

Mentorship in the Professional Practicum: Partners' Perspectives

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Abstract. The goal of this project was to examine the perspectives of teacher-education mentors and their protégés, regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring program within their extended-practicum placements. The participants were mentor/protégé pairs who worked together in a field-based practicum that took place in several schools in an Eastern Canadian province. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant with respect to their thoughts related to the strengths and weaknesses of the mentorship process. The authors examined these views in the light of findings reported in previous related research. They also drew implications from that analysis with a goal of enhancing the mentorship process not only for pre-service teachers, but also for practicum participants in other professional disciplines. The resulting data substantiated findings reported in previous literature with respect both to the positive and negative aspects of mentorship practice. For instance, a key strength was that both protégés and mentors benefitted from the mentorship process when it was deemed effective, while a troubling aspect was the persistent challenge of how to reduce/eliminate the negative elements that seem to re-emerge within the mentorship process, not only in this study but across several disciplines. A major implication of this study is that mentorship planners and practicum educators from all professional fields should make concerted efforts not only to share promising ways to minimize these weaknesses, but to take deliberate measures to ensure that the processes/procedures deemed effective are maintained as well.

Keywords: Mentoring; Mentorship; Professional Development; Coaching; Practicum

1.1 Introduction

Although the mentorship process traces its beginnings to ancient Greek times (Hansman, 2002), its universal popularity across the professional-education

landscape has increased substantiality over the past three decades (Caldwell & Carter, 2005). At its core, mentorship is a teaching/learning, developmental relationship (Kram, 1985), whereby *mentors* who have accumulated more expertise, experience, and knowledge in a particular field, assist *protégés*, who possess relatively less knowledge and skills in the discipline, to develop their related professional competence and confidence (Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen, & Bergen, 2011; Ralph & Walker, 2014b; Rose Ragins & Kram, 2007).

The purpose of this present project was to examine the perspectives of teacher-education mentors and their protégés, regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring program within their extended-practicum placements. We identified two research questions for the mentors and protégés, namely, what was effective in the mentorship process and what was ineffective in it? We analyzed the data generated from the interviews in the light of previous pertinent research, and we raise implications of these findings for improving the mentorship process for practicum pre-service education in all professional disciplines.

1.2 Background

The literature across the occupational spectrum has repeatedly identified a number of benefits of effective mentorship for all participants (Clutterbuck, 1987; Philpott, 2015). At the same time, however, some research has also indicated the existence of perplexing mentorship problems that seem to re-appear across professions and cultures (Allen & Eby, 2007; Long, 1997; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2008; Yaman, 2013). For instance, relationship difficulties such as the emergence of partner insincerity/dishonesty, the operation of power differentials between mentors and protégés, and the miscommunication or misinterpretation of partners' actions may lead to increased mentorship conflicts (Hamlin & Sage, 2011; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2007, 2009a; Scandura, 1998). Often, too, these deficiencies are prematurely ignored, inaccurately diagnosed, or inappropriately dismissed with expressions like "we simply have a personality clash" or "my protégé (or mentor) is just intransigent (or stubborn or lazy)" (Ralph, 1998), rather as being accepted as opportunities for growth that need to be engaged (Tillema, Smith, & Leshem, 2011). In another vein, some researchers and practitioners believe that such mentoring issues are normal characteristics of the human condition that inevitably appear whenever two or more individuals interact (Eby, 2007; Scandura, 1998). However, our own previous research has suggested that some of these mentoring limitations can be traced directly to the mentor's mismatching of his/her mentoring response or style with the existing developmental level of the protégé to perform a specific task or skill set (Ralph, 2005; Ralph & Walker, 2013). For instance we found that: (a) when a mentor/protégé pair has a clear conceptualization of the holistic mentorship process; (b) when partners understand each other's role/responsibility in that process; and (c) when a mentor appropriately adapts his/her mentorship to meet the protégé's changing learning needs, then many of the seemingly unavoidable difficulties can be appreciably reduced (Ralph, 1998; Ralph & Walker, 2014a, 2014c).

The importance of mentorship has been documented in nearly all professional disciplines (Neville, Sherman, & Cohen, 2005), such as in professional pre-service preparation (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Kleiger & Oster-Levinz, 2015), professional in-

service education (O'Brien, Rodriguez, & McCarthy, 2006; Richter, Kunter, Ludtke, Klusmann, Anders, & Baumert, 2013), occupational training (Wilding, Marais-Strydom, & Teo, 2003), and apprenticeship programs (Tilley & Callison, 2007).

1.3 Mentorship across the Professions

Cross-disciplinary research conducted during the past three decades (Kelly, 2007; Petrila, Fireman, Scholl Fitzpatrick, Wertheimer Hodas, & Taussig, 2015) has confirmed the advantages of effective mentoring for protégés, mentors, clients, and the institutions hosting these mentorship programs. On the other hand, earlier research (Lortie, 1975) also identified the lingering presence of a certain difficulties that persistently emerge within the mentoring relationship (Daloz, 1999; Roycraft, 2014). Some of these deficiencies that spanned professional fields in several countries were an unclear understanding among mentoring participants of the entire mentoring process; an over-dependence on a “one-size-fits-all” mentoring approach; a lack of mentor incentives for assuming the mentoring role; an insufficient orientation/preparation/training of mentoring participants; and inadequate institutional support for the mentorship program (Bukari & Kuyini, 2015; Ralph & Walker, 2011).

1.4 Mentorship in the Teacher Education Practicum

Almost all professional preparation programs in higher education, including pre-service teacher education, offer a field-based, hands-on practicum within which prospective graduates practice and develop their practical skills and competence to prepare for entrance into their respective fields (Ralph & Walker, 2011). Professionals in these disciplines typically rank their practicum/clinical placement as the most influential feature of their professional-preparation experience (Eastman, 1998; Ontario Teachers' Federation, 2013; Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2008), largely because it provides them with an opportunity to apply knowledge and theory within an authentic, reality-focused setting. As novice teachers venture out into classroom in an effort to hone their instructional skills, the mentorship and support provided by practicum mentors and advisors play an influential role in the teacher candidate's overall preparation (Ralph & Walker, 2010).

The practicum mentorship role is commonly associated with field-based observations and debriefing sessions between the protégé and his/her mentor(s). The classroom teacher and the university-based mentor/supervisor help the teacher candidate integrate practice with theory and provide them with formative feedback regarding their teaching performance. Further, the practicum mentors provide their protégés with academic, social, and personal support. Yet, the research reports that difficulties typically emerge in mentorship practice (Hansford, Ehrich, & Tennent, 2004; Parks Daloz, 2005). In the present qualitative research study, we identified effective and ineffective facets of the mentorship process, as perceived by a cohort of teacher candidates and their mentors within one Bachelor of Education program in an Eastern Canadian university.

2.1 Research Methodology

2.2 Design

In this study, we sought to gain an understanding of the diverse realities of practicum participants in ways that examined their unique professional experiences, viewpoints, and situations. In line with this statement, we grounded our project in a constructivist research paradigm by endorsing participant individuality, subjectivity, and voice, therein capturing the situational and experiential portrayals of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Mertens, 2010). We documented the personal experiences and perceptions of teaching mentors and their protégés with regard to the mentorship process in which they participated during the teaching practicum. Because the concepts undergirding phenomenology are inextricably linked with the constructivist research paradigm (Savin-Badin & Howell Major, 2013), we applied a phenomenological research design to this study. Because phenomenology is a research approach that attempts to reveal what participants who experience a similar phenomenon have in common (Creswell, 2013), our study was a composite description of the essence of that lived experience.

2.2 Participants

Typically, phenomenological studies involve a small number of individuals, who are interviewed by the researchers in an effort to collect pertinent data regarding the interviewees' views of a phenomenon or process being studied (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Our study involved nine teacher candidates (protégés) and five practicum advisors (mentors who were university faculty members or sessional staff).

2.3 Procedure

The 14 participants were individually interviewed using a semi-structured interview format (Merriam, 2009), in which each interviewee described his/her respective experiences within the teaching practicum in a Bachelor of Education program in an Atlantic Canadian university. Their teaching practicums were located within elementary and high schools across the province, and were representative of all subject levels.

Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed. We initially read the transcripts to provide familiarity of content or "openness to all detail" (Wertz, 2011, p. 131). Thereafter, we reread each participant's interview in a more systematic manner. We identified significant statements deemed relevant to the phenomenon at hand, and we created a preliminary list of key ideas, commonalities, differences, patterns, and/or categories embedded within the transcripts. We then analyzed these significant statements for broad patterns, which converged into broader themes in response to the research purpose (Christensen et al., 20014). At that point, we reread all interviews ensuring that the data represented each theme and that we addressed each research question. We attested that each unit of data fit a composite theme of the process of mentorship as experienced by the partners.

Although the study was largely qualitative in nature, we supplemented our analysis with basic quantitative tabulations. We presented these numerical data to help summarize the qualitative comments by reporting numbers of participants' making specific statements related to the themes shown in Tables 1 and 2.

3.1 Findings

In Table 1, we summarize protégés' views of what they perceived as effective and ineffective aspects of the mentorship process experienced during their practicum period. For each of Table 1's sub-categories that emerged from the interview data, we include excerpts of specific interviewee statements that illustrate these themes. The protégés offered slightly more negative observations (68 of 130 discrete units) than they did for the effective category (62 of 130 units).

3.2 Protégés' Viewpoints on Positive Elements

Two typical comments illustrating the largest category (i.e., positive communication among partners) were "I had great discussions with my co-op who gave me practical advice about our obligation of dealing with hallway behavior;" and "My co-op was always there after every class to debrief with me. He always made time for that."

Illustrative protégé contributions regarding the establishment of strong relationships with mentors were "[My practicum advisor] was so good at creating friendships, so I felt very comfortable around her;" and "He was really friendly, personable, and willing to listen to you and any concerns you had."

Statements exemplifying the third largest sub-theme (mentors providing productive feedback) were "He was very blunt and bold, but it was effective for me. He just tells you straight up what to work on and what you're good at;" and "He would go over everything he wrote, but he wouldn't dwell on it or rub your nose in it, just point it out so you could improve next time."

Typical points regarding the fourth sub-theme on support were "I liked my university advisor because I could go to him, not just my co-op, so I had somebody from faculty to go to;" and "My mentors gave me support and were there to ask questions of. They were people I knew ineffective aspects of the mentorship process experienced during their practicum period. For each of Table 1's sub-categories that emerged from the interview data, we include excerpts of specific interviewee statements that illustrate these themes. The protégés offered slightly more negative observations (68 of 130 discrete units) than they did for the effective category (62 of 130 units).

Table 1: Summary of teacher candidates' views' regarding effective and ineffective mentorship practices experienced in their education practicum (N =9)

Category	Percentage
Effective aspects (n =62)	
1. Positive communication with mentors	20
2. Strong relationship with mentors	9
3. Mentors provided helpful feedback	8
4. Mentors were supportive	5
5. Mentors had professional credibility	3
6. Appreciated working with fellow protégés	2
Ineffective aspects (n = 68)	
1. Mentors gave insufficient feedback	5
2. Program inconsistencies/Unhelpful seminars	9
3. Inconsistencies among advisors	8
4. Apparent mismatches of mentors with protégés	7
5. Inadequate/Inappropriate personal-reflection activities	7
6. Non-authentic "showcase performance" for practicum advisor	5
7. Protégés question their career choice	2

*Note.*In separate interviews the 9 teacher candidates articulated a total of 130 specific points: 48% of which described their perceptions of effective elements and 53% that described ineffective aspects. Percentages indicate portions of the 130 total points. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

3.2 Protégés' Viewpoints on Positive Elements

Two typical comments illustrating the largest category (i.e., positive communication among partners) were "I had great discussions with my co-op who gave me practical advice about our obligation of dealing with hallway behavior;" and "My co-op was always there after every class to debrief with me. He always made time for that."

Illustrative protégé contributions regarding the establishment of strong relationships with mentors were "[My practicum advisor] was so good at creating friendships, so I felt very comfortable around her;" and "He was really friendly, personable, and willing to listen to you and any concerns you had."

Statements exemplifying the third largest sub-theme (mentors providing productive feedback) were "He was very blunt and bold, but it was effective for me. He just tells you straight up what to work on and what you're good at;" and "He would go over everything he wrote, but he wouldn't dwell on it or rub your nose in it, just point it out so you could improve next time."

Typical points regarding the fourth sub-theme on support were "I liked my university advisor because I could go to him, not just my co-op, so I had somebody from faculty to go to;" and "My mentors gave me support and were there to ask questions of. They were people I knew you could trust if you had problems with your practicum."

Illustrative positive remarks for the sub-category of mentor accessibility were “He told us we were his priority for the term, and made us feel like he really, really cared;” and “I liked how you could call him any time at home. He was approachable and you had no problem talking to him at all.”

The sixth sub-theme regarding mentors having credibility was illustrated by such remarks as: “He had been a teacher for his whole career, so he was knowledgeable and had tons of experience;” and “He had huge credibility and had a story for everything we’d experience.”

Sample statements showing protégés’ gratitude for being able to collaborate with fellow interns were “The two of us were together for the whole term. It was comfortable for us both to meet with the university advisor together, because the things that were said to her were also beneficial to me and vice versa;” and “We drove together every day so we knew there was always somebody there for each other, plus we could debrief as we built up our peer relationship with one another.”

3.3 Protégés’ Viewpoints on Ineffective Facets

To describe the seven negative aspects of their mentorship experiences summarized in the lower portion of Table 1, we provide examples of remarks contributed by the interviewees. Two comments regarding the most frequent problem (i.e., mentors providing insufficient feedback) were “I wish he would have come more often and have given me more critical feedback;” and “She thought everything went well with no negative feedback, which is something I would appreciate—some constructive criticism. This is something I definitely wanted.”

Interviewee comments illustrating the second largest sub-theme (i.e., program inconsistencies and unproductive seminars) were “Some of the seminars were simply not pertinent, and were a waste of time. Individual meetings with one or two of us to discuss our issues would be better;” and “Instead of using 3 hours with all 10 of us, couldn’t we have half an hour with the advisor one-on-one with 5 of us during one week and 5 of us the next week?”

Typical comments illustrating the problem of inconsistencies among mentors were “When we compared co-ops we found that some were belittling and made the intern their servant. How do they get to be a co-operating teacher?” and “My co-op was not paying attention. She went out to photocopy and I had to chase after her and ask if we could talk. All she said was ‘it went well,’ but I knew she wasn’t listening at all.”

With respect to mismatching of mentors with protégés typical statements were: “I just didn’t really click well with her; it was really stressful;” “The co-op really didn’t tell me right from wrong and didn’t advise me on how to do things;” and “The vibe I got was he was using an intern in order to make his life easier. I don’t know if he knew anything about me at all.”

A fifth deficiency that interns identified in the mentorship process was unhelpful assigned personal-reflection activities. For instance, one interviewee reported, “We had a lot of good discussion, but to require us to do a formal written reflection seems like busy work: it doesn’t seem productive in any way.” Another stated, “I’d say that 95% of our group was sick of doing reflections.”

A sixth limitation was interviewees' perception of the non-authenticity of "performing" for the faculty advisor. One intern said, "My co-op would even say to prepare a really good lesson with all the bells and whistles for him in order to make sure it looks good;" and another individual stated, "It was not natural teaching most of the time; it was kind of like a highlight package."

Two percent of the protégés' comments related to the fact that they soon realized that they were incompatible with teaching. One protégé stated: "I wanted to drop out of the program," while another said, "I told my coordinator later, but I knew had to get through this practicum regardless, of not intending to teach later."

In Table 2, we summarize the comments made by the five university practicum-advisors with respect to their perspectives on the effective and ineffective aspects of the mentorship

Table 2: Summary of mentors' views' regarding effective and ineffective mentorship practices experienced in the education practicum (N =5)

Category	Percentage
Effective aspects (n =90)	
1. Mentors provided protégés with support	20
2. Mentors forged strong relationship with protégés	12
3. Mentors provided helpful feedback	11
4. Program handbook provided guidance	11
5. Co-operating teachers were recognized as essential agents	8
6. Mentors were good communicators and listeners	8
7. All participants benefitted from the mentorship process	6
Ineffective aspects (n = 30)	
1. Mentors had inadequate mentorship training	12
2. Not all faculty participated	6
3. Some faculty advisors lacked field experience	5
4. Uncertainty in dealing with interns experiencing difficulties	2

Note. In separate interviews the 5 university advisors presented a total of 120 specific points, 75% of which described their perceptions of effective elements and 25% that identified ineffective aspects. Percentages indicate portions of the 120 total points. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

process that occurred during the practicum. Compared to the protégé cohort (9 individuals raising 130 specific points), the mentors generated a comparatively larger number of statements overall in proportion to the number offered by the protégés (5 people identifying 120 discrete elements).

3.4 Mentors' Viewpoints on Positive Elements

The advisors offered three times as many items regarding positive features than they did for ineffective components. One fifth of these points focused on the support that mentors gave to their protégés. Typical mentor comments in this sub-category were "They'll often trust me more than the co-operating teacher, especially if they have a tough class they want to talk to me about;" and "My goal is to build the confidence of those beginning teachers in their ability to teach."

Two examples of comments describing the sub-category of building relationships were "My big thing was trying to build a community within the group and I always made sure we had food;" and "We attempt to build a mutual respect between me and them and a trust we have in each other."

Statements illustrating the third sub-theme (i.e., providing the protégés with feedback) were "I make a whole page of notes, a good side and a bad side, but you try to be unbelievably positive particularly the first couple of times you observed;" and "I was very encouraging but I was also very honest. Celebrate their strengths and help them strengthen the weak areas."

A fourth effective aspect that the mentors identified was the program handbook, as exemplified by the following remarks: "The practicum handbook describes the roles/responsibilities very well so there is no misunderstanding;" and "It is clear on expectations for all parties so that everyone is on the same page."

Comments that illustrated the importance of the co-operating teachers in the mentorship process were: "We have to show the co-ops that we really appreciate the extra time and effort they spend for the student teachers;" "We used to recognize them with receptions and present them with something, but now the money's just not there plus we are all very busy;" and "We have great commitment by our volunteer co-operating teachers and they do take their task very seriously."

Examples of mentors' comments demonstrating the sixth sub-category (i.e., mentors being effective listeners and communicators) were "We contact them all via phone or email even if we don't have the time to meet in face-to-face conversations;" and "I always ask the teacher candidates to call me at any time to chat about how things are going or how they plan to introduce something."

Six percent of the contributions emphasized the benefit of the mentorship process for all participants, as illustrated by such statements as "I also find the program to be a professional development opportunity for myself;" and "I see it as a chance for the pre-service teachers, the co-operating teachers, and the faculty advisors to help each other."

3.5 Mentors' Perspectives on Ineffective Facets

The greatest limitation indicated by advisors was the lack of mentorship training they received. Sample comments were "There's no official training that I know of, but we do lean on our experience;" "There is an assumption that anyone can be a practicum advisor but some of our colleagues can't because it is just not their strength;" and "Nobody has ever told me how to supervise; we were all assumed to understand, but actually we don't really know each teacher-candidate's particular situation at all."

Illustrative statements related to the issue of lack of participation by all faculty members were: “The number one problem is the lack of commitment by some colleagues to supervise, naively believing that online contact produces the same results as personal classroom visits;” “Some faculty just pay lip service to advising in the practicum but they need to actually nurture personal relationships with teacher candidates;” and “Because of budget issues and increased numbers of practicum students per supervisor, I totally understand why fewer and fewer colleagues don’t want to supervise at all.”

The third ineffective aspect (i.e., advisors’ lack of field experience) was illustrated by statements like: “I feel full-time advisors should have extensive experience both in teaching in schools and in teacher supervision;” and “If advisors have little experience they will tend to focus on unimportant things rather than paying attention to the TC’s (teacher candidate’s) actual delivery;” Two percent of the mentors’ statements identified the challenge of knowing how best to assist protégés experiencing serious difficulties. Examples here were “In rare cases there is no change in their performance; they are not doing well and don’t seem to want to improve;” and “A big issue is when they have problems and I try to ride the fine line of supporting everyone but being fair in providing advice to make a decision when necessary.”

4. Limitations

Although the number of interviewees was relatively small, we were not seeking *generalizability* in the quantitative-research sense, but rather we were searching for *transferability* of findings, in that perspectives of the participants’ in this study might help inform the mentoring practices of mentorship stakeholders in practicum programs across the disciplines. Also, we began our semi-structured interviews with only two key questions, but because of the nature of this investigative method, participants’ early responses logically led the interviewer to pose additional questions and/or to extend prompts inviting interviewees to “expand,” “elaborate,” or “explain” their initial comments. This probing process produced an enriched data field.

5. Discussion

We analyzed the interview data according to the two original research questions for each cohort, and synthesized the findings in Tables 1 and 2. We then made five general observations based on this data-analysis. Our first observation was that both cohorts identified a similar grouping of positive qualities that they witnessed in the mentorship program (e.g., supportive mentors, positive mentor/protégé relationships, helpful feedback, and clear communication). However, the relative order of these strengths differed for each group depending on their respective positions in the mentoring process. For example the protégés included unique data that acknowledged their mentors’ professional credibility and their appreciation of being able to work closely with fellow protégés. The mentors, on the other hand, recognized the input of co-operating teachers in the mentoring process and they valued the practicum manual provided by the university in clarifying expectations for all partners.

A second observation was that each sub-group identified relatively similar groupings of ineffective characteristics; however, the protégés identified over twice as many aspects as their counterparts did. Both cohorts identified what they perceived as gaps in mentoring practice and anomalies in the program. Moreover, because of their more extensive professional background, the mentors related these ineffective elements to broader issues not yet fully recognized by the teacher candidates (e.g., insufficient mentorship training or lack of field experience).

Third, we noted some apparent discrepancies in the data. For instance, 8 percent of the protégés' statements commended their mentors for providing useful feedback, while 15 percent of their comments referred to receiving insufficient feedback. However, further qualitative investigation of the interview data helped uncover possible explanations for the differences, which in turn would assist observers to sidestep the seeming false dichotomy of "who is right or wrong." Deeper analysis confirmed the reality that both aspects were indeed present among the practicum triads, and that such differences can actually lead to the creation of new mutual understandings and growth, provided that the involved stakeholders would engage in open dialogue about the issues (Tillema, Smith, & Leshem, 2011). For instance, in our study, one plausible explanation for the differences was to recognize that mentoring effectiveness is influenced by a combination of factors, especially during the initial phases of the practicum. Key factors here were the previous experiences, existing beliefs, and current practices of the university advisors and the classroom co-operating teachers, who typically take the leadership role in guiding the mentorship process, because they work daily with the protégés (Kemmis, Heikkinen, Fransson, Aspors, & Edwards-Groves, 2014). Our interview data suggested that the divergent results were probably due to such elements as insufficient mentorship training/experience, incomplete faculty buy-in and/or participation in the practicum, institutional budgetary limitations, and increased supervisory workload for the mentors.

A fourth observation was that the findings in the present study were similar to, but not identical with, results reported in previous practicum-mentorship research both in teacher education (Izadinia, 2015; Ulvik & Smith, 2011) and also in other professional fields such as: business (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004), engineering (Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2009c), industrial training (Hamlin & Sage, 2011), medicine (Frei, Stamm, & Buddeberg-Fischer, 2010; Sanfey, Hollands, & Gantt, 2013), nursing (Ralph Walker, & Wimmer, 2009b), and social work (Petrila, Fireman, Scholl Fitzpatrick, Wertheimer Hodas, & Taussig, 2015).

We also noted that the present study contributed a new finding that we had not observed before, either in our own prior research or in the related research literature. That element was the specific recognition by the university advisors of the valuable input of the school-based co-operating teachers with respect to the success of the mentorship program. We found this gesture to honor the mentoring work of their field-based partners to be a refreshing finding, and we are hopeful that this example of mutual respect is a sign that genuine collaboration among all mentoring stakeholders is not only possible but that it

may flourish in the future.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study taken together confirmed that: (a) although mentorship practices differ across professions and cultures, the overall mentoring process is characterized by similar sets of positive features (that practicum organizers should strive to maintain) and negative elements (that they should work at eliminating); (b) specific mentorship training and ongoing mentor support were needed in order to enhance mentoring effectiveness; (c) protégé input should not be discounted or ignored, because it can contribute valuable insights for improving mentorship; (d) mentorship deficiencies can be reduced when practicum organizers and mentorship participants collaborate to deal specifically with those limitations; and (e) one mentorship model called *Adaptive Mentorship*, which the authors have developed and researched during the past two decades (), has been shown to help participants who implement it to improve the mentorship process in their respective disciplines, such as nursing (Fauvel-Benoît, Kerr, Ponzoni, & Arnaert, 2014), second language instruction (Khoii, 2011), and teacher education (Salm & Mulholland, 2015).

In conclusion, we believe that the findings from this present study, viewed in the light of previous related research, combine to amplify the call to all interested mentorship practitioners across the professional-education landscape to make concerted efforts in sharing their unique mentoring experiences and insights with one another (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Ralph & Walker, 2014a). Although each profession's educational philosophies and practices are idiosyncratic, there are enough commonalities within the mentorship process for all interested stakeholders to relinquish conventional "turf protection tendencies" and come together in joint conferences, seminars, or colloquia to inform each other of strategies they have found effective in enhancing the mentorship of prospective practitioners in their respective professions. We are convinced that such cooperation will serve to improve practicum programs.

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