made the interactions **easy**. The tone created a comfort which made it easy to initiate and engage in interaction as described by respondents who said, "easy to relate back and forth", "our interactions were so easy it was a natural place to go", and "because they were not at all confrontational and usually lighthearted it was easy to establish a rapport". Encouraged **willingness** was the next most commonly (17.6%) cited reason tone was important. The nature of the exchanges motivated the respondents to partake. It made them feel like they wanted to do what was necessary to be a participant in the partnership which was illustrated by respondents who said, "made us want to see each other", "created a willingness to share stuff", and "I showed my willingness to help and share". The third most common (14.7%) reason tone was important was **relationship** development. The relationship between the partners was encouraged to grow, progress, expand and deepen by the positive and comfortable tone as illustrated by, "allowed us to get to know each other", "made it easier to establish the relationship", and "established the way we worked together".

The nature of the exchanges also influenced the development of the relationship through interest, enjoyability, support, trust, respect and development. Demonstrated **interest** refers to an authentic interest and commitment to being involved in the relationship which was informed by respondents who said, "he got the impression that I was willing to hear his story", "he made himself available", and "I felt that she wanted to be there". **Enjoyable** refers to the positive tone making the exchanges pleasant, which made the participants feel good. This was informed by respondents who said, "you are going to go back if it feels good", enjoyed being able to push and grow", "made me want to continue

with it because it was positive". **Support** refers to the tone facilitating being supportive and feeling supported which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "felt supported" and "he always made a point of understanding me". Developed **trust** refers to the tone allowing for the development of faith in one another as illustrated by, "built trust", "made it a trusting relationship", and "it allowed for a strong basis of trust". Established **respect** is the notion the tone facilitated the development of admiration which was described by respondents who said, "created safety and an environment where he could feel respected and liked as a worthwhile human being", "they were never demeaning, he never talked down to me", and "because I didn't feel inferior". **Facilitated** development refers to the positive tone creating a safe environment for frank, honest and meaningful discussions as well as learning, growth and risk-taking which was described by respondents who said, "was willing to step outside my comfort zone because I felt like I could do that", "felt challenged in a comfortable way – the comfortable challenge", and "allowed us to talk about tough issues".

Differences in the Impact of Tone

To identify if the impact of tone on mentoring was viewed differently, the explanations provided by various constituents within the respondent group were examined. Table 32 shows the responses for the ways in which tone impacted the development of the relationships for a number of groups within the sample. As illustrated, there are many small variations and a few substantial differences in the frequency of responses for each theme. The substantial differences in response patterns worth noting include the following:

- Relationship development was a less common reason given by respondents in cross-gendered partnerships in comparison to those in same-sex partnerships.
- Respondents in positions senior to their partner gave more interest theme responses than those that were in positions equal or junior to their partners.
- Easy was cited by female respondents more often than male respondents.

Yes, the impact of tone on the development of informal mentoring relationships was different for people within the sample. However, there were not enough substantial differences to suggest that ease, willingness and relationship development were not the primary ways in which tone affects the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Table 32

Response Patterns for Significance of Tone

Theme	Role of Respondents			Composition of Partnership		Departmental Relationship		Hierarchy			Gender	
	Mentor	Equal	Mentee	Same	Cross	Same	Different	Sr.	Equal	Jr.	F	M
Easy	10	1	10	12	9	14	7	7	10	4	15	6
Willingness	10	1	7	14	4	11	7	7	7	4	12	6
Relationship	7	1	7	12	3	9	6	7	5	3	8	7
Interest	3	1	6	6	4	4	6	7	3	0	7	3
Enjoyable	1	3	4	7	1	6	2	5	2	1	5	3
Support	1	1	6	7	1	6	2	5	2	1	1	7
Trust	4	0	4	6	2	7	1	4	2	2	4	4
Respect	2	1	4	5	2	6	1	3	3	1	2	5
Development	2	2	3	5	2	5	2	3	3	1	4	3
Other	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Total Cases	20	5	23	33	15	33	15	22	16	10	27	21

Discussion of Tone

The initial exchanges between mentoring partners had a spirit, character and style that was positive. Collaborative, instructive, reciprocal, illuminating, challenging, pleasant, educational, serious, enjoyable, humorous, informal, focused, friendly, fun, reserved, comfortable and positive are all words that describe the tone of the initial interactions. Words more predominant in the description of tone included collaborative, illuminating, educational, humorous, informal and focused suggesting there was a particular style to the interactions between mentoring partners. This style was relaxed enough to be fun and enjoyable, and at the same time serious enough to be functional, practical and enlightening. This pattern of interaction contributed to the development of mentoring by: creating an ease with which the mentoring partners could interact; encouraging a willingness to be active contributors to and participants in the partnership; and, facilitating the connections characteristic of a real and meaningful relationship.

Patterns of Place Activities, Content and Tone

The informal mentoring relationships studied were instigated by circumstance. Respondents found themselves in a situation for which mentoring was either a natural outcome or a viable solution. This situation may have been a job change, a particularly challenging assignment, or something as simple as an office assignment. Regardless, it was found that situations and occurrences in the workplace created reasons for the relationships to begin. Although circumstance created reasons for the respondents to

pursue a mentoring partnership, these particulars did not facilitate the development of the relationships. The partners making connections with each other facilitated mentoring. These connections included: recognition and admiration of traits and characteristics; identification of relevant expertise; and, the acknowledgement of similar values, beliefs, goals and interests. The mentoring partners made these connections through interactions. They got to know each other and learn about their traits, expertise, skills, beliefs, values, and ethics by engaging with each other.

The initial interactions were most likely to happen in the private or semi-private office of one member of the partnership, at an on-campus eating establishment or in an office shared by the partners. These places helped the partners make connections because they offered privacy, which gave them freedom in what was discussed and how issues were addressed. These locations also facilitated convenient interaction. Using offices that were close together or food service venues near their offices made it easy for the mentoring partners to interact with each other since there were no complicated plans to be made or long distances to cover. Not only were these locations private and convenient, but they were also comfortable. The places where the mentoring partners interacted were familiar and non-threatening which created a sense of comfort with the surroundings helping the participants feel relaxed.

While interacting in these locations, the partners engaged in a variety of activities. These activities were often work related, rarely recreational and sometimes social. Work activities characteristic of the initial interactions were most often discussions, work projects and meetings. Social activities the mentoring partners engaged in were typically going for coffee or lunch. It was rare the partners engaged in recreational activities together, but when they did it was playing sports at the athletic facilities on-campus. Engaging in activities together allowed the partners to determine the purpose of their partnership and establish the framework the relationship. Engaging in activities together also created opportunities for the partners to see and evaluate the capabilities of the person with whom they were getting involved. It allowed them to answer the questions – what does this person have going on? And, does what they have going on work for me? Doing things together was also important because it gave the partners the chance to either offer or experience support, encouragement, feedback or teaching which allowed them to engage with each other constructively.

As the mentoring partners were doing things together, they were engaged in dialogue. The discussions were mostly work-related and were often about opportunities, sometimes or often about problems, sometimes about interpersonal interactions and sometimes about technical skills. When discussing these issues the conversations were commonly conceptual, characterized by general contemplation, investigation or reflection. When discussing specific issues the conversations focused on education or completion of specific tasks. Content contributed in many ways to the development of the partnerships. First, the conversations made useful and tangible contributions by facilitating coping as well as growth, development, learning, change and problem solving. Second, the discussions allowed the partners to get to know and understand each other in ways which helped the relationships to grow and develop. Finally, the discussions advanced a confidence in the knowledge and information being shared as well as the reliability of each other.

The exchanges between the mentoring partners had a particular style which contributed to the establishment of the partnerships. The initial interactions were collaborative, illuminating, educational, humorous, informal and focused. This style of interaction facilitated the development of mentoring by making the exchanges easy and comfortable. Because there was no pressure and the respondents did not feel nervous it was easy to engage with each other. Not only did the positive and relaxed tone put the respondents at ease it actually encouraged a willingness to engage in and contribute to the partnership which in turn facilitated a stronger bond.

A dominant pattern of experience emerged from the findings: the interactions that initiated the informal mentoring relationships were possible because the partners were proximal to each other in places offering privacy and comfort. As well, there was a positive and relaxed tone which allowed the partners to engage in activities and discussions helping them get to know each other, establish the foundation of their partnership, and realize meaningful outcomes such as problem solving or capacity development.

Although a dominant pattern could be identified, it is important to keep in mind people are unique and this individuality influences personal experience. To explore the influence of individual difference on experiences of mentoring, the responses for each question

given by: mentors, mentees and equals; respondents in same-sex and cross-gendered partnerships; those in the same and different departments from their partners; respondents who were senior, equal to junior to their partner; women and men, were contrasted. This examination revealed some slight differences that were evenly distributed across each identified group and a few meaningful differences for some items. Even though some differences emerged, there was no compelling evidence to suggest the experience of a particular group within the sample population was dramatically different from any other. An explanation for the differences that were identified is not immediately evident, however the differences should not be disregarded. Instead, they should be used as a reminder of individual difference and that any system designed to foster mentoring can only be effective if it is flexible enough to accommodate individuals. Creating conditions that support and nurture natural tendencies then exposing people to those conditions uses the common experiences of mentoring while at the same time allows for individual difference to influence the partnerships that develop.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PLACE, ACTIVITIES, CONTENT AND TONE OF LATER MENTORING INTERACTIONS

Introduction

Mentoring relationships typically go on for several years and during that time progress through a series of distinct phases – early, middle, later and last. In the early phase of mentoring, the partners are establishing the relationship upon which the later phases are based. During this phase, mentor and mentee establish trust, personal understanding and communication patterns. The next phase, the middle phase, focuses on the exchange of information and knowledge construction related to the identified goals of the mentee. In the later phase, mentor and protege begin to explore and examine the mentee's worldview, that is, his or her beliefs, values, attitudes, interests and motivations. In this phase, mentors may begin to challenge mentees to critically examine 'their own self-limiting strategies and behaviors'. In the final phase of the relationship, mentors encourage mentees to: reflect on their goals; pursue challenges; and, engage in activities that will facilitate achievement of their stated goals. At the conclusion of the last phase, mentees have developed skills, knowledge and understanding that allow them to move along their developmental path autonomously (Cohen, 1995, 1999).

The progression of a mentoring relationship into the middle, later and last phases is facilitated by interaction between the partners. The purpose of this chapter is to examine interactions characteristic of the later phases of a mentoring relationship. Specifically, to describe the nature of these exchanges, to understand how later interactions help to sustain an established partnership, and to identify how the initial and later interactions differ. To facilitate this inquiry, later mentoring interactions are deconstructed into four components – place, activity, content and tone. The features and contributions of each component are explored. When reconstructed, the exploration reveals a detailed description of the interactions that keep mentoring partnerships going.

Places Where Mentoring Partnerships were Maintained

Places Where Later Interactions Occurred

Like the initial interactions between mentoring partners, the later exchanges happened in a variety of physical places. These included: private or semi-private **offices**, **on-campus** eating establishments, **offices shared** by the mentoring partners, the **telephone**, **public spaces** on campus, **off-campus** eating establishments, **educational** settings such as classrooms, labs or shops, **social** settings, **recreational facilities** on campus, **meeting** and convention rooms, **private homes** and places around the **Department**. Table 34 shows the locations where the later interactions occurred, and the number of times each place was mentioned by respondents.

Table 33

Places Where Later Mentoring Interactions Occurred

Category	Count	Percent
Private or semi-private office	48	37.8
On-campus eating establishment	16	12.6
Shared office	11	8.7
Telephone	11	8.7
Public spaces on campus	7	5.5
Off-campus eating establishment	6	4.7
Educational settings	6	4.7
Social settings	6	4.7
Campus recreational facilities	5	3.9
Meeting room	4	3.1
Private home	4	3.1
Around Department	3	2.4
Total	127	100

As illustrated by Table 33, the most common (37.8%) location for interactions that maintained the established partnerships was the private or semi-private offices of the respondents or their mentoring partners. The next most common (12.6%) location for the later interactions was on-campus eating establishments such as cafeterias, coffee bars, restaurants or the pub. Later interactions also commonly occurred on the telephone (8.7%) and in offices shared by the partners (8.7%).

Locations of Initial and Later Interactions

The places where initial and later mentoring interactions occurred were very similar with the three most common locations staying the same. Both the initial and later interactions

were most likely to occur in a private or semi-private office, at a food service venue on campus, or in an office shared by the partners. Later interactions occurred more often on the telephone and less frequently in educational settings. Social settings either on- or off-campus, and private homes were locations where some later but no early interactions occurred. Figure 2 compares the places where the initial and later mentoring interactions occurred.

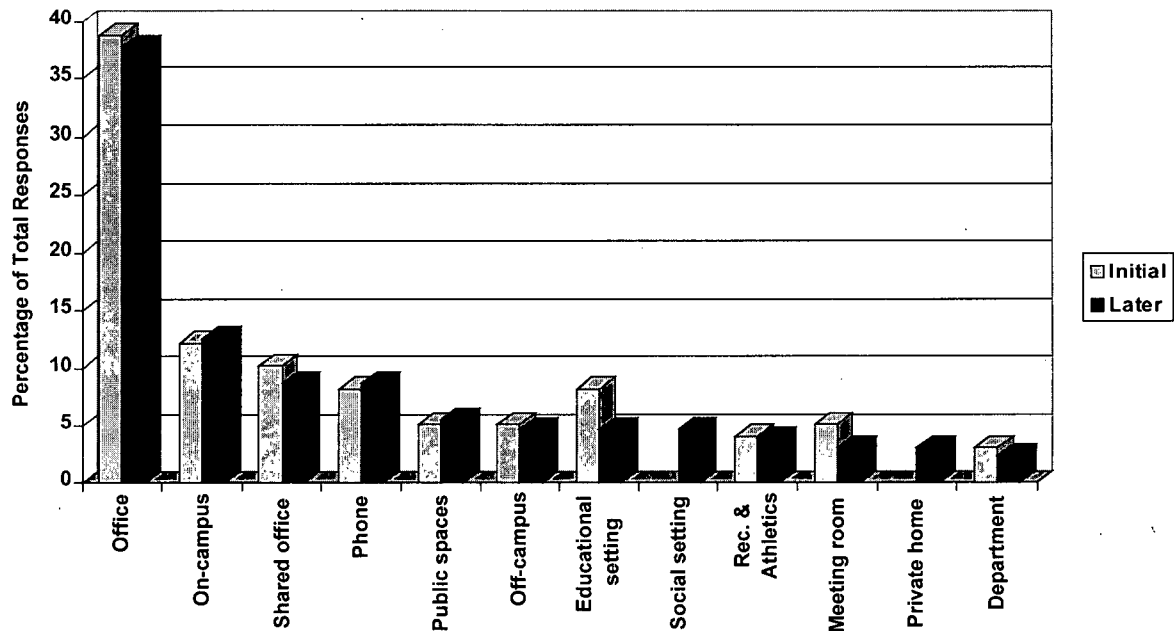


Figure 2. Locational Differences for Initial and Later Mentoring Interactions

Significance of the Places Where Later Interactions Occurred

The locations of the later interactions helped to maintain the partnerships and keep them growing. The ways in which place helped to sustain the partnerships identified by respondents fell into 10 conceptual themes: offered **convenience**, offered **privacy**, provided **stimulation**, they were **familiar**, added **social dimensions**, facilitated **regular** interaction, indicated **choice**, offered **informality**, **not significant** and **uninterrupted**.

Table 34 shows the number of times each conceptual theme was mentioned by respondents.

Table 34

*Reasons Locations of Later Interactions were
Significant to Maintenance of Mentoring*

Theme	Count	Percent
Offered convenience	15	15.5
Offered privacy	14	14.4
Stimulated discussion	14	14.4
Familiar	12	12.4
Added a social dimension	12	12.4
Regular interaction	9	9.3
Demonstrated choice	9	9.3
Informality	7	7.2
NOT	3	3.1
Uninterrupted interaction	2	2.1
Total	97	100.0

As shown in Table 34, **convenience** was the most frequently (15.5%) cited way in which place helped to sustain established partnerships. Interacting in these locations was easy and uncomplicated for the partners as illustrated by respondents who said, "we were still close enough to make it easy to maintain the relationship", "it is the place where we are proximal to each other", and "ease of access". **Privacy** (14.4%) and **stimulation** (14.4%) were the next most common descriptors used by respondents to explain how place helped to maintain their mentoring relationships. 'Offered privacy' is the notion the locations allowed for private, one-on-one, confidential interaction. This conceptual theme was informed by respondents who said, "a safe environment to share things I wouldn't share elsewhere", "gave us room for private dialogue", and "allowed a space to speak openly". Provided stimulation is the idea locations presented material and issues for discussion as demonstrated by statements such as, "because that is where our interests are", "the task at hand was right in front of us which forced us to deal with work issues which is what helped learning and growth", and "the venues had so many dimensions which stimulated our conversations and discussions". The next two most common ways in which place helped to support the established partnerships were **familiarity** (12.4%) and added **social dimension** (12.4%). Familiarity refers to the locations being comfortable, familiar and usual. The locations were the places where the partners were comfortable having discussions and sharing experiences which was illustrated by respondents who said, "because of the consistency of location I knew what type of an interaction we were going to have", "places where we shared experiences", and "comfortableness". The conceptual theme social dimensions reflects the notion of social venues presenting opportunities for the partners to discuss non-work related issues which expanded the scope of the relationship. This was captured by respondents who

said, "coffee and lunch also encouraged us to go beyond discussions of immediate work tasks which grows the relationship", "in social settings we talk about more philosophical issues such as visions, goals and issues outside the classroom", and "gave us the opportunity to talk about many different things".

Other conceptual themes that described the ways in which place helped maintain the partnerships included, regular interaction, choice, informality, not and uninterrupted.

Regular is the notion the locations allowed the partners to interact regularly and keep in-touch. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "on-going interactions", "allow for regular contact" and, "it happened everyday so it was part of the daily routine".

Indicated **choice** is the idea that where the partners got together signaled they were making an effort to interact and were doing so by choice as illustrated by respondents who said, "not mandated, our meetings were totally by choice", "we had to make a point to see one another because of a new distance", and "we would come in early to make time for the conversations". **Informality** is the idea the casualness of the environment facilitated the interactions as demonstrated by respondents who said, "relaxed atmosphere", "coffee – reduced barriers", and "recreational places are informal". For some respondents the locations of their later interactions did **not** contribute to the maintenance of their partnership which was reflected by respondents who said, "the space was available, otherwise it was not significant" and "doesn't make any difference – we could meet anywhere". Finally, **uninterrupted** was another way in which place helped to maintain the established mentoring partnerships. Uninterrupted is the idea the locations where the partners met offered opportunity for interaction and discussion without disruption which was described by respondents who said, "location gave us an extended period of time to have uninterrupted conversations" and "allows us the time with no interruptions making it more relaxed".

Changes in the Significance of Place

The emergent pattern for the ways in which place helped to sustain informal mentoring relationships was: places where the partners interacted offered convenience, privacy, stimulation, familiarity and opportunities to get to know each other in more social ways. There were both similarities and differences in the patterns that reflective the influence of place on the development and maintenance of mentoring. Convenience and privacy were important ways in which place contributed to the initiation and progression of the

partnerships. Facilitating regular interactions was more important to the maintenance of established partnerships while place being unimportant became less significant. The places being familiar, stimulating conversations, creating opportunities to discuss non-work issues and signaling a choice were ways in which place helped to maintain mentoring relationships but were not mentioned as contributing factors to the establishment of the partnerships. Figure 3 shows these and other differences.

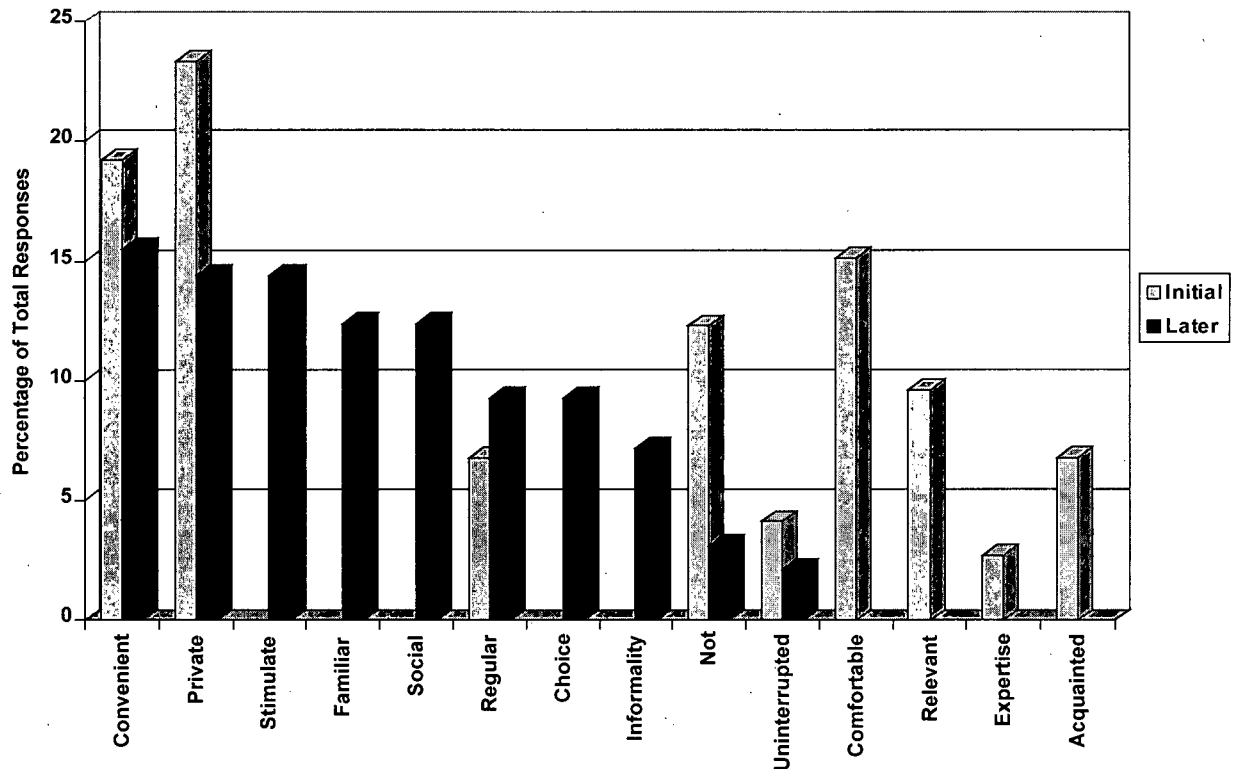


Figure 3. Differences in Contribution of Place to Development and Maintenance of Mentoring Relationships

Summary

Interactions between mentoring partners occur within a physical context. This context for the partnerships studied was most often private or semi-private offices, on-campus eating establishments and offices shared by the mentoring partners. These are not the only places where mentoring interactions occurred; however, they were the most predominant. The locations of initial and later interactions differed very little.

The venues where the interactions occurred contributed to both the development and the maintenance of the partnerships. However, there were differences in the ways in which place contributed. The initiation of the partnerships was facilitated by the convenience, privacy, and comfort offered by the places where the interactions occurred. The maintenance of the partnerships was also supported by the convenience and privacy offered by the locations. Stimulation, familiarity and opportunities to discuss non-work issues were cited as reasons place contributed to the maintenance of the established relationships however, they were not mentioned as contributing factors to the development of the partnerships. So, the reasons place was important to the maintenance of the relationships were different from the reasons it was significant to the development of the partnerships.

Activities Characteristic of Established Mentoring Partnerships

Mentoring partners engaged in discussions, worked on work projects and shared food and drink as they were getting to know each other and establish their partnerships. Once their relationships were established, the partners continued to engage in a variety of activities together which helped to support their relationship. This section explores the activities characteristic of later mentoring interactions. It also examines the influence of these activities on the continuation of the partnerships.

Later Mentoring Activities

To get a general sense of what activities were characteristic of later mentoring interactions respondents were given a series of scaled items to describe what they did with their mentoring partner once the relationship was established. The activities mentoring partners engaged in later in the partnership were often work related, sometimes recreational and sometimes social. Table 35 outlines the items used by respondents to describe the activities and the responses for each item.

Table 35

Work, Recreational and Social Activity Frequency During Later Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Work Related			48	3.69	.829
Never work related	1	2.1			
Rarely work related	3	6.3			
Sometimes work related	11	22.9			
Often work related	28	58.3			
Always work related	5	10.4			
Recreational			48	2.52	.967
Never recreational	9	18.8			
Rarely recreational	12	25.0			
Sometimes recreational	20	41.7			
Often recreational	7	14.6			
Always recreational	0	0.0			
Social			48	2.96	.651
Never social	4	4.2			
Rarely social	5	10.4			
Sometimes social	34	70.8			
Often social	7	14.6			
Always social	0	0.0			

Changes in Mentoring Activities

The dominant pattern descriptive of later mentoring activities was somewhat different from that of the initial activities. Paired sample t-tests for the scaled items revealed statistically significant changes in the mean response for each item. Figure 4 illustrates the changes in the scaled item response pattern. Specifically it shows that:

- Later interactions between mentoring partners were still often work related (58.3%) however, fewer respondents described them as always work related.
- There was an increase in the frequency of the activities being described as sometimes work related which suggests the pastimes expanded to include things other than work.
- In comparison to early on, more respondents described the activities as sometimes social and fewer described them as rarely social indicating they became more social.
- The most significant change came in the responses to the recreational item. In describing the activities characteristic of their initial interactions, 29.2% of the respondents described them as never recreational, 33.3% described them as rarely recreational and 29.2% described them as sometimes recreational. The later interactions were described as never recreational by 18.8% of the respondents, rarely recreational by 25.0% and sometimes recreational by 41.7%.

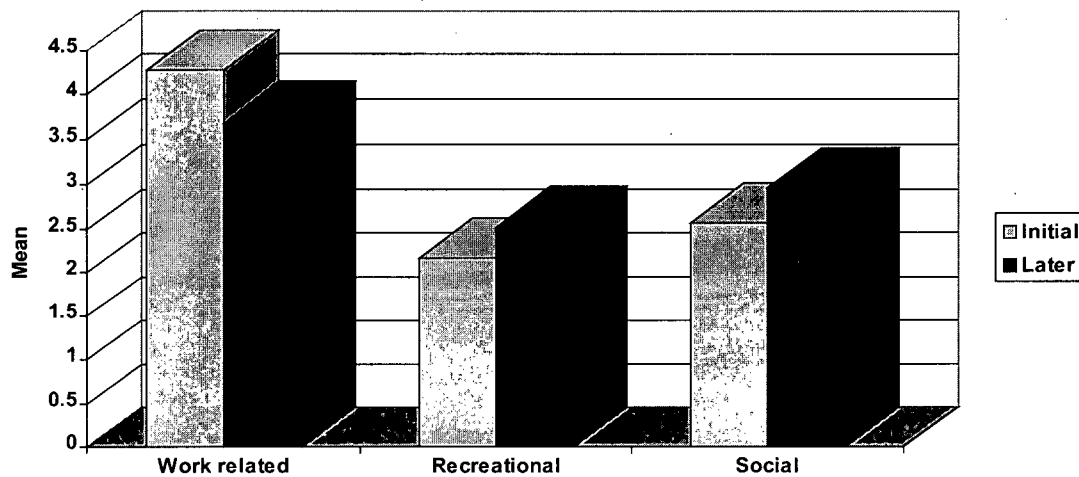


Figure 4. Differences in Work, Recreational, Social Activity Frequency for Initial and Later Mentoring Interactions

Specific Activities Characteristic of Later Interactions

Although helpful in describing the general nature of the later mentoring activities, the scaled items do not provide much detail in terms of the types of work related, recreational and social activities characteristic of the later interactions. To get more detail, respondents were asked to use their own words to describe what they did with their mentoring partners later on in the relationship.

When describing the activities, respondents provided 135 responses that fell into nine categories: **discussions**, working on **work projects**, **sharing food and drink**, attending **meetings**, engaging in **recreational** activities, engaging in **social** activities, engaging in **developmental** activities, working on **work assignments**, and **sharing information** and resources. Table 36 shows these categories with the frequency of responses for each. Thirty-six respondents (75%) provided 2-4 distinctly different responses that fell into more than one category while nine (25%) provided 1-2 statements that fell into a single theme. As such, most respondents engaged in a variety of activities with their mentoring partners during their later interactions.

Table 36

Specific Activities Mentoring Partners Engaged in During Later Interactions

Category	Count	Percent
Discussions	31	23.0
Work projects	25	18.5
Sharing food & drink	23	17.0
Meetings	18	13.3
Recreational activities	15	11.1
Social activities	10	7.4
Developmental activities	6	4.4
Work assignments	4	3.0
Sharing info & resources	3	2.2
Total	135	100.0

As shown in Table 36, the activity respondents engaged in most often (23.0%) with their partner once their relationship was established was **discussion**. Respondents described this category of activity when they said, "we would talk about issues", "we would have conversations in the office" and, "we would have touch base conversations". The next most common (18.5%) activity was working on projects. The working on **work projects** category was informed by respondents who said, "work projects" and "working on work projects". Sharing food and drink was the next most common (17.0%) activity for mentoring partners to engage in during the later interactions. **Sharing food and drink** was reflected by respondents who said, "going to lunch", "go for coffee", and "share a meal". Attending meetings was another activity frequently (13.3%) cited by respondents when describing their later interactions. The **meetings** category was informed by respondents who said, "going to meetings", "attending third party meetings", and "committee meetings".

Other activities described by respondents included recreational activities, social activities, developmental activities, working on work assignments and sharing information and resources. The **recreational** category was described when respondents said, "play sports", "go for walks", and "camping". The **social** activities category was reflected when respondents said, "institute functions", "socialize after hours", and "social gatherings". **Developmental** activities were described when respondents said, "doing homework", "conferences", and "attending courses and seminars". Working on **work assignments** was illustrated by respondents who said, "selection committee", "team teaching a course", and "orientation of students". The **sharing information** and

resources category was informed by respondents who said, "review of materials", "sharing materials and resources", and "reviewing materials".

Changes in Specific Activities

One would expect the activities characteristic of mentoring interactions to change once the partners were more familiar with each other, they had an established foundation for their partnership, and they had dealt with the situation that brought them together. Changes in the response pattern for the scaled items supports this notion. An examination of the differences between the activities described by the respondents for their early and later interactions also supports this notion. As illustrated by Figure 5, the types of activities were very similar; however, a greater number of respondents engaged in a more diverse set of activities. The later interactions were more diversified and less dominated by discussions and projects. Specifically, there was a decrease in the percentage of responses that fell into the discussions and projects category and an increase in the percentage of statements that fell into the sharing food & drink, attending meetings, engaging in recreational activities, and engaging in social activities categories. There was also the introduction of new activities such as, developmental endeavours and, sharing information and resources. Overall, the activities characteristics of the early and later interactions were similar. However, a larger number of respondents engaged in a broader spectrum of activities with their partners making the profile of later mentoring activities different from that of the initial interactions. Figure 5 shows these differences.

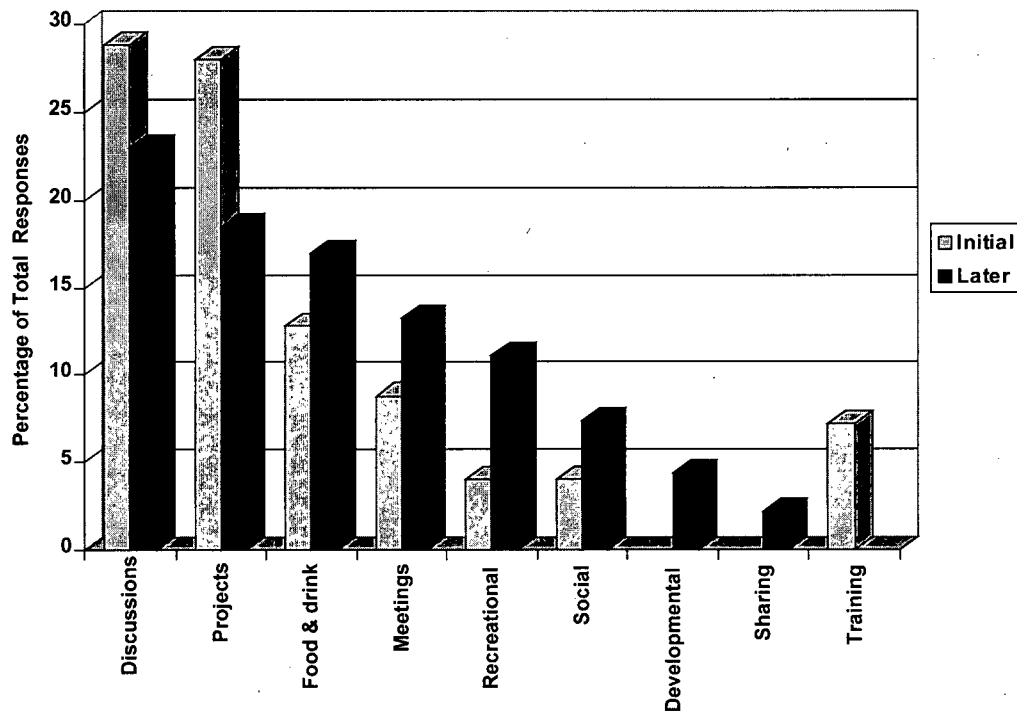


Figure 5. Changes in Specific Activities Characteristic of Initial and Later Interactions

Importance of Later Mentoring Activities

Engaging in activity is the basis of interaction for mentoring partners. Because engaging in activity creates the opportunity for the mentoring partners to interact, these activities must somehow contribute to the initiation and maintenance of the partnerships. The purpose of this section is to explore this notion and identify the ways in which activities help to sustain established partnerships.

Activities Supported the Partnership

The later mentoring activities supported the established partnerships in a variety of ways. When describing how their later mentoring activities helped to keep their partnership going, respondents provided 128 responses that fell into 10 conceptual themes. These themes were: facilitating a **deeper understanding**, keeping **in-touch**, proved **helpful**, facilitated **relationship growth**, provided **sustenance**, facilitated **reciprocity**, stimulated **discussion**, **trust**, **enjoyable**, and demonstrated **interest**. In describing their experiences, most respondents provided more than one reason for how

activities supported their mentoring partnership. Thirteen respondents (27%) provided 1-2 responses that fell into one category while 35 (73%) provided 2-4 answers that fell into one or more theme. Table 38 shows the number of times each theme was cited by respondents.

Table 37

Reasons Activities Supported Mentoring Relationships

Theme	Count	Percent
Facilitated a deeper understanding	28	24.3
Kept us in-touch	19	16.5
Proved helpful	16	13.9
Facilitated relationship growth	11	9.6
Provided sustenance	11	8.9
Facilitated reciprocity	10	8.7
Facilitated discussion	8	7.0
Reinforced trust	5	4.3
Enjoyable way to spend time	5	4.3
Demonstrated interest	2	1.7
Total	115	100.0

Facilitating a **deeper understanding** of one another was the most commonly (24.3%) cited way in which activities helped to sustain the relationships. Engaging in a wider variety of activities during their later interactions created opportunities for the partners to get to know each other on more levels, giving a more holistic understanding of the other. This notion was informed by respondents who said, "playing sports together gives me the opportunity to see another side of my mentoring partner outside the office", "it gives me a holistic view of her", "get to know each other on more levels: emotions, skills, motivations", and "lets us see that we have common interests other than work". Keeping **in-touch** was the next most commonly (16.5%) cited way in which activities helped to maintain the partnerships. This conceptual theme was demonstrated by respondents who said, "provides an informal channel of communication", "it's how we connect and touch base", and "allows us to keep up to date with each other". The third most frequently (13.9%) mentioned reason was **helpful**. The activities stimulated and facilitated growth, development, learning and problem solving as illustrated by respondents who said, "allowed for continual progress and working towards achieving my goals", "created opportunities for learning", and "opportunity to provide reassurance".

As illustrated by Table 37, other themes that described how activities supported on-going mentoring partnerships included relationship development, sustenance, reciprocity, discussion, trust, enjoyable and interest. Facilitated **relationship growth** is

the notion that engaging in activities together helped to further develop the foundation of the partnership as demonstrated by respondents who said, "social and recreational activities are good for broader interpersonal relationship development", "opportunity to share experiences which builds a common history", and "continues to establish and deepen the relationship". Provided **sustenance** is the idea that activities present experiences and issues to be dealt with. That is, activities gave the partners things to talk about and work-on which was described by respondents who said, "we always had something to work on which facilitated learning and growth", "gave us reason to discuss various issues", and "it's the currency of the relationship". Facilitated **reciprocity** refers to activities creating opportunities for the partners to share more equally. This conceptual theme was informed by respondents who said, "both being involved in these activities began to balance the relationship", "more reciprocity", and "we were supporting each other". Stimulated discussion was another way in which activity helped to keep the mentoring partnership going. **Discussion** refers to activities facilitating conversation as demonstrated by respondents who said, "gave us an extended period of time to talk", "gave us a chance to chat", and "opportunity to bounce information and ideas off each other". **Trust** is the notion that engaging in activities together developed or reinforced mutual reliance between the partners. This was reflected by respondents who said, "leads to increased trust, caring and understanding", "develops trust", and "trust and respect is growing on both sides". Activities also helped to support the partnerships by being **enjoyable** ways to spend time together which was illustrated by respondents who said, "I was excited about the work we were doing", "we enjoy talking to each other", and "these are rituals we enjoy". Engaging in activities also created opportunities for the partners to show their **interest** and commitment to the partnership which helped to sustain the relationship. This notion was reflected by respondents who said, "stopping by the office showed a level of interest and caring", and "just the fact that they happened was significant".

Changes in the Contribution of Activities

There were a variety of ways in which activities sustained the mentoring relationships. The reasons cited most often by respondents were they: facilitated deeper and more holistic understandings; helped to keep the partners connected; and, proved to be useful. This differs from the pattern that described the ways in which activities contributed to the initiation of the relationships. Activities contributed to the development

of the partnerships by facilitating relationship development, creating opportunities for the partners to demonstrate and assess capabilities and providing opportunities for support. The most significant difference between these patterns is later in the relationship, activities were seen to be an important way for the partners to get to know each other. Getting acquainted by doing things together was not cited by respondents very often when describing the contribution of activities to the development of their mentoring partnerships; however, it featured predominantly in the descriptions of how activities helped to sustain the relationships. Additionally, keeping in-touch, reciprocity and enjoyable were themes used to describe the ways in which activities supported the relationships but were not used to characterize the contribution of activities to the development of the partnerships. More than half of the themes used to describe the contribution of activities to the development of the partnerships were not illustrative of the ways in which they supported the relationships. As such, the ways in which activities contributed to the development of mentoring relationships were very different from the ways in which they helped to sustain them. These differences are shown in Figure 6.

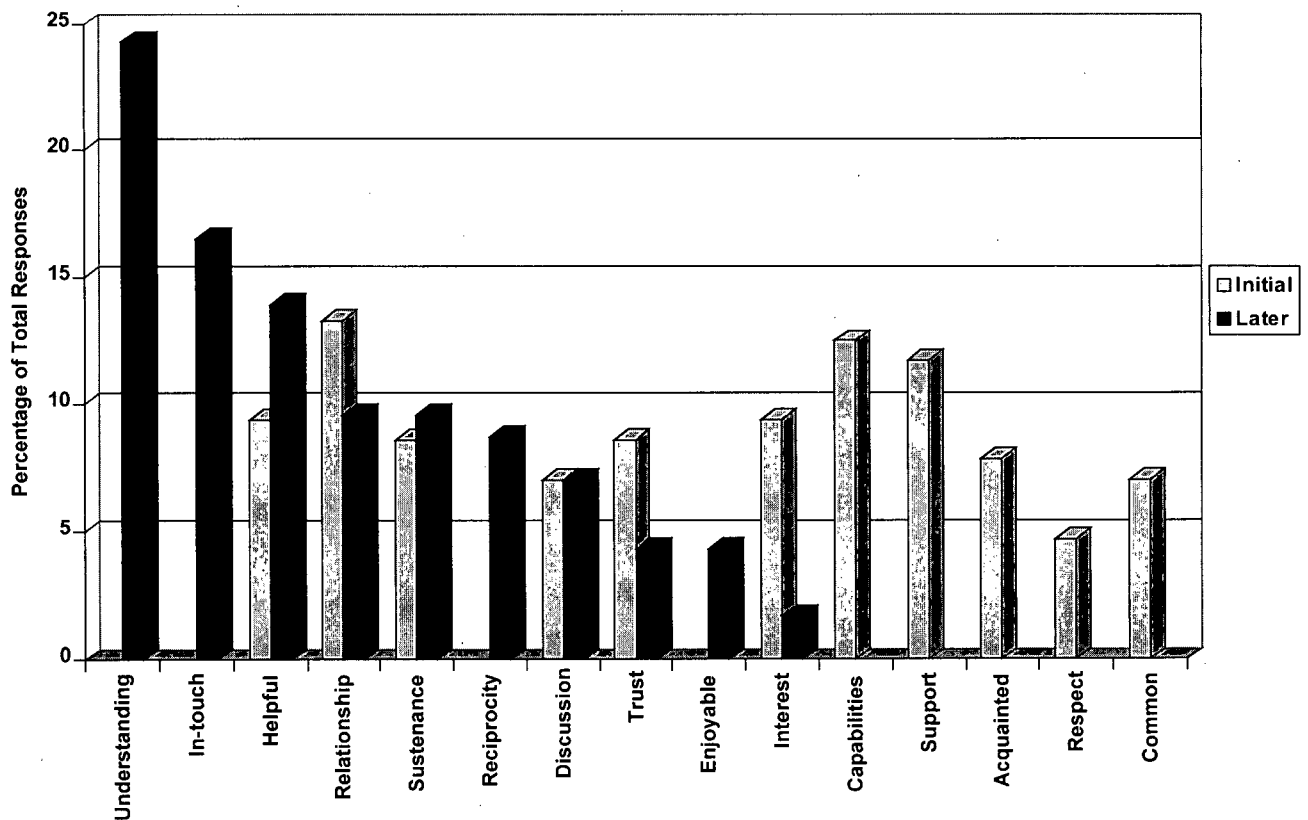


Figure 6. Differences in Contribution of Activities to Development and Maintenance of Mentoring Relationships

Summary

As people spend time together they engage in activity. These activities may be very informal and unstructured such as engaging in a conversation while standing around the office, or very organized and official such as attending a meeting. Mentoring partners engaged in both types of activities during their initial and later interactions. Once the relationships were established, the activities characteristic of the interactions were diverse. They were often work related, sometimes recreational, sometimes social and were most often discussions, working on work projects and, sharing food and drink. Engaging in these activities sustained the established partnerships by deepening the partners understanding of each other, helping them stay connected, and furthering the bond between them.

The activities mentoring partners engaged in during their early and later interactions were very similar. However, later in the relationship the partners engaged in a more diverse range of activities. Their pastimes were less dominated by discussions and work projects and more frequently involved sharing food and drink, attending meetings, and taking part in recreational endeavors. Activities were seen to play an instrumental role in facilitating the development of the relationship by helping the partners: establish the basis of the partnership; demonstrate their own capabilities and assess the capabilities of their mentoring partner; and, forge supportive collaboration. Later on, the activities expanded and deepened what had been established. They allowed the partners to get to know each other better and delve deeper into their partnership.

Content of the Later Interactions

Discussion was the primary activity mentoring partners engaged in throughout their relationship. Even while working on projects, sharing food and drink, and partaking in recreational activities, the partners were involved in dialogue. The purpose of this section is to investigate the substance of the later discussions between the partners, and to determine how the content supported the partnerships.

Substance of Later Discussions

Because content of the later conversations would be complex, respondents were asked to describe the frequency with which some general issues were discussed and the

actual topics addressed. Respondents were given the series of scaled items used to describe the content of their initial interactions to describe the substance of their later exchanges. As illustrated by Table 38, the topics discussed were equally work and non-work related, often related to opportunities, sometimes related to problems, sometimes related to interpersonal interactions, and rarely or sometimes related to technical skills.

Table 38

Content Saturation for Work and Non-work Discussions During Later Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Work Related			48	3.56	1.070
Mostly non-work related	2	4.2			
Somewhat non-work related	2	4.2			
Equally work and non-work	24	50.0			
Somewhat work related	7	14.6			
Mostly work related	13	27.1			
Opportunities			48	3.52	.618
Never related to opportunities	0	0.0			
Rarely related to opportunities	3	6.3			
Sometimes related to opportunities	17	35.4			
Often related to opportunities	28	58.3			
Always related to opportunities	0	0.0			
Problems			48	3.38	.606
Never related to problems	0	0.0			
Rarely related to problems	3	6.3			
Sometimes related to problems	24	50.0			
Often related to problems	21	43.8			
Always related to problems	0	0.0			
Interpersonal interactions			48	3.29	.651
Never related to interpersonal interactions	0	0.0			
Rarely related to interpersonal interactions	5	10.4			
Sometimes related to interpersonal interactions	24	50.0			
Often related to interpersonal interactions	19	39.6			
Always related to interpersonal interactions	0	0.0			
Technical Skills			48	2.65	.838
Never related to technical skills	3	6.3			
Rarely related to technical skills	19	39.6			
Sometimes related to technical skills	18	37.5			
Often related to technical skills	8	16.7			
Always related to technical skills	0	0.0			

Differences in Substance of Early and Later Discussions

The frequency with which partners would discuss some topics was different during their initial and later interactions. When the partners were first getting to know each other, the subjects discussed were mostly work related, often related to opportunities, sometimes or often related to problems, sometimes related to interpersonal interactions, and sometimes related to technical skills. This contrasts the substance of the later discussions which was equally work and non-work related, often related to opportunities,

sometimes related to problems, sometimes related to interpersonal interactions, and rarely or sometimes related to technical skills. Paired sample t-tests for the scaled items revealed statistically significant changes in the mean response for each item. Figure 7 summarizes these differences. Most notable, the later interactions were less dominated by work and they began to include discussions of both work and non-work issues. Later discussions were also less often about problems and more often about interpersonal interactions. Technical skills were also discussed less often. As illustrated by Figure 7, the most meaningful difference was the inclusion of more non-work related issues in the later conversations. Differences in other areas are present but rather small.

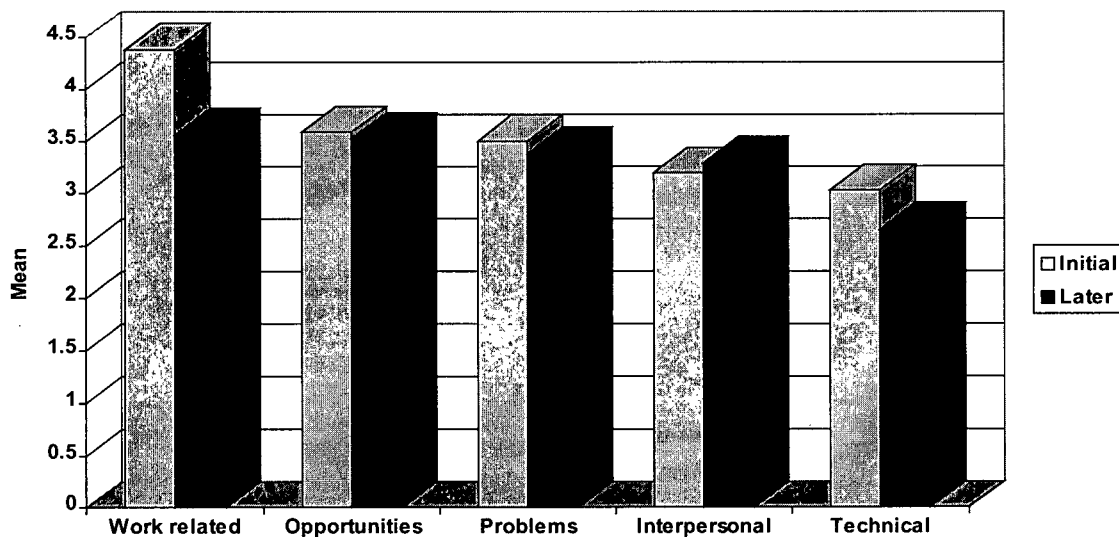


Figure 7. Changes in Content Saturation for Work and Non-work Discussions During Initial and Later Interactions

Topics Discussed During Later Interactions

The response pattern for the scaled items paints a simplified picture of what mentoring partners talked about once their relationship was established. To give greater depth and texture to this simple picture, respondents were asked to describe what they talked about using their own words. The descriptions given by respondents provided information on the types of work and non-work related issues, opportunities, problems, interpersonal interactions and technical skills discussed. When describing the topics discussed, respondents offered 158 responses that fell into 11 distinct themes. These

themes included: **conceptual**, **personal** issues, **strategies**, **educational** issues, **career** planning and development, work **tasks**, the **future**, personal and professional **development**, interpersonal **interactions** and **politics**. Table 39 shows each conceptual theme and number of times each was mentioned by respondents.

Table 39

Topics Discussed During Later Interactions

Theme	Count	Percent
Conceptual discussions	41	25.9
Personal issues	23	14.6
Strategies	20	12.7
Educational issues	18	11.4
Career development	18	11.4
Task completion	17	10.7
The future	9	5.7
Personal & professional development	7	4.4
Interpersonal interactions	3	1.9
Politics	2	1.3
Total	158	100.0

As illustrated by Table 39, the content of the later conversations was most often (25.9%) **conceptual** in nature. The discussions were a general contemplation of and reflection on an issue as demonstrated by respondents who said, "life experiences", "there was less knowledge transfer and more open ended discussion", and "more philosophical". The later discussions were next most likely (14.6%) to be about **personal** issues as illustrated by respondents who said, "personal relationship issues", "family and personal life", "hobbies", and "personal issues such as health and family". **Strategies** was the next most frequently (12.7%) discussed topic. Strategies refers to discussions about possible ways to handle a situation or get something done. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "back and forth guidance on how to approach a problem", "handling and dealing with errors and mistakes", and "how to move beyond barriers". The next most common subjects discussed were **educational issues** (11.4%) and **career development** (11.4%). Educational issues includes teaching, the classroom and students which was reflected by respondents who said, "curriculum development", "developing remedial plans for students", and "strategies for improving effectiveness of teaching and evaluation". The **career** development theme reflects discussions related to occupational planning and growth as illustrated by respondents who said, "developing my career", "where I want to see myself and how I can get there", and "my future and career growth within BCIT".

Other topics discussed during the later interactions included work tasks, the future, personal and professional development, interpersonal interactions and politics. **Work tasks** refers to work assignments and projects which was described by respondents who said, "hiring decisions", "daily operations", "budget issues", and "equipment purchases". The **future** reflects conversations about looking to and planning for the future which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "long range issues", "preparing for the future of our department", and "visions and future plans". Personal and professional **development** included discussions related to strategies for skill and capacity improvement. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "his educational work", "workshops to go to for professional development", and "skill development". Interpersonal **interactions** refers to discussions about exchanges and communications with others which was captured by respondents who said, "interpersonal skills and approaches" and "we would give each other feedback on approaches to interpersonal interactions and communication". The last theme that characterized the content of the later interactions was politics. **Politics** refers to governmental, social and work politics, which was reflected by respondents who said, "politics" and "politics of issues".

Changes in the Topics Discussed During Initial and Later Interactions

Once the mentoring relationships moved into an established phase, what was discussed changed. Many of the topics and issues discussed were similar however, there were significant shifts in what was discussed most frequently. Figure 8 summarizes these changes. Most notable is the significant increase in the number of responses that fell into the personal theme indicating that once the partners were better acquainted they were more comfortable discussing non-work issues. Other notable changes were the more frequent discussion of career development and the less frequent discussion of educational issues. New subjects discussed included the future and politics. Topics no longer discussed included job responsibilities and work systems. The differences in what was discussed during the early and later interactions shows mentoring partnerships changed over time becoming more personal and less focused on work.

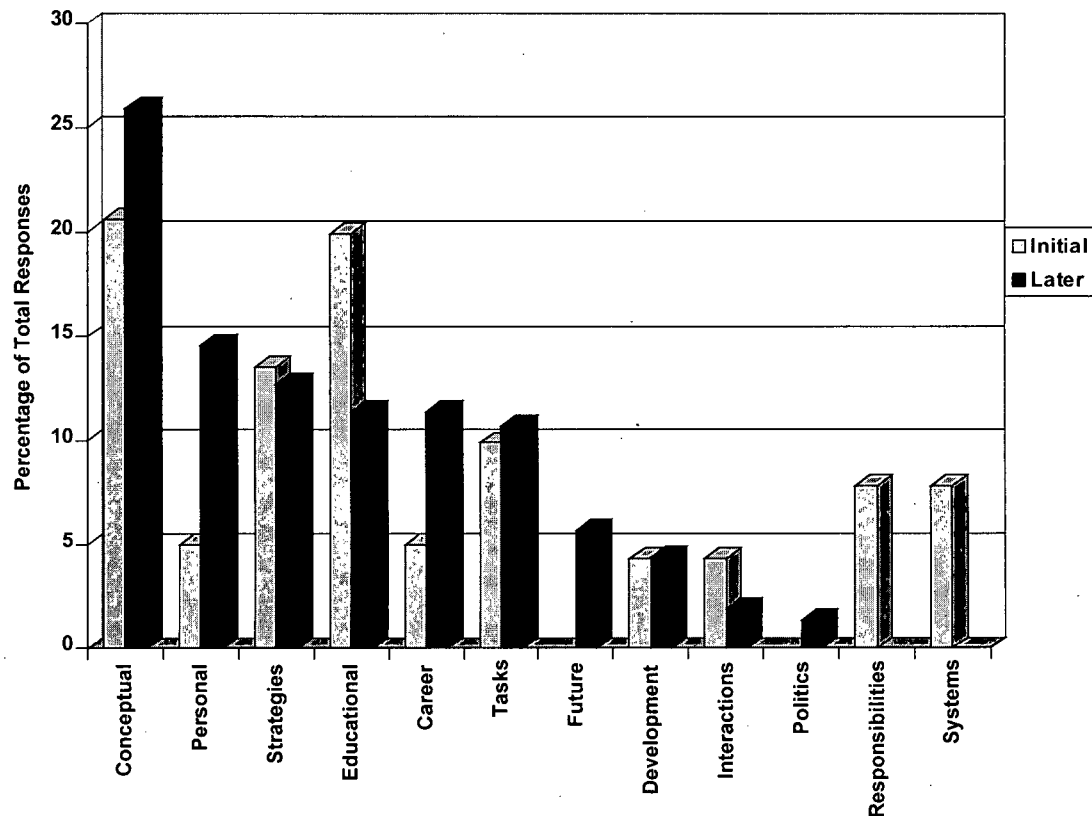


Figure 8. Changes in Topics Discussed During Initial and Later Mentoring Interactions

Contribution of Content to Maintenance of Partnerships

The relationships between respondents and their partners were maintained through interactions. What was discussed during these interactions contributed to the maintenance of the mentoring relationship. When describing the ways in which the content helped to sustain their partnerships, respondents provided 122 responses that fell into nine conceptual themes including, proved **helpful**, **supportive**, fostered **reciprocity**, facilitated a deeper **understanding**, **relationship development**, helped to **sustain**, **honest** exchanges, intellectually **stimulating**, and **comfortable**. Most respondents (70%) provided one to four responses that fell into one or more conceptual theme while some (30%) provided 1-3 statements that fell into a single category. This pattern suggests the content of later mentoring interactions supported their partnerships in several ways. Table 40 summarizes the themes used to describe the contribution of content and the frequency for each.

Table 40

Reasons Content of Later Interactions Supported Mentoring Relationships

Theme	Count	Percent
Proved helpful	25	20.5
Opportunities for support	21	17.2
Facilitated reciprocity	20	16.4
Developed understanding	13	10.7
Relationship development	12	9.8
Sustained our purpose	10	8.2
Honest discussion	8	6.6
Intellectually stimulating	7	5.7
Comfortable	6	4.9
Total	122	100.0

Helpful was the most commonly (20.5%) cited way in which content supported the mentoring relationships. Helpful is the notion the discussions were useful because they facilitated preparation and coping as well as growth, development, change, learning and problem solving. This conceptual theme was informed by respondents who said, "making progress which was exciting", "helped with my own personal development in particular my interpersonal skills", and "provides me with new insights sometimes". The next most frequently (17.2%) cited reason content contributed to the maintenance of the partnerships was **support**. The substance of the discussions created opportunities for continued support as demonstrated by respondents who said, "still appreciate her advice and perspective", "I still go to him with frustrations and he is still receptive and open", and "makes her feel supported which gives her added confidence". **Reciprocity** was the next most common (16.4%) way in which content sustained mentoring. Reciprocity is the notion discussions created opportunities for the partners to contribute equally to the relationship, both giving and taking information, ideas and support which was reflected by respondents who said, "has gotten to the point where the conversations are mutually beneficial", "we are now learning from each other because we do different things", and "creates an exchange of information that enhances our work".

Other conceptual themes that described the ways in which the content helped to keep the partnerships going include understanding, relationship development, sustaining, honesty, stimulating, and comfortable. **Understanding** refers to the confirmation or deepening of the developed knowledge of each other through what was discussed which was evidenced by respondents who said, "we know each others strengths", "as you talk with someone you really get to know them and how they operate", and "recognize that

we have areas where we agree to disagree and we don't go there anymore".

Relationship development is the idea that what the partners talked about helped to expand and deepen the partnership. This theme was described by respondents who said, "allows us to become friends, a work related friend", "establishes a greater amount of trust because we talk about personal and family issues", and "it helped the relationship devolve from mentoring to collegial interaction". **Sustain** the partnership refers to discussion nourishing the established relationship, which was reflected by respondents who said, "our history of shared experience provides a foundation", "continued to have a link with each other" and "shared an interest". **Honest** is the notion that what the partners talked about created opportunities for truthful dialogue and feedback which was informed by respondents who said, "always get an honest answer", "we can be more direct and are able to point out things that the other person might not see", and "she offers very constructive feedback". **Stimulating** refers to the content of the interactions being interesting which was demonstrated by respondents who said, "makes for more challenging, fun minded interactions for both of us", "thought provoking", and "stimulating". The final reason cited was **comfort**. That is, the comfort they felt with their mentoring partner facilitated the discussions and interactions as illustrated by respondents who said, "comfortable so it's Ok to keep going", "I feel comfortable approaching her", and "after you get to know someone there is more comfort".

Changes in the Contribution of Content

Content contributed to the development and maintenance of mentoring relationships very differently and there was little overlap in the descriptions used to illustrate the influence of what was discussed for new and established partnerships. Helpful, understanding and comfortable were the only ways in which content contributed to both new and established partnerships. Although these themes were used to describe the impact of content for the development and the maintenance of the mentoring relationships, they were not frequently cited as a way in which content supported the partnerships. Reciprocity, relationship development, sustaining, honesty, stimulating and support were ways in which content contributed to the maintenance of the associations. However, these themes were not characteristic of the contribution of content to the development of mentoring. Figure 9 illustrates the different ways in which content contributed to the establishment and the maintenance of the relationships.

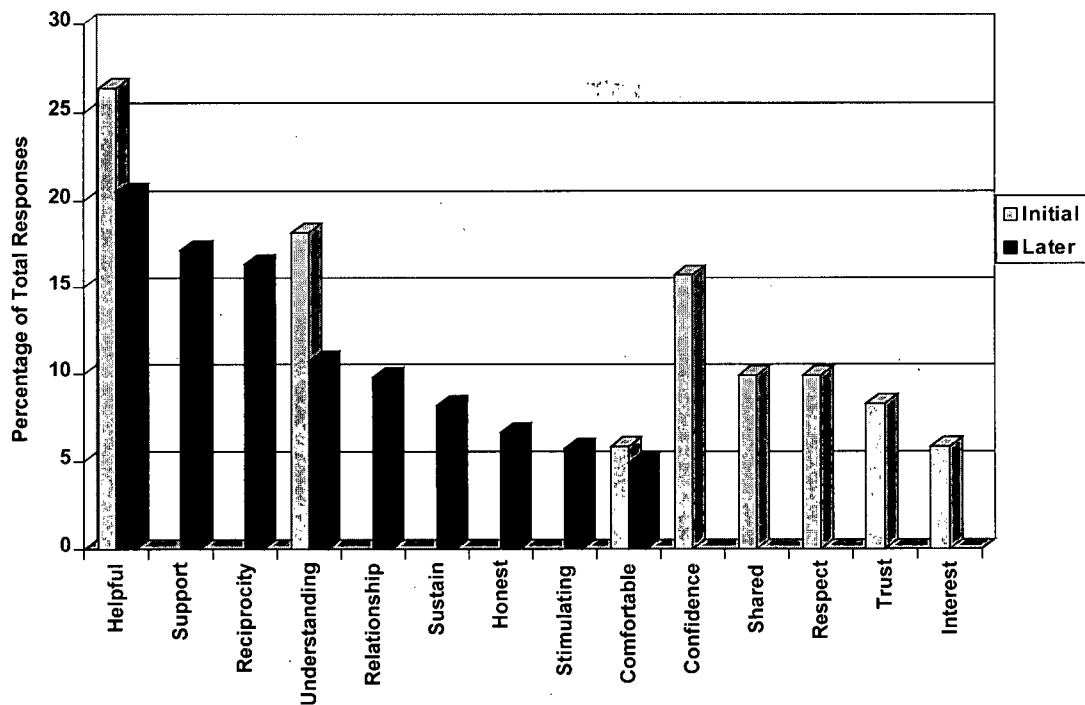


Figure 9. Changes in Contribution of Content to Development and Maintenance of Mentoring Relationships

Summary

Discussion was the medium of interaction between mentoring partners for the duration of the partnerships. During the later interactions, the content of these discussions was equally work and non-work related, often related to opportunities, sometimes related to problems, sometimes related to interpersonal interactions, and rarely or sometimes related to technical skills. Although most often conceptual in nature, the later discussions would also deal with specific topics which were most likely to be: personal in nature such as family, health or personal experience; related to education such as teaching or student evaluation; and, about career planning and development. The content of the later interactions helped to keep the relationships going because it was useful in meaningful ways, it facilitated supportive exchanges and it created opportunities for reciprocity.

What mentoring partners talked about during their later interactions was different from what was discussed early on in the partnerships. In comparison to the content of the initial interactions, the substance of the later discussions was less dominated by work and more likely to include subjects that were non-work related and personal in nature. This indicates that once mentoring partners were more familiar with each other, they felt comfortable discussing issues that were private. There was also a shift in how the content contributed to the partnerships. In the beginning, content of the conversations facilitated the development of mentoring in very functional ways such as: allowing the partners to see that the partnership was useful; helping the partners get to know one another; and, creating opportunities for the partners to verify the capabilities of the person with whom they had teamed up. Later on, content continued to be helpful, but it contributed differently by creating opportunities for support and mutually beneficial exchanges. The content of the later interactions facilitated deeper, more meaningful exchanges that solidified the established bond.

Tone of Later Interactions

The tone of communication between people is fundamental to the nature of the association that develops. In this section, the tone of later mentoring interactions is explored, along with the influence of this variable on the continuation of the partnerships. In addition to describing the manner of the later interactions, this section also examines differences in the tone of initial and later mentoring exchanges.

Nature of Later Interactions

Again, respondents were asked to use a series of scaled items to describe the general nature of their later mentoring interactions. These items were the same as those used to describe the tone of their initial interactions. The dominant response pattern that emerged was that the later interactions were not at all confrontational, very collaborative, sometimes pre-planned, somewhat instructive, initiated equally by the respondents and their mentoring partners, very reciprocal, very illuminating, sometimes challenging, not at all unpleasant, somewhat or very educational, somewhat serious and very enjoyable. The later interactions also sometimes pushed the respondents out of their 'comfort zone'. Table 41 shows the scaled items used by respondents and the response frequency for each item.

Table 41
Intensity of Features Characteristic of Later Mentoring Interactions

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Confrontational	33	68.8	48	1.46	.743
Not at all confrontational	8	16.7			
Not very confrontational	7	14.6			
Somewhat confrontational	0	0.0			
Very confrontational	0	0.0			
Entirely confrontational	0	0.0			
Collaborative	1	2.1	48	3.98	.699
Not at all collaborative	0	0.0			
Not very collaborative	6	12.5			
Somewhat collaborative	33	68.8			
Very collaborative	8	16.7			
Entirely collaborative	8	16.7			
Pre-planned	3	6.3	48	2.79	.922
Never pre-planned	15	31.3			
Rarely pre-planned	21	43.8			
Sometimes pre-planned	7	14.6			
Often pre-planned	2	4.2			
Always pre-planned	1	2.1			
Instructive	6	12.5	48	3.21	.743
Not at all instructive	23	47.9			
Somewhat instructive	18	37.5			
Very instructive	0	0.0			
Entirely instructive	0	0.0			
Initiation	2	4.2	48	3.00	.715
Mostly initiated by me	2	4.2			
Somewhat by me	4	8.3			
Equally by me & partner	36	75.0			
Somewhat by partner	4	8.3			
Mostly by partner	2	4.2			
Reciprocal	1	2.1	48	3.73	.765
Not at all reciprocal	1	2.1			
Not very reciprocal	13	27.1			
Somewhat reciprocal	28	58.3			
Very reciprocal	5	10.4			
Entirely reciprocal	5	10.4			
Illuminating	2	4.2	48	3.67	.595
Not at all illuminating	0	0.0			
Not very illuminating	13	27.1			
Somewhat illuminating	32	66.7			
Very illuminating	1	2.1			
Entirely illuminating	1	2.1			

Item	Frequency	Percent	N	Mean	SD
Challenging	3	6.3	48	3.12	.959
Never challenging	8	16.7			
Rarely challenging	19	39.6			
Sometimes challenging	16	33.3			
Often challenging	2	4.2			
Always challenging	2	4.2			
Unpleasant	34	70.8	48	1.42	.821
Not at all unpleasant	11	22.9			
Not very unpleasant	1	2.1			
Somewhat unpleasant	1	2.1			
Very unpleasant	1	2.1			
Entirely unpleasant	1	2.1			
Educational	0	0.0	48	3.46	.617
Not at all educational	2	4.2			
Not very educational	23	47.9			
Somewhat educational	22	45.8			
Very educational	1	2.1			
Entirely educational	1	2.1			
Serious	3	6.3	48	2.79	.798
Not at all serious	12	25.0			
Not very serious	25	52.1			
Somewhat serious	8	16.7			
Very serious	8	16.7			
Entirely serious	8	16.7			
Push me out of my comfort zone	12	25.0	48	2.44	1.090
Never push me out	12	25.0			
Rarely push me out	16	33.3			
Sometimes push me out	7	14.6			
Often push me out	1	2.1			
Always push me out	1	2.1			
Enjoyable	0	0.0	48	4.21	.617
Not at all enjoyable	0	0.0			
Not very enjoyable	5	10.4			
Somewhat enjoyable	28	58.3			
Very enjoyable	15	31.3			
Entirely enjoyable	15	31.3			

Differences in the Nature of Initial and Later Interactions

There were differences in the tone of the initial and later interactions. Paired sample t-tests for the scaled items revealed statistically significant changes in the mean response for each item. Figure 10 shows these differences. Changes that were particularly meaningful include:

- The interactions between respondents became more confrontational as evidenced by the increase in the percentage of responses for the not very and somewhat confrontational categories. Early on, 81.8 % of the respondents described their interactions as not at all confrontational, 12.5% as not very confrontational and 4.2% as somewhat confrontational. When describing their later interactions only 68.8% described them as not at all confrontational, 16.7% as not very confrontational and 14.6 % as somewhat confrontational.
- There was an increase in the number of respondents who described the interactions as pre-planned. Only 33.3% of respondents described their initial interactions as pre-planned in comparison to 43.8% who described their later interactions as pre-planned indicating the interactions between established partners are more likely to be pre-planned.
- The number of respondents who described their interactions as being initiated equally by themselves and their mentoring partner increased substantially. When describing their later interactions 75.0% of respondents described their initial interactions as being initiated equally by themselves and their mentoring partner which is considerably higher than the 37.5% who described their initial interactions in this way.
- The later interactions between mentoring partners were very reciprocal while the initial interactions were only somewhat reciprocal. Most respondents (58.3%) described their later interactions as very reciprocal while only some (33.3%) described their initial interactions as very reciprocal. The majority of respondents (39.6%) described their initial interactions as somewhat reciprocal.
- There was an increase in the number of respondents who described the later interactions as very illuminating. When describing their early interactions, 47.9% of respondents described their interactions as very illuminating in comparison to 66.7% who described their later interactions as very illuminating.
- The later interactions between mentoring partners were less educational than the initial interactions as evidenced by the decrease in the number of respondents who

described their interactions as very educational. Some 52.1% of respondents described the initial interactions as being very educational in comparison to only 45.8% who described their later interactions as being very educational. There was also an increase in the number of respondents who described the later interactions as being somewhat educational to 47.9% from 31.3%.

- The later interactions also became less serious as illustrated by the increase in the number of respondents who described interactions as not very serious. Twenty-five percent of respondents described their later interactions as not very serious while only 14.6% described the early interactions as not very serious.

Although some aspects of the response pattern for the early and later interactions are similar, there are notable and meaningful differences for each item indicating the tone of the later interactions was different from the tone of the early interactions between mentoring partners.

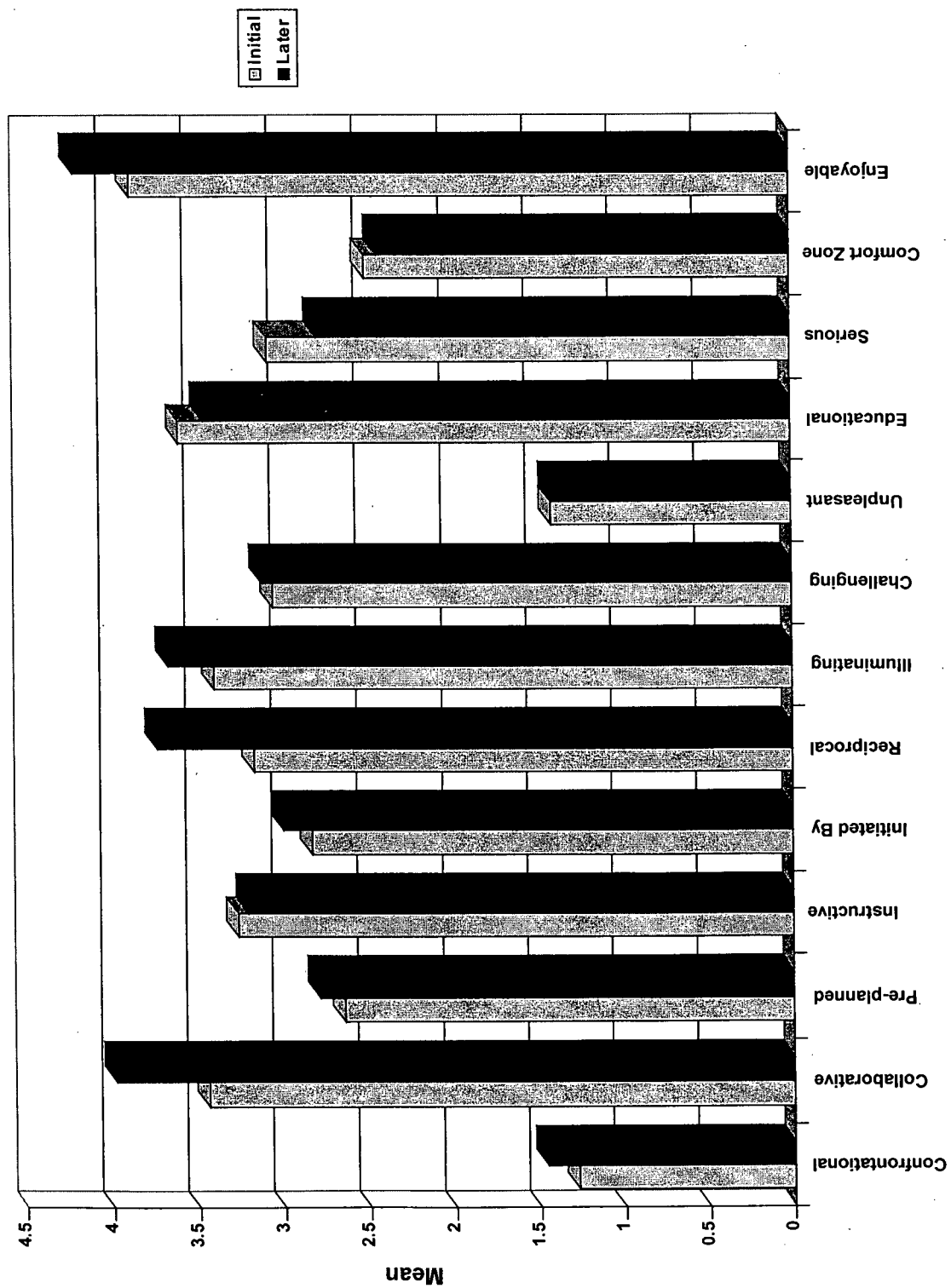


Figure 10. Changes in the Intensity of Features Characteristic of Initial and Later Interactions

Details on the Tone of Later Interactions

The nature of interactions between people could be described in ways not captured by the scaled items given to respondents. To gain insight into all possible qualities reflective of the later exchanges, respondents were asked to use their own words to describe the nature of their later mentoring interactions. When describing the tone, respondents provided 157 single word responses. There was great diversity in the words used to describe the tone and only 93 (59%) of the responses could be categorized without losing the essence of what was being communicated. The remaining one-word descriptors were single occurrences that could not be categorized without degrading what the respondents were communicating. Table 42 shows the words used by more than one respondent to describe the tone of the later interactions.

Table 42

Descriptors for Tone of Later Mentoring Interactions

Descriptor	Count	Percent
Comfortable	12	12.9
Supportive	9	9.7
Informal	7	7.5
Efficient	6	6.4
Friendly	6	6.4
Positive	6	6.4
Caring	5	5.4
Equal	5	5.4
Frank	5	5.4
Fun	5	5.4
Humorous	5	5.4
Pleasant	5	5.4
Reciprocal	3	3.2
Trusting	3	3.2
Intuitive	3	3.2
Confrontational	2	2.2
Collegial	2	2.2
Approachable	2	2.2
Respectful	2	2.2
Total	93	100

Differences in Tone of Initial and Later Interactions

The tone of the interactions between respondents and their partners changed as the partnership progressed. The words most commonly used to describe the initial interactions were humorous, informal, focused, friendly, fun, reserved, comfortable, positive, hierarchical, enthusiastic, relaxed, open, straightforward, light, respectful, supportive, nervous, synergy, non-hierarchical, and approachable. Ten (50%) of these words were also used frequently to describe the later interactions. Comfortable,

supportive, informal, friendly, positive, fun, humorous, approachable and respectful were all words used to describe both initial and later interactions. Even though many words were used to describe both the initial and later exchanges, there were differences in the frequency with which the descriptors were used. For example, comfortable was used more frequently to describe the tone of the later exchanges in comparison to the frequency with which it was used to describe the initial interactions. Supportive was also a more commonly used descriptor for the later interactions. The frequency with which informal, friendly, positive and fun were used was about the same for early and later interactions. Efficient, caring, equal, frank and pleasant were words used by respondents to describe the later but not the early interactions.

Impact of Tone on Established Partnerships

The quality of interactions played an important role in the development of mentoring. The relaxed, enjoyable, positive tone helped establish the mentoring partnerships by making the interactions easy, creating a willingness to participate and facilitating relationship development. The influence of tone continued to be important once the relationships were established. There were a variety of themes descriptive of the ways in which tone contributed to the maintenance of the relationships including: **enjoyable, mutually beneficial, feeling of safety, easy, relationship development, familiarity, no fear of offending, caring, support, facilitate** development and **efficiency**. Respondents gave 122 statements that fell into these themes. Table 43 summarizes the themes and the number of descriptions provided for each.

Table 43

Reasons Tone of Later Interactions Supported Mentoring Relationships

Theme	Count	Percent
Enjoyable way to spend time	17	13.9
Mutually beneficial	17	13.9
Created a safe environment	16	13.1
Easy and simple	15	12.3
Relationship Development	14	11.5
Familiarity	12	9.8
No fear of offending	8	6.6
Demonstrated caring	7	5.7
Supportive	6	4.9
Facilitated growth	6	4.9
Efficiency	4	3.3
Total	122	100.0

Enjoyable (13.9%) and **mutually beneficial** (13.9%) were the most frequently cited reasons tone supported the established partnerships. Enjoyable is the notion the tone made the interactions pleasant and gratifying. This conceptual theme was informed by respondents who said, "very positive so it kept us going", "always fun and enjoyable", and "because it's fun and a stress release". Mutually beneficial refers to the tone facilitating a reciprocity which allowed both partners to benefit from the interactions. This theme was described by respondents who said, "we are both getting something out of the interactions", "both have something to bring to the relationship", and "we each got something out of it". The next most common (13.1%) way in which tone contributed to the relationships was a feeling of **safety**. The tone created a safe environment for discussion of tough, sensitive and complex issues as demonstrated by respondents who said, "can take risks without fear of failing", "can talk about things that might be confrontational and feel comfortable doing so", and "confidence that you can chuck it on the table and hash it out which might be lacking early-on". **Easy** was also a frequently (12.3%) cited way in which style of interaction supported the established partnership. Easy is the idea the tone made the interactions effortless and uncomplicated. This theme was informed by respondents who said, "we were able to communicate with greater ease", simple, no complications", and "not difficult so I don't avoid the interactions". Further **development** (11.6%) of the relationship between the mentoring partners was another significant way in which tone supported the partnerships as illustrated by respondents who said, "continues to build trust and respect of each other", "you come to understand how the other person thinks, know their likes and dislikes and nothing about him keeps me away", and "tone of the interactions supported the relationship which facilitated more collaboration". The next most common (9.6%) way in which tone helped to sustain the partnerships was **familiarity**, which is the notion of the style of interaction creating a closeness and comfort. This was illustrated by respondents who said, "solid understanding of each other", "because it was so comfortable", and "there is an openness that we have created".

Although not as frequently cited, no fear of offending, caring, support, facilitates growth and, efficiency were other ways in which tone contributed. No fear of **offending** is the notion the tone allowed the partners to be unconcerned with offending each other in what was said and how it was said. This theme was reflected by respondents who said, "ability to talk openly in a non-politically correct environment", "not concerned about

offending him", and "she says what she wants to say and there are no hackles raised". **Caring** refers to the style of interaction showing fondness and interest as demonstrated by respondents who said, "felt that he genuinely cared about me and what I was doing", "we were interested in one another", and "concern for each other". **Support** is the idea that the tone facilitated being supportive and feeling supported which was described by respondents who said, "supportive" and "I feel that my input is valued". **Facilitates growth** refers the style of interaction creating conditions conducive to personal and professional growth, development, change, learning and problem solving which was described by respondents who said, "get to see positive outcomes", "takes me to places of examining why", and "it's a helpful tone". The final way in which tone contributed to the maintenance of the partnerships was efficiency. **Efficiency** is the idea the tone allowed the partners to have abbreviated yet effective interactions which was illustrated by respondents who said, "cover lots of ground in a short amount of time", "I know my mentoring partner so well, it is easy to cut to the chase and get to the meat of the matter", and "not as much communication is required now".

Changes in Impact of Tone

The quality of interaction between mentoring partners was important early and later in the partnerships. However, the influence of tone on newly formed mentoring relationships was somewhat different than its impact on established partnerships. During the initial interactions, the positive tone was helpful because it made the interactions easy, it created a willingness to engage and it facilitated relationship development. Once the relationships were established, the comfortable, relaxed tone supported the partnerships by making the interactions enjoyable, facilitating mutually beneficial exchanges and creating a safe environment for risk taking and dealing with complex issues. There were some ways in which tone contributed to both the development and the maintenance of the relationships including enjoyable, easy, relationship development, support and facilitating growth. However, the significance of these themes was different for the initial and the later interactions. Specifically, enjoyable was used more frequently and easy was used less frequently to describe the later interactions. Mutually beneficial, safe, no fear of offending and efficiency were new ways in which tone was thought to contribute to the maintenance of the relationships. While willingness, which was a significant theme for the initial interactions, was not used to

describe the influence of tone on the established relationships. Figure 11 illustrates these differences.

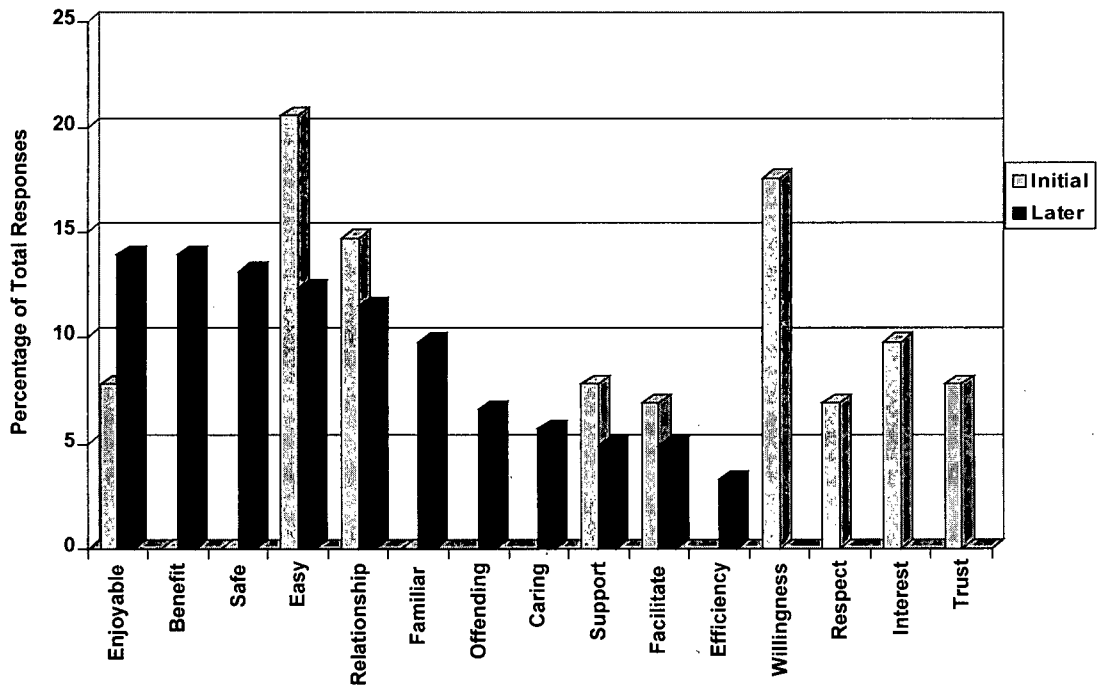


Figure 11. Differences in the Impact of Tone on Development and Maintenance of Mentoring Relationships

Summary

Respondents' relationships were sustained by the interactions they had with their partners. The tone of these interactions created a climate that fostered continuation of the partnerships. The later interactions were not at all confrontational, very collaborative, sometimes pre-planned, somewhat instructive, initiated equally by the respondents and their mentoring partner, very illuminating, sometimes challenging, not at all unpleasant, somewhat or very educational, somewhat serious, sometimes pushed the respondent out of their 'comfort zone', and very enjoyable. The tone was also described as being comfortable, supportive, informal, efficient, friendly and positive. This description demonstrates later interactions between partners had a particular nature that was relaxed, light, familiar and uncomplicated which made the exchanges very easy. The positive climate between the partners, fostered by the tone of the interactions, helped the partners maintain their relationship because it made spending time together

enjoyable, it facilitated mutually beneficial exchanges, it created an environment that felt safe for sharing, learning and risk-taking, and it helped the partners develop a deeper relationship with one another.

The tone of the initial exchanges was somewhat different than that of the later interactions. When the mentoring partners were getting acquainted and embarking on their partnership, the tone was very positive but quite serious. Once the relationships were established, the positive tone prevailed however, the manner became more informal making the interactions more relaxed and casual. The qualities of the early and later exchanges were different and the ways in which the tone affected the relationships changed. As the mentoring relationships were just getting started the positive tone contributed to the associations by making the interactions easy, creating a willingness to engage in mentoring and developing the relationship between the partners. Later on, the tone contributed by making the interactions enjoyable, helping the partners progress to a point where both partners were benefiting from the exchanges and allowing the partners to establish deeper connections with each other.

Discussion of Patterns

Patterns of Place, Activities, Content and Tone

The average duration of the respondents mentoring relationships was 5.3 years (SD = 4.45). To understand the places and processes that supported these long lasting partnerships, the later interactions between mentoring partners were examined. The findings revealed later mentoring interactions occurred in private or semi private offices, at food service venues on-campus, on the telephone, or in offices shared by the partners. These locations sustained the partnerships because they offered convenience, privacy and familiarity which allowed the partners to interact comfortably and easily without others interfering with or imposing on their time together. These locations also presented issues and challenges for discussion which stimulated dialogue. Additionally, the social places where the later interactions occurred created opportunities for discussion of non-work issues which served to expand the boundaries of the relationships, opening up new dimensions of the partnerships.

The mentoring relationships were also influenced by what the partners were doing when they interacted. The activities of later interactions established were mostly work related; however, they also included some social and recreational activities. The work, social and recreational activities characteristic of the later interactions were discussions, working on work projects, sharing food and drink and playing sports. Engaging in these activities supported the partnerships by creating opportunities to get to know one another on more levels, keeping the partners in-touch with each other, facilitating meaningful learning, growth and development, and furthering the established connections.

The mentoring partners continued to engage in discussion even after they knew each other well, had established the basis of their partnership and had dealt with the situation or issue that brought them together. The partners talked about both work and non-work issues related to opportunities, problems, and interpersonal interactions. These discussions were most often conceptual in nature. Specific topics such as personal, educational and career issues were also discussed. These discussions supported the mentoring relationships by facilitating change and growth, and by creating opportunities for supportive and reciprocal exchanges.

The tone of the interactions was fundamental to the development and continuation of the partnerships. As one respondent said, "the tone of the interactions sets the stage"; it is the foundation upon which the activities and resulting discussions rest. If the manner of the interactions between mentoring partners is not positive, the relationship itself is not likely to be very good making it difficult to maintain. As such, the tone of the interactions between the established mentoring partners was very good. Specifically, the later interactions were collaborative, reciprocal, illuminating, educational, enjoyable, comfortable, supportive and informal. These qualities contributed to the continuation of the partnerships by making the interactions enjoyable, creating a climate that could accommodate mutually beneficial exchanges and fostering a safe environment for risk taking.

Changes in Patterns Characteristic of Initial and Later Interactions

People and their relationships change and evolve; so, it would be expected the attributes characteristic of a relationship between individuals would also change. The differences

in the patterns descriptive of the initial and the later interactions support this notion. With the exception of the locations of the interactions, there were differences in what mentoring partners did together, what they talked about, and the style of their communications. There were also changes in the reasons why activities, content and tone were integral to the partnerships. During the initial interactions, the partners were most likely to spend their time discussing work issues, working on work projects and sharing food and drink. During the later interactions the activities were still mostly work related but were more likely to involve some recreational and social pastimes such as sharing food and drink and playing sports.

When the partners were first getting to know one another, their discussions were mostly about work. These work-related discussions were often very conceptual in nature addressing general issues such as opportunities, problems, interpersonal interactions or technical skills. If the discussions were more focused, they were most likely to be about education or task completion. Once the partners knew each other and their relationships were established, they talked about non-work issues as much as they discussed work. Their discussions continued to be very conceptual but were less likely to be about problems and technical skills. When specific topics were discussed they were most likely to be about personal issues, education or career development.

Right from the beginning, the tone of the interactions between the mentoring partners was very positive. When their relationships were just getting started, the interactions were not at all confrontational or unpleasant instead they were very collaborative, instructive, illuminating and educational, humorous, informal and focused. The positive upbeat tone established during the initial interactions prevailed; however, the exchanges became more relaxed, informal and casual once the mentoring partners were more familiar with one another. The tone of the later interactions was described as collaborative, reciprocal, illuminating, enjoyable, comfortable, supportive and informal.

The ways in which interaction contributed to a newly formed mentoring partnership were somewhat different from the ways in which interaction sustained an established relationship. The locations characteristic of initial interactions helped initiate the partnerships because they offered privacy, convenience, and comfort. The locations of later interactions contributed to the maintenance of the partnerships in similar ways in

that they continued to provide privacy and convenience. However, later on the locations also contributed to the maintenance of the partnerships by presenting situations and issues for discussion, which kept the mentoring partners working together.

Initial mentoring activities facilitated the development of mentoring by: helping the partners discover and establish the foundation of their relationship; creating opportunities for them to demonstrate their own capabilities and assess the capabilities of the person with whom they had teamed up; and, allowing them to partake in supportive exchanges. The ways in which activities sustained the partnerships were considerably different from the ways in which they contributed to the establishment of the associations. Engaging in activity together sustained the relationships by allowing the partners to get to know each other on more levels, by keeping the partners in-touch with one another and by facilitating meaningful learning and growth.

While engaged in activity with each other, the partners were also engaged in dialogue. The content of this dialogue helped establish the relationships because what was discussed was helpful, facilitating development for both members of the dyad. As well, the issues discussed fostered an understanding of each other resulting in a belief in the other person and what they had to say. Like the contribution of content in the beginning, the substance of the later interactions contributed to established mentoring partnerships by facilitating learning and development. The content of the later interactions was also important because it facilitated supportive and reciprocal exchanges, which were of value to both members of the partnership.

Finally, the tone of the interactions contributed to the development and maintenance of the mentoring relationships in different ways. The positive tone of the initial interactions made the interactions easy, fostered a willingness to engage and facilitated relationship development. While the relaxed and casual tone of the later exchanges helped to sustain the partnerships by making the interactions enjoyable, and creating a climate for mutually beneficial and safe interactions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CREATING SPACES FOR MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

Mentoring relationships begin in a variety of ways. An external party can formally construct them or they can develop independently through mutual interest and attraction. The methods utilized to initiate formally planned mentoring relationships are well documented (Cohen, Murray). However, the processes by which informal partnerships begin have not been thoroughly examined and are not yet well articulated. An examination of the mentoring experiences of faculty and staff members at BCIT engaged in such relationships answers questions of where, how and why such partnerships begin and are maintained. By articulating and understanding the conditions that lead to informal mentoring, hopefully the development of such partnerships can be fostered in the workplace.

Participants in this research study identified common experiences that led to their mentoring associations. The data shows there are particular locations where mentoring associations develop. As well, there are identifiable patterns to the activities, discussions and communication styles that contribute to this development. Most significantly, the data shows there are particular reasons why informal mentoring relationships begin. By understanding the common experiences documented by the research and using this evidence to create the right conditions, it should be possible to encourage informal mentoring relationships within an organization.

While this research study does contribute to the understanding of the spaces and conditions that foster informal mentoring relationships, there are still unanswered questions creating opportunities for further research. The findings of this study can be used to frame new research questions to provide further evidence about the initiation and continuation of informal mentoring.

People Have Common Experiences

People engaged in informal mentoring relationships identify commonalities of experiences. At BCIT, people involved in mentoring have similar meeting places, interactions, activities and, conversations with their partners. Examining response patterns to interview questions for identifiable groups within the population interviewed, identified these similarities. Very few significant differences in the responses were found, thus suggesting informal mentoring begins in a similar way for all people regardless of their roles within the relationship, their personal traits and the nature of the mentoring partnership. If the conditions that fostered this development were significantly different for men and women, mentors and mentees, supervisors and subordinates, it would be more difficult for an organization with a diversified work force to create circumstances that would encourage mentoring. Fortunately, the similarity of peoples' experiences confirms that creating appropriate spaces for these associations to grow can be an uncomplicated and non-discriminating process. And, although the experience of initiating and becoming involved in a mentoring relationship will be very personal for those involved, others will share similar experiences.

Recommendations: Creating Spaces that Foster Mentoring

Interaction between people sparks the initiation and nurtures the continuation of informal mentoring relationships. The data collected provides valuable, detailed information about the nature and features of these interactions. Further, this information is the key to creating the spaces that encourage such relationships.

Physical Places

In the context of BCIT, the interactions that establish informal mentoring relationships occur in a variety of places. Most often they occur in the private office of one of the mentoring partners. It is also common for initial mentoring interactions to occur in a food service venue such as a cafeteria or coffee bar. Further, as office sharing is a common practice, the initial interactions between mentoring partners also occur in these shared spaces. A quality of these spaces is that they tend to be private. They are places where people can interact without being heard or interrupted by others. Of course, private

offices or offices shared by mentoring partners offer privacy. However, it is not always possible for an organization to give every employee a private office, nor is it necessary. Building conveniently located private meeting rooms available to employees without imposing complicated booking procedures is a way to create private space. Further, private space can be constructed by giving employees the freedom to leave their immediate work environment and go to a place that offers the opportunity for private talk, such as a food service venue or a quiet public space.

The spaces conducive to informal mentoring are places where people have unstructured time for interaction. In their offices or at restaurants, people often have flexibility as to how they use their time. When tied to a phone or assigned to classroom instruction, people have less freedom to engage in unplanned or off-task interaction. The research findings reveal that informal mentoring relationships begin through unplanned interaction in response to circumstances presented by the work environment. Organizations can create the conditions for this type of interaction by building unstructured time into employees' schedules and scheduling work in places that allow for non task-oriented conversation. This time must be different from scheduled break time. If organizations want to encourage work-related informal mentoring, employees need the opportunity to congregate in places which enable them to engage in mentoring activities during the workday.

For a work environment to foster informal mentoring partnerships, it must invite interaction. People need to be in visual and physical proximity with one another to exchange the cues that signal willingness and availability for interaction. Open workspaces and workstations without walls or doors facilitate interaction but do not offer the privacy fundamental to mentoring. An alternative is to create work environments that facilitate interaction by way of movement through the workspace and an open door policy. Workplace designs that require people to pass offices and encounter others as they move to their own office, classroom, or to resources, such as supplies, photocopiers, printers and fax machines, can effectively encourage dialogue particularly if office doors are open and the people in those spaces are situated facing the open doors. This approach to office layout can aid both interaction and privacy, two key components of the spaces that foster informal mentoring.

In many organizations, particularly in the public post-secondary education system, there is limited control over building and office design. Design is often dictated by budget and pre-determined standards. Therefore, organizations committed to creating a work environment conducive to mentoring must make efforts with limited resources to create the right physical spaces for this process to begin.

Processes

As mentoring partners interact with each other in a private office, at a food service venue, or in a shared office, they are engaged in processes which lead to the initiation of their partnership. For the purposes of this study, the processes examined were activity, content of discussion and tone of interaction. The activity mentoring partners engage in most often while getting to know each other is work-related discussion and conversation. The partners also spend time working on projects and will commonly go for coffee or lunch together. While engaged in these activities, the mentoring partners have conversations about a variety of topics. Most often they discuss work and issues such as teaching, classroom management, students, and strategies for handling work situations.

It is challenging for an organization to create an environment that can foster mentoring because the conditions are not entirely materialistic or physical. Rather, they are more atmospheric and cultural. Creating and controlling the atmosphere or culture of an organization is difficult because every member influences it, and it is impossible to direct the behaviours and beliefs of every organizational member. Despite these challenges, there are viable means by which organizations can encourage and support activities that promote informal mentoring.

Discussion is the dominant component of interactions that lead to informal mentoring relationships. There are several strategies organizations can use to promote discussion. Employees can be encouraged to talk about work-related issues, educational issues and completion of work tasks by having role models and being given time, freedom, and incentive to do so. Role models can be a powerful influence. Employees will learn to engage in conversation about work if they see their institutional leaders and their direct supervisors doing so. Managers engaging in work-related discussions can teach organizational members that sharing knowledge, skills and experience is not only acceptable but is valued. It also demonstrates the utility of figuring out how to complete a

work task or solve a work problem through discussion. Encouraging this type of dialogue also requires support from the organization. Organizations can provide this support by giving their employees time and freedom during the workday. This can be achieved by flexible scheduling and by allowing employees to use time at their discretion. Concerns about productivity may arise when it is suggested organizations give their employees unstructured time with no particular outcome in mind. However, the research findings show that in the work environment people do spend their time talking about issues related to work. Although the discussion may not focus on an issue deemed relevant by a supervisor, it is likely to be about a work issue or a work-related function, therefore the organization will benefit. The final strategy organizations can use to encourage work related discussion is incentive. Employees will be encouraged to engage in these discussions if they are recognized for the achievements realized by them. If employees' capabilities grow through conversation, personal and organizational recognition of this achievement will function to support these behaviours.

Working on projects is another interaction that fosters the initiation of informal mentoring relationships. The conditions that encourage employees to work together on projects can be more directly constructed than the conditions that foster conversation and discussion. Employees within and across departments can be assigned, by supervisors and managers, to work collaboratively on projects. This requires willingness on the part of managers to delegate interesting and challenging projects to employees. Supervisors, who see their employees as underlings may be inclined to work on such projects and assignments themselves. However, offering employees the opportunity to work on these assignments with others can help to get informal mentoring relationships started which can contribute to employee development and, ultimately, benefit the organization. Collaboration on projects can also be fostered through role modeling and organizational support. If employees see their leaders working jointly on projects, they will see how it is done and will learn to view teamwork as effective and valued. Working collaboratively is both an art and a science requiring hard and soft skills. Organizations can further encourage successful partnership by providing training on effective collaboration. Employees not only need the opportunity and the skills to work collaboratively but they also need the time. Organizations can support the type of collaboration that fosters initiation of informal mentoring relationships by giving employees cooperative projects and the time needed to complete them.

Sharing food and drink is another activity that helps mentoring relationships develop. Organizational leaders can encourage employees to interact with each other over coffee and lunch by setting an example, providing time to do so, communicating it is valued and, making it known that work can get done outside the office. In the busy work environment, the coffee and lunch break are often sacrificed in the name of productivity. However, valuable work can and does get done over meals. The research shows that work-place mentoring partners talk about work in these venues and such conversations contribute to improved work capabilities. If work is scheduled and prioritized so employees feel they can afford the time for a coffee or lunch break, they are more likely to engage in the activity. As well, employees need to know that going to coffee or lunch is sometimes as important as their assigned duties or work. It is a challenge in the busy work environment to put interaction above productivity; however, the contributions derived from such interaction between people are significant.

Motivations

People routinely interact with co-workers and supervisors in the places where informal mentoring partnerships begin. During these interactions they engage in activities and conversations characteristic of those between mentoring partners. However, in some cases mentoring results and in others it does not. At BCIT, the development of mentoring between some colleagues and not others is contingent upon circumstances the individuals are facing, the presence of certain personal traits, recognition of similarities, and the acknowledgement of an expertise that meets a learning need. As well, a positive, upbeat, relaxed and sincere tone promotes the development of the special partnership.

The research indicates mentoring partnerships are forged in response to particular circumstances in the workplace. Most often, someone is faced with a challenge which creates a learning need. In response, the individual will connect with a person who has the skills, knowledge, experience, or expertise to address that need. For people to make use of a colleague's expertise for professional and personal coping, learning and development, they need to be aware of the possibility of mentoring. As such, the most important step for an organization wanting to encourage mentoring is to raise awareness of the practice among its staff. This can be accomplished by having role models; sharing information on mentoring through established communication channels; by offering

educational workshops; and, asking those involved in mentoring to share their experiences. An organization wishing to encourage mentoring can start by including a statement about mentoring in its mandate. This communicates to the organizational community that mentoring is sanctioned and valued by the organization, which gives employees permission and incentive to develop such relationships. In support of the formal, written mandate, organizational leaders can act as role models by engaging in mentoring and sharing their experiences. Newsletters and electronic message boards, as well as free, regular workshops on mentoring will also help organizations raise awareness about mentoring.

In addition to awareness, the tone of the interactions between potential partners contributes to the development of mentoring. The style of the interactions that occur between partners as they get to know each is positive, collaborative, educational, humorous and informal. Clearly, the way in which mentoring partners communicate with each other cannot be dictated or controlled, but if people feel supported they will be relaxed and comfortable as they interact with their partner. A relaxed and comfortable environment and an atmosphere of support promote informal mentoring relationships in the workplace.

Summary of Conditions Which Encourage Mentoring

There are several conditions that must be present for an informal mentoring relationship to begin and flourish. First, there must be an awareness of mentoring as a viable strategy for workplace learning; second, there must be an understanding among staff that mentoring relationships have merit in the organization; and thirdly, people must feel supported to engage in a mentoring partnership. In addition, people with learning needs and those with expertise to share, need exposure to one another. They need to be in contact so they can get to know one another and make a mentoring connection. Finally, once an initial connection has been made, mentoring partners need private places and free time to engage in activities that nurture their partnership.

Outcomes of Creating Conditions Which Encourage Mentoring

If the appropriate conditions – awareness, sanction and support - are created, mentoring can be recognized and utilized by employees. When people encounter circumstances and challenges they will look to their colleagues for help and advice. From the opposite perspective, when people see their colleagues facing challenges or struggling to handle a situation, they will offer to share their expertise and experience. With support from institutional leaders, potential mentoring partners will feel comfortable taking time to engage in discussion and activity with each other. Eventually, conversation will help partners identify shared beliefs, values and personal styles, creating a deep and meaningful connection that will serve to spark the partnership. Once the connection is made, activity and discussion will help the dyad to establish the basis of their partnership, identify and learn about each others abilities, give and receive aid and encouragement, achieve a deep professional and personal understanding of each other, and create confidence in themselves. The bond is sustained after the issue or crisis that brought them together has passed because there are always new issues arising and the established mentoring partnership becomes the method by which new challenges are addressed.

Recommendations: Creating Spaces that Sustain Mentoring

Continued interaction between the partners helps sustain an established mentoring relationship. While the interactions between established mentoring partners were all slightly different, the conditions needed to promote that relationship are the same. However, the ways these conditions influence an established partnership are somewhat different from the ways these conditions led to the original bond.

Features of Established Partnerships

Established mentoring partners interact with each other in their private offices, at food service venues on campus and in their shared offices. They also interact regularly on the telephone. Once the relationship is established, partners engage primarily in work-related activities, but also partake in social activities together more often than they did early on. As with the initial interactions, conversations, working on projects, and going to coffee or lunch are the most common activities for the partners to engage in together.

Later on in their mentoring relationship, eating together is a more prevalent activity. During these activities, established mentoring partners discuss work and non-work issues, personal subjects and strategies for managing situations or getting something done. The style of interaction is relaxed, light, familiar and uncomplicated which makes interaction easy and enjoyable.

Conditions to Support Established Mentoring Partnerships

The conditions that allow mentoring partners to carry-on effectively are essentially the same as those that get the partnerships going. The only major difference is the maintenance of an established partnership is not reliant on an awareness of mentoring. Once a partnership is established, education about mentoring is unnecessary, as the participants are already familiar with the practice. All other conditions are essentially the same.

To maintain their relationship, mentoring partners need to be easily accessible to each other so they can meet regularly and conveniently with a certain amount of privacy. Working in the same department or office facilitates the proximity required to keep a partnership going. Use of the telephone or e-mail also facilitates the convenience of interaction required to sustain the relationship. Organizations can create these conditions by being sensitive to established mentoring partnerships when making or changing office assignments, and by providing access to communications technology that can help the partners keep-in-touch.

Established mentoring relationships also need continued support from the organization to survive. Organizations can communicate support through the institutional mandate as well as through scheduling of work and management style. Specifically, employees work can be scheduled so they have the opportunity to engage unstructured dialogue, collaborative projects, and sharing meals during the workday. Employees can also be allowed to engage in activity without being monitored and given freedom to discuss issues and topics that are meaningful and relevant to them. Mentoring partners that have time to interact conveniently and freely will have the resources and support required to sustain their partnership.

If an organization is able to create these logistical and atmospheric conditions, informal mentoring relationships will continue. The right conditions will permit mentoring partners to keep in-touch with each other, and allow them to develop a deeper professional and personal understanding of each other. This deeper understanding facilitates reciprocal, on-going professional and personal learning, and improvement that reinforces the utility of the partnership and motivates the partners to keep working together.

Fostering and Sustaining Informal Mentoring Relationships

Because the conditions that foster the initiation and maintenance of informal mentoring relationships are very similar, creating these conditions is feasible. It requires the creation of a conducive organizational culture through the implementation of management, training and communication systems. Organizations wishing to promote and sustain informal mentoring relationships can do so by:

- communicating to the organizational community that mentoring is sanctioned and valued by incorporating it into the organizational mandate;
- developing programs to educate and raise awareness about mentoring among organizational members;
- leading by example by having organizational leaders and managers engage in mentoring relationships and share their experiences with the organizational community;
- designing physical work environments that put employees in contact with each other;
- structuring work spaces so they facilitate interaction between employees;
- creating spaces where people can engage in mentoring activities in relative privacy;
- providing employees with unstructured time to engage in mentoring activities and behaviours; and,
- giving employees freedom to use their unstructured time without external influence or interference.

Creating the organizational ambiance and the operational structures that create these conditions will spark the initiation and nurture the continuation of informal mentoring relationships. These relationships can be of great benefit to the organization by contributing to improvement and growth through individual learning and development.

Generalizability of Research Findings

The features and characteristics of informal mentoring relationships and the conditions that foster the development of such associations revealed by this study, provides information that can be used by organizations like BCIT to encourage informal mentoring partnerships. Because the research was conducted within the context of BCIT, a publicly funded post-secondary educational institution, the data collected may not reflect the experiences of people in organizations distinctly different from the Institute. However, the research findings do show that the experiences of people involved in informal mentoring relationships are similar regardless of their role within the relationship, the nature of the partnership or their personal traits. Therefore, the findings are likely to have relevance in many organizations.

It is reasonable to suggest that people in most work environments manage their work challenges and circumstances by engaging in dialogue, collaborating and, taking breaks with their colleagues. Since engaging in these activities can lead to the development of informal mentoring relationships, such associations are likely to arise in organizations both alike and different from BCIT. If processes that initiate and sustain informal mentoring are the same in most organizations, then the contributing conditions explored in this study are likely to be similar as well. As such, the strategies that encourage informal mentoring relationships proposed in this study could be used by any organization wishing to promote such partnerships. Further research would verify the validity of these assertions.

Opportunities for Further Research

The findings of this study suggest particular features are characteristics of informal mentoring relationships and certain conditions are conducive to the development of these associations. The study also makes recommendations for management, training and communication systems that can foster the development of mentoring partnerships within an organizational context. Further research could verify these assertions and provide a more thorough understanding of the complex, multi-faceted, social process of mentoring.

Because mentoring relationships occur between people in complex social contexts, there are numerous factors that shape and influence such partnerships. This study examined in detail interactions that initiate and sustain informal mentoring relationships. It did not examine the influence of personality and personal experience on the development and continuation mentoring relationships. A further research study could identify the personality traits of those involved in informal mentoring partnerships and explore the influence of these traits on the initiation of such relationships. An important question to ask in this research would be: "How does prior experience with mentoring influence the initiation and development of informal mentoring relationships?". It would be helpful to know if having a family member who was a mentor or mentee affects involvement in informal mentoring in the workplace. It would also be interesting to know if people who were mentored either at work or outside of work are more likely to take part in mentoring. Understanding the influence of prior experience would provide more information that could be used to create systems that encourage and support informal mentoring.

A goal of this research study was to articulate and understand the physical environments in which mentoring develops and the influence of place on these partnerships. Although the physical locations of initial and later mentoring interactions were identified, details about the aesthetics and integration these venues were not clarified. An opportunity for further research would be to better articulate the features of the locations where mentoring begins and progresses. This could be achieved by asking people engaged in mentoring relationships about the attributes of the places where their partnerships began, the patterns of movement through these spaces and, how and why they encountered their partners in these locations.

This research focussed on a particular organization which effectively identified the attributes of places and interactions that get informal mentoring relationships started in that context. However, given the idiosyncratic nature of organizational culture, it is difficult to generalize these findings to other settings. The narrow context also limits the application of the strategies designed to promote informal mentoring. Conducting the same study in an organization distinctly different from BCIT would determine if the patterns identified here, occur elsewhere. In effect, this research could measure the influence of organizational culture on the growth and maintenance of these relationships.

It could also examine the effectiveness of the strategies proposed in this research in different organizational environments.

The most exciting opportunity for new research to advance informal mentoring relationships is to implement and measure the effectiveness of the strategies proposed in this study. This research would need to be longitudinal and would entail measuring the number of existing informal mentoring relationships within a particular organization prior to using the techniques identified here. After the strategies had been implemented, the number of informal partnerships could be measured again. An increase in the number of partnerships within the organization would prove the ideas proposed in this study correct. If there was no change in the number of relationships, it would weaken the proposition that informal mentoring partnerships can be fostered by the right conditions. All of these studies would enhance the findings of this study by creating a greater body of research on how and why informal mentoring relationships begin, evolve and mature.

Conclusion

I was motivated to undertake this research study because I wanted to know why some people I worked with had successfully established mentoring relationships and I had been unable to do so. By learning about factors that nurtured informal mentoring relationships for 48 of my colleagues, I was able to identify how I could improve my opportunities for becoming involved in such a partnership. Learning about the experiences of my colleagues has made me more interested in forging the deep and meaningful connections characteristic of informal mentoring. I now know better what to look for in a work environment to help me establish a mentoring relationship. As the study evidence suggests, I need a workplace where mentoring relationships exist and are valued. I must have access to people who have the skills and desire to help me meet the challenges presented by my work through one-on-one interaction. Most importantly, I need time and freedom within my work context to pursue a mentoring partnership. Hopefully, the information revealed by this study can be used by anyone who is looking for mentoring opportunities. Further, it can be useful to organizations wanting to foster informal mentoring to improve their organization and to encourage career growth for their employees.

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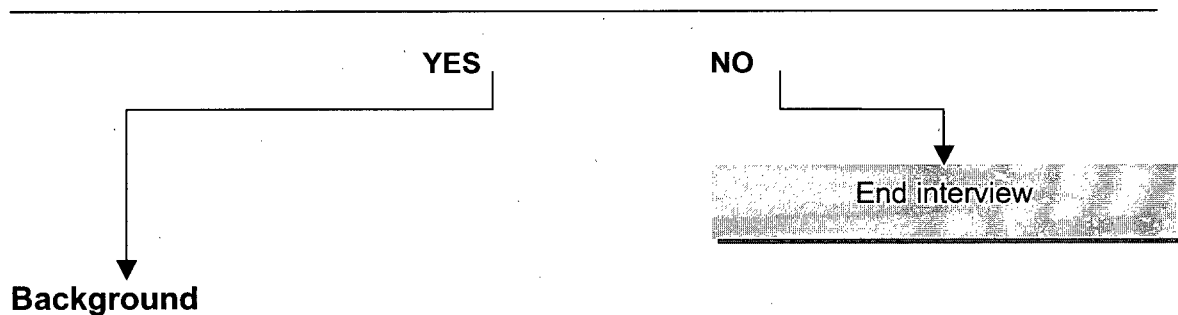
APPENDIX 1: Structured Interview Template

Are you involved in a mentoring type relationship?

Mentoring has different meanings for different people. For the purposes of this study, mentoring has been defined as:

Learning, helping, sharing, supportive, developmental or nurturing relationships where the participants invest time, know-how and effort in ways that enhance the knowledge, skill and professional capacity of one or both members of the partnership resulting in greater satisfaction, productivity or achievement in the work they do at BCIT.

Does this describe a relationship that you have ever had with a colleague here at BCIT?



Background

1. Can we use your mentoring partner's name during this interview? _____
2. What is their name? _____
3. Where did you meet your mentoring partner? _____
4. How long have you known your mentoring partner? _____
5. When do you think your relationship with this person became more of a mentoring relationship and less of an acquaintanceship?

6. Why do you think your relationship with your mentoring partner developed into a mentoring type relationship?

Do you consider yourself to be the mentor or the mentee (the person being mentored) in this relationship?

7.

Mostly the mentor

Somewhat the
mentor

Equally mentor and
mentee

Somewhat the
mentee

Mostly the mentee

8. Do you think that your mentoring partner knows that you think of your relationship as a mentoring type relationship?

9. Did your mentoring relationship develop as a result of a single interaction or several interactions?

Single

Several

10. Were your initial interactions regular or sporadic? _____

The Beginning (Physical Location)

11. Where did your initial interaction(s) occur? _____

Physical Location(s): _____

12. In what ways do you think the place where your mentoring relationship got started was significant to the development of the relationship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

The Beginning (Activities)

13. What kinds of activities did you do with your mentoring partner during your initial interactions?

Activity / Activities:

Were the activities that you engaged in with your mentoring partner as the relationship developed?:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 14. | Never work related | Rarely work related | Sometimes work related | Often work related | Always work related |
| 15. | Never recreational | Rarely recreational | Sometimes recreational | Often recreational | Always recreational |
| 16. | Never social | Rarely social | Sometimes social | Often social | Always social |

17. In what ways were the activities that you engaged in with your mentoring partner significant to the development of the relationship?

- a.

- b.

- c.

The Beginning (Content)

18. The first few times you interacted with your mentoring partner, what did you talk about or work on?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

As your mentoring relationship was developing, were your conversations and interactions?:

19.	Mostly work related	Somewhat work related	Equally work and non-work related	Somewhat non-work related	Mostly non-work related
20.	Never related to opportunities	Rarely related to opportunities	Sometimes related to opportunities	Often related to opportunities	Always related to opportunities
21.	Never related to problems	Rarely related to problems	Sometimes related to problems	Often related to problems	Always related to problems
22.	Never related to interpersonal interactions	Rarely related to interpersonal interactions	Sometimes related to interpersonal interactions	Often related to interpersonal interactions	Always related to interpersonal interactions
23.	Never related to technical skills	Rarely related to technical skills	Sometimes related to technical skills	Often related to technical skills	Always related to technical skills

24. In the beginning, how did the things you talked about with your mentoring partner contribute to the development of the relationship?

The Beginning (Nature of the Interaction)

25. What were your initial interactions with your mentoring partner like?

The initial interactions with your mentoring partner were?:

26.	Not at all confrontational	Not very confrontational	Somewhat confrontational	Very confrontational	Entirely confrontational
27.	Not at all collaborative	Not very collaborative	Somewhat collaborative	Very collaborative	Entirely collaborative
28.	Never pre-planned	Rarely pre-planned	Sometimes pre- planned	Often pre-planned	Always pre-planned
29.	Not at all instructive	Not very instructive	Somewhat instructive	Very instructive	Entirely instructive
30.	Mostly initiated by myself	Somewhat initiated by myself	Equally initiated by myself and my mentoring partner	Somewhat initiated by my mentoring partner	Mostly initiated by my mentoring partner
31.	Not at all reciprocal	Not very reciprocal	Somewhat reciprocal	Very reciprocal	Entirely reciprocal
32.	Not at all illuminating	Not very illuminating	Somewhat illuminating	Very illuminating	Entirely illuminating
33.	Never challenging	Rarely challenging	Sometimes challenging	Often challenging	Always challenging
34.	Not at all unpleasant	Not very unpleasant	Somewhat unpleasant	Very unpleasant	Entirely unpleasant
35.	Not at all educational	Not very educational	Somewhat educational	Very educational	Entirely educational
36.	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious	Entirely serious
37.	Never pushed me out of my 'comfort zone'	Rarely pushed me out of my 'comfort zone'	Sometimes pushed me out of my 'comfort zone'	Often pushed me out of my 'comfort zone'	Always pushed me out of my 'comfort zone'
38.	Not at all enjoyable	Not very enjoyable	Somewhat enjoyable	Very enjoyable	Entirely enjoyable

39. In what ways did the tone of your initial interactions contribute to the development of your mentoring relationship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Established (Physical Location)

40. Where do the interactions and conversations that you currently have with your mentoring partner usually occur?

Physical Location(s): _____

41. In what ways do these locations support or facilitate the mentoring relationship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Established (Activities)

42. What kinds of things do you currently do with your mentoring partner? (*Clarification - what activities do you engage in with your mentoring partner?*)

Activity / Activities: _____

Are the activities that you engaged in with your mentoring partner:

43.

Never work related

Rarely work related

Sometimes work
related

Often work related

Always work related

44.

Never recreational

Rarely recreational

Sometimes
recreational

Often recreational

Always recreational

45.

Never social

Rarely social

Sometimes social

Often social

Always social

46. In what ways do these activities support or facilitate your mentoring relationship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Established (Content)

47. What 2 or 3 things do you currently talk about or work-on with your mentoring partner?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

How would you describe your conversations and interactions?:

48.	Mostly non-work related	Somewhat non-work related	Equally work and non-work related	Somewhat work related	Mostly work related
49.	Never related to opportunities	Rarely related to opportunities	Sometimes related to opportunities	Often related to opportunities	Always related to opportunities
50.	Never related to problems	Rarely related to problems	Sometimes related to problems	Often related to problems	Always related to problems
51.	Never related to interpersonal interactions	Rarely related to interpersonal interactions	Sometimes related to interpersonal interactions	Often related to interpersonal interactions	Always related to interpersonal interactions
52.	Never related to technical skills	Rarely related to technical skills	Sometimes related to technical skills	Often related to technical skills	Always related to technical skills
53.	Never related to routine issues	Rarely related to routine issues	Sometimes related to routine issues	Often related to routine issues	Always related to routine issues

54. In what ways do the things you talk about with your mentoring partner facilitate or support your relationship?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Established (Nature of the Interaction)

55. What are the interactions with your mentoring partner like? _____

The interactions with your mentoring partner are?:

56.	Not at all confrontational	Not very confrontational	Somewhat confrontational	Very confrontational	Entirely confrontational
57.	Not at all collaborative	Not very collaborative	Somewhat collaborative	Very collaborative	Entirely collaborative
58.	Never pre-planned	Rarely pre-planned	Sometimes pre- planned	Often pre-planned	Always pre-planned
59.	Not at all instructive	Not very instructive	Somewhat instructive	Very instructive	Entirely instructive
60.	Mostly initiated by myself	Somewhat initiated by myself	Equally initiated by myself and my mentoring partner	Somewhat initiated by my mentoring partner	Mostly initiated by my mentoring partner
61.	Not at all reciprocal	Not very reciprocal	Somewhat reciprocal	Very reciprocal	Entirely reciprocal
62.	Not at all illuminating	Not very illuminating	Somewhat illuminating	Very illuminating	Entirely illuminating
63.	Never challenging	Rarely challenging	Sometimes challenging	Often challenging	Always challenging
64.	Not at all unpleasant	Not very unpleasant	Somewhat unpleasant	Very unpleasant	Entirely unpleasant
65.	Not at all educational	Not very educational	Somewhat educational	Very educational	Entirely educational
66.	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious	Entirely serious
67.	Never push me out of my 'comfort zone'	Rarely push me out of my 'comfort zone'	Sometimes push me out of my 'comfort zone'	Often push me out of my 'comfort zone'	Always push me out of my 'comfort zone'
68.	Not at all enjoyable	Not very enjoyable	Somewhat enjoyable	Very enjoyable	Entirely enjoyable

69. In what ways does the tone of your interactions support or facilitate your mentoring relationship?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Demographics

At the beginning of your mentoring relationship:

70. What was your age? _____ years

71. What was the age of your mentoring partner? _____ years

72. Gender

☐ Female

☐ Male

73. Is your mentoring partner?

☐ Female

☐ Male

74. How long had you worked at BCIT? _____ years

75. How long had your mentoring partner worked at BCIT? _____ years

76. Were you?

☐ Management

☐ BCGEU Support

☐ BCGEU Faculty

☐ FSA Faculty

☐ FSA Assistant Instructor

☐ FSA Tech Staff

☐ FSA Non-teaching

77. Was your mentoring partner?

☐ Management

☐ BCGEU Support

☐ BCGEU Faculty

☐ FSA Faculty

☐ FSA Assistant Instructor

☐ FSA Tech Staff

☐ FSA Non-teaching

☐ don't know

78. Was your mentoring partner your direct supervisor? **YES** **NO**

79. Were you your mentoring partner your direct supervisor? **YES** **NO**

80. Was your mentoring partner?

☐ senior to you

☐ equal to you

☐ junior to you

81. What Department were you in?

82. What Department was your mentoring partner in?

83. Has the relationship **CHANGED** **ENDED** **STAYED THE SAME**

When?

In what way / why? _____

84. How long has your relationship lasted? _____ years

Wrap-up

85. In what ways has your mentoring relationship contributed to your personal and professional development and success?

86. Do you think these types of relationships should be encouraged at BCIT? Why?

87. Do you think these types of relationships can be fostered at BCIT? Why?

Contact

May I contact your mentoring partner about participating in this research study?

Can you suggest anyone else at BCIT who might be involved in this type of a relationship?

Creating Spaces for Mentoring Relationships

Introduction

Because you are involved in a mentoring relationship of this type, I would like to ask you about your experiences. This interview will essentially be a conversation about your experiences. During our conversation I will be asking you to answer some background questions about your relationship. I will then ask you a set of questions about the physical location, activities, content and tone of your mentoring interactions twice – once related to the beginning of your relationship and once related to the point at which the relationship is well established, which may be now or sometime in the past. At the end, I will ask you a few demographic questions.

Physical Location

The next few questions are related to the actual physical locations (places), on campus or off campus, where you interact with your mentoring partner.

Activities

The following questions are related to what you do with your mentoring partner. That is, the types of activities (actions, pastimes) that you engage in together.

Content

The next set of questions is about what you talk about or work-on with your mentoring partner. Specifically the content (make-up, composition) of those conversations and interactions. Another way to think about this one is, 'what is said during your conversations and interactions'.

Nature of the interactions

The following questions are related to the tone (features, characteristics) of the interactions that you have with your mentoring partner. That is, what your interactions are like. So think of the spirit, the character, and the style of the interactions you have with your mentoring partner.

Demographics

The following questions are demographic type questions – age, sex etc. Answer these questions according to what was true at the beginning of your mentoring relationship.

APPENDIX 3: Letter of Informed Consent

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Creating Spaces for Mentoring Relationships

Purpose:

This study identifies physical locations and interpersonal processes that facilitate initiating and maintaining informal mentoring relationships.

Study Procedures:

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer several questions. This interview will take less than an hour and can be completed at a location that is convenient for you.

Confidentiality:

Any information resulting from this research study will be kept strictly confidential. All documents and data files will be identified only by code number. Participants will not be identified by name in any documents or reports resulting from the study.

Contact:

This research study has been designed and implemented by Janeen Alliston as part of the thesis requirement for her Master of Arts in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia. The Principal Investigator and supervisor of the study is Roger Boshier, Professor in the Department of Educational Studies. The Co-Investigator is Janeen Alliston, Master of Arts student the Department of Educational Studies.

If you have any questions or desire further information about this study, please contact Roger Boshier at 822-5822, or Janeen Alliston at 432-8479 or 732-4504. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject you may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratley at 822-8598.

Consent:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussion.

You have been given a copy of this letter for your own records.

Please sign below to consent to participate in this study:

Respondent Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

APPENDIX 4: Letter of Initial Contact

The following wording will be used in e-mail messages sent to potential participants identified through the use of a snowball sampling technique:

Dear [potential participants name],

A fellow BCIT colleague participated in a research study on the development and maintenance of informal mentoring relationships and suggested that you might have this type of association with someone here at BCIT.

For the purposes of this study, mentoring is defined very broadly and includes learning, helping, sharing, supportive, developmental or nurturing relationships that enhance a person's knowledge, skill and professional capacity. If this describes a relationship that you have ever had with a colleague here at BCIT, would you be willing to participate in this research study on mentoring?

If you choose to participate in the study you will be asked to answer several questions. The questions will focus on:

- the physical locations where you interact with your mentoring partner,
- the activities you engage in with your mentoring partner,
- the tone of the interactions between you and your mentoring partner.

This interview will take less than an hour and can be completed at a location that is convenient for you.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussion. Your name will not appear in any document, report, or thesis that results from this study. Confidentiality is assured.

I am conducting this study to satisfy the thesis requirement for my Master of Arts in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia. If you have any questions about participating in this study please contact me at local 8479, or my faculty advisor, Roger Boshier at 822-5822.

I will contact you in the next 2-3 days to follow-up on your participation in the study.

Thank you,

Janeen Alliston
BCIT Program Advising
Master of Arts student, UBC

APPENDIX 5: Request for volunteers posted on electronic bulletin board



a

Topic: Volunteers Wanted for Research Study on Mentoring **Category:** General News

Description:

Creating Spaces for Mentoring Relationships is a research study on the development and maintenance of informal mentoring relationships among faculty and staff members at BCIT.

For the purposes of this study, mentoring has been defined as learning, helping, sharing, supportive, developmental or nurturing relationships where the participants invest time, know-how and effort in ways that enhance the knowledge, skill and professional capacity of one or both members of the partnership resulting in greater satisfaction, productivity or achievement in the work they do at BCIT. If this describes a relationship that you have ever had with a colleague here at BCIT, would you be willing to participate in this research study on mentoring?

If you choose to participate in the study you will be asked to answer several questions. The questions will focus on:

- the physical locations where you interact with your mentoring partner,
- the activities you engage in with your mentoring partner,
- the tone of the interactions between you and your mentoring partner.

This interview will take less than an hour and can be completed at a location that is convenient for you.

If you are interested in participating in this study please contact me at local 8479 or send an e-mail at janeen_alliston@bcit.ca

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussion. Your name will not appear in any document, report, or thesis that results from this study. Confidentiality is assured.

I am conducting this study to satisfy the thesis requirement for my Master of Arts in Adult Education at the University of British Columbia. If you have any questions about participating in this study please contact me at local 8479, or my faculty advisor, Roger Boshier at 822-5822.

Janeen Alliston
BCIT Program Advising
Master of Arts student, UBC