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AN EXAMINATION OF THE MENTORING PROCESS IN MICHIGAN NEWSPAPERS: THE INFLUENCE OF MENTORING ON REPORTERS

By

Cynthia Elaine Thomas

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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF THE MENTORING PROCESS IN MICHIGAN NEWSPAPERS: THE INFLUENCE OF MENTORING ON REPORTERS

By

Cynthia Elaine Thomas

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the mentoring process for reporters of daily Michigan newspapers. Research questions were introduced to extend the current literature on mentoring to include newspapers as an analytic category for studying mentoring and its impact on reporters. Mentoring researchers generally have not studied news organizations; this study sought to fill this gap in research. Qualitative interviewing was used as the primary method of research. Twenty reporters were interviewed for their assessments of the type of mentoring they received, the benefits of mentoring, and the problems associated with mentoring. From in-depth analyses of their interviews, a journalistic model of mentoring was proposed. Findings indicate mentoring will influence reporters and the newspaper industry positively.

For my mom (now deceased), who wanted more than anyone to see me complete this.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It's a valuable tool that can be used for the workplace that can assist budding journalists to ensure that quality goes into the paper.
(male, veteran reporter)

Purpose of Study

Mentoring can yield many benefits; yet, mentoring programs rarely are conducted formally and consistently in the newspaper business. Although such programs have been conducted in the newspaper industry from time to time, they usually are viewed as relevant to those who are considering entering the field of journalism—such as those seeking internships—or for reporters who are looking to make a lateral move. For years, researchers have reported on the advantages of mentoring—for the mentor, the protégé and for the organization—but not necessarily for the newspaper industry. "Few empirical research reports [exist] on mentoring in academic settings" (Hopkins & Grigoriu, 2005, p. 40), let alone in news organizations. Mentoring is a common practice and is known to successfully impact the lives of both the protégé and the mentor. Further, because organizational studies have revealed that more and more non-journalistic organizations are instituting formal

mentoring programs, this dissertation explores rationale the benefits of mentoring and the problems associated with mentoring, with regard to newspaper reporters. This dissertation also extends the current literature on mentoring to include newspapers as a category for studying the mentoring process and its influence on reporters and its potential impact on newspapers. This study discusses how mentoring happens in the Michigan newspaper industry and analyzes some of the pitfalls associated with mentoring. This study also suggests a journalistic mentoring system that can be implemented. The following mentoring concepts are explored: characteristics of a mentor, functions of a mentor, psychosocial needs of the mentor, career growth, job satisfaction, and organizational socialization.

What is a Mentor?

Mentors are individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to their protégés' careers (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985). Kram views mentors as serving two behavioral roles. Mentors provide career development behaviors that include coaching, sponsoring advancement, providing challenging assignments, protecting protégés from adverse forces, and fostering positive visibility. Kram

also believes mentors provide psychosocial roles, which include personal support, friendship, acceptance, counseling, and role modeling. Mentors may serve as internal mentors (those who work in the same organization), or they may act as external mentors [those who are not employed in the same organization] (Ragins, 1997).

The Concept of Mentoring

Although mentoring is a concept that may be used differently by various professions, organizations and individuals, each user of the term generally has the same intention in mind: taking someone under his or her wings and helping to guide him or her through a process. Over the years, mentoring has evolved from the notion that individuals should be nurtured, groomed, taught, or shown the ropes. As a result, the term has come to be known as a process whereby an individual or a group of individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are dedicated to providing support to their proteges' careers (Hunt & Michael, 1993; Kram, 1985). Over the years, the process has been formalized by mentoring programs or mentoring systems. Parnell (1998:35) explains:

> Mentoring programs began to blossom in the late 1970s. The success of mentoring programs for non-traditional managers has been well-documented in

numerous studies. Management mentoring originally developed as a means of encouraging workplace diversity and developing women and minorities as managers. However, today's mentoring programs are designed to achieve a wider variety of corporate goals.

Organizational scholars have noted the benefits associated with mentoring relationships (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997). Mentoring is an important aspect of academic and career success. It is considered a long-term, role model relationship oriented toward career development (Noe, 1988; Ornstein & Isabella, 1993). A mentor can provide guidance, coaching, counseling and friend to a protégé (Greenberg & Baron, 2000).

Organizational behavior, education, and organizational communication scholars also have documented the benefits associated with mentoring relationships (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997). Not only is mentoring an important aspect of academic and career success, it is an ongoing, long-term role-model relationship oriented toward career development (Noe, 1988; Ornstein & Isabella, 1993; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000).

Mentoring relationships are particularly important for women and minority groups that are trying to break through

the glass ceiling (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Noe, 1988). Much research and attention have focused on mentoring and the implications it has on the mentor and the mentee.

Studies suggest mentoring provides benefits for both the mentor and the mentee (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Such benefits will be detailed in Chapter 2.

Dissertation Organization

The chapters that follow address assumptions about mentoring and four research questions are explored in the study. Chapter 2 presents the context of mentoring and introduces newspaper mentoring programs. Chapter 3 reviews the methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 presents the results and discussion and proposes a journalistic model of mentoring. Chapter 5 summarizes mentoring relationships and their influence on newspaper reporters. It also suggests additional directions for future study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much research has focused on mentoring in the business sector and education contexts; news organizations typically have not been included. Researchers have documented mentoring as a concept that leads to career success and social development in business organizations and education contexts (Hopkins & Grigoriu, 2005).

Definitions and Characteristics

Mentoring is a practice that dates back centuries ago. It is a process where usually an older, more senior, or more experienced person serves as a guide, counselor, and teacher for another person—usually in academic settings, corporate America, and other occupational settings. It "is about dialogue, caring, authenticity, emotion, passion, and identity" (Galbraith, 2003, p. 2). Golian and Galbraith (1996: 100) suggest that:

> Mentoring is a process within a contextual setting, which involves a relationship between a more knowledgeable and experienced individual and a less experienced individual; provides professional networking, counseling, guiding,

> instructing, modeling, and sponsoring; is a developmental mechanism (personal, professional, and psychological); is a social and reciprocal relationship; and provides an identity transformation for both mentor and protégé.

In like manner, Kolberg & Weiss (2003) argue the coaching and mentoring are similar. That is, Kolberg and Weiss explain that (19):

> Coaches influence the beliefs and attitudes of the leaders they work with and help them expand their options when responding to difficult situations. The coach's role is to affect the leader's thinking and behavior in ways that may not only have broad-based business results but can be important to the leader's career for years to come. Coaching, in general, is a process that requires commitment, honesty, diplomacy, and insight into human nature. Coaching for competencies is distinctive because it goes beyond helping someone solve an immediate problem. It is making a longer-term commitment to the development of that person's leadership potential. Specifically, coaching for

competencies is a process that fosters awareness and ongoing, sustained behavioral change, using data from multiple sources that leads to enhanced business success. (19)

Mentoring first became known in Greek mythology in Homer's tale of Odysseus, who wanted his young son to be mentored while he was away at sea. Athene, disguised as a mentor, acted as a trusted friend and counselor to the boy (Stalker, 1994). That classic definition is consistent with how today's scholars view the term and concept of mentor and mentoring, respectively, in two ways: 1. A mentor is one who has the characteristics of being trustworthy, a friend, and a counselor; and 2. Mentoring is more common for males than for females. Scholars in various fields have contributed extensively to a broad range of its conceptualization (Wilson, 2001). A mentor also can be viewed as an individual (e.g., a senior faculty member, top manager, superior, etc.) who provides guidance, coaching, counseling, and friendship to a protégé (Verdejo, 2002; Greenberg & Baron, 2000; Tepper, 1995). Others have defined mentoring as a boss, teacher, parent, philosophical guru, gatekeeper, public role model, or a friend

(Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). The fields of organizational behavior, education, and organizational communication long have dominated discussions of mentoring (Roman, 2000: Campbell-Heider, 1986; Fagan & Fagan, 1983; Hagerty, 1986; Klein & Dickenson-Hazard, 2000; Kram, 1985; May, Meleis, & Winstead-Fry, 1982; Nelson & Quick, 2005; Sands, Person, & Duane, 1991; Ragins, 1989; Vance & Olson, 1998). Each discipline has defined, conceptualized, and operationalized mentoring differently.

For example, organizational behavior scholars have defined mentoring in the context of career development and enhancement. Organizational behavior scholars also have treated mentoring as an individual variable and have studied both formal and informal mentoring relationships.

Beyond this, education scholars have defined mentoring in the context of program effectiveness (Desjardins, 1993; Jacobi, 1991) and treated the variable as an educational/organizational variable. That is, education scholars have attempted to examine mentoring relationships in undergraduate and graduate schools of education programs from the perspective of protégés (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Valdez, 1998).

Finally, organizational communication scholars have investigated strategies used by organizations to socialize newcomers and have treated mentoring as both an individual and an organizational variable.

Mentoring in Various Disciplines

A further investigation of the mentoring phenomenon shows that usages and themes emerge as various disciplines conceptualize and operationalize the term. What follows is an overview of how organizational behavior, education, and organizational communication disciplines describe this concept.

Organizational Behavior

Organizational behavior scholars view mentoring as a work relationship that encourages development and career enhancement for people moving through the career cycle (Krantz, 1989; Levinson, 1979; McNamee & Gerge, 1999; Nelson & Quick, 2005). Such scholars also believe that dialogue influences the mentoring process. That is, communication interaction is essential—whether on a daily or weekly basis—for an effective mentoring relationship to take place. For organizational behavior scholars, mentoring is also a process where professional persons act as resources, sponsors, and transitional figures for another person entering the professional world (Kram, 1985;

Nelson & Quick, 2000). Underlying much of the extant research has been the assumption that the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship lies in the amount and quality of mentoring assistance provided to a protégé.

Furthermore, the conceptualization of mentoring in this field has been traditional. That is, organizational behavior researchers have focused on a single or primary mentoring relationship or, in aggregate, on the amount of mentoring a protégé has received through a series of dyadic relationships over the course of his or her career. Some conceptual and operational differences in the way mentoring has been used emerge. For example, in the organizational behavior literature mentoring has been described as a professional relationship between mentor and protégé and conceptualized as the development assistance provided by a more senior individual within a single dyadic relationship (Nelson & Quick, 2005). That is, there are affective and behavioral components to mentoring that have identifiable outcomes. The affective component refers to attitudinal, personality, or emotional characteristics of the mentor that can be identified by others (Bean, 1998; Klein & Dickenson-Hazard, 2000; Million, 1990; Vance & Olson, 1998). The closeness that develops between the mentor and protégé is not that of a peer or pal, but a relationship of

mutual respect, trust, warmth, and friendliness (Shapiro, Haseltine, & Rowe, 1978). The behavioral component of the relationship refers to the consistent actions demonstrated by the mentor. The mentor demonstrates being a wise and trusted model who believes in the protégé and who is a committee leader in the profession (Fagan & Fagan 1983; Klein & Dickenson-Hazard, 2000; Vance & Olson, 1998). The networking, experience gained, and competence developed by the mentor set the stage for the mentoring process and enhance the opportunities for the protégé.

Education

Education scholars have defined, conceptualized, and operationalized mentoring in similar ways. These scholars view mentoring as a process where advising facilitates access to key professional networks (Blackwell, 1989; Cronan-Hillix, Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, & Davidson, 1986). Mentoring also is looked upon as a way to think and exchange ideas. For example, it is a way for students to receive guidance (Reinarz & White, 2001). Moreover, the higher education field has borrowed the concept of mentoring from the corporate world, where mentoring benefits have long been known and have cultivated between successful, influential, often more senior members and energetic, promising novices who receive support and share

in the resources and experiences of their mentors (Vance & Olson, 1998; Wunsch, 1994).

The academic environment at the graduate level presents its own case of mentoring. Rather than contributing to the lifelong development of a protégé or the career advancement of a graduate student protégé, the academic mentor apprentices the understudy to the skills and habits of mind that is needed to succeed in a totally new arena. Lyons, Scoggins, and Rule (1990) believed that academic mentoring, especially in graduate school, is different than corporate mentoring. Lyons et al have argued, "Graduate school mentors and their protégés share a comradeship of such extraordinary intensity that it transcends the normal teacher-student relationship" (p. 279). The academic mentoring encompass three activities: (1) educating protégés in a particular subject or skill, (2) orienting protégés to the ethics, values, and protocols of a given discipline, and (3) providing psychological support (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspike, & New, 1984; Stone, Nelson, & Nieman, 1994). Education scholars believe that mentoring quite likely relates to advising (Lipschutz, 1993). In the education literature, mentoring has become a regular activity directed at programmatic efforts to bridge the gap between the needs of the individual and the requirements of

the college or university (Anderson & Shannon, 1986; Cronan-Hillix, Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, & Davidson, 1986; Terrell & Wright; 1988; Wunsch, 1994; Price, Graham, & Hobbs, 1997). These efforts included structured approaches, such as mentoring, to increasing the retention and completion rates of nontraditional and high-risk students. Mentoring is typically presented as a formal, distinct program or as a component of a larger program. In many cases, the mentoring programs tend to focus on a specific target population to assist the students academically through a particular passage (Terrell & Wright, 1988; Wunsch, 1994) of their education.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication scholars mainly have defined, conceptualized and operationalized mentoring in the context as the organizational socialization of newcomers, and they use a variety of terms to refer to the mentoring process. Moreover, researchers of this field claim that organizational socialization relates to mentoring and has its epistemological roots in feminist studies (Mumby, 1987). Organizational socialization is defined as the "theory about how new skills, belief systems, patterns of action, and occasionally, personal identity, are acquired (or not acquired) by people as they

move into new social settings" (van Maanen, 1984, p. 211). Organizational communication literature also has conceptualized the socialization process as one that is facilitated by mentoring and developing individual–organizational relationships. Leadership factors that are typical of those behaviors that mentors exhibit in the mentor-protégé relationship have been found to lead to increases in the socialization process of the newcomer (Yukl, 1989). Yukl believes that the role of leaders in socializing others in the workplace involves the process of mentoring.

Boyd (1988), for example, provided a philosophical definition of a mentor as "a kind of guide who, despite having been far enough ahead to know something of what's down the path, comes back to walk with you, and thus leads without leaving you to follow" (p. 169). Otto (1994), on the other hand, defined mentor much more pragmatically as someone who provides practical day-to-day advice that can be used immediately as well as to help the protégé prepare for advancement. More specifically, Yoder, Adams, Grove, and Priest (1985) defined mentors as role models who are visible members of the protégé's own ethnic, minority, or gender groups who are successful in their professions. Yet, an even more comprehensive definition comes from

Evanoski (1988), who focused on the multiple roles of the mentor. These multiple roles in the mentoring process include considering the mentor as a teacher who enhances the skills and intellectual development of the protégé; as someone who serves as a host and guide in welcoming the newcomer into the organization and social world; and as the person who acquaints the individual with the organizational values, culture, customs, resources, and specific actors. In light of these definitions, organizational communication scholars have questioned whether or not a mentor is a sponsor. For instance, Canton and James (1995) have argued that although a mentor may be a sponsor, a sponsor is not a mentor. Kram (1985) has defined a sponsor as someone who has the influence to actively make sure his or her protégé is in the right place at the right time.

Last and as part of the mentoring process, organizational behavior scholars have studied achievement motivation as proactive behavior (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). The need for achievement involves issues of excellence, competition, challenging goals, persistence, and overcoming difficulties (McCelland, 1965). The need for motivation provides a work condition related to satisfaction of the need for psychological growth. Put another way, people are motivated to achieve excellence and to succeed at difficult

tasks. McCelland found that high achievers perform better than those with a moderate, to low need for achievement. He also found that high achievers have three unique characteristics: (1) they set moderately difficult goals, yet ones that are achievable, (2) high achievers like to receive feedback on their progress, and (3) high achievers do not have external events or individuals interfere with their progress. Because high achievers so strongly desire to succeed, these individuals proactively seek out competent people who can mentor them and help them succeed. To illustrate, graduate school is no easy feat for most graduate students. Graduate students are required to take a stringent coursework load, write conference papers, take a preliminary examination, and write a dissertation. However, high achievers are motivated to write a number of papers for conferences and/or publish with well-known professors while they have been proactively completing their degree program. Through personal initiative and mentoring relationships with professors, these high achievers have had a degree of success in publishing their work. In addition, professors and high achieving graduate students tend to exchange ideas about their work. Through all of this interaction, a mentoring relationship likely develops.

Mentoring Programs

The rise in the use of mentoring may be linked to some sort of ongoing or lifelong learning (Garvey & Alred, 2000). Therefore, institutions and businesses are incorporating mentoring programs as a way to train, mold or teach their workers. Effective mentoring involves role modeling, so it is also important that an organization has a positive culture with shared understanding of organizational purpose and objectives (Khushwant, Pittenger, & Heimann, 2000). Thus, formal mentoring programs (programs that assign mentors) have been found in various businesses and in higher education (Roche, 1979). Other mentoring programs are in the fields of nursing (Fagan & Fagan, 1983; Yoder, 1990), higher education (Merriam, 1983) and law firms (Riley & Wrench, 1985). Other researchers suggest professional associations may be a source of formal mentoring, too (Dansky, 1996).

Because mentoring programs are increasingly becoming a part of an organization's culture, one study (Garvey & Galloway, 2002) examined how mentoring can be developed in an organization. The authors' aim was to make participants aware of their mentoring abilities and to match mentors with protégés. The researchers recruited volunteers to become mentors and participate in a one-day mentor

awareness workshop. Their findings were consistent with research that views mentoring as beneficial to participants: The mentee learns something new, gains encouragement and builds self-esteem. The mentor is motivated by a desire to help. Kram (1985) believes formal mentoring programs can be high-risk. In her interview of 18 mentoring relationships found that mentors resented the extra responsibility and unmatched mentors felt deprived. Giles (1997) believes another type of risk occurs in the case of newsroom mentoring. When individuals are selected to be groomed for a position, others may feel resentment.

The Mentoring Process

How does the process of mentoring begin? The first stage in the mentoring process occurs when mentors identify protégés and establish relationships with them (Gardner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000). Through formal mentoring programs, a mentor is assigned a protégé (Murray, 1991), whereas informal mentoring happens as a result of an affinity between two people. Either process suggests a one-on-one approach for learning, assimilation, and role modeling to exist. Mentoring also is developed in a stage where initiation, cultivation, and separation evolve (Moore, 1982a, 1982b; Hunt & Michael, 1983).

Research has shown that an important variable in determining the mentoring process is the opportunity to interact among mentor and protégé (Heimann & Pittenger, 1996). Gardner, Enomoto, & Grogan (2000) view this aspect of the mentoring process as the maintenance stage. That is, protégés strive to keep connected and remain loyal to their mentors. Conflicting work schedules, time demands, and lack of physical proximity can reduce the frequency of interaction and dialogue between a mentor and a protégé, which have been found to reduce the effectiveness of the relationship (Noe, 1988). The mentoring process includes many different phenomena and works in both directions. When individuals mentor, they also get mentored by other senior colleagues who are inspired by the success of their protégés. That is, mentoring is a reciprocal process. A mentor also must be open to new experiences, to new points of view, and to change and professional growth. It is only in this way that the one mentored can feel a partner in the process. This also implies that good mentoring involves leadership that inspires others to follow, adapt, and contextualize what they have admired and learned. Similarly, the mentor, like the protégé, can be inspired to follow, adapt, and contextualize his/her learning experiences from senior colleagues as well as from

protégés. The process of mentoring includes but is not limited to mentoring qualities, trust, welfare, quality of interaction, and psychological intimacy resulting from effective dialogue, as indicated in the organizational behavior literature (Nelson & Quick, 2000; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Miller et al. (1990) have argued that communication/dialogue has a significant influence on the role mentoring plays in the success of individuals' careers. However, mentoring encompasses more than just career functions such as sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and coaching. Psychological functions such as role modeling and friendship are involved, too (Kram, 1985). The level of intimacy or closeness between the mentor and protégé also measures the effectiveness of the relationship. This closeness in relationship may create special challenges for mentors and protégés of different genders; mixed-gender relationships are likely to be stymied (Clawson, 1985) unless businesses support such relationships by providing appropriate interaction opportunities at work, guidelines, and norms for interaction, and sensitivity or diversity training.

Mentoring Models

Researchers have created various mentoring models for an individual's career, personal, and social development. Traditional models in the educational environment center on one of three such focuses: 1. Student-to-student (upper division to lower division, or graduate to undergraduate, 2. Faculty member to student, and 3. Industry to professional student (Reinarz & White, 2001). Each model has centered on the mentor and the protégé. Johnson, Geroy, & Griego (1999) present a three-dimensional mentoring relationship influenced by the blending of socialization, task, and lifespan. The authors believe that understanding what each dimension brings to the relationship influences our understanding of what makes a relationship succeed or fail.

Types of Mentoring

Mentoring can be informal and formal. Over the last decade, much attention and research have been given to the concept of mentoring relationships. Whether or not the process of mentoring is approached informally or formally, many organizations and businesses have shown a commitment to establishing mentoring programs (Burke & McKeen, 1989). Some organizations have instituted formal mentoring

programs (Burke & McKeen, 1989) that are rising as a popular trend (Tyler, 1998). Informal and formal mentoring programs have been positively correlated with positive career and job attitudes. However, some researchers have found that informal mentoring relationships are more beneficial to protégés than are formal mentorships because they are unexpected and unplanned (Chao, Walz & Gardner, 1992; Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). As an example, informal mentors have a tendency to provide coaching, increasing protégé's exposure, counseling (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Formal mentoring is planned and operated in an intentional manner and is usually sponsored by an organization. In formal mentoring, programs are designed to reach a variety of specific goals and purposes, as defined within the organization in which it operates (Burke & McKeen, 1989).

Mentoring Outcomes

Studies report that mentoring is linked to career success. It is a long-term role-model relationship oriented toward career development (Burke, McKenna, & McKeen, 1991; Noe, 1988; Ornstein & Isabell, 1993; Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). In the education context, mentoring is said to increase student responsibility and to enrich and broaden their overall academic experience (Reinarz & White, 2001). Mentoring has been linked to

other positive outcomes. For example, students who had mentors reported greater satisfaction (Cosgrove, 1986). Students also have had higher rates of research productivity and publications than students who did not have faculty mentors (Cronan-Hillix, Gensheimer, Cronan-Hillix, & Davidson, 1986).

Other outcomes include career and psychosocial functions (Kram, 1985). That is psychosocial functions involve role modeling (modeling attitudes, values, and behaviors that provide an exemplar), acceptance and confirmation (providing support and encouragement), counseling (providing a forum for discussing personal concerns), and friendship (engaging in social interaction) (Kram, 1985). Much research and attention have focused on mentoring and the implications it has on the mentor and the mentee. For the mentee, mentoring relationships have been found to lead to job promotions, job satisfaction, and higher pay (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Kram, 1985; Roche, 1979; Scandura, 1992). Those who are mentored also are more likely to gain a greater awareness of their organization's structure and politics than those who are not mentored (Bolton, 1980; Kram, 1985; Zey, 1991). Other outcomes include higher levels of confidence, esteem among peers, and increased competence (Kram, 1985). Beyond benefits for

the mentor and protégé, mentoring relationships benefit organizations, too (Murray, 1991). For example, news organizations that foster mentoring programs might benefit from increased productivity, improved recruitment and better communication.

Since the fields of organizational behavior, education, and organizational communication view mentoring as a work relationship, a method of exchanging of ideas, and a means of socialization, respectively, these mentoring outcome variables will be used to study the mentoring process in news organizations.

Mentoring in Newsrooms

Unlike some businesses and organizations, a newsroom environment is not a place where mentoring occurs with structure or consistency. Since the newspaper industry is fast-paced and deadline-oriented, most reporters are thrust into the work environment and are expected to work with minimal supervision. Since a newsroom is fast-paced and deadline-driven, mentoring could aid in the socialization of newcomers who quickly must learn to practice newsroom policy. Giles (1987), who viewed mentoring as a political process, believes the socialization aspect of mentoring could be especially useful to women and racial minorities who may not have easy access to normal newsroom networks.

Newsroom mentoring can play a key in any newspaper management's attempt to diversify its staff. This was the case with the *The Dayton (Ohio) Daily News*, which used informal mentoring in 1993 as a way to recruit minority students from journalism schools. Its program—The Minority and Intern Mentor Program—paired high school and college students with professionals for summer internships. Numerous other newspapers offer mentoring programs for high school and college students. News organizations and their associations traditionally have been noted for collaborating with high schools, colleges, and universities to provide mentorship opportunities for aspiring journalists. However, empirical researchers have not explored mentoring to the extent of its impact on working journalists. This section examines such past and existing programs.

The Push for Newsroom Mentoring

A 1995-96 Minorities Committee constructed a handbook titled *Mentoring in the* Newsroom. This handbook, published by the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE), was developed with the idea of offering newspapers a strategy for developing a career development model. The handbook also offered guidelines for individuals who served as mentors, outlining the following purposes:

1. Emphasize strategic importance of mentoring and other care development
2. Share ideas for improving staff performances and preparing diverse candidates for increasing responsibilities
3. Help editors attract and retain a diverse staff in an environment that offers personal and professional fulfillment
4. Help the industry address diversity goals and ultimately better serve communities. (p. 4)

The handbook also offered a collection of anecdotes by editors and members of management who had been mentored or who were currently mentored. It recognized the following newspapers for their mentoring programs:

- The New York Times
- The St. Petersburg Times
- The Seattle Times
- The Post Register in Idaho Falls, Idaho
- The Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, California
- The News & Observer, Raleigh, North Carolina

Journalism Mentoring Programs

Some new and existing programs understand the need for and the benefits of formal mentoring programs. Two such programs were developed in the fields of environmental and science reporting.

SEJ

For environmental journalists, there is the Mentoring Program sponsored by The Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ). The coordinators of that program are Dawn Stover and Jane Braxton Little. According to Stover, this program first began as a pilot program at an annual conference and interest in the program continually grew. She said the program gives preference to working journalists (D. Stover, personal communication, December 2006). The program works by matching newer journalists (mentees)—who are entering the field or changing from one field to another—with more experienced journalists (mentors). Little estimates that she has matched at least 20 to 25 mentoring pairs. "SEJ is all about connecting and networking and helping one another. The mentoring program is a natural extension of that. We ask seasoned journalists to be mentors" (J. B. Little, personal communication September, 2006).

The process initially begins when prospective mentors and mentees complete an online application form. Then, they answer questions about their work experience and their education. The mentee also submits a writing sample. Stover explained that these steps give the mentor a chance to examine the work of the mentee, and both learn about

each other's backgrounds and describe what they hope to get out of the program. From the general pool of applicants, coordinators then make the mentor-mentee matches. Stover said sometimes it is typical to have 50 who apply for mentors and 15 who apply as mentees. Participants must be committed for at least one year, and the program works generally as a one-on-one long distance partnership. Some of the mentoring contact occurs by phone or through email, but "It works better if contact is over the phone first," (D. Stover, personal communication, December 2006). Although the program has been successful, the coordinators said they are hoping to develop the program further to do more follow up work with the mentoring pairs.

WFSJ

In 2006, the World Federation of Science Journalists launched a mentoring program for science journalists in Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East. The purpose of the program was to support those interested in science journalism or those interested in improving their skills in covering science and technology. For the project, The Peer-to-Peer Training in Science Journalism, a team of mentors from 14 countries were trained to assist their protégés. Participants must be committed for two years.

Gannett and AAJA

In 2005, Gannett Company's Newspaper Division and the Asian American Journalists Association began a one-year pilot mentoring program. Six mid-career journalists interested in newspaper management were paired with veteran Gannett mentors who were knowledgeable about management issues.

In Michigan, the Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, and the Lansing State Journal are known to mentor their reporters informally. At the Times Herald in Port Huron, reporters participate in a six-month formal mentoring program that has been in existence for the last 10 years, according to Assistant Managing Editor, Judith McLean. McLean believes the mentoring benefits everyone—the mentee, the mentor, and the organization. From the mentee's standpoint, "If you're brand new to the job—and obviously you want to do a good job—and you don't know where to go or where to look for answers…the newer person can learn from the more experienced person…You have someone who can help you ease into the situation…Likewise for the mentor, the mentor can learn some things from the newer person…It's a win-win situation all the way around." (J. McLean, personal communication, December 1, 2006).

Justification of This Study

Newsrooms long have been noted as an organizational structure in need of fully functional mentoring programs. A study and forum organized by the American Society of Newspaper Editors called for the urgency of mentoring. When new reporters are integrated into the newsroom, what methods for socialization and employee orientation are used? Who—other than their assigned editor—provides feedback and offers practical advice for them to survive in an intense working environment? For mid-level and veteran reporters, who is there to help them strive for career advancement? Who is there to guide them continuously, other than at times when they are answering questions about stories prior to deadline? Who is there to offer comfort and support so they do not reach the point of burnout? Other organizations use mentoring systems, although not always formally. The integration of mentoring in a newsroom could yield intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to both the reporter (the mentee) and the designated mentor. The benefits of mentoring could be an extension of professional development, career enhancement, and serve as a personal newsroom support system. Mentoring may yield other benefits for the reporter, the mentor, and the newspaper itself.

Since researchers have not studied the mentoring process in newspapers, how it fully evolves, and the potential for its impact on the reporter, the mentor, and the newspaper, this dissertation was designed in mind to fill this gap in research. Based on the indications of previous researchers that the incorporation of mentoring—whether formal or informal—has benefits for both the protégé and the mentor, it is time for journalism scholars to extend the literature by studying the mentoring process in newspapers. The following section describes the research questions explored in this study.

First, this study was based on the premise that either some type of formal or informal mentoring exists. The concept of mentoring is an exploration of both. Formal mentoring programs typically last less than one year and may not be a desired length of time to show the benefits of mentoring (Ragins and Cotton, 1999). On the other hand, formal mentoring programs are more likely to be instituted by organizations such as medium- and large-circulation size newspapers because more resources are available. In newspapers, informal mentoring can occur every day, continuously, intermittently, and at short periods of time. In examining the ways in which mentoring is used for

reporters of Michigan daily newspapers, the study explored the following research five questions:

Research Questions

RQ1: In what ways is mentoring used in the newspaper industry?

a. Is it used to socialize new employees into the organization?
b. Is it used primarily for coaching?
c. Is it used to help employees advance to a new position?

RQ2 How do reporters get mentored?

RQ3: In what ways might journalists benefit from having a mentor?

RQ4: What would be a good mentoring system for a newspaper?

RQ5: What sorts of problems can arise from mentoring?

Chapter 3

METHODS

In the previous chapters, I presented the introduction and review of the literature. The study's purpose was twofold: First, it was designed to examine the process of mentoring and its influence on reporters in the Michigan daily newspaper industry. Second, it sought to offer a recipe for newsroom mentoring. This study already suggests that mentoring exists to some extent. Because mentoring studies have not included newspaper research as an analytical category, this study sought to fill this gap in research and suggest a journalistic mentoring system that can be implemented in the newspaper industry.

Study Design

This study employed interviews as the primary method. Qualitative research methods notably are used to aid organizational scholars in developing an understanding of an organization's culture (Herndon & Kreps, 2001), and mentoring is viewed as a traditional organizational communication topic. Although past mentoring studies have been conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively, a qualitative method is useful for this study of which traditional mentoring studies are explored rather broadly

across diverse career fields, but lacks in exploration in the field of journalism.

Qualitative interviewing (mainly semi-structured) was used as a means for gathering data from editors and from reporters. First, investigative interviews were conducted with editors of all Michigan daily newspapers to assess whether any type of mentoring was used. Second, interviews were conducted with 20 reporters who were asked a series of questions to determine if and how they were influenced by mentoring. Reporters were interviewed whether they were currently mentored, mentored in the past, or whether they never had been mentored at all. From those respondents, five were chosen for face-to-face, in-depth interviews that lasted from 60 to 90 minutes.

Interviewing is one of many different types of qualitative methods and is regarded as one of the most challenging but rewarding forms of measurement. Qualitative research scholars see interviewing as an extension of normal conversations; therefore, I chose (in part) semi-structured interviewing so that I could ask core questions but allow for participants to extend their conversations so categories and themes would emerge during the data analysis stage. Also in using qualitative interviews, I felt that it would be crucial to allow for

the flow of the interview to change in order to reach a comfort level between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Pre-testing

Before the 34-item questionnaire was administered, it was pre-tested through assessments provided by four participants who were not a part of the actual study. As a result of the pre-testing, modifications were made regarding the actual structure of the questions. Other modifications were made to shorten the questionnaire.

Sampling Plan

To carry out this project, a questionnaire examining the influence and extent of mentoring on reporters was constructed for a telephone interview with 20 reporters from 10 small, six medium, and four large sized daily newspapers in Michigan. Because qualitative interviews offer some flexibility and utilizes the judgment of the researcher, I felt that interviews of 20 participants would be sufficient to help me to gain an understanding of mentoring as it related to journalists.

Sampling Frame and Procedure

The sampling frame for this study was a list of all 49 daily Michigan newspapers. All of the newspapers were used to answer initial questions of whether mentoring existed and if it were predominantly formal or informal.

Individuals identified as editors were the respondents. Since the focus of the study was reporters, participants were selected from a sampling frame taken from a roster of newspaper listings from the most recent edition of the *Editor & Publisher Yearbook*. From this yearbook, a list was constructed to include the name of the newspaper, its circulation size, website address, and telephone number. Each newspaper's web address was then accessed to obtain a broader list of newsroom employees. Then, a list of reporters was constructed from that initial list. Each sample was selected with a designated listing of "reporter" or "writer" to construct the initial list of 467 reporters. Next, the list was separated and merged into one larger list, grouped by circulation size for small, medium, and large newspapers. Reporters then were selected via a systematic sample to ensure participants had an equal chance of being selected, regardless of gender, race, age, or years of employment.

The 20 reporters were represented by the following demographic data:

- 10 females, 10 males
- 3 African-Americans
- 15 White Americans
- 1 Asian American

- 1 Hispanic American

Face-to-Face Interviews

Five participants were drawn from the sample of 20 reporters. The participants represented first were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in a follow up interview to be conducted face-to-face at a location of their selection. The respondents were asked permission to be tape-recorded and then asked to sign a consent form on the day of the meeting. Four interviews were conducted by this method. One interview method had to be altered because of breaking news, so the respondent agreed to participate in a taped telephone conversation.

The five are described by the following demographic data:

- 2 females, 3 males
- 2 African-Americans
- 2 White Americans
- 1 Hispanic American

Survey Instrument

Telephone Survey

A four-page, four-part questionnaire covered a range of questions to determine the influence of mentoring on reporters. The questionnaire was organized around three main concepts:

1. Mentoring Types

2. Mentoring Functions

3. Mentoring Benefits

The first part of the questionnaire examined the concept of mentoring types. Participants' knowledge about mentoring was explored. The second portion explored mentoring functions and asked whether or not and how mentoring was incorporated into their news organization. The third section of the questionnaire studied mentoring benefits. Respondents were asked five questions that helped me to assess the benefits of mentoring. The last part of the questionnaire obtained demographic information about the participants, such as age, gender, race, and year of work experience.

In-depth Interview Survey

Ten primary questions that were used for the in-depth interviews were designed for a sixty minute, to a 90-minute semi-structured discussion about mentoring. Additional questions were used where probing was necessary.

Interviews

Pilot Interviews

Prior to conducting the full study, the instrument was pilot-tested with a smaller group of four participants who were not a part of the actual study. The purpose of

conducting a pilot study was to test the interview protocol and to determine whether or not the interview questions were addressing the research questions. After the pilot testing, participants thought that the questionnaire was too lengthy and needed to include additional questions that assessed the organization's mission. One of the participants also thought more open-ended questions would be useful. Based on their feedback, the following changes were made: I reduced some of the questions that added less value to my research questions; I added a question that assessed the newspaper's mission, and I changed two closed-ended questions to allow for open-ended questioning. Other changes were made so that I could reduce the amount of data management once I reached the data analyzing stage.

Telephone Interviews

After the initial pilot testing, telephone interviews were conducted during the Fall of 2005 and Spring of 2006. Each interview began with me introducing myself by telling them of my current role as a graduate student and my former role as a journalist. I then proceeded by reviewing with the participants the informed consent policy and by explaining the study purpose. I used this manner in beginning the interview so I could establish rapport. All of the initial interviews were conducted over the

telephone, with two of the interviews completed over two telephone calls. In order to preserve the integrity of the data, it was important for me to keep the original data complete and intact so that I and any other interested researchers could refer to it if necessary. After interviewing an initial set of respondents, I felt comfortable with using the interview protocol and I felt comfortable with my background as an experienced interviewer and former journalist. Based on my experience, I was careful about taking detailed notes without inadvertently altering the meaning of the interviewee's comments. At times, I also repeated sentences or phrases (using probing techniques) in order to make sure I accurately reflected their comments, and for the purpose of making any adjustments or corrections at their request.

The interview protocol was designed to last about 30-45 minutes, but each interview took approximately 15 to 30 minutes, with the shortest initial interview lasting nine minutes. The difference in the time can be attributed to one primary factor: Given the busy and deadline-oriented nature of the news industry, interviews had to be conducted in the midst of some reporters' deadlines.

In-depth Interviews

Among the 20 respondents, five were selected for face-to-face, in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted in the Spring of 2007. The interviews took place outside of the newsroom and in a location at the selection of each respondent. One of the interviews was conducted over the telephone because of deadline constraints and breaking news. All of the interviews were recorded.

Interview Transcripts

The tape-recorded interview data produced fifty pages of qualitative interviews. Transcribing of the data ranged from five hours, to thirteen hours per tape. The data was transcribed by listening to the tape-recorded conversations and then by capturing every word, pause, and vocal intonations that could be heard. The data ranged from four pages, to nineteen pages of single-spaced text for each interview. As each reporter described his or her mentoring experience, any reference to a person's name, city, or name of newspaper was omitted from the actual text of the transcribed data. The recordings remained in their original state. The data was transcribed with ease.

Researcher's Role

My previous role was that of a journalist with 10 years of experience. I worked in the field as a newspaper

reporter for four years and as a copy editor for six years—working in an environment at times absent of mentoring, but yet fully embraced in others. Naturally, I have an interest in newspaper research and specifically with mentoring. Mentoring is a topic that is uttered but not discussed to a large extent in the context of reporters. It is discussed mainly as a means of aiding individuals looking to enter the journalism field. Such individuals are usually high school students, interns, and sometimes entry-level reporters. I have a good understanding of the mentoring topic from my research of previous studies, apart from newspaper research. I also possess a solid understanding of a newsroom's culture. Therefore, the study of the two together represents the core of my personal research interest.

Research Integrity

Given my experiences, it seems inevitable I may have some biases about several aspects of the study, particularly dealing with the purpose, the problems, and the benefits of mentoring. In light of having any beliefs and opinions about mentoring, I sought to safeguard the integrity and credibility of this study. First, I used *only* the words of the respondents. I did not attempt to interpret meaning in favor of my beliefs. During the

interview process, I also carefully took note of silences, pauses, tone and other non-verbal expressions that might have aided me in my understanding of their comments.

Data Analysis

Before surveys were administered, each questionnaire was assigned a code so that the survey could be identified by a number viewable by only the primary and secondary researchers. Coding was used so that no information could identify the respondent. To begin the data analysis, each questionnaire was first grouped into one of three categories: respondents who were currently being mentored; respondents who were previously mentored; and respondents who never were mentored at all. Then in keeping the questionnaires in that same order, each survey was assigned a label that represented the size of the respondents' newspaper. The categories of newspapers were "S(small), M(medium), and L(large)." During the review of the surveys, I examined each page to first identify key words and phrases that were common among the participants. Use of this technique helped me to look for emerging themes so that I could interpret and manage my data collection. I then highlighted key words and phrases by circling words and by underlining key sentences that specifically helped me to answer each research question. For example, I paid

close attention to when and at what point during the interview that the respondents used the word "coaching," a term that sometimes is used in different mentoring contexts. For instance, coaching is viewed as a career function of mentoring. In other disciplines, the term coaching may not be viewed in the same manner as mentoring. In another example, one respondent said that no mentoring existed at his current paper, but when asked about coaching, he said that coaching did occur.

Throughout the analysis process, I was mindful of the importance of keeping the data collection in tact in order to preserve its integrity. Therefore, during the collection and analysis process, I kept separate notes about my interpretation of what I was analyzing. This practice helped me to separate my own thoughts (as a researcher) separate from the thoughts of the respondent. In doing so, I was able to re-examine how I constructed a particular question and cross-compare the responses (verbal and non-verbal) of each respondent. From the 20 interviews, two respondents interpreted the meaning of a question differently than its intended meaning. By recording separately my own thoughts, I was able to analyze further what part of the conversation might have precipitated a response apart from the responses of others. From the in-

depth interviews, I was able to examine both verbal and non-verbal cues (their tone, their vocal intonations) from reporters in order to analyze further their reflections about mentoring.

Themes

As I was analyzing the data, several descriptive categories emerged about the mentors, the mentees, the mentoring relationship, the work environment, and a suggested mentoring system. Those categories were further examined to identify sub themes that helped me to narrate the respondents' attitudes, beliefs and personal accounts about their mentoring experiences. The next chapter discusses one set of those themes, with respect to what would make a good mentoring system for reporters and for newspapers.

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The previous chapter discussed the methodology used to gather the interview data. This chapter details the results and provides discussion. Response rate information and demographics are reported. This section also describes the characteristics of the mentors (from the perspective of the reporters).

Response Rate Information

Of the twenty who initially were polled for the telephone interviews, two declined to participate, citing the need for the editor or publisher's permission. Two unsuccessfully participated when they were contacted initially to participate, made arrangements for a date to participate, and then could not be reached after four attempts, each. One participated for three minutes, and two participated for four minutes. All of these respondents were not included in the survey, and additional respondents were selected to ensure a pool of twenty who could participate in a more complete survey. Another initial respondent did not want to complete the survey, citing deadline constraints, and two others reluctantly participated. The average number of callbacks was four.

Of those participating in the in-depth interviews, one respondent who was initially polled to participate declined a face-to-face meeting but offered to participate via email. This respondent was not selected to be interviewed. Three callbacks were made for one respondent. Another respondent received five callbacks, and arrangements were made to participate each time. The interview method was altered (to accommodate deadline constraints and breaking news), and this respondent was able to participate in an in-depth telephone interview that was recorded.

Demographic Information

Twenty reporters representing ten small, six medium, and four large daily newspapers in Michigan were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in an interview about their general views on mentoring. Of the twenty, five were selected for face-to-face, in-depth interviews. Reporters were interviewed regardless of whether or not they had a mentoring experience in the past, the present or never at all. From the interview data, eight respondents reported previously being mentored, five were currently mentored, and seven said they never had been mentored. Of those who participated in in-depth interviews, two were currently mentored, two were previously mentored, and one was never mentored at all. Two respondents reported having multiple

mentors, and two reported having one mentor. The multiple mentors for one respondent were from the same paper, and the multiple mentors for another respondent were from various papers.

Interview respondents included newspaper reporters with one to thirty years of experience at their current newspapers, one to forty-one years of experience as reporters, and two to 44 years of experience in the journalism field. The respondents represented ten males and ten females of which 15 were described as Caucasian, three were African-American, one was Asian, and one was Hispanic. The respondents represented an age range of 22 to 64, with 39 as the average age. (See Table 1)

TABLE 1

Sample Description of Twenty Telephone Interview Respondents

Males		10
Females		10
Beginning journalist	(0-5 years)	6
Mid-level journalist	(5-10 years)	5
Veteran journalist	(10+ years)	9
Small newspapers	(under 50,000)	11
Medium	(over 50,000)	6
Large	(over 100,000)	3

Description of Mentors

Survey questions asked reporters to describe their mentors. The description of the mentors is provided by reporters who participated in the telephone and in-depth interviews based on their interactions in the mentoring relationships. The mentors were reported as editors, reporters, and copy editors. Some respondents report their mentors as being patient, having role-like qualities, having a willingness and desire to help, being accessible,

reliable, and being knowledgeable. Career and psychosocial functions of mentors emerged from the interview data. Psychosocial functions include role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship (Kram, 1985). Psychosocial functions are those that enhance an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. Psychosocial functions depend on the quality of the interpersonal relationship. Several respondents described some of these psychosocial functions. Three respondents saw their mentor as a friend; four viewed their mentor as a role model; five saw their mentor as a coach; and three respondents viewed their mentor as a trainer.

Research Question 1: In what ways is mentoring used in the newspaper industry?

a. Is it used to socialize new employees into the organization?

b. Is it used primarily for coaching?

c. Is it used to help employees advance to a new position?

Of the 20 telephone survey respondents, eight believed mentoring was used to socialize reporters into the newsroom. Twelve believed mentoring was used for coaching reporters, while two believed mentoring was used to help

reporters advance into a new position—a new beat, a different job assignment, or for an external move.

Research Question 1(a): Is it used to socialize new employees into the organization?

From analyses of the in-depth interviews, the following quote is a description of how mentoring can be used to socialize new employees with respect to how a newspaper operates with deadlines:

> ...You have so many young people who come through on a job shadow and they've seen things on TV and they think that's the way it is. They don't realize that [because they very rarely show on TV or in the movies] what a deadline pressure is all about—when you have to write a story from beginning to end within 30 minutes or less and that's including calling people to get the information, and so you have this type of fantasy where it's really glamourized to be in front of the camera or the person with your byline in the paper, but they don't see what it takes to get to that point, and sometimes it is not pretty.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

In another example, one reporter from a small newspaper and (who currently isn't mentored) recalled the time of being socialized to her newspaper beat and to the community. This mentoring experience was provided by another reporter who acted as her mentor:

> It was when I first started. You know how it is—you have to learn your beat, and with the small newspaper that we have, each reporter has several beats to cover. There's a broad aspect to cover, so I believe I have six townships and one school

> district right now, so my mentor just started driving me around throughout each township, meeting supervisors, meeting city officials, meeting good sources that she knew I was going to need in the future. She even helped just even finding where things are. In this county there are a lot of country roads, a lot of places—you don't even know where you're going. She even took me places to show me where things are, where certain businesses are—things like that. She just helped me with a lot of things—little details that really help out. You know at the time they seemed trivial but at that time it was really helpful. You know it's a big transition. These sources aren't somebody that you're just automatically best friends with and they're going to give you a call; you've got to earn their trust and really earn that, so she really helped out with that as well—you know just who to call and how—putting in a good word for me—things like that, which was really helpful. So obviously it wasn't something that was a real quick—you know a one day thing—where 'here you go, here's what you do, good luck.' It took several weeks where she just really, really helped me out. And like I said I can't stress enough how much that really helped. And the city editor allowed that process to really develop, let me develop—give me that leeway to develop into a reporter, so it was really helpful.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

In the next set of narratives, respondents speak further on the socialization aspect of mentoring:

> Most people aren't from here. Sometimes they need assistance familiarizing themselves with the area. My mentor was beneficial in giving me practical knowledge.
>
> (female mid-level, small paper)

Another replied,

> Oftentimes when you start out, you're a little timid and afraid of what's going on…it [having

> mentor] just helps you through the start of things. It's nice to know there's someone you can turn to. That in itself is comforting—you don't' feel you're stuck in a corner. There's someone who has your back.
>
> (female mid-level, small paper)

The above narratives depict common reasons among interview respondents of why reporters get mentored: to be socialized to the norms of a newspaper's culture and to enhance their journalistic skills. It seems the socialization aspect of mentoring most often occurred with younger reporters or those just beginning their careers. According to another reporter, socialization may be helpful on an ongoing basis for others, as suggested by this narrative:

> There are people crying in the bathroom and oh—it can be something—a very rude awakening, because you think once you're an adult, you've gone through high school, gone through college, you've made it to the work world, and yet, you've got this person yelling at you—like your parent, and yet, this is a coworker. Yeah, they're your boss or your supervisor, but you think well, 'Wait a minute; what's this all about? I'm an adult, too; yes, I'm younger, but that *[sic]* I don't expect you to talk to me any kind of way because you're frustrated.'
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

Research Question 1(b): Is it used primarily for coaching?

This example is how one reporter of a larger newspaper and who currently isn't being mentored anymore (by his own choice) remembered a time of coaching:

> Something that really sticks with me—I was having some trouble getting hold of a source and I kind of complained about it and I was just basically told reporters get the story. And I was like, 'Oh OK.' It was short, concise, to the point and left me with me kind of going back with my tails between my legs and going back to my desk and trying to get the story, which I ended up doing. I don't remember what the story was about, but I remember getting the advice or the stage works that was given to me at that time.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

The above narrative depicts several concepts: the socialization process, the coaching aspect of mentoring, and the organizational culture of a newsroom. By hearing the phrase, "Reporters get the story," this would be a prime example of how quickly reporters are expected to take command of their skills. The phrase also provides insight into coaching—a method used to quickly guide someone, whereas mentoring is more of a process, often long-term and often developed through phases. The narrative also speaks to the culture of a newsroom, which is fast-paced and filled with spoken and unspoken norms. These norms become expectations that reporters are expected to fulfill. At the same time, the narrative illustrates how this reporter

is being coached to be a better reporter—one who is independent and can take criticism positively. In comparison of both research questions, the coaching aspect of mentoring can occur among reporters at all stages of their careers, whereas the socialization aspect of mentoring often occurs with newcomers or those just beginning their careers.

One other reporter of a small newspaper, who is still being mentored and also mentors others, recounted how the cycle of mentoring and coaching occurred:

> We're fortunate in a newsroom that we have these people in our newsroom that have a lot of experiences and so you can rely on them for advice, help with different ideas on how to tackle tough issues, and so in that way it's been a good thing for my career. I mean I mentor—I may not think about it but I mentor every day and I benefit from mentors that I've had. Now that I'm forty-five years old and we have new reporters in our newsroom who are in their early twenties—not as experienced; I try to relay information to them that others have relayed to me and I try to help them as much as I can. So it's certainly a business [mentoring] that goes on every day and every hour.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

Another reporter of a small newspaper offered this example of the socialization aspect of mentoring:

> If you need help (when new people come in), there are people who will drive you around and help you

> meet people and help you to learn aspects of the job.
>
> (female entry-level, small paper)

Research Question 1(c): Is it used to help employees advance into a new position?

Two respondents reported on mentoring being used to groom reporters for employee advancement. One respondent recalled that her mentor would email announcements regarding prospective job openings.

Another respondent described how mentoring helped him to advance overall for the better:

> I think that it would have been probably around 1988, I had been at the [paper] a couple of years and I kind of looked around and I had found another job offer, and I had planned to leave the [paper] and then [my editor] said I want you to stay and I'll make you the news editor and I'll give you a good raise. Our relationship kind of changed. When I became the news editor and he gave me more impact over the stories we did—who did them, how we did them, I became more of a co-worker with [him] rather than just a reporter anymore. And so after that, I think it really helped me go beyond just being a reporter—you know going to a meeting, writing a story but thinking more about how to cover stories and thinking how to use photographs. I started thinking much more outside of just the basic reporter thing where you go to a meeting and then you hammer out your story. It's more, well how do we plan our paper, how do we present things, what do put out front, what do we put on the front page, who do we assign the different stories? And that really helped me become a journalist rather than just a reporter. And to this day, I do a lot of reporting but a lot of my job is decision-making, too, about what stories to do, or how to do them, and who to assign them to. So that was when I was really going

> to leave but he convinced me to stay and it made me really a better journalist than a reporter.
> (male veteran, small paper)

Research Question 2: How do reporters get mentored?

Several of the survey questions asked reporters to describe how they were mentored. Of the twenty survey respondents, three reported being assigned to their mentors, and five sought out their mentors. Of the three who were assigned to mentors, one reporter worked at a small newspaper, and two worked at large papers. Respondents reported being mentored face-to-face, by telephone, and by email. Eight respondents were mentored face-to-face, two respondents were mentored by telephone, and two respondents were mentored by email. Two reported being mentored by all three methods. Respondents report being mentored for as little as 15 minutes, to hours at length. Respondents reported having a mentoring relationship from six months, to as long as 15 plus years.

The following set of narratives shed light on what typical mentoring is like from the perspectives of the reporters.

One reporter of a small newspaper described his mentoring experience, explaining how often and for what reasons he needs to get mentored. The narrative, offered

by a 22-year-veteran suggests the importance of continuous mentoring and ways in which it can help:

> Almost every day. Every day it was 'Hey, what do you think about this? Do you know how to tackle that?' Even smaller things like even if I had a story in my head, you know 'What's a good lead for this story? How can I write this better than I've written it?' So it goes from big ideas to really down to smaller ideas.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

The same respondent commented on what he views as a typical day of mentoring:

> But as far as mentoring, yeah it goes on all the time. A good example, we have a reporter [police reporter] who did it for five or six years, and he got a little burned out on it and he wanted to do something else in journalism and so we switched our beats a little and now he's doing something else. But we brought in a younger police reporter and he asks him [the former police reporter] on a daily basis 'What about this and how can you help me with that?' so different fields of expertise, you know—you rely on other reporters.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

The above narrative suggests this newsroom is friendly, open, and receptive to mentoring. The newcomer is actively initiating the mentoring process and is taking control of what he wants to become: a good reporter. This example also sheds light on what some scholars describe as a high achiever—those who proactively seek out mentors and others who can help them succeed.

Another reporter of a medium-size paper described what her mentor typically would do:

> She would start making some of the calls. She'd say, 'What's the story about; who do you need me to call?' And she would—and she typed up what they said and then we'd combine it and I'd always give her a double byline, because she helped. And it's like, ah, I'm not that arrogant to make it seem that I did all the work when I didn't. I'd say no, you helped; you deserve credit.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

In another example by the same respondent:

> There've been times when family issues come up in the middle of your work day and makes you sad, angry and everything in between and she helped to keep it at a level where you stayed professional—even though you were hurting or sad, and she would quietly do whatever it took to keep you moving forward so that the rest of the people in the room didn't know you were having some sort of breakdown or whatever was going on. But I can't think of very many other people in that room who have that type of relationship with somebody where they could actually ask them to do some of their work and them not looking at them like, 'Are you crazy? I've got my own.' But she's a very good mentor.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

The following respondent from a small newspaper described the process of her mentoring when she first learned her beat:

> It was when I first started. You know how it is—you have to learn your beat, and with the small newspaper that we have, each reporter has several beats to cover. There's a broad aspect to cover, so I believe I have six townships and one school district right now, so my mentor just started driving me around throughout each township, meeting supervisors, meeting city officials,

> meeting good sources that she knew I was going to need in the future. She even helped just even finding where things are. In this county there are a lot of country roads, a lot of places—you don't even know where you're going. She even took me places to show me where things are, where certain businesses are—things like that. She just helped me with a lot of things—little details that really help out. You know at the time they seemed trivial but at that time it was really helpful. You know it's a big transition. These sources aren't somebody that you're just automatically best friends with and they're going to give you a call; you've got to earn their trust and really earn that, so she really helped out with that as well—you know just who to call and how—putting in a good word for me—things like that, which was really helpful. So obviously it wasn't something that was a real quick—you know a one day thing—where 'here you go, here's what you do, good luck.' It took several weeks where she just really, really helped me out. And like I said I can't stress enough how much that really helped. And the city editor allowed that process to really develop, let me develop—give me that leeway to develop into a reporter, so it was really helpful.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

The same respondent commented on the length of her mentoring experience:

> …that probably took a few weeks, you know, but, but she stayed on with me…She'd always check back, or if I needed her help, things like that—until I felt comfortable. I think everyone has their own time. You know it takes a certain amount of time, but for me it took a few weeks and then she stayed with me or I never felt uncomfortable asking questions. To me, I felt like the more questions I could ask, the better, you know. So, I think it really depends on a person but for me it probably took a few weeks, and then like I said she stayed with me throughout.
>
> (mid-level female, small paper)

One reporter from a large newspaper described his past mentoring experience:

> That was nearly eleven years ago I believe, *[sic]* but as I recall it was one of the elder editors at [my paper] who had been around for some time and he took myself and some others under his wing basically and we'd have some kind of what I would call Journalism 101—working at [my paper] was a little bit different than working at some other paper or the school setting. Often, or roughly weekly, we'd have different sit-downs and the rest of the time was an opportunity to be able to get daily feedback, and the door was open always if there were any questions.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

The same reporter commented on the types of questions he would ask during his mentoring experience. In a previous narrative, he explained that his mentor helped him cultivate sources, learn his beat, and enhanced his writing skills:

> …It was something at every step along the way as I grew, and depending on as my assignments changed—he was there to assist with it and the type of questions that I might need to know—like some of the ins and out of *[sic]* whose who kind of areas of leadership outside that would help with what we're looking for in sources and stuff like that and whose the best person to speak to *[sic]* that would save a lot of time spinning my wheels and getting no where. He was more of a middle man or a little bit of a roadmap.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

In one other example, this reporter described another mentoring experience that was poignant:

> …I was having some trouble getting hold of a source and I kind of complained about it and I was just basically told reporters get the story. And I was like, 'oh, OK.' It was short, concise, to the point and left me with me kind of going back with my tails between my legs and going back to my desk and trying to get the story, which I ended up doing. I don't remember what the story was about but I remember getting the advice or the stage works that was given to me at that time.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

The next example is provided by a 17-year veteran of a medium-size newspaper. This respondent reported having multiple mentors, some of which were copy editors and an editor:

> They had been there for 30 years or more. *[sic]* One of the things I did as I clerk is I would submit ideas for stories and they would allow me to go out and pursue writing a story, well then the copy editors—there were three of them who would edit my copy and give me tips on writing, They would share some of their favorite books. They had…suggested that I not only do a lot of writing but reading as well, because they made it clear the more you read, you increase your vocabulary and that will help you in the business, and they were older people. And when I say older, 20-25 years older than I was at the time.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

Research Question 3: In what ways might journalists benefit from having a mentor?

Findings of the interview data reveal that mentoring likely is beneficial for all reporters at the entry-level phase of their career, the mid-level, and the well-seasoned

career phases. Some see mentoring as a benefit to themselves, to others, and to those who may never have been mentored. Seventeen respondents reported on the benefits of mentoring. Three respondents reported on the benefits to others but not for themselves.

The following narratives first detail mentoring benefits for younger reporters:

> When they get out into the real world, a mentor at a small paper would assist that individual into being able to get to know the mayor, the city manager or the man who could wear many different hats and how it varies, because in some communities—like if you're in Michigan, we've got the prosecutors, where in other states they have district attorneys. Getting through some of those things on how law enforcement works or elections are set up are all interesting things that could help cut down some time or at least in trying to figure out how the community works, so it makes for a more efficient effort in the daily job description.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

Another respondent discusses why mentoring plays an important role in one's career:

> As a journalist, experience is really your best asset, your best ally and if you've come into situations where you've dealt with them before, you know how to handle yourself, you know what questions to ask. But if you don't, you have to go to somebody or figure it out yourself, or you go to somebody else who does have that kind of experience.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

He goes on to say:

> With my first job, when I was basically out of college, I took a job at a weekly and there was a printer there, and there was a secretary, and there was another person who came but there was nobody that I could learn from as a journalist, and so I was there by myself, and I knew what to do and I stayed busy but there was nobody there to teach me about this business, about this town and where I lived. And as I look back I stayed there about a year, and they [the paper] ended up bringing somebody in to do my job, and that was the only job I got fired from really. But as I look back and say why didn't it work out? Well, because I was too young to know what I was supposed to do, and there was nobody else there to teach me what I was supposed to do, and so then you leave your job there and you say OK, have I made the right career choice, have I totally screwed up here? What happened? And then I was able to go to [another paper] and where [my boss] had that kind of experience and I found my way. And I was about a year, two years behind. I didn't know as much as I should have after a year and a half in the business but it was just because I didn't have any one to learn from.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

This reporter of a medium-size newspaper highlights a purpose of mentoring—even apart from a news organization:

> Society in general needs to have more mentors—not in the workplace but in our daily lives because you see some people who have no clue of dealing with challenges, and if they have someone to help them along the way—helping them so they're not stepping on every landmine that is thrown to them, you'll get along in life a heck of a lot better.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

One female respondent, who is currently being mentored, replied,

> [Having a mentor] is definitely beneficial. It helps you through the growth. It helps you to build sources, build trust in the community—build trust with government sources. You can learn the 'ins' and 'outs' at a lot faster pace.
>
> (veteran female, medium paper)

Another respondent, a male reporter with 12 years of experience, believes having a mentor would be beneficial for career development and in general.

> It would help me most in figuring out what's most important in a story sometimes….I think that it helps us to see (a) what we're doing well, but (b) more importantly, what we can be doing better.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Another respondent describes a cyclical benefit for the mentoring that he gets and then imparts upon others:

> I mentor—I may not think about it, but I mentor every day. I benefited from the mentors that I had. I'm forty-five years and we now have reporters in our newsroom in their early twenties who may not be as experienced, and so I try to relay information to them that others have relayed to me, and I try to help them, so it's certainly a business that goes on every day and even every hour. The journalism business is just something—even if you don't think about it, it goes on all of the time.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

This same respondent also describes the reason he as a veteran may get mentored:

> Everyday it may be 'Hey, what do you think about this. Do you know how to tackle that?' And even smaller things like, 'What's a good lead for this story? How can I write this better than I've

> written it?' It goes from big ideas, down to smaller ideas.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

He offered another narrative of why he would need mentoring in the future:

> I think it could help everybody at different points, but I think it could be more—much more helpful to young people. As you get older, you need different things. Where I could use mentoring now is in electronic media—how to do more work on the Internet. I need to break away from the old style of journalism and get more into the webs and the blogs and things like that…whereas I think younger journalists need mentoring in how to do stories, how to cultivate sources, how to do in-depth interviewing. I think nuts and bolts stuff is on younger people whereas as you get older in the business, it's good to expand. I hand to learn how to handle people, how to be a boss, and so there are different things you need to learn as you go. So I think it would be beneficial throughout, but I think the needs of journalists with different levels of experience are a lot different.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

One male reporter of a small newspaper with two years of experience reported he has never been mentored and would welcome some type of mentoring system that would provide feedback on his work. When asked if he wish he had a mentor, he replied:

> Yeah. That would be beneficial. We don't have any type of formal practice here to provide
>
> feedback….I think it is something that the majority of us would welcome here.
>
> (male entry-level, small paper)

Another female respondent of a medium-size paper with 17 years of experience also stated that she had never been mentored but believes it is something that would be useful for others:

> As I look back when I was younger, it would have been helpful in terms of number one, my writing skills, and two, to help me with planning my career.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

She also explained that oftentimes journalists are faced with having to learn a variety of things on their own:

> [With a lot of journalism] you learn it on the job and the process of learning how to write well is a difficult and long one. If you had a good editor, it would serve the purpose of mentoring. I wish I had someone to talk to about what do [I] want to do and where do I want to go with my career.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

The experience of another respondent illustrates this point further. The respondent of a small newspaper and with four years of newspaper experience said he wished his newspaper provided mentoring:

> I think it's beneficial especially when you start out at a newspaper. It was 'here's your desk, here's what we need you to do,' and I had to go out and introduce myself to people. I didn't know them [the sources]. I had no clue. I didn't know how to approach them.
>
> (veteran male, medium paper)

One veteran reporter of a medium-size paper who has never been mentored and would like to still get mentored discussed how a mentor would help now:

> I think a mentor would help mainly to get me refocused during those periods in which I feel that I'm stagnating a. as a writer, b. as a reporter to kind of help me work through those career rough spots I think every body goes through where at least you feel like you're running in place and then you could be getting better and you're not getting better.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

He also views a mentor as someone who could help on a personal level:

> Just to have somebody to talk to who is familiar with my life because of my occupation and the demands that it makes on you professionally and outside the newsroom just to have someone to talk to, relate, and bounce thoughts off with—get their thoughts on how they bounced it, cause you know I'm 35 and single, and I don't know if that would have been the case if I had chosen another profession, so it's always good to have someone to talk to and relate to.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

This same reporter speaks about mentoring helping everyone overall:

> I think that staff is more motivated and more excited and more filled with good ideas about what they do every day can only make the paper better, can only make the stories better and as a result, make the paper a lot better. And I think would make the relationships in the newsroom better if people were a lot happier and more motivated.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Researchers have said that when individuals get mentored, they likely will be more satisfied on the job. The interview data is consistent with that body of literature. Respondents who were interviewed by telephone attributed their job satisfaction, in part, to being mentored and consequently reported dissatisfaction from lack of any mentoring. Eleven of the 20 respondents were satisfied in general; one was more satisfied because of her current mentoring experience; two were more satisfied because of their previous mentoring experience while two were dissatisfied in general; and one was dissatisfied from the lack of having no mentoring experience. First, respondents were asked if they were satisfied at their current job. When asked if satisfaction or dissatisfaction the their current job was related to their experience with or without a workplace mentor, one respondent replied that she was not satisfied and that her dissatisfaction was because of her lack of being mentored.

> Well, [it would help with] things such as writing, advancing in the newsroom. I suppose it possibly would be nice to have [a person to go to, to help with situations].
>
> (female entry-level, small paper)

Another female reporter with 23 years of experience reported being more satisfied as a result of having been mentored. "The mentor also showed me how to cope with the

negatives." Another female respondent with mid-level experience said this:

> It has a lot to do with knowing that there someone there….They're attitude is good because they're willing to do this. It's not like they're being forced [to mentor].
>
> (mid-level female, small paper)

The above narratives suggest that newspaper reporters are satisfied because of the career and psychosocial outcomes of mentoring. Another respondent (a veteran, currently not mentored) of a large newspaper reported being more satisfied because of the mentoring he received:

> It helped me to avoid some roadblocks and obstacles early on that might have slowed down my progress and impede my learning curve. It [mentoring] helped me to become successful at a much faster pace.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

One other respondent of a medium-size newspaper and with more than 17 years of experience summed up the urgency of mentoring in general:

> So often we have graduates with very limited experience coming into the workplace and they're romanticizing about what they see on television but in reality, it's going to be different. They don't get to see that it's not a nine-to-five job and that you have to be flexible and work really hard. Mentoring would be good for building self-esteem and confidence so they can have someone to help them with the good, the positive, and the somewhere in the middle [type of experience].
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

Mentoring scholars have pointed out the benefits that mentoring brings to an organization—employee retention, increase in morale, and job satisfaction. It seems logical that the same benefits may serve as outcomes for journalistic mentoring. According to the interview data, several themes emerged as to how and when mentoring would be most useful to a news organization. First, mentoring would be good for practical reasons for both career and psychosocial functions of coaching, advising, counseling, exposing, and sponsoring:

> I think it's something that's really important. But a newspaper—just by its very nature—is such a hectic place that I imagine it would be difficult to start and sustain a program.
> (female entry-level, small paper)

Yet, another respondent pointed out:

> It is beneficial. I think it's something that should be at every level, no matter how big the paper is. It would just help to improve what you're already doing in lots of ways.
> (female mid-level, small paper)

A few respondents see mentoring not so much as a benefit to those already well-seasoned in their careers, but more as a tool for those first entering it:

> It helps having someone with experience share them with you and guide you through the process. It makes it a lot easier.
> (male entry-level, small paper)

Another replied,

> I think it's a great way for people who are coming up to learn from those who have done it. It can help them avoid mistakes. I think this is the type of thing I wish I had when I was younger.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

Other veteran respondents said they would like to become mentors, themselves, while others recognize mentoring as something useful for all reporters and the organization, itself:

> It's a valuable tool that can be used for the workplace that can assist budding journalists in addition to ensure that quality goes into the paper.
>
> (veteran male, large paper)

Another respondent replied,

> I think it's very important, even if it's mentoring someone at my age or mentoring a younger child as an adult. I think it's extremely important.
>
> (male entry-level, small paper)

Development of a Journalistic Model

Since a main purpose of this study was to offer a model for newsroom mentoring and to fill in a gap left by other mentoring researchers who excluded newsrooms, reporters were asked about the type of mentoring relationships that work and the problems that may be associated with them. Findings that address the next two

research questions were used for the development of a model.

Research Question 4: What would be a good mentoring system for a newspaper organization?

Mentoring literature points out that a good system of mentoring would include both formal and informal interactions. Respondents of the in-depth interviews see the benefits of having both. From the interview data, this researcher pulled 20 key components (themes) of instituting a journalistic mentoring system—regardless of whether the system is formal or informal. These key components are highlighted here and explained thereafter.

- Raise awareness of mentoring and the benefits it provides to the journalism profession
- Encourage a view of mentoring as a gain, not a loss
- Promote and encourage mentoring throughout the news industry, regardless of newspaper size
- Promote and encourage mentoring programs, whether formal or informal
- Institute the mentoring program on a small scale, by allowing an employer recruiter to assume the role of mentor initially
- Encourage newcomers to get mentored

- Find mentors who were themselves mentored and had good experiences
- Select mentors with reporting backgrounds
- Seek mentors who represent and can explain the newspaper's culture
- Seek mentors of diverse backgrounds
- Encourage mixed-race, mixed-gender mentor relationships, which could result in a mentee having more than one mentor
- Assign mentor relationships
- Promote face-to-face mentoring
- Encourage reporters to seek multiple mentors
- Socialize reporters through mentoring
- Give the mentee flexibility regarding when to leave the mentoring relationship
- Select mentees who are receptive to getting mentored
- Select mentors who are genuine
- Select mentors who are flexible about mentoring
- Select mentors who are not the reporter's assigned editor

The following sets of narratives suggest what might make a good mentoring system for newspapers.

Key Component 1: Raise awareness of mentoring and the benefits it provides to the journalism profession:

All five in-depth interview respondents believe promoting awareness is the key to highlighting mentoring. One respondent believes that members of management need to be aware that reporters may want mentoring, and reporters simply need to make their voices heard. The respondent of a medium-sized newspaper offered this advice to the industry:

> Talk to reporters because I think sometimes managing editors assume that that's not something [mentoring] real high on a reporter's priority list and that reporters are probably going to resent it as some kind of you need to get better at what you're doing, and so we're bringing in these mentors. When in actuality, I think most reporters would love that from them, I think. And also it shouldn't be something so low on the priority list when there's budget cuts and belt-tightening, those kinds of things are always the first things to go. I think they [management] underestimate the importance of staff development.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Another respondent of a small paper touched upon the importance of setting a goal:

> I would say highlight it and quantify it and say 'OK, we're going to spend twenty minutes a day' or whatever you would think an appropriate period may be you know to talk amongst each other, to talk with our editors and you know to do mentoring and quantify it and make more awareness that it's going on because it goes on every day. In good newsrooms it goes on every day, and I think if you were to highlight it and set some timeframes for OK, we're going to do a half an hour of mentoring today for this or that. Because just the fact that you're bringing attention to it would make it more

> productive I think. It happens all the time. If you would bring more attention to it, bring more structure to it, I think it would become even more affective than it is.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

He continued:

> I was just thinking about the discussion we had in the newsroom this morning you don't think about, 'Oh, yes I'm mentoring,' but that's what going on all the time.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

Key Component 2: Encourage a of view mentoring as a gain, not a loss

> Every reporter does things differently—rather it's the interviewing style or maybe their writing but the mentoring comes in when you can draw on other people's experiences on how to get the best story. How to do the interview, not the specific questions to ask, but maybe "How did you get through this tough source, or who did you talk to that you might not have thought of otherwise?"
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

Another reporter commented:

> …They're generally the ones who've been there for a long time and they're just so set in what they do and not really all that receptive to new ideas that they would see a mentor as an imposition and rather that something that could benefit them.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Key Component 3: Promote and encourage mentoring throughout the news industry regardless of newspaper size

One veteran reporter who used to be mentored shared this:

> It's just such an important step I think for reporters to build their confidence, too, to approach these new people and strangers even for

certain stories that you have to do. I think all papers should do it.

(female veteran, small paper)

Another reported had this to say:

Anyone coming in, no matter how much experience they've had—if they're just coming out of college or if they have a 10-year veteran reporter, they're coming into a new place, a new town, you know not knowing anyone. I think it's important that everyone has this program—even if you try if for a couple of weeks. I think it's just important for everyone to have, because you know everyone needs help, especially where you're just starting out, I mean everything is so overwhelming any way when you start any job, so having a mentor definitely helps in that transition phase.

(female veteran, small paper)

One other reported shared this insight:

It's critical to developing as a professional. I don't think I would be as good of a reporter. I think good mentoring has helped me to become a much better professional and it's helped me grow and not get stale. We have a lot to learn in our business now about the new media, the Internet. It's a changing medium. We don't just do newspapers. We have to do our Internet. We have to do our chat rooms and all this other stuff, so I think we all kind of rely on each other to pull us back. Some of us are pretty old journalists. I learn this stuff on typewriter and we don't use those anymore. But other people in my age are in that position, too. I mean I'm certainly not unique to that. But I think we have to challenge each other to stay on top of this changing industry that we're in. I mean it's a lot different than it was five or then years ago.

(male veteran, small paper)

Key Component 4: Promote and encourage mentoring programs, whether formal or informal

This reporter, who gets mentored, sums up the need for mentoring:

> Mentoring would be good. It would be very good. If it happens, it would be great.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

Another reporter emphasized the need for editors to consider some type of program:

> I think they should really press management to make mentoring a regular part of the budgeting process. They should find a way to get that somehow included in the staff development budget… I think they [management] would be more receptive if enough reporters requested it. I think a lot of reporters want it but it isn't something they press for regularly but I think obviously if there were more funds available, they'd [management] more likely to institute something resembling a mentoring program at least. I know some of the bigger papers it's fairly common.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Key Component 5: Institute the mentoring program on a small scale, by allowing an employer recruiter to assume the role of mentor initially

> I would say that whoever is maybe the recruiter or the recruiting editor might be a good person to be able to start with that and be able to start at a small scale with the new hires and offering themselves as the mentor or the reference point and as that possibly can be used to build when more people are being brought on staff and bringing it up to others in the office interested in taking that role on as maybe more

> people can come, get hired on and as the program gets successful, you can start that way.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

Key Component 6: Encourage newcomers to get mentored

Several reporters (those who have been mentored and those who have not) are mostly in agreement that young reporters and those new to a newspaper would benefit well from mentoring. These two narratives point to different reasons mentoring would be good at that stage.

> Zero to five [years of experience] I would say is very important but not that there's not more we can learn but I think that once somebody does it for you then you're more likely to ask other people for help and then be a mentor as you get more experience and so I would think for new and young reporters, it's most important.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

This next reporter touched upon why the socialization process is key, especially for new and young reporters. This socialization aspect of mentoring would include introducing reporters to norms, culture, and other expectations of the news business. In this example, the reporter pointed out how the title of a news source would differ from one state to another:

> When you get into a large metropolitan region or maybe a smaller one—but for those who are just starting out on the job—they have the idea of how journalism is when you're in the books and

> depending on school. When they get out into the real world with a mentor at a small paper would assist that individual in to be able to get to know the mayor, the city manager or the man who could wear many different hats and how it varies, because in some communities, like if you're in Michigan, we've got the prosecutors, where in other states they have district attorneys. Getting through some of those things on how law enforcement works or elections are set up are all interesting things that could help cut down some time or at least in trying to figure out how the community works, so it makes for a more efficient effort in the daily job description.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

Key Component 7: Find mentors who were themselves mentored and had good experiences

This reporter, who no longer is mentored, is thinking about mentoring others:

> It would be something I'd be interested in doing, that's for sure, just because of the good experience I had with it….Even though I don't have the official title—I still try to help them out with certain things…like when they first come—[I] give them some ideas of who to they can call, like if they're working on a story, I'll tell them…just kind of help them out as much as I can, just because I know how valuable that is.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

Key Component 8: Select mentors with reporting backgrounds

Key Component 9: Seek mentors who represent and can explain the newspaper's culture

For the previous components, this excerpt is provided by a veteran reporter who has never been mentored as a journalist, but he still is open to getting mentored in his career.

> I would suggest someone who;s there all the time. Someone who has spent maximum time as a reporter, minimum time as an editor—that would be my ideal mentor. Someone who has worked at a middle size newspaper and has come to understand kind of the unique environment of a midsize newspaper because it's very different than a big daily; it's very different than a small daily and enough mentors to reflect the diversity of news, which obviously isn't terribly diversed.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Key Component 10: Seek mentors of diverse backgrounds

> Every reporter does things differently—rather it's the interviewing style or maybe their writing but the mentoring comes in when you can draw on other people's experiences on how to get the best story.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

> I think everybody would benefit from a mentor (a) from both genders and also from varied racial backgrounds.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper

Key Component 11: Encourage mixed-race, mixed-gender mentor relationships, which could result in a mentee having more than one mentor

The next pair of excerpts shows agreement that reporters are more likely to learn from the differences in others.

> I think everybody would benefit from a mentor a. from both genders and b. also from varied racial backgrounds.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

> I would think that the differences would be more important than the similarities. For instance, [this town] is not a very diverse town and if I were in a situation where I went to a city with more of an ethnic mix, I would need to learn more about those types of cultures, and neighborhoods, communities, and I would think that mentoring older journalists with younger journalists would be good, mixing white journalists with black journalists, I would think that you would be further ahead dealing with people who have different experiences than you.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

But one reporter cautioned:

> I think it helps that I had female reporter. You know there were guys in the newsroom that have been there 25 plus years. I don't think I would have felt as comfortable with those guys as I did with her. Like I said, we're closer in age. She was, you know another girl, so I would say that would probably be helpful to people, because you want to be as comfortable.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

Key Component 12: Assign mentor relationships

These two sets of in-depth interview excerpts discuss the differences in pairing individuals in a mentoring relationship or leaving that decision to the individual's

choice. The first excerpt highlights a potential problem when mentoring pairs are matched but not by their own choice. Mentoring research indicates there needs to be a degree of affinity for the relationship to work, and by pairing individuals without their input could lead to resentment later.

> I think open is fine…Obviously pairing it up with the mentee *[sic]* there's some concerns or feelings about it. I think a more open one is just fine. To me I have an open mind myself. I might not feel so open to that.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

> They would need to pair up a veteran and I'm talking someone who has been there longer than five years, because if you haven't been there five years, you're still negotiating yourself, trying to find out what's what, trying to not only find yourself around town in some instances, but also find your way around the building. With someone with at least five years or more, pair them up with a person coming in, in that same department, and you don't have to hold their hand but let them know that you're there to help them if they find that they're stuck.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

Key Component 13: Promote face-to-face mentoring

This reporter, who gets mentored and mentors others, sums up mentoring as this:

> The journalism business is just something that mentoring is—and even if you don't think about it, it goes on all the time.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

Key Component 14: Encourage reporters to seek multiple mentors

Key Component 15: Socialize reporters through mentoring

For the above components, the next set of narratives explained their significance.

> Every reporter does things differently—rather it's the interviewing style or maybe their writing but the mentoring comes in when you can draw on other people's experiences on how to get the best story.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

> I think everybody would benefit from a mentor a. from both genders and also from varied racial backgrounds.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Key Component 16: Give the mentee flexibility regarding when to leave the mentoring relationship

> Availability and flexibility, depending on the individual obviously [it] would have to be someone independent and be thinkers. Not everyone wants to be told how to do things. But at the same time, too, you want some individuals who may need more assistance than others and you want that opportunity to be able to have it available and use it if you have to but don't make it too mandatory, especially if you're coming with a lot of experience and if you're offering someone a mentor, you may not need that individual.
>
> (male veteran, large paper

Key Component 17: Select mentees who are receptive to getting mentored

The following narrative touches upon reporters being proactive about their mentoring experience.

> One of the things when I talk with my co-workers all the time, we crave feedback. We love it when they bring in writing coaches, and we love it when they bring in people to talk to us about new ideas or when they bring in people from the community to talk to us about what we're not covering. I think people—we want feedback, and we want kind of direction and guidance and I think a mentor could provide that, and I think for the most part that's the feeling in general from among reporters.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Key Component 18: Select mentors who are genuine

> Be sincere. Because if you're going to help them, help them. If not don't do it half-heartedly, because you do more harm than good, because you frustrate the person.
>
> (female veteran, medium paper)

Another reporter pointed out:

> I think the mentor should be willing. I don't think the mentor should be forced into being a mentor or else it's not going to work. You know, they're not going to be very helpful that way.

In this next excerpt, the reporter describes her mentor as leading by example, and this description is consistent with mentoring research that points to mentors having qualities that are likely to be mirrored by their mentees:

> …She took the mentoring job very seriously. She was very *[sic]* enthusiastic, which made me

> enthusiastic; you know it's contagious that enthusiasm that you have for your job. She was pretty amazing.
>
> (female veteran, small paper)

Key Component 19: Select mentors who are flexible about mentoring

> Availability and flexibility, depending on the individual obviously [it] would have to be someone independent and be thinkers. Not everyone wants to be told how to do things. But at the same time, too, you want some individuals who may need more assistance than others and you want that opportunity to be able to have it available and use it if you have to but don't make it too mandatory, especially if you're coming with a lot of experience and if you're offering someone a mentor, you may not need that individual.
>
> (male veteran, large paper)

Key Component 20: Select mentors who are not the reporter's assigned editor

> A mentor I think probably understands—not that editors have never been a reporter, but an editor has so many divided responsibilities that it's kind of hard for them to focus on one reporter's needs at a given time, whereas a mentor's solely focused on helping the reporter or whomever. I guess the main thing is they [mentors] would have had the time—the time that I would have needed from them—for them to tell me to get it done right.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

This respondent cited another reason for the consideration of an individual—other than the reporter's editor—to be an assigned mentor:

> Because an editor is always editing your copy… and may not necessarily give you *[sic]*. I mean they'd probably be good with the constructive criticism but not kind of the support and the booster you needed—just because that's what they're used to doing. And also I think a mentor can help you better deal with the non-story factors that may be influencing whatever you're going through—like pressure in the newsroom in general—you know the things that editors don't think about.
>
> male veteran, medium paper)

RQ5: What sorts of problems can arise from mentoring?

All of the respondents who were interviewed in depth believe there can be several problems associated with mentoring. Some of those problems as identified in these narratives may occur with the concept of mentoring, itself: Sometimes the thought of one needing to get mentored may cause resentment among those being mentored. Other types of problems can occur when mentoring may be viewed as less of a priority, or when one member of the paired relationship view mentoring as too time-consuming. Yet, other problems may occur when some do not want to effect change or may not be receptive to criticism.

Giles points out that mentoring works well when both parties have respect for one another when there is an honest exchange of information. One respondent would agree:

> Be sincere. Because if you're going to help them, help them. If not don't do it half-

> heartedly, because you do more harm than good, because you frustrate the person.
> (female veteran, small paper)

Sometimes problems can occur when one may not feel led to mentor or be receptive to receiving it, as the following narrative suggests and is provided by a small paper veteran:

> I appreciate it a lot more than I did. [In] my first job, there was nothing like [this]. It makes [the job] much more enjoyable. In my current job I'm grateful to be able to work with a group of people who are able to help.
> (male veteran, small paper)

This reporter of a medium-size paper had this to say:

> …They're generally the ones who've been there for a long time and they're just so set in what they do and not really all that receptive to new ideas that they would see a mentor as an imposition and rather that something that could benefit them.
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Yet, one other respondent (medium-size newspaper veteran) believed problems may arise from mentoring when the mentor may be someone other than an editor, who already coaches the reporter on a day-to-day basis:

> I think what's important is also having a mentor who will give you the opportunity to kind of reflect and kind of take stock in where you are, and have someone to tell you where you ought to be, which I think can be valuable sometimes because I think a mentor and not someone as an editor who you may have to report and someone who you will be turning in your work to, I think it will be easier to take the criticism.
> (male veteran, medium paper)

At other times, problems can occur if the mentor focuses on perceived negative aspects of mentoring, as the next narrative by the same respondent suggests:

> Don't see it as a threat, either. I think that's sometimes a problem for editors. They sometimes see that kind of thing [bringing in a mentor or coach] as a threat. When we brought in a writing coach, one of the things she said she noticed about the newsroom was that there was tension between editors and reporters and so that made a lot of editors very nervous, and we haven't had a writing coach since then. And I think that editors should welcome it just as much as reporters as a chance to get better—for the paper to get better.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Another potential problem may occur when newspapers assume mentoring may not be wanted as is suggested by this medium-size newspaper veteran):

> Talk to reporters because I think sometimes managing editors assume that that's not something real high on a reporter's priority list and that reporters are probably going to resent it as some kind of 'You need to get better at what you're doing and so we're bringing in these mentors.' When in actuality, I think most reporters would love that from them. I think and also it shouldn't be something so low on the priority list when there's budget cuts and belt tightening, those kinds of things are always the first things to go. I think they underestimate the importance of staff development.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Another respondent of a small newspaper viewed mentoring as problematic because competition may result outside the mentoring relationship:

> I don't see it as something useful for me. It gets too competitive….you and the mentor would be competing for the same attention and eventually you and the mentor would go up for the same job.
> (female mid-level, small paper)

The above narrative is consistent with the literature with regard to one's feelings of resentment on behalf of others who are not getting mentored, or one of the individuals in the mentoring relationship may be getting sponsored more than the other.

The following respondent (a large newspaper veteran) described an assortment of problems associated with mentoring and highlighted the mentee adopting the same thoughts and viewpoints as the mentor:

> It can be time-consuming, especially if you're all ready to take over your beat and you don't have time to sit down and be able to meet with that individual I think are some of the biases that might come out, or this person may not be a good person for me to talk to because they don't return phone calls—they are simple biases we're not supposed to have but people have made these pre-conceived notions. You may discount that person as a source or a reference and you're hurting yourself because you're aligning yourself with what that mentor thought and I think those are a couple of things you would see.
> (male veteran, large paper)

There are other conditions in which a mentoring relationship may not work because of one being close-minded, as suggested by this narrative from a medium-size paper veteran:

> I think (a) with reporters who are long-time reporters who are very set in the way they do things, who've had beats for a long time, who choose to have a certain mastery of that beat, I just think they're going to be a lot less receptive to new ideas and criticism in general. And it doesn't have to be long-time reporters; there are some young reporters you can't explain anything to, so I guess it depends on the open-mindedness of the individual.
>
> (male veteran, medium paper)

Mentoring can go bad when one does not receive enough of it, and the mentoring may create a downward spiraling effect, where others suffer the consequence, too. The following three narratives (from a male veteran of a small newspaper) provide insight into the worse case scenario with mentoring:

> With my first job, when I was basically out of college, I took a job at a weekly and there was a printer there, and there was a secretary, and there was another person who came but there was nobody that I could learn from as a journalist, and so I was there by myself, and I knew what to do and I stayed busy but there was nobody there to teach me about this business, about this town where I lived. And as I look back I stayed there about a year, and they [the paper] and they ended up bringing somebody in to do my job, and that was the only job I got fired from really. But as I look back and say why didn't it work out, well, because I was too young to know what I was supposed to do, and there was nobody else there to teach me what I was supposed to do, and so then you leave your job there and you say OK, have I make the right career choice, have I totally screwed up here? What happened? And then I was able to go to [another paper] and where [my former boss] had that kind of experience and I found my way. And I was about a year, two years

> behind. I didn't know as much as I should have after a year and a half in the business but it was just because I didn't have any one to learn from.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

He goes on to say:

> I guess I could say because of the lack of mentoring and the kinds of things I really had to deal with on my first job, as I went to my second job, I almost had to approach that as my first job. I might have been able to get a better job from there and it might have taken me in a totally different direction—you know it's hard to say but the fact that I had to go into my second job with a lot of the experience you would get from your first job, but I got over it quickly and I'm a fast learner, but who knows—it could have taken a *[sic]* turn if I had had some experiences and had gone to a bigger paper from there and then maybe a bigger paper on from there.
>
> (male veteran, small paper)

The same reporter talked about the consequential effects of how his lack of mentoring impacted others:

> I think it's rewarding personally when you can look at people that you've helped and I've been doing this long enough that I feel I've helped some people. I feel like I've let some people down when I think back to the weekly and some reporters that I just couldn't get them over the hump you know, and now it's really bothered me. Did I do as much as I could do to make this person the best professional they could be and in some cases I don't, and so I take it a lot more seriously now than I used to, and plus it's good business—it's good for the company, if we have good reporters doing good stories and you're part of that, that's good for your business, but I find it personally rewarding, too. On the opposite side, I find it very frustrating personally frustrating when I find I haven't

helped people and maybe I could have helped more and I think of a couple of examples back. I remember one time we fired a girl at [the former paper] and she wasn't very good, but we fired this girl and she was really nice about it and I was sitting in my office on a Friday afternoon and literally crying because I thought to myself, 'Gosh I really let this girl down.' And I remember my boss comes in and said, "What the hell's matter with you?" cause he didn't care and says like, "Hey, move on to somebody else." But it was a real frustrating thing—and I think about it to this day— that I didn't do as well as I should have with that young lady and I don't know what she does now, but I hope she's had a better mentor the second time around.

(male veteran, small paper)

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to make a case for journalistic mentoring. This study explored mentoring in the Michigan daily newspaper industry by using in-depth interviews of 20 reporters who either were currently mentored, previously mentored, or never mentored at all. The study sought to find out the types of mentoring reporters experienced, the benefits of their mentoring, and the problems associated with mentoring.

Mentoring researchers have discussed mentoring and its implications for non-journalistic organizations and largely excluded news organizations as a unit of analysis. This study sought to fill this gap in research. Twenty key components were drawn from the interview data in consideration of a journalistic model that may be incorporated for news organizations considering mentoring programs. This study also sought to serve as a catalyst for newsroom mentoring of reporters, regardless of their career phase.

Studies have shown that mentoring benefits the mentor, the protégé and the organization (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997). Mentoring serves both career and

psychosocial functions (Kram, 1985). Career functions include sponsorship, exposure and visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. Psychosocial functions consist of role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Much research has been conducted on mentoring from the disciplines of organizational behavior, education, and organizational communication (Roman, 2000; Campbell-Heider, 1986; Fagan & Fagan, 1983; Hagerty, 1986; Klein & Dickenson-Hazard, 2000; Kram, 1985; May, Meleis, & Winstead-Fry, 1982; Nelson & Quick, 2005; Sands, Person, & Duane, 1991; Ragins, 1989; Vance & Olson, 1998). In the news industry, mentoring is a concept used relative to interns or those seeking to enter the field of journalism. This study sought to focus on reporters at all stages of the career to assess the implications of mentoring. Through qualitative interviewing methods, I interviewed 20 reporters about their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about mentoring. The following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways is mentoring used in the newspaper industry?
    a. Is it used to socialize new employees into the organization?
    b. Is it used primarily for coaching?

c. Is it used to help employees advance to a new position?

2. How do reporters get mentored?

3. In what ways might journalists benefit from having a mentor?

4. What would be a good mentoring system for a newspaper organization?

5. What sorts of problems can arise from mentoring?

This study was conducted through telephone interviews with 20 newspaper reporters from daily newspapers in Michigan, and through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with five respondents. Using their circulation sizes, the newspapers were grouped into three categories representing small (under 50,000), medium (under 100,000), and large (over 100,000) sized newspapers. Participants were drawn from a convenience sample of all Michigan daily newspapers; then, newspapers and reporters were systematically sampled to represent ten small newspapers, six medium, and four large newspapers. One reporter was sampled from each newspaper that represented each of the three categories.

The data was collected using semi-structured interviewing techniques. From the 20 who participated in telephone interviews, five were selected for face-to-face,

in-depth interviews. Each interview ranged from 60 to 90 minutes.

Summary of Findings

The evidence presented previously contributes to the extant body of research and theoretical understanding of mentoring relationships by proposing a journalistic mentoring model. First, consistent with mentoring literature, the evidence supports the notion that mentoring can play a significant role in news organizations. In essence, reporters seemingly recognized the importance of mentoring: From the 13 respondents who reported having mentoring experiences, more than half of them sought out their own mentors. Second, a significant contribution of this study rests in the consideration of the potential of mentoring relationships between reporters and their prospective mentors. From the seven reporters who said they never received mentoring, all but one reported they would have liked to receive mentoring, and two said they would still like a mentor. Findings from the interview data also revealed three categorical benefits of mentoring outcomes among the groups of respondents: career, psychosocial, and socialization benefits of mentoring. Of the respondents who reported being mentored previously, two received the benefits of career and psychosocial functions

of mentoring. Of those being mentored currently, outcomes of career, psychosocial, and socialization benefits were reported. Of those who reported never being mentored, interview data suggested those respondents would have wanted the outcomes of psychosocial and career benefits of mentoring. Other distinctions were made among the respondents when the demographic category of years of experience was examined. Of the respondents identified as entry-level reporters, outcomes of all three mentoring benefits were reported. Of the mid-career level respondents, outcomes of socialization and career benefits were reported. Respondents identified as veteran reporters received the outcomes of psychosocial and career benefits. For the purpose of developing a journalistic mentoring model, the above findings suggest that a mentoring model should incorporate career functions as an outcome for reporters in all phases of their career, subsequently include socialization functions as an outcome for mid-career level reporters, and add psychosocial functions as an outcome for veteran reporters. The data suggest an underlying assumption that perhaps newspaper reporters can increase their chances of upward mobility within the newsroom and decrease the opportunity for mobility among newspaper chains. One respondent reported dissatisfaction

at the workplace because of the lack of any workplace mentoring experience.

Since one of the purposes of this study was to offer a recipe for journalistic mentoring, research questions explored in this study centered around the overarching study's purpose: Why should news organizations initiate and keep mentoring programs into their newsrooms? From the responses of the reporters, several conclusions can be drawn with respect to what news organizations should consider.

It is already apparent that news organizations indeed have considered mentoring. This finding is evident from responses of all three categories of respondents: those who previously have been mentored, those who currently are mentored, and those who never have been mentored at all. In light of this finding, it seems logical to conclude that mentoring should be sustained. With respect to why mentoring should be initiated by news organizations that have no mentoring and sustained by news organizations that no longer provide mentoring, one main conclusion can be drawn: Mentoring serves different but useful functions for reporters at various stages of their career. From this conclusion, several themes emerged with respect to why reporters wanted to be mentored. For entry-level

reporters, benefits of socialization, psychosocial, and career function outcomes were reported. Socialization outcomes were described as learning the community, learning the culture of the newsroom, and learning about their beat assignment. Psychosocial outcomes were described as being counseled about the ins and outs of the job, and viewing their mentor as a role model. Career function outcomes were described as helping them to gain exposure and challenging them with assignments. For mid-level career reporters, benefits of socialization and career functions were reported. Socialization was described as learning about available resources and the nuances of the news business. Career function outcomes were described as getting regular feedback on stories, being coached, being offered challenging assignments, and being nominated for lateral reporting moves. Veteran reporters received the benefits of psychosocial and career function outcomes. Psychosocial outcomes were described as sharing friendship with their mentors, and being counseled in general. Career function outcomes were described as being coached and being nominated for lateral or vertical career moves.

In light of these findings, the following journalistic mentoring model is proposed: one that incorporates the various mentoring outcomes of all stages of a reporter's

career. However, in consideration of any model, it is important first to view potential problems with integrating any major change. Giles (1987) discussed several potential problems with the prospect of members of management getting mentored.

Consideration of a Model

This dissertation sought to serve as a catalyst for the newspaper industry to consider the notion of mentoring. Through an exploratory study, data was gleaned from three entities in consideration of such model: from the reporters' viewpoints, from existing mentoring programs, and from an ASNE Committee Report. This information is further detailed with respect to each.

Based on the analyses of interviews with reporters, the following 20 components were used for consideration of the model:

- Raise awareness of mentoring and the benefits it provides to the journalism profession
- Encourage a view of mentoring as a gain, not a loss
- Promote and encourage mentoring throughout the news industry, regardless of newspaper size
- Promote and encourage mentoring programs, whether formal or informal

- Institute the mentoring program on a small scale—by allowing an employer recruiter to assume the role of mentor initially
- Encourage newcomers to get mentored
- Find mentors who were themselves mentored and had good experiences
- Select mentors with reporting backgrounds
- Seek mentors who represent and can explain the newspaper's culture
- Seek mentors of diverse backgrounds
- Encourage mixed-raced, mixed-gender mentor relationships, which could result in a mentee having more than one mentor
- Assign mentor relationships
- Promote face-to-face mentoring
- Encourage reporters to seek multiple mentors
- Socialize reporters through mentoring
- Give the mentee flexibility regarding when to leave the mentoring relationship
- Select mentees who are receptive to getting mentored
- Select mentors who are genuine
- Select mentors who are flexible about mentored

- Select mentors who are not the reporter's assigned editor

Based on existing formal mentoring programs, the following should be considered for development of a model:

1. Both participants should remain committed to the mentoring program
2. The program should be equally beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee
3. Mentoring interaction is not necessarily face-to-face

Based on the ASNE Committee Report on Mentoring in the Newsroom, the following also should be considered:

1. Create a task force to recommend goals
2. Encourage diversity of relationships
3. Have assessment measures in place

Based on the above overview a combined model of 26 key points is presented:

Proposed Mentoring Model

The following model of mentoring was developed based on the interview transcripts from reporters, from information in the ASNE report, and from existing journalism mentoring programs. This information is organized in terms of three levels of action needed for journalistic mentoring programs to be effective:

- Level One: (Macro level) What needs to occur in the newspaper industry
- Level Two: (Meso level) What needs to occur in individual news organizations
- Level Three: (Micro level: mentor and mentee) What needs to occur in the individual mentoring relationship

Seven components were selected at the industry-wide level, thirteen at the newspaper level, and four at the individual level of mentoring. They are detailed as the following:

Level One: Newspaper Industry

- Raise awareness of mentoring and the benefits it provides to the journalism profession
- Encourage a view of mentoring as a gain, not a loss
- Promote and encourage mentoring throughout the news industry, regardless of newspaper size
- Promote and encourage programs, whether formal or informal
- Create a task force to recommend goals
- Encourage diversity of relationships
- Provide direction on assessment measures

Level Two: Individual Newspapers

- Institute the mentoring program on a small scale—by allowing an employer recruiter to assume the role of mentor initially
- Encourage newcomers to get mentored
- Find mentors who were themselves mentored and had good experiences
- Find mentors with reporting backgrounds
- Seek mentors who represent and can explain the newspaper's culture
- Seek mentors of diverse backgrounds
- Encourage mixed-race, mixed-gender relationships, which could result in a mentee having more than one mentor
- Assign mentor relationships
- Promote face-to-face mentoring, but allow for other methods as well
- Encourage reporters to seek multiple mentors
- Socialize reporters through mentoring
- Allow mentoring to be equally beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee
- Give the mentee flexibility regarding when to leave the mentoring relationship

Level Three: Individual Mentoring Relationship

- *Mentor:* Select mentees who are receptive to getting mentored
- *Mentee:* Select mentors who are genuine
- *Mentee:* Select mentors who are flexible about mentoring
- *Mentee:* Select mentors who are not the reporter's assigned editor

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in several ways. The sampling frame could have been incomplete. It included 467 reporters, but there is no master list against which to compare the accuracy of the sampling frame. The study was limited to a population sample: Only about five percent of newspaper reporters were polled from a convenience sample of 467 reporters who represented each of Michigan's 49 daily newspapers. The study was limited to reporters, not columnists or editorial writers. The study also excluded categories of copy editors and other editors, although editors were contacted only to provide a close-ended response to whether or not and what type of mentoring existed. Other limitations were geographical: Only Michigan daily newspapers were sampled. In consideration of a journalistic model, the following limitations were noted:

In examining the possibility of incorporating a model, six subsidiary questions came to mind that were not explored in the study:

1. What are some reasons reporters may not want to get mentored?
2. At what phase during a reporter's career might one benefit the most from mentoring?
3. Would a formal mentoring system be necessary?
4. What are the best methods for a reporter to get mentored?
5. What might be a good exit strategy if the mentoring relationship is not the best fit?
6. Would what be a good recipe for a news organization to deal with unintended effects of mentoring?

Implications for Future Study

Mentoring is an important aspect of an individual's life. Although no previous research has investigated the possibility of mentoring at all phases of a reporter's career, evidence presents a strong case for mentoring of reporters, based on the benefits of career, psychosocial, and socialization outcomes of mentoring. This study attempted to explain why news organizations should provide mentoring. Reporters provided collective insight for which conclusions can be drawn. I believe that future research on

the process of mentoring in newspaper organizations should be explored readily, particularly since media are ever-changing with the convergence of different mediums. What resources would be available to assist reporters to adapt to such changes? What support mechanisms would be in place to help reporters deal with the demands of still a fast-paced, intense working field? Who will assist reporters with respect to career advancement? Who will be there to offer reporters practical, objective advice? Because this study is the first of its kind, it was meant to be exploratory. The data, however, suggest the importance of investigating more explicitly the nature of the mentoring phenomena in order to understand more completely everyone's role in shaping the ways in which newspaper reporters get mentored. Since this study was conducted using one geographical location, more studies should be conducted for a more sizeable population to be generalized. Because this study was explored from the perspective of only reporters, more studies need to be conducted to include both protégés (reporters) and their mentors (editors or peers). Further studies also may measure reciprocal benefits of mentoring, with respect to reporters receiving benefits from getting mentored compared with their mentors receiving benefits for mentoring. Previous mentoring studies show how mentoring

benefits the protégé, the mentor, and the organization. This idea may best be explored through combined quantitative and qualitative research methods. Only qualitative analyses were used in this study. Last, additional studies should describe how reporters get mentored with respect to quality and frequency of the interactions. This idea may be best investigated through quantitative research methods.

Conclusion

In sum, an overarching conclusion was drawn: Mentoring is a useful tool for reporters. As several of the participants pointed out, mentoring is a process that is needed, regardless if it occurs informally or formally.

With respect to further consideration of the prospect of journalistic mentoring, it is important for those involved in this type of study to contribute to the development of a common research design, far reaching across any newsroom circulation size and geographical location. It seems to me that the achievement of establishing mentoring programs in news organizations could be well within our reach, because some mentoring *is* occurring. Most of all, it is something that reporters want and need for themselves and additionally recognize as being an essential tool for others.

Appendices

Appendix A: Telephone Interview Questions

1. Do you currently have a mentor?

2. Do you wish you had a mentor? Why or why not?

3. In what way do you believe having a mentor would be beneficial?

4. Is your mentor: at your workplace? Outside your workplace? In the journalism field?

5. Is your mentor a:

Male? Female?

Older? Younger?

6. Was your mentor assigned to you?

7. Does your workplace provide mentoring?

8. Do you consider mentoring to be a high priority at your workplace?

9. Do you wish your newspaper provided mentoring? Why or why not?

10. Does coaching occur at your newspaper?

11. How often does coaching occur?

12. Have you ever been coached?

13. Are you being coached currently? If so, how often?

14. Can you tell me a little bit about how you are mentored at your workplace?

15. I will read you four different types of mentors. Which example comes closest to describing your mentor?

Friend:

Role model:

Coach:

Trainer:

16. Do you see your mentor as someone who challenges you?

17. In what way(s) does your mentor challenge you?

18. Describe other ways in which your mentor has been helpful to you.

19. What are some ways you wish your mentor could have helped you?

22. Why would you consider these ways helpful to you?

23. Has your mentor in any way helped you to get an assignment or a job?

24. Do you believe that having a mentor helps to expand your network in the newspaper industry? Why or why not?

25. Are you currently satisfied at your current job?

26. Do you believe that dissatisfaction/satisfaction at your current job is related to your experience with your workplace mentor? In what way?

27. Are you more satisfied in your career as a result of having a mentor? Why or why not?

28. Have you ever wanted to resign or quit a reporting job because there was not mentoring? Why or why not?

29. How many years have you worked at this paper?

30. ……..as a newspaper reporter?

31. …….in the journalism field?

32. What is your age?

33. Which statement best describes your race or ethnic background?

_____ African American _____White

_____Asian American _____Other:

Specify_____

_____Hispanic/Latino

_____Native American

34. Do you have anything else to add on the subject of mentoring that I neglected to ask?

Appendix B: In-depth Interview Questions

1. Would you paint a picture of your work environment for me? What is it like?

2. What was your work environment like without mentoring?

3. Can you describe your mentor or previous mentor?

4. What was your mentoring relationship like?

5. Can you think of a single, really important way in which your mentor really helped you as a journalist?

6. Why should a person care about mentoring?

7. What do you think reporters would want to see in a mentoring system?

8. What do you think are some of the problems associated with someone getting mentored?

9. Why should a newspaper care about mentoring?

10. What would be a good mentoring system for a newspaper?

Appendix C: Consent Letter

Dear Participant:

Researchers have focused on mentoring in businesses and educational contexts, while largely ignoring news organizations. Therefore, we are interested in a research study on the mentoring process and its impact on reporters in the newspaper industry. In order to examine mentoring, we are interested in conducting face-to-face interviews with newspaper reporters working at daily newspapers in Michigan. You are being asked to participate in a research study—that is the first of its kind—to explore mentoring and its impact on newspaper reporters.

While this study is not expected to yield any immediate benefit to the individual participant, it will increase our understanding of the mentoring experiences of journalists, and the study will include news organizations as an analytic category for studying mentoring. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation. The results of this study will be published in a dissertation and will be made available for you.

Your participation is voluntary but will be greatly appreciated. You may choose not to participate at all. You also may refuse to participate in certain aspects of the research or answer only certain questions. You also may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate, the interview should take about 45 minutes.

Your responses may be recorded. You will be asked for permission to tape record your interview. The taped recording will be used only to capture the accuracy of your response. After the research is completed, the taped recording will be destroyed. Should you decide to withdraw, any such tape recording and data with your response will be destroyed immediately. Your responses will be kept **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Data will be carefully stored and locked in the Journalism Department and will be accessible only by the principal and secondary investigators. Data will be kept for a period of one year after publication of the study and then will be destroyed. The information gathered from this survey will

be reported so that you will not be associated with the data. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by beginning the interview when contacted by telephone.

Should you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (517) 393-1789 or by email, thoma222@msu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Director of the Human Research Protection Program. He may be reached at (517) 355-2180 or by email at irb@ores.msu.edu.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in this study.

Signature _____

Date _____

Your additional signature below indicates your permission to be tape-recorded.

Signature _____

Date _____

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Cynthia E. Thomas
Doctoral Candidate
Michigan State University

Appendix D: Telephone Consent Script

Dear Participant:

You are being asked to participate in a Michigan State University research study—that is the first of its kind—to explore mentoring and its impact on newspaper reporters. I am a doctoral student who is interested in exploring the concept of mentoring and its usage by newspaper reporters. Researchers have focused on mentoring in businesses and educational contexts, while largely ignoring news organizations. Therefore, we are interested in a telephone interview with reporters and their use of mentoring in the newspaper industry at Michigan daily newspapers. Would you be interested in answering some questions about your experience with mentoring?

[if no]

Thank you for time.

[if yes]

While this study is not expected to yield any immediate benefit to the individual participant, it will increase our understanding of the mentoring experiences of journalists, and the study will include news organizations as an analytic category for studying mentoring. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation. The results of this study will be published in a dissertation and will be made available for you.

Your participation is voluntary but will be greatly appreciated. You may choose not to participate at all. You also may refuse to participate in certain aspects of the research or answer only certain questions. You also may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If you choose to participate, the interview should take about 30 minutes.

Your responses may be recorded. You will be asked for permission to tape record your interview. The taped recording will be used only to capture the accuracy of your response. After the research is completed, the taped recording will be destroyed. Should you decide to withdraw, any such tape recording and data with your

response will be destroyed immediately. Your responses will be kept **STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL** and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Data will be carefully stored and locked in the Journalism Department and will be accessible only by the principal and secondary investigators. Data will be kept on file for a period of one year after publication of the study and then will be destroyed. The information gathered from this survey will be reported so that you will not be associated with the data. You indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by beginning the interview with this preliminary telephone call.

Should you have any questions regarding this research, please feel free to contact me by telephone at (517) 393-1789 or by email, thoma222@msu.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, contact Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Director of the Human Research Protection Program. He may be reached at (517) 355-2180 or by email at irb@ores.msu.edu.

Do we have permission to tape-record your response?

Yes_____

No_____

Date _____

Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

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