

## Mentoring and Human Resource Development: Where We Are and Where We Need to Go

Sarah A. Hezlett  
Sharon K. Gibson

**The problem and the solution.** Although mentoring theory, research, and practice have begun to mature, relatively few articles on mentoring have appeared in the human resource development (HRD) literature. The purpose of this article is to examine past theory, research, and practice on mentoring through the lens of HRD, in order to identify gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD professionals. After reviewing core aspects of mentoring central to all domains of HRD, the authors summarize key issues that have been studied regarding mentoring and career development, organization development, and training and development, proposing new directions for future research. The authors conclude with a research agenda that identifies where researchers need to go with mentoring research and HRD to better inform the practice of mentoring in organizations.

**Keywords:** *mentoring; human resource development; literature review; career; training; organization development*

A growing body of academic and practitioner literature supports the popular perception that mentoring has considerable value to both individuals and organizations. Mentoring involves an intense, one-on-one relationship in which an experienced, senior person (i.e., a mentor) provides assistance to a less experienced, more junior colleague (i.e., a protégé or mentee) in order to enhance the latter's professional and personal development (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Russell & Adams, 1997). Books and articles on mentoring began appearing in the scholarly and practitioner press in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Kram, 1985; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Missirian, 1982; Shapiro, Haseltine, & Rowe, 1978; Roche, 1979). Subsequently, interest in mentoring has

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steadily increased. Informal mentoring relationships, which evolve naturally between two people, have been identified and studied in diverse settings, including a variety of industries, occupations, educational institutions, and public agencies. Formal mentoring relationships, which are arranged or facilitated by parties other than the mentor and protégé, have been implemented by organizations (Russell & Adams, 1997) to promote a number of important goals, including employee and student socialization, retention, and success. About one third of large companies in the United States are estimated to have formal mentoring programs (Axel, 1999). Twice that many report that informal mentoring is a development opportunity available to managers (Axel, 1999).

Given current trends in the workplace, such as placing greater responsibility on employees for managing their own careers, increasing need for continuous learning, and greater reliance on on-the-job development, it seems unlikely that mentoring will wane in significance soon. Moreover, the role of mentoring in fostering the development of adults is discussed as a component of a number of adult development theories (Bee & Bjorklund, 2004) and is noted to be an important means of facilitating learning in our society (Merriam & Cafarella, 1999). It is, therefore, not surprising that mentoring has been recommended as an essential tool for human resource development.

The recent publication of several reviews of research on mentoring (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Noe et al., 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003) highlight that our knowledge of mentoring is maturing. Noteworthy advances have been made in understanding the nature, process, and outcomes of mentoring relationships. However, the literature on mentoring is still fairly young (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003); many questions about mentoring remain poorly answered or have yet to be thoroughly investigated.

The purpose of this article is to examine what is currently known about mentoring and suggest directions for future theory, research, and practice on mentoring from the perspective of the discipline of human resource development (HRD). Although there are some exceptions (see, for examples, D'Abate, Eddy, & Tannenbaum, 2003; Hegstad, 1999; Hegstad & Wentling, 2004; Mullen, 1998), relatively few articles on mentoring have appeared in the HRD literature (Hegstad, 1999). By considering past and future theory, research, and practice on mentoring through the lens of HRD, we seek to identify gaps in what is known about mentoring that are relevant to HRD professionals.

Although many alternative definitions of HRD have been proposed (Swanson & Holton, 2001), we will use the domains of HRD defined by McLagan (1989) as our framework for this review. McLagan defined HRD as "the integrated use of training and development, career development and organization development to improve individual and organizational effec-

tiveness” (p. 7). We believe these three domains—career development, organization development, and training and development—effectively address the major application areas of HRD and are, therefore, an appropriate organizing schema for this review. However, we recognize that there may be overlap in these domains and have, in this review, attempted to identify those areas where the application of mentoring spans their boundaries. McLagan’s definition also identifies the improvement of individual and organizational effectiveness as the outcome of HRD. Consistent with this definition and with the broad contexts in which mentoring has been studied and practiced, we view HRD as being applied to a diverse array of organizational contexts including business, government, education, and community.

In this article, we begin with a discussion of the core aspects of mentoring relevant to all aspects of HRD and then review research and practice on mentoring for the HRD domains of career development, organization development, and training and development. We conclude by suggesting an agenda for future mentoring research that would benefit HRD professionals and discuss how the subsequent articles in this issue begin to address some of the gaps in what is known about mentoring within the context of HRD.

## Core Aspects of Mentoring

Four core issues relevant to research and practice on mentoring, regardless of which aspect of HRD one is contemplating, are (a) the definition and measurement of mentoring, (b) the dynamics involved in mentoring relationships, (c) understanding different types of mentoring relationships (e.g., formal vs. informal), and (d) the differentiation of mentoring from other workplace relationships. The current state of knowledge about each of these issues will be discussed next.

In her groundbreaking qualitative research, Kram (1985) identified two kinds of assistance mentors provide to their protégés. Career functions directly aid protégés’ career advancement and include challenging assignments, coaching, exposure, protection, and sponsorship. Psychosocial functions—which include acceptance and confirmation, counseling, friendship, and role modeling—enhance protégés’ sense of competence and identity. These mentoring functions have been a prominent method used by many researchers to define and assess mentoring.

Three well-known measures of multiple mentoring functions (Ragins, 1999) have been used in a number of studies and have well-established psychometric properties: the Mentoring Role Instrument (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990), the Mentoring Functions Scale (Noe, 1988), and the Mentoring Functions Questionnaire (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). Differences across the instruments highlight two areas of continued uncertainty regarding mentoring functions

(Wanberg et al., 2003). First, because of mixed evidence (Scandura & Williams, 2001; Tepper, Shaffer, & Tepper, 1996), it is unclear how many distinct mentoring functions there are. Some research suggests that Kram's (1985) original two mentoring functions are the appropriate way to characterize the assistance mentors provide (Noe, 1988). Other research supports the idea that role modeling, initially conceptualized as a facet of psychosocial mentoring, should be viewed as a third, separate mentoring function (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). Second, debate continues over which of the narrower mentoring functions are facets of psychosocial mentoring and which are facets of career mentoring. For example, coaching was initially identified by Kram as a facet of career mentoring. Consistent with diverging empirical evidence, this classification has been maintained in the development of some instruments (e.g., Ragins & McFarlin, 1990) but not others (Noe, 1988). Overall, there is widespread agreement that mentoring functions are an important component of mentoring relationships and that there at least two distinct mentoring functions (Wanberg et al., 2003). HRD professionals should consider the subtle differences across measures of mentoring when selecting instruments to use and interpreting their results.

A recently proposed model of formal mentoring suggests that mentoring functions are a necessary, but insufficient, representation of mentoring received by protégés. Wanberg and her colleagues (2003) proposed that mentoring functions are one aspect of the scope, or breadth, of mentoring provided. The number of subjects, or topics, that are discussed by mentors and protégés may be another important aspect of scope. Additional variables related to mentoring received include the frequency with which a mentor and protégé interact and the strength of influence the mentor has on the protégé. Further research is needed to determine to what extent the concepts of frequency, breadth of topics, and strength of influence aid our understanding of mentoring above and beyond mentoring functions.

Another emerging area of inquiry focuses on the dark side of mentoring. Although it has long been recognized that some mentoring relationships could be dysfunctional, only recently have the negative aspects of mentoring begun to be systematically studied. Through content analysis of experiences reported by 84 protégés in negative mentoring relationships, Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000) identified 15 types of negative mentoring experiences. Subsequent research confirmed the grouping of these experiences into five metathemes: *mismatch within dyad*, *distancing behavior*, *manipulative behavior*, *lack of mentor expertise*, and *general dysfunctionality* (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004). Initial findings indicate that these dimensions of negative mentoring have moderate to large (negative) associations with the positive, supportive aspects of mentoring (i.e., mentoring functions) but account for additional variance in protégé

outcomes, including intentions to leave the relationship, depressed mood, and job withdrawal (Eby et al., 2004). Some evidence suggests that certain negative experiences may be more prevalent or have greater impact in formal mentoring relationships than informal ones (Eby & Allen, 2002; Eby et al., 2004). Additional research on negative mentoring experiences, particularly on their antecedents and consequences, would help inform HRD professionals' efforts to maximize the benefits of mentoring.

A limited amount of research has examined the dynamics of mentoring relationships, including the "micro" processes through which mentors and protégés interact and the "macro" processes through which mentoring relationships evolve over time (Wanberg et al., 2003). For example, studies of "micro" processes have examined how protégés' use of ingratiation and influence tactics (Aryee, Wyatt, & Stone, 1996; Tepper, Brown, & Hunt, 1993) relate to mentoring functions. Mentoring functions also have been linked to mentor-protégé reciprocity (Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001), met expectations (Young & Perrewé, 2000), relationship closeness (Mullen & Noe, 1999), and interpersonal comfort (Allen, Day, & Lentz, 2005). One important implication of this research is that protégés actively shape their relationships with mentors; they are not simply passive recipients of mentors' aid (Wanberg et al., 2003). A second key implication is that gaining a better understanding of the interpersonal processes involved in mentoring relationships will help clarify the conditions under which mentoring relationships are maximally supportive and satisfying. This knowledge is likely to enhance HRD professionals' ability to help individuals and organizations improve mentoring relationships. Therefore, further research on interpersonal processes in mentoring relationships is encouraged. Attachment theory (Noe et al., 2002) and the dynamic process model of mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003) have been suggested as useful theoretical foundations for guiding such research.

With regard to the "macro" dynamics of mentoring, several models of the phases of informal mentoring relationships have been derived from interviews with mentors and/or protégés (Kram, 1985; Missirian, 1982). Although the models differ in some ways, they all suggest that mentoring relationships begin with an initiation phase during which few mentoring functions are provided, progress to more active phases where more mentoring functions are given, and end in a redefinition phase where fewer mentoring functions are offered (Wanberg et al., 2003). Two quantitative studies found support for the idea that mentoring functions are lower at the start of mentoring relationships and increase over time but found no evidence for a later diminishment of mentoring functions (Chao, 1997; Pollock, 1995). However, both studies suffered from methodological limitations that undermined the possibility of observing such decreases (Wanberg et al., 2003). Thus, although the exact phases of mentoring rela-

tionships remain poorly documented, it appears clear that mentoring functions change as such relationships unfold, at a minimum increasing from the early to middle phases. Several studies have found relationship duration is a key moderator affecting the relationships between mentoring antecedents and outcomes (Allen & Eby, 2003; Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). These dynamics make it critical for HRD professionals to consider the impact of relationship duration on their work and, ideally, to conduct longitudinal research (Wanberg et al., 2003). It also is important to note that these "macro" studies of the dynamics of mentoring relationships have focused on informal mentoring.

In general, relatively little research has been directed specifically toward understanding formal mentoring relationships. The majority of research on mentoring has not identified the origins of the mentoring relationships being examined (Wanberg et al., 2003). A number of scholars and practitioners have argued that formal and informal mentoring relationships differ in meaningful ways. For example, they may differ in terms of the structure surrounding them (e.g., having guidelines for how often to meet and topics to discuss), the motivation and skills of the mentors, and the willingness of mentors to visibly support their protégés (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Some, but not all (Allen & Eby, 2004), research has suggested that protégés in informal relationships receive more support and accrue more favorable career-related outcomes than their counterparts in formal relationships (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). However, when protégés who are equally satisfied with their mentoring relationships are compared, protégés in informal and formal mentoring relationships do not differ in terms of important career-related outcomes they experience, including career commitment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational self-esteem, promotion satisfaction, intentions to quit, and procedural justice (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000). These findings suggest that formal mentoring relationships have the potential to be as beneficial as informal relationships in terms of protégé outcomes, but they may not always deliver.

Developing and implementing a formal mentoring program involves making decisions about program objectives, policies, guidelines, and activities. Although a number of authors have offered advice or shared their experiences about running formal mentoring programs, very little research has evaluated how different program characteristics affect program effectiveness (Wanberg et al., 2003). Preliminary research has explored the role of voluntary versus mandatory participation, participants' input in the matching process, different program objectives, goal-setting, meeting frequency guidelines, and recognition for mentors (Wanberg et al., 2003). Initial findings suggest protégé choice of participation is unrelated to the perceived effectiveness of the program, but programs may be marginally more

effective when mentors participate voluntarily. Goal-setting and meeting frequency are associated with greater protégé satisfaction. Results regarding the matching process have been mixed, with some studies suggesting protégé input enhances protégé perceptions of the mentor and the relationship and others finding no relationship between participation and program success. Program objectives and mentor recognition have not been linked to perceived program effectiveness or protégé outcomes. These conclusions are quite tentative (Wanberg et al., 2003). To improve HRD practices, additional research is needed to determine what program characteristics and factors make for successful formal mentoring relationships. In executing this research, program effectiveness must be carefully conceptualized. Research to date has focused on the protégés' perspective, using measures of protégé satisfaction and outcomes. However, other indices of program effectiveness may be more appropriate, particularly if the objectives of the program are broader than enhancing individual career development.

Finally, there is a growing body of research that has focused on differentiating mentoring from other workplace relationships. Early work in this area described the dimensions on which mentoring differed from other supportive workplace relationships (Missirian, 1982; Shapiro et al., 1978). Later researchers examined the similarities and differences between leadership and mentoring (Scandura & Schreishiem, 1994; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Most recently, researchers have proposed that protégés hold multiple developmental relationships simultaneously and have called for research exploring a protégé's entire developmental network, which will likely include alternative forms of mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Questions remain as to the nature of and distinction between those relationships that are viewed as mentoring and those that serve other developmental purposes (D'Abate et al., 2003). Understanding this distinction is important to HRD's effective use and implementation of mentoring in organizations.

## Mentoring and Career Development

To date, more research on mentoring has been on issues related to career development than on the other major domains comprising HRD. One recent review of the business and psychological literature on mentoring employees identified more than 90 studies examining the relationship between mentoring and work- or career-related outcomes (Wanberg et al., 2003). More than 95% of these studies examined outcomes for protégés; only 13% investigated mentors' outcomes. Current understanding of the influence of mentoring on career development can be characterized as follows.

First, having a mentor and receiving more mentoring functions is associated with more favorable objective (e.g., compensation, promotions) and subjective outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, job satisfaction) for protégés.



A recent meta-analysis concluded, "The findings were generally supportive of the benefits associated with mentoring, but effect sizes associated with objective outcomes were small" (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004, p. 127). Second, despite the total amount of research that has been directed toward understanding the outcomes of mentoring for protégés, the number of studies examining a particular measure of mentoring (e.g., having a mentor, career mentoring functions) and a specific career outcome remains fairly small, often less than ten (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004). An important implication of this fact is that relatively little is known about individual or situational factors that consistently moderate the relationship between mentoring and protégé outcomes (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004). Third, firm causal conclusions about mentoring and protégés' career outcomes cannot be drawn (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). The majority of studies of mentoring have relied on cross-sectional, correlation designs. Although a number of these have attempted to statistically control for variables that offer alternate explanations for observed career outcomes (e.g., education, experience, gender), some of the potentially most powerful confounds (e.g., motivation, skills and abilities, work performance) have rarely been simultaneously included in such analyses (Wanberg et al., 2003). Few studies of mentoring have used experimental designs or even longitudinal designs (Allen, Eby, Poteet, et al., 2004; Wanberg et al., 2003). Finally, although much more limited in scope, research on the benefits of mentoring for mentors has yielded encouraging findings. Potential positive career-related outcomes associated with being a mentor may include developing a personal support network, receiving information and feedback from protégés, gaining satisfaction and pride from helping others, attaining recognition for developing others, increasing one's career satisfaction, and accelerating promotion rates (Allen, Poteet & Burroughs, 1997; Bozionelos, 2004; Johnson, Yust, & Fritchie, 2001; Mullen & Noe, 1999).

A related line of research has studied the role of individual characteristics in mentoring. Models of mentoring have incorporated both protégé and mentor characteristics as key antecedents of mentoring relationships as well as factors that may affect the outcomes of mentoring relationships (Hunt & Michael, 1983; Wanberg et al., 2003). In addition, the combination of protégés' and mentors' attributes—or dyad characteristics—are increasingly recognized as a potentially important influence on mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003).

Seeking to explain the glass ceiling, a number of researchers have studied how gender and race affect mentoring. From the protégé's perspective, key questions that have been investigated include (a) are women (or minorities) less likely than men (or Caucasians) to have a mentor? (b) do women (or minorities) receive the same kind and amount of mentoring functions as others? and (c) do women (or minorities) gain the same favorable outcomes



from mentoring as men (or Caucasians) (Wanberg et al., 2003)? The majority of research suggests that women and minorities are as likely as men and Caucasians to have mentors (Ragins, 1999; Wanberg et al., 2003), but inconsistent findings make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about relationships between protégés' gender or race and mentoring functions (Wanberg et al., 2003). Similarly, it is unclear whether female and minority protégés achieve the same career outcomes as their counterparts. There is some evidence that mentors' race and gender may be associated with differences in protégés' compensation (Wanberg et al., 2003). These findings underscore the importance of considering both the characteristics of mentors and protégés. Note that research on diversity and mentoring falls at the intersection of two domains of HRD: career development and organization development. An improved understanding of how diversity affects mentoring and the career-related benefits arising from mentoring would enable HRD professionals to more effectively use mentoring as a career development tool for all individuals, as well as more successfully deploy mentoring as an organization development initiative to achieve diversity-related objectives.

A number of other protégé and mentor attributes have received modest attention in the literature. Researchers have attempted to relate protégé attributes to their motivation to seek mentors, having a mentor, mentoring functions received, and the extent to which they are viewed as appealing candidates for potential mentors to work with (Wanberg et al., 2003). Research on mentors' attributes has examined the characteristics protégés look for in mentors, variables that relate to experienced employees' decision to serve as mentors, and the qualities associated with providing mentoring (Wanberg et al., 2003). Protégé and mentor attributes that have been examined include individual difference variables (e.g., personality traits, attitudes, and goal orientation), demographics (e.g., age, education), and career history variables (e.g., organizational tenure, management level) (Wanberg et al., 2003). Although a thorough review of the findings of this research is beyond the scope of this article, it is important for HRD professionals to be aware of this small but important body of research. Knowledge of how protégé and mentor attributes relate to mentoring will not only help in theory-building but enhance our ability to prepare individuals to be protégés. Similarly, an understanding of the role of mentors' attributes has the potential to help protégés find effective mentors, enable experienced employees to self-diagnose their readiness to serve as mentors, and permit HRD professionals to identify and train successful mentors (Wanberg et al., 2003).

It is interesting that the examination of the role of individual characteristics in mentoring relationships brings us to the question: How does career development affect mentoring? In essence, research linking individuals'

past work or career experiences to their current or future mentoring experiences addresses this question. Preliminary findings from the modest number of studies on this topic indicate past experience in mentoring relationships may be one of the key career experiences that helps individuals prepare to be a mentor (Wanberg et al., 2003). Some, but not all, studies have found that individuals who have been a protégé, a mentor, or both have more optimistic perceptions of the costs of being a mentor and greater intentions to mentor others (Allen, Poteet, Russell, & Dobbins, 1997; Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1999). In addition, employees who have been protégés are more likely to serve as a mentor (Broadbridge, 1999; Fagan & Walter, 1982) and may provide more career mentoring functions (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997) than those who have not. Additional research scrutinizing what specific experiences as a protégé or mentor, as well as other career experiences, are associated with being a successful mentor will be of considerable value to HRD professionals responsible for identifying employees likely to excel as informal or formal mentors.

### **Mentoring and Organization Development**

Although, as noted earlier, there have been a substantial number of studies on mentoring outcomes, most have focused on protégé outcomes versus those that might accrue to mentors or the organization. Studies examining organizational outcomes have mostly been at the individual level of analysis and have been derived from the research on protégé and mentor outcomes. There has been relatively little attention paid to mentoring outcomes at the organizational or aggregate level of analysis (Wanberg et al., 2003). Three major kinds of possible organizational outcomes of mentoring that have been suggested include developing human resources (e.g., improved motivation, job performance, retention, and succession planning), managing organizational culture (e.g., strengthening or changing culture), and improving organizational communication (Wilson & Elman, 1990; Singh, Bains, & Vinnicombe, 2002; Wanberg et al., 2003).

The integration of mentoring with other organizational initiatives is of importance to HRD professionals, in terms of ensuring strategic alignment of programs and practices. A recent study in the HRD literature on formal mentoring in *Fortune* 500 companies found that the majority of mentoring programs reviewed, although rolled-out as individual programs, were designed to support other HRD initiatives such as career development or management training (Hegstad & Wentling, 2004). These authors recommended that mentoring be “considered a process (vs. a program) and built into organizational culture” (p. 442). Furthermore, interviews with executives suggest that mentoring networks can assist protégés in adapting to and

succeeding in a rapidly changing workplace that is characterized by frequently changing organizational structures and boundary-less careers (de Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, 2003). Simply put, "mentoring has become an effective means for coping with organizational change" (de Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, p. 81).

However, measuring the impact of mentoring programs is increasingly difficult, especially those that have such goals as fostering emotional intelligence and the transfer of corporate culture. Even when retention, which was the most frequently cited purpose of formal mentoring programs could be tracked (for example, by reviewing turnover rates), this often was not accomplished (Hegstad & Wentling, 2004). The integration of evaluation strategies as part of action research and other organization development practices of HRD professionals would significantly enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of mentoring initiatives in organizations. As the impact of development on organizational outcomes is an area of major concern to HRD, it would be advisable for HRD professionals to turn their attention to the measurement of these organizational outcomes in future mentoring research.

In addition, Gibson (2004a, 2004b) has suggested that mentoring for women in the higher education context should be considered as a critical component of campus climate initiatives to assist women in gaining access to information networks and the organizational systems that are required for success and from which they may be excluded. Issues of access to mentoring for women and persons of color noted earlier (see previous section on Mentoring and Career Development) need to be addressed by HRD professionals who are concerned with equity or affirmative action issues in organizations. In this context, mentoring could be used as a means to support organizational cultural initiatives that are designed to address systemic issues of diversity in a variety of organizations, including private corporations, public agencies, and nonprofit groups. Mentoring programs for faculty and students may be particularly valuable in promoting the diversity of academic institutions and of occupations requiring higher education for entry.

There is some indication that the source of the mentoring relationship may influence organizational outcomes. In one study comparing protégé outcomes, supervisor and coworkers relationships were found to be related to organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover intent, whereas formal mentoring relationships were not (Raabe & Beehr, 2003). If affecting organizational outcomes is the goal, then choosing supervisors or coworkers as mentors may be desirable as they are likely to be in close contact with the protégé and invest more time in the relationship.

It is useful to reverse the relationship between mentoring and organization development and ask, "How can organization development support or enhance the provision of mentoring in organizations?" Noe et al. (2002)

asserted that the effectiveness of mentoring should be viewed within the broader context of various organizational factors such as structure and culture; however, they noted that the influence of these contextual factors has seldom been addressed in the mentoring research. Wanberg and colleagues (2003) identified that organizational context, which is comprised of such characteristics as organizational culture, the support for or value placed on the mentoring program, and access to broader developmental networks and opportunities, is likely to have an impact on mentoring program outcomes. In a survey of organizational practices with respect to formal developmental relationships, Douglas and McCauley (1999) found that the use of formal developmental relationships as a management development strategy was more prevalent among those organizations that employed more individuals and had larger sales volumes. This may suggest that the size of the organization may have an impact on whether mentoring is available to employees as a developmental option in organizations. Similarly, we would posit that those work environments that view themselves as learning organizations (Senge, 1990) and espouse strong values and beliefs about the importance of ongoing learning and development as organizational objectives would be more likely to sponsor mentoring to support this developmental orientation. Performance review criteria and reward systems that include HRD objectives, such as learning and development, may help promote participation in mentoring relationships (Hegstad, 1999). These and other areas of organizational research are needed to more fully explore the relationship between mentoring and organizational outcomes important to HRD professionals such as performance, learning organizations, and retention, as well as the corresponding impact of cultural variables on the provision of mentoring.

## Mentoring and Training and Development

Relatively little research has focused on how mentoring is related to learning in organizations (Allen & Eby, 2003). Given that mentoring relationships are primarily directed toward professional development and that dictionary definitions of *mentor* often include the term *teacher*, this lack of attention is surprising. Recent research and theory-building efforts highlight the potential importance of the role of learning in mentoring relationships. The preliminary evidence suggests that mentors and protégés see learning as an important objective and outcome of their relationships (Singh et al., 2002). Protégé learning has been linked positively with receiving support from a mentor (Eby et al., 2004) and appears to mediate subsequent positive, work-related outcomes experienced by protégés (Lankau & Scanlura, 2002). In contrast, decreased protégé learning appears to be associated with having negative experiences in mentoring relationships (Eby et al., 2004). In proposing a model of formal mentoring, Wanberg and colleagues

(2003) incorporated a taxonomy of learning outcomes (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993). They proposed that the relationship between mentoring received and more distal career outcomes (e.g., career satisfaction, promotions) would be partially mediated by cognitive, skill-based, and affective learning. Although this model needs to be tested, it seems probable that examining the relationships among training and mentoring are likely to be fruitful areas of future research. Key questions to address are (a) What do protégés learn from their mentors? (b) What do mentors learn from their protégés? and (c) How do protégés and mentors learn from each other?

Relatively little research related to these questions has been completed. Careful review of studies investigating the benefits of mentoring, along with research on the socialization of new hires, reveals some information about what protégés learn from their relationships with mentors. Consistent with the model proposed by Wanberg et al. (2003), initial evidence suggests protégés acquire knowledge (technical information, organizational knowledge), develop skills (technical, interpersonal, time management, self-organization), and engage in affective learning (self-confidence, attitude changes) (Hezlett, 2005). Developing a more concrete and precise understanding of what protégés learn from their mentors is a research priority. A well-supported taxonomy of the content of protégé learning is needed both to test theories of mentoring and to enable practitioners to make informed decisions about using mentoring as a developmental tool.

Somewhat less attention has been devoted to understanding mentors' learning experiences than protégés'. However, several studies suggest that learning is part of the experience of being a mentor. In interviews, 27 mentors from diverse organizations gave increasing their own learning as one of 13 reasons individuals chose to serve as mentors (Allen, Poteet, & Borroughs, 1997). In a quantitative study, Mullen and Noe (1999) obtained some support for the idea that mentors seek information from their protégés. Mentors participating in formal mentoring programs at two organizations in the United Kingdom reported that mentoring helped them gain insight into their development needs, refresh their skills, understand how others perceived them at work, and develop their management style (Hale, 2000). Finally, a survey of members of two professional organizations in the United States found that mentors who perceived themselves as more similar to their protégés' reported learning more from their relationships. Unexpectedly, multiple regression analyses revealed mentor-protégé gender similarity and type of relationship (formal vs. informal) were not significantly related to learning after other variables were controlled (Allen & Eby, 2003). These preliminary findings encourage future research on what mentors learn from their roles. Additional insights into the nature of mentors' learning may prove valuable for HRD professionals responsible for recruiting and fostering the development of potential mentors.

How mentors and protégés learn from each other has not been formally studied. One of the mentoring functions, role modeling, suggests that learning through observation may be a key part of mentoring relationships. Consistent with this, social learning theory has been proposed as the theoretical rationale for the positive outcomes observed in mentoring relationships (Zagumny, 1993). However, given the dynamic nature of mentoring relationship and the complexity of mentoring functions provided, it seems unlikely that observation is the only method by which mentors and protégés learn from each other. Given the richness of existing theories of learning and HRD professionals' expertise in this area, theory-building related to the process of learning in mentoring relationships seems to be a promising area for HRD.

Another direction for future work is examining how mentoring can be used to support or facilitate training and development practices. Prior research on transfer of training and participation in development activities has found that support from supervisors may be a critical success factor. Trainees who receive more supervisor support are more likely to apply what they have learned in training on the job. Similarly, supervisor support has consistently been associated with greater participation in on- and off-the-job developmental activities. Because many protégés identify their supervisors as their mentors, it seems probable that mentoring also will be positively correlated with transfer of training and participation in development activities.

Reversing the directionality of the relationship between training and mentoring yields another important question for HRD professionals to consider: How can training and development be used to support mentoring? Implementation plans for formal mentoring programs call for orientation sessions to help mentors understand expectations, goals, and roles. Protégé orientation is also recommended (Murray, 2001). However, the quite limited number of studies evaluating mentoring training have yielded ambiguous results. On the positive side, one quantitative study found new teachers whose assigned mentors participated in a 4-day orientation workshop focusing on how to mentor were better able to organize classroom routines, manage instruction, and control student behavior than a group of protégés whose mentors received no orientation or a shorter orientation covering policies and resources relevant to new teachers (Evertson & Smithey, 2000). Less favorable findings, suggesting that longer orientations are not always welcomed by mentors and protégés, were reported in a qualitative study of a mentoring program for new staff in the United Kingdom (Bard & Moore, 2000). A 1/2 day of training, rather than the original day-long workshop, was thought to be enough for mentors; an hour or 2 (instead of a 1/2 day) of training was recommended for protégés. Concerns were raised, particularly by protégés, that it was condescending to suggest that training is needed to

participate in mentoring. Clearly, additional research on the format and content of training for mentors and protégés is needed. Theory and research on training provide critical guidance for HRD professionals responsible for implementing formal mentoring programs, but more specific information from evaluations of mentoring training sessions would be valuable.

### Summary: Future Directions

In this introductory article, we have reviewed current perspectives on mentoring and HRD and identified directions for future research, theory, and practice from the perspective of the HRD domains of career development, organization development, and training and development. This review suggests we are at an exciting phase of work on mentoring. Noteworthy strides have been made on mentoring research, theory, and practice providing a solid foundation on which to build the additional work that is needed to fully understand and maximize the effective use of mentoring. A summary of “where we are” with respect to mentoring and HRD is provided in Table 1.

A research agenda on mentoring that would benefit HRD professionals includes topics related to the core aspects of mentoring, career development, organization development, and training and development. With regard to core aspects of mentoring, it would be helpful to test propositions that have expanded on mentoring functions as a means of evaluating mentoring provided (Wanberg et al., 2003), develop a better understanding of the day-to-day interpersonal processes involved in mentoring, and continue to study the impact of the duration of a mentoring relationship on its processes and outcomes. Specific to the form or type of relationship, further research is needed to identify program characteristics that enhance the quality and effectiveness of formal mentoring programs, compare the benefits of formal and informal mentoring programs, and further differentiate mentoring from other work relationships. Addressing these issues would contribute to theory-building and help improve HRD practices related to mentoring. Some of the most critical issues that remain to be addressed regarding mentoring and career development include more rigorously testing the causal impact of mentoring on protégés’ career outcomes, expanding on what is known about the outcomes of mentoring for mentors, and identifying factors that moderate the relationship between mentoring and career outcomes (e.g., gender, program characteristics). In general, examining the different ways in which individual and situational characteristics directly and indirectly affect the processes and outcomes of mentoring relationships will be extremely valuable in helping HRD professionals prepare individuals and programs so that mentoring flourishes. Turning to organization development, more research evaluating the impact of mentoring on organi-



**TABLE 1**  
**Mentoring and HRD: Where We Are**

HRD Domain	Current Knowledge and Research Gaps
Core aspects of mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The kinds of assistance mentors provide (i.e., mentoring functions) are widely used to define and assess mentoring relationships.</li> <li>· There are at least two distinct major mentoring functions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· career</li> <li>· psychosocial</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Debate continues over:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· whether there are more distinct mentoring functions.</li> <li>· the nature of the sub-facets comprising the major mentoring functions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>· There are several regularly used measures of mentoring functions.</li> <li>· A small body of research suggests negative mentoring experiences can be described by five themes.</li> <li>· Additional ways of characterizing mentoring relationships have been proposed (e.g., frequency of meeting, scope of topics discussed, strength of influence) but need additional testing.</li> <li>· Several promising studies suggest additional research on mentor-protégé interactions and the evolution of mentoring relationships would be valuable.</li> <li>· Limited research on formal mentoring suggests:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· it can, but does not always, lead to the same protégé outcomes as informal mentoring.</li> <li>· some program characteristics have been linked to program effectiveness, but others have not; more research is needed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Mentoring has not yet been thoroughly distinguished from other supportive workplace relationships.</li> </ul>
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· More research on mentoring has focused on career development than on other areas of HRD.</li> <li>· For protégés, mentoring is associated with small objective career outcomes and small to moderate subjective outcomes.</li> <li>· Evidence regarding the causal direction of these relationships is lacking; more experimental and longitudinal studies are recommended.</li> <li>· Research suggests that mentors also benefit from mentoring.</li> <li>· Women and minorities appear as likely as their male or Caucasian counterparts to have mentors; the impact of diversity on mentoring functions and protégé outcomes is less clear.</li> <li>· There is a small body of literature examining how protégé characteristics, mentor characteristics and dyad characteristics relate to mentoring.</li> <li>· Past experience in mentoring relationships tends to be related to being a mentor and providing mentoring.</li> </ul>

*(continued)*

TABLE 1 (continued)

HRD Domain	Current Knowledge and Research Gaps
Organization development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· There has been little attention paid to mentoring outcomes at the organizational level of analysis.</li> <li>· Three organizational outcomes of mentoring have been suggested:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Developing human resources</li> <li>· Managing organizational culture</li> <li>· Improving organizational communication</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Limited research suggests that mentoring can assist protégés in adapting to organizational change.</li> <li>· Measurement of the impact of formal mentoring programs on organizational outcomes such as retention is lacking.</li> <li>· Research findings support that mentoring can be a means to promote equity and diversity in organizations.</li> <li>· Preliminary evidence indicates that the source of the relationship may influence organizational outcomes.</li> <li>· Contextual factors influencing mentoring effectiveness have been identified but empirical research is lacking.</li> <li>· Additional research is needed to examine the relationship between organizational culture factors and the provision of mentoring.</li> </ul>
Training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Little research has focused on mentoring and learning.</li> <li>· Preliminary findings and recent theory-building suggest protégé learning may be a key construct mediating the relationship between mentoring functions and protégé outcomes.</li> <li>· Theory and past research suggest protégés may gain cognitive, skill-based, and affective learning from mentoring.</li> <li>· Initial research suggests mentors also learn from their protégés.</li> <li>· More conceptual and empirical work on how learning occurs in mentoring relationships is needed.</li> <li>· Additional research is needed to determine how the content and format of training for mentors and protégés influences the success of mentoring relationships.</li> </ul>

zational-level outcomes—such as organizational culture, communication, and change—would help clarify the possible objectives mentoring could be used to support. Similarly, research on what and how protégés and mentors learn would make it possible to more precisely deploy mentoring as a tool for learning in organizations. Finally, HRD practice related to mentoring would benefit from further examination of how career development, organization development, and training efforts can be used to enhance mentoring.

The remaining articles in this issue are a first step toward implementing this research agenda. They offer new research on mentoring as related to core aspects of mentoring, career development, organization development, and training and development and provide insight into the contextual factors that affect mentoring relationships in HRD. These articles and topics were specifically selected for their potential to lend new knowledge to assist in closing the gaps identified in this review or to provide an expanded perspective on mentoring as it applies to the discipline of HRD. To begin, Gibson's (2005) article addresses HRD's need to understand how the experience of mentoring is distinct from other supportive relationships in which protégés are engaged in order to foster effective developmental relationships in organizations. Her article falls at the interface between the domains of career development, organization development, and training and development as the distinction between mentoring and support is relevant to all three domains. Hezlett (2005) addresses the gap in the literature on what and how protégés learn from their mentors. This study on learning in mentoring relationship primarily spans the career development and training and development domains. Egan's (2005) research lends insight into the factors that are associated with successful formal mentoring programs, focusing on the impact of the similarity of protégés' and mentors' learning goal orientation on mentoring support and protégé outcomes. Implications of this research reside primarily in the training and development and organization development domains. Rosser's (2005) investigation of CEO's perspectives on mentoring relationships is most closely connected to the career development and organization development domains. Her study addresses a gap in the literature regarding the mentoring roles of those at the senior levels of an organization who are likely to participate over the course of their careers in developmental relationships as both mentor and protégé. The remaining three articles address the individual and contextual factors of protégé gender and race, virtual mentoring, and the ethics of mentoring that affect the field of HRD broadly in terms of application. Thomas, Hu, Gewin, Bingham, and Yanchus (2005) help close the gap in the research on access to mentoring through examining the roles of protégé race and gender in mentors' willingness to serve as a peer mentor. Bierema and Hill (2005) and McDonald and Hite (2005) provide much-needed insight into the contextual issues associated with virtual mentoring and ethics, which are important to our understanding of mentoring practices in HRD. The primary relationships between the various articles and the domains of HRD are depicted in Figure 1.

In combination, these articles well illustrate the important contributions that quantitative and qualitative research and integrative conceptual articles, specifically focused to the concerns and interests of HRD professionals, make to our understanding of mentoring in HRD. In addition, each arti-

### Mentoring and HRD: Organization of Issue

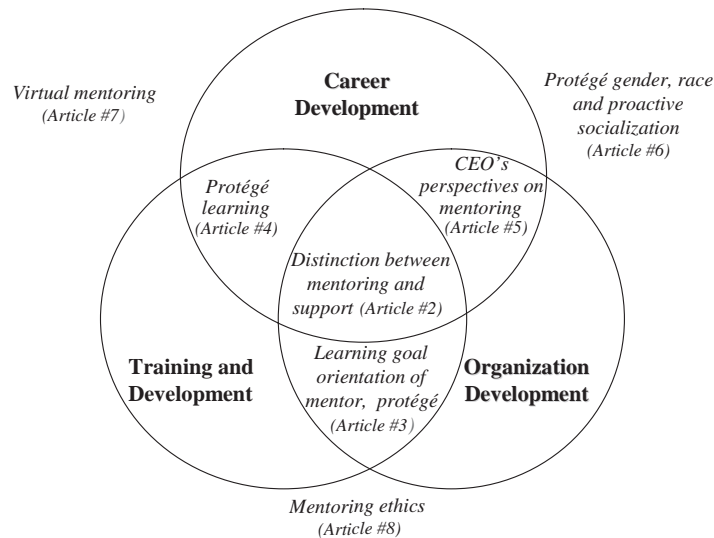


FIGURE 1: Mentoring Article Topics and the HRD Domains

cle includes a discussion of implications for HRD, providing the link between what we know and what we still need to know, in terms of effectively applying our knowledge of mentoring to improve HRD practice.

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**Sarah A. Hezlett** is an assistant professor of human resource education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Previously, she worked as a consultant, assisting a variety of businesses and not-for-profit organizations with training, individual and leadership development, and organization development initiatives. In addition to mentoring, her research focuses on workplace learning, including individual development and 360-degree feedback as well as understanding and predicting college student performance. She earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology at the University of Minnesota.

**Sharon K. Gibson** is an assistant professor of organization learning and development at the University of St. Thomas. She received her Ph.D. in adult education from the University of Minnesota. She holds an MSW degree and graduate certificate in labor and industrial relations from the University of Michigan and a BS from Cornell University. Her research interests focus on developmental relationships including mentoring and coaching; strategic HRD, OD, and HRM; and adult learning. She has more than 20 years of business, nonprofit, and consulting experience and has held various management positions in the human resources field.

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