

THE INFLUENCE OF BEING A MENTOR ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Recommendations for Curricular and Co-Curricular Experiences

Abstract

While there are well-established personal benefits to being a mentor, such as increased life satisfaction and job performance (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007), how mentors grow and develop requires exploration. We meet this need by presenting six key themes from two recent research studies related to the experiences that mentors perceived as contributing to their development. The growth of two leadership theories in particular were explored: generativity and Psychological Capital. Six themes emerged: (a) curricular training, (b) exposure to leadership outcomes, (c) being mentored by peers, (d) experiences with mentee, (e) reflection, and (f) observing a ripple effect. These themes offer insights on how curricular and co-curricular experiences might maximize leadership development of students and ground leadership interventions, such as mentoring, in theory and research.

Introduction

In the past two decades, the global economy has experienced massive change. As the information age has overtaken the industrial age, people have had to increasingly navigate unstable jobs and careers (Savickas, 2007). This rapid shift has created a renewed call for high-quality mentoring relationships (Bearman et al., 2007). As a widespread social intervention (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008) mentoring has been frequently employed to meet the needs of a changing landscape and foster positive relationships (Bearman et al., 2007; Males et al., 2017). However, the prevalence of mentoring relationships and programs is not necessarily an indicator of their effectiveness (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Therefore, it is critical that mentoring programs implement empirically-driven practices for the sake of both the mentors and the mentees (Freedman, 1999).

In higher education mentoring is recognized as a valuable tool for leadership development in both mentors and mentees (Campbell et al., 2012; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Hastings et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2009). The type of mentoring (e.g., peer mentoring versus faculty mentoring) and the individualized experiences within each mentoring relationship uniquely impact the particular leadership development outcomes, such as enhanced self-efficacy (Allen & Eby, 2010; Chopin et al., 2012; Day & Liu, 2019; Dugan & Komives, 2007, 2010; Hastings et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2009). The results of the two studies discussed in the current paper further previous research by suggesting that, among college students, being a mentor contributes to the growth of generativity and Psychological Capital (PsyCap), two constructs that have significant implications for leadership educators, scholars, and practitioners. Generativity is the most significant predictor of social responsibility (Rossi,

2001), which, along with leadership, is a key student learning outcome of higher education (AACU, 2007; Adelman et al., 2011; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2015; NASPA & ACPA, 2004, National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2016). Further, PsyCap is a predictor of student performance, student retention, and student leadership development (Gallaher & Lopez, 2016; Luthans et al., 2012; Wisner, 2011). Therefore, understanding how generativity and PsyCap grow and develop is particularly valuable for leadership educators, higher education student development personnel, and leadership development scholars.

In pursuit of aiding practitioners and contributing to scholarship, we present six key themes that emerged from two separate studies related to how being a mentor influences leadership development, specifically generativity and psychological capital. These themes offer insights on how curricular and co-curricular experiences might maximize leadership development and ground leadership interventions, such as mentoring, in theory and research.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Mentoring

Dating back thousands of years, the foundation of mentoring is Homer's epic poem, *Odyssey* (Savickas, 2007). While Odysseus prepared to leave for battle, he asked his friend, Mentor, to guide his son. Long after *Odyssey*, scholarly interest in mentoring started with Levinson's seminal work, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (Levinson et al., 1978). The findings from a study of lifespan human development among 40 men revealed the importance of mentoring relationships, stating that not having a mentor or having an ineffective mentor was the equivalent of poor parenting in childhood.

Scholars throughout the last decades of the 20th

century have devoted considerable effort and energy to examining mentoring and have legitimized it as a field of inquiry (Bearman et al., 2007). Notably, their findings showed that outstanding, successful, and prominent men tended to report having a mentor (Kanter, 1977; Roche, 1979). Outside of the workplace, Chickering (1969) identified student-faculty interactions as positively shaping student identity development, as well as academic success and intellectual growth. Additionally, being a mentee has significant benefits for at-risk youth, including enhanced resilience (Masten & Garmezy, 1985) and fewer conduct disorders (Rutter, 1987). Across these three main domains of mentoring (i.e., workplace, student-faculty, and youth; Bearman et al., 2007), the benefits of being a mentee include enhanced psychological health, achievement, and positive perceptions (Lockwood et al., 2007). Mentors also benefit from mentoring (Bass, 1990; Newby & Corner, 1997), showing higher levels of personal fulfillment (Lockwood et al., 2007), life satisfaction, and job performance (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007).

Despite five decades of scholarly work, there has not been consensus around one definition of mentoring (Burke, 1984). However, Eby and Allen (2008) discuss four attributes common among definitions of mentoring: (a) mentoring is relationship between a person with more experience and a person with less experience; (b) although the mentoring relationship is often reciprocal, the mentoring pair focuses on growth in the mentee; (c) mentoring relationships are ever-changing; (d) mentors are different from other notable relationships, such as coaches and teachers. In the current paper, we define mentoring as a developmental process existing in the relationship between a more-experienced individual and a less-experienced individual with the purpose of development in the mentee (Bearman et al., 2007; Eby & Allen, 2008).

Mentoring for Leadership Development

Mentoring and leadership development literature has evolved from a focus on skill development for specific contexts (Kram, 1998) to include psychosocial support, personal development and leadership capacity (Campbell et al., 2012; Lankau & Scandura, 2002; Nora & Crisp, 2007; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Allen and Poteet's (1999) qualitative study explored mentors in five diverse organizations and found from the mentor's perspective that listening and communications skills, alongside patience and goal-setting, were the most helpful characteristics to effective mentoring for leadership development. Similarly, a review of leadership development practices over two decades found emotional intelligence and the mentor's emotional resonance with the mentee as essential for effective leadership development (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2009). Multiple studies demonstrate that mentors take on several roles when mentoring for leadership development: motivator, coach, tutor, role model, & sponsor (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018; Dzikowski, 2013; Jacobi, 1991; Komives et al., 2005; Moerer, 2005; Nora & Crisp, 2007). Specifically, Salansky (2010) found mentees in leadership development more responsive to mentors who initiated the relationship and emphasized coaching (i.e., empowering mentors to excel as they align goals, beliefs, and actions) than mentors who ensured their mentee followed the program.

Contextually, mentoring plays a significant role in leadership development, both in the work-place and in higher education (Campbell et al., 2012; Day, 2000; Dzikowski, 2013; Hastings et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2005; Komives & Collins-Shapiro, 2009; Lin et al., 2016; Parker et al., 2008; Scott, 1992; Thompson, 2006). Workplace mentoring to develop leaders is rooted in apprenticeships with well-documented results in research and practice (Middlebooks & Haberkorn, 2009). Colleges and universities use formal and informal mentoring programs for leadership development and have documented positive results (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Eby et al., 2008; Nora & Crisp, 2007; Wisner, 2011), including

personal growth, skill development, generativity, and an increased desire to invest in others (Hastings et al., 2015; Lin et al., 2016; Moerer, 2005; Sunderman, 2020; Walters & Kanak, 2016). A few studies have focused on the type of mentor, e.g. faculty mentor vs. peer mentor, when measuring the impact of mentoring on the leadership development of college students (Campbell et al., 2012; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Komives et al., 2005; Priest & Donley, 2014).

While most research has focused on the leader development of the mentee, a few studies have explored the use of mentoring relationships to develop the mentor's leadership capacities, especially among college students (Campbell, et al., 2012; Dugan & Komives, 2010; Hastings et al., 2015; Komives et al., 2005). Hastings et al. (2015) found mentors demonstrated higher generativity levels than other college students. Further, multiple studies have demonstrated that mentors experience personal growth and skill development consistent with leadership development (Kim, 2007; Lin et al., 2016; Walters & Kanak, 2016). Yet, researchers continue to call for more research on how mentoring relationships impact the mentor (Allen & Eby, 2010; Hastings et al., 2015; Lockwood et al., 2010; Ramaswami & Dreher, 2010;). The current paper contributes to this call by presenting findings from two recent research studies related to the experiences that mentors perceived as contributing to their development. Two leadership theories in particular were explored: (a) generativity and (b) Psychological Capital. Before discussing the methods and results, we present an overview of both theories.

Generativity

Originally conceptualized by Erik Erikson as a stage of psychosocial development (Wakefield, 1998; Kotre, 1984), generativity is defined as "primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, 1963, p. 267). Individuals who embrace generativity, often experienced in parenthood (Erikson, 1964; McAdams, 2001), teaching (Kotre, 1984), mentoring (Azarow et al., 2003) and leadership (Huta & Zuroff, 2007), have

demonstrated increased life satisfaction (Grossbaum & Bates, 2002; Huta & Zuroff, 2007) and positive affectivity (Ackerman et al., 2000; Huta & Zuroff, 2007; McAdams & Logan, 2004). Further, generativity has been identified as the strongest predictor of social responsibility (Rossi, 2001) and a significant predictor of socially responsible leadership (Hastings & Sunderman, 2019), a student learning outcome of higher education (Dreschsler et al., 2011; NASPA & ACPA, 2004).

While originally discussed as a midlife construct (Erikson, 1950, 1963), generativity has increasingly been studied at younger ages. Notably, generativity has been identified as an aspect of moral concern in emerging adulthood (Lawford et al., 2005). Furthermore, Hastings et al. (2015) found that college student leaders who mentor had significantly higher generativity than their peers. Then, Sunderman and Hastings (2019) discovered that college student leaders who mentor experienced significant growth in generative concern over one year. Finally, the Leadership Identity Development Model posits generativity as the fifth of six stages of leadership identity development for college students in which participants began to mentor future leaders (Komives et al., 2005; Komives et al., 2006; Komives, 2011). While being a mentor has been associated with generativity, how does the experience of being a mentor encourage generativity development?

Psychological Capital

The roots of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) emerged from the call to reorient psychology towards understanding and building positive qualities (Fowler & Seligman, 1999). This call encouraged researchers to focus on psychological resources that make a positive impact on individuals and organizations (McElravy, 2014), such as hope (Snyder, 2002) and optimism (Seligman, 1998). One area of research resulting from this positive psychology focus is Positive Organizational Behavior (POB; Luthans, 2002a). POB research resulted in Luthans and Youssef (2004) coining the phrase PsyCap, which included four psychological resources: hope, efficacy,

resilience, and optimism (HERO) (Youssef-Morgan & Luthans, 2013). Quantitative empirical research has demonstrated the validity of PsyCap as a higher-order construct that shares commonalities with the unique characteristics of these four psychological resources (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

Multiple strains of research on PsyCap have documented its positive benefits in numerous spheres (Newman et al., 2014), including employee attitudes, behaviors, and productivity (Avey et al., 2011), psychological well-being (Avey et al., 2010), and student performance, student retention, and student leadership development (Gallaher & Lopez, 2016; Luthans et al., 2012; Wisner, 2011). Yet, how PsyCap develops and the mechanisms by which it grows remain largely unexplored (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Newman et al.'s (2014) meta-review of PsyCap research included a call for more studies to test and examine how PsyCap works. This call included qualitative studies that explore a deeper understanding of how cognitive appraisals work within reciprocal relationships to promote hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans, & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Research confirms PsyCap is developable, so how might the developmental interaction of mentoring encourage the PsyCap growth?

Methods

While there are well-established personal benefits to being a mentor, such as increased life satisfaction and job performance (Ramaswami & Dreher, 2007), how mentors grow and develop requires further exploration. The purpose of the current paper was to present the findings of how mentors grow from two separate qualitative studies. Study One explored how mentoring impacted mentors' perceptions of growth in generativity, while Study Two explored how mentoring influenced mentors' perceptions of growth in PsyCap.

Both Study One and Study Two used a qualitative approach and sought to understand how the

mentors interpreted their experiences and the meanings they gave them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The studies conducted a transcendental (i.e., descriptive) phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), exploring the essence of the shared mentoring experience in order to describe the phenomena of mentors' perceptions of growth in generativity and PsyCap. In Study One this approach sought to fill a gap in the literature as a qualitative investigation of generativity development among college student leaders who mentor, thus informing the literature on antecedents of generativity (McAdams, 2001) and outcomes associated with long-term mentoring relationships (Aryee et al., 1996; Olian et al., 1993). In Study Two this approach was utilized to answer the call for more qualitative research that explores how PsyCap develops and the mechanisms by which it grows (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

The context for both studies was a leadership mentoring program (LMP) at a large, midwestern university. The LMP selects and trains college student leaders to mentor K – 12 students who have been identified by their schools as having exceptional leadership talent and potential. College student leaders are selected during their freshman year and mentor the same K – 12 student leader each week for three years. The positive strengths-based leadership program includes elements associated with growth-based mentoring programs (Allen, 2003; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Eby et al., 2008; Kram, 1988; Krueger et al., 1992; Miller, 2002; Roberts, 2000): (a) mutual growth of mentor and mentee, (b) emotional support built on empathetic listening and feedback, (c) role-modeling, and (d) degree and/or career support. This kind of mentoring and leadership development environment is fertile soil for exploring how mentors grow.

All participants in Study One were seniors in the LMP and were in their third year of mentoring. Participants in Study Two were in either their second or third year of mentoring in the LMP and were randomly selected from the mentors that volunteered for the study. The mentors' length of time in the LMP ensured enough experience with the phenomena to elucidate specific

or particular elements of growth in generativity and PsyCap, including how they grew as mentors, the focus of the current paper. Researchers collected data via one-on-one semi-structured interviews with each participant because the extended interview is the primary data collection method in transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). The questions were general, open-ended, and focused both on the mentor's experience with and perceptions of growth in generativity and PsyCap. During the interviews the researchers each took notes on their thoughts and observations. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and participants were given the opportunity to review the transcript. Study One and Study Two received IRB approval prior to data collection.

The data analysis in both studies began with reviewing interview memos and coding completed interview transcripts. Following the process for descriptive phenomenology outlined by Moustakas (1994), there were three steps to data analysis: (1) phenomenological reduction via horizontalization and clustering significant statements into themes, (2) imaginative variation that produced a textural (what) and structural (how) description, and (3) a synthesis of meanings and "intuitive integration" of the descriptions into a composite statement on the essence of the phenomenon. For this paper, we concentrated on the structural descriptions and how being a leadership mentor impacted mentors' perceptions of their growth.

Results

Six themes emerged from the two research studies relevant to how being a mentor influenced students' development (see Figure 1). Two themes were found in Study One, two themes were found in Study Two, and two themes were found in both studies. This section details each theme and presents evidence from the interviews with participants.

Theme 1: Curricular Training

Within Study One a leadership class, "LEAD 111,"

an in vivo code and pseudonym, emerged as a common thread that facilitated generativity development. In the LMP, students have the opportunity to take an interpersonal skills and leadership development class their first year as a mentor. Four participants discussed the profound influence the leadership class had on their generativity development. Chelsea, who mentored a high school student, succinctly stated: “[LEAD 111] was a huge help...having the information lectured upon and then at the same time being able

to apply it to a relationship.” Paralleling Chelsea, Tyler, who mentored an elementary school student, commented, “Combining [LEAD 111] with [the LMP], it’s sort of like getting a job out of school with a degree. You have all this knowledge and you get to apply it. And more importantly, that gives you the experience that you need to apply it well.” Overall participants perceived “LEAD 111,” a curricular experience, to be paramount to their growth and success in the co-curricular activity of being a leadership mentor.

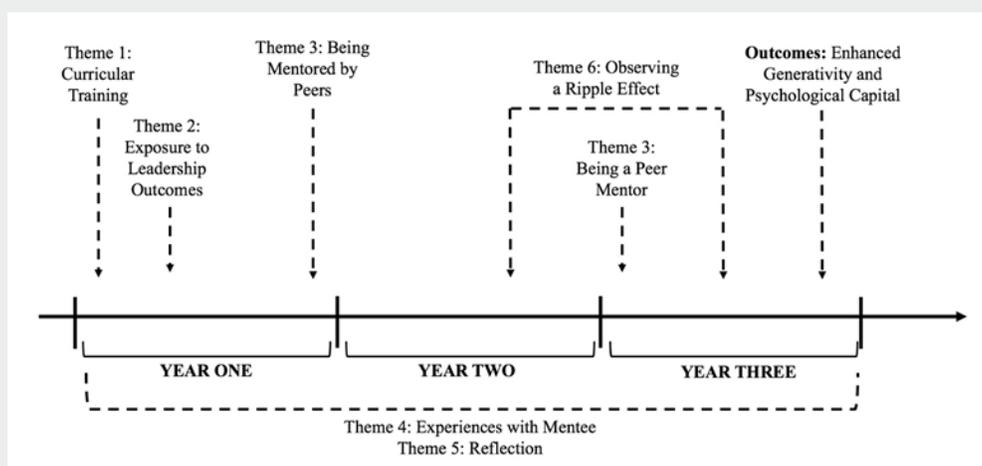


Figure 1. Timeline of Themes and Outcomes

Note. This is a timeline of when participants experienced the events and interactions that fueled their development. Themes four and five ran the entire length of the three-year mentoring

Theme 2: Exposure to Leadership Theories and Outcomes

In LEAD 111 students are exposed to the theory of generativity. Five participants pointed towards this (i.e., “knowing what to call [generativity]”) as being important to their growth. Demi, who mentored a tenth-grade student, articulated the role that learning about generativity played in her approach to the next generation: “The idea of generativity is really awesome because it really puts into words what it means to care for those younger than you...having that awareness really grew my desire to like want

to pour into that.” Tyler, echoing Demi, compared learning about generativity to the worldview expansion that comes with language acquisition:

I had never heard of generativity. And it’s easier to change things or work with things that you finally know about. The Germans have lots of words for different things that we don’t have a word for in English but once you learn about them in English, you start realizing them and you start being able to change and affect them a lot more. Kind of like it’s hard to really have a

relationship with someone without knowing their name, it's hard to get better at something if you don't know what to call it.

Concisely, Chelsea stated, "I didn't know what generativity was, so I wasn't as purposeful in my actions." In sum, participants in Study One viewed both curricular training (Theme One) and being exposed to the leadership outcomes intended to be developed through the LMP (Theme Two) as critical to their growth in generativity.

Theme 3: Peer Mentoring

Participants in both Study One and Study Two discussed how having meaningful peer relationships through the LMP developed their generativity and Psychological Capital (PsyCap). In Study One four participants highlighted that being an upperclassman in the LMP positively influenced their generativity development. All four of these participants were serving as student staff members for the LMP during the time of their interview. The role of a student staff member is to shepherd the health and well-being of a small group of mentoring relationships, essentially mentoring the leadership mentors. When asked to explain her perception of the connection between generativity and years spent mentoring, Jana, who mentored a high school student, commented, "The first year it was more I was reaching out to [older members], and the next two years of having an actual leadership position, I was the one being reached out to." Emily, who also mentored a high school student, specifically noted the time and effort she has invested during her third and final year in the LMP toward young students: "[I've been] spending a lot of time [being a student staff member] in hopes of a better future for [the LMP]."

While participants in Study One discussed the benefits of being a peer mentor to others related to their generativity development, participants in Study Two highlighted the importance of being mentored by their peers related to their growth in PsyCap. All 10 mentors discussed how the telling and hearing of stories allowed them to reflect on their own progress

in applying skills to their mentoring relationship and be affirmed in this growth. Several mentors spoke of the advice and feedback they received and how much they learned from groups of peers reflecting, evaluating, and asking questions. For example, Karl, a senior who mentored a middle school student for three years, noted his insights growth occurred from peers "that will ask you questions like follow up questions, to kind of challenge your thinking...that group of people that will do kind of go deep and really are invested in your relationship as well." The group 'therapy-like' sessions allowed them to see strengths and weaknesses and gain new perspectives and ideas from the feedback and encouragement of others.

Four of the students mentioned that these meetings were difficult at first because they would hear great stories from upperclassmen and feel frustration over "their stilted conversations and lack of meaningful interaction." Yet, all four talked about how they applied what they heard to their mentoring relationship, and over time this increased their confidence and growth. For example, Megan, a senior who mentored a middle school student, recalled, "I'll never forget the first couple of weeks that I was sitting in [small group] meetings and everyone was having all these great stories and I was just like, oh... why don't I have one? Why is this not there?" For Megan, the lesson was resilience, as she later realized "you have to build a firm foundation before you can build a house." Other mentors recalled different elements in the peer mentor meetings. Julie, a senior who mentored a high school student for three years, recalled "when the younger [mentors] ask for advice or questions that's when I am so much more aware of what we have been through and the steps that I had to take to get to the relationship that my mentee and I have." In sum, participants perceived that being a peer mentor to others within the LMP fueled their growth in generativity, while being mentored by peers developed their PsyCap.

Theme 4: Experiences with Mentee

In Study Two all the mentors mentioned various elements of the mentoring experience, especially

the discussions and activities with their mentee, as contributing to their PsyCap development. The mentor-mentee time was filled with 'aha' moments when the 'light' came on for the mentor. Four mentors discussed the challenges in starting the mentor-mentee relationship and the self-learning that occurred during these moments. Three mentors stressed the importance of time and patience because perceptions of growth occurred after the mentor-mentee relationship was established. Meagan, a senior mentor who invested in a middle school student, recalled a time her mentee was struggling. "That is when I kind of had my first Aha moment. She's kind of leaning on me for support. She's leaning on me for guidance... And she finally started to open up to me and... trust me." As a result, their conversations deepened and her mentee shared more challenges and struggles. These meaningful interactions gave Meagan more awareness of her empathy and listening skills.

Tori, also a senior who mentored for three years, talked about 'stimulus moments' where she and the mentee went out of their comfort zone through a service project or experience. Tori summed up why these experiences became teachable moments for her to see some of her own strengths and weaknesses, "so I think those have been the most successful just because I'm able to observe my [mentee's] behavior and situations and see how she handles those." A few of the mentors discussed the hard work of planning the activities for the mentor-mentee time together. Lisa, a senior who mentored a middle school student, spoke to this directly:

I never thought about how much specific thought goes into trying to mentor. I thought it sort of came naturally, like once you are in a one on one relationship with someone, you became a mentor. But I kind of realized that it's not so easy. It takes time and showing up on time for that person and it takes care and it takes effort. You have to really think about what the mentee needs from this relationship? How can I actually challenge them in a

useful way?

Lisa also summed up her growth from this hard work: "I don't think I ever realized how much mentoring can affect the mentor... how much it influenced my confidence in myself." Most of the mentors spoke of working through challenges, making goals and evaluating progress with their mentee. For example, Kathy noted,

I think getting to be in a relationship with [my mentee], we set goals at the beginning of the semester. I think we've grown as a pair and actually committing to these goals...I would challenge her to stick to goals and then it's like, oh...I also can make goals for myself and we can keep each other accountable. So, I think that relationship has really given me a lot of accountability, in goal setting.

In sum, the mentors found themselves growing through regular activities with their mentee, growing both in the planning of appointments and in the conversations and experiences they shared together.

Theme 5: Reflection

In Study Two another context of growth in PsyCap involved mentors' personal reflection. All 10 mentors spoke about spending time to self-reflect with questions of what went well, lessons learned, and ways to improve. Some, like Meagan, described how they "rehashed the whole experience in their brain." Others discussed journaling and the growth they wrote about, and some talked about how they reflected and processed with a close friend. Laurie, a senior mentor and student staff member, noted, "Once I can put it into words, either with a friend or on paper, it helps me to know, wow, I can see growth." Similarly, Kathy, also a senior, discussed the process of comparing old and more recent journal entries, and how this helped her recognize "the difference in who I was three months ago versus who I am now." Meagan found reflection awakened her to the need of applying to her own life the concepts she so easily put into words to her mentee. She sensed more self-

awareness and growth as she communicated these insights to her mentee.

Several mentors discussed the challenge of applying to their life what they had encouraged their mentee to do. The mentors remembered and recalled their own advice as they reflected on the experience, and then had to fight hard to apply it to themselves. For Peter and Megan, seniors who both mentored middle school students, these fights became moments of self-awareness and growth. The seniors especially voiced the lack of conscious growth in the week-to-week moments of the mentoring experience, and talked about the importance and benefit of 'looking back' and reflecting, both alone and with other mentors, in order to see progress and growth over time. As Karl expressed, "I don't think it's like an epiphany, it's more so gradual, taking moments where you actually really soak it all in and think of what you've gained from this experience." The reflection process, though unique for each mentor, included variations of remembering, pondering, writing, and talking with others, as mentors applied concepts to their own life that they previously discussed with their mentee.

Theme 6: Observing a Ripple Effect

Participants in both Study One and Study Two discussed the benefits of observing the ripple effect of their mentoring relationships, which encouraged their own growth in generativity. In Study One six participants expressed that the leadership mentoring relationship led to "ripple effect" that extended beyond the mentoring dyad. Four participants specifically articulated that their investment in their leadership mentee led their mentee to increasingly invest in others. Demi, in describing her leadership mentee, commented, "Ever since we brought [generativity] up, she does a great job of investing in girls on her gymnastics team and girls younger than her. And that's really inspiring to me. I'm just like '...I want to keep doing this because I'm literally watching it happen.'" Similarly, Lia noted a ripple effect of investment through her one-on-one meetings with her mentee: "She helps different students at school... she says hi to everyone, and she invests in different

kid...she's just very intentional with that." When asked how this impacted her own generativity, Lia said, "[I'm] looking for those opportunities to work with other students. For example, right now I'm a teaching assistant for a class so...getting to invest in those students to help them grow in leadership and diversity."

Participants in Study Two also discussed how seeing the mentees apply the concepts worked on in the mentoring relationship contributed to their own growth in PsyCap. Two mentors spoke of growth in their ability to influence others as a result of watching the mentee apply concepts in relationships with friends and family and in their own problems. Morgan, a junior who mentored a high school student for two years, recalled a mentoring meeting where her mentee began "describing situations with her friends where she's definitely applying the concepts that we talked about." Morgan described this as an "Aha moment" of growth in her own confidence and ability to influence another person.

Lisa, who mentored a high school student for three years, also talked about the confidence and hope she gained in her own interpersonal skills when she reflected together with her mentee and realized "she doesn't just want me to show up and be her friend, she wants to be challenged because I have created a safe environment for her to grow." Four mentors expressed the hope and resilience it gave them to lead as they observed their mentee applying concepts. For example, Meagan, a senior who mentored a middle school student for three years, discussed the strength and resilience it gave her as she heard her mentee talk about the positive growth she got from her negative experiences, a concept discussed frequently in their mentor-mentee meetings. Overall, participants in both studies perceived growth in their generativity (Study One) and in their PsyCap (Study Two) as a result of seeing their mentees apply the concepts learned by investing in others.

Implications

These six themes have implications for curricular and co-curricular leadership development interventions, particularly the intervention of being a mentor. For leadership educators, encouraging students to serve as a mentor is another pedagogical tool to teach leadership skills and facilitate the process of leader development both in the classroom and in co-curricular organizations. In order for this growth to be realized among mentors, however, the current paper suggests that mentors need education and training. These findings urge leadership educators to include training in interpersonal skills, influence tactics, and mentoring practices, as well as instruction on the anticipated leadership outcomes for the mentor (e.g. generativity and PsyCap) in order to encourage growth.

This paper further suggests that maximizing the leadership education experience of being a mentor involves significant reflection along with peer mentoring experiences that include storytelling and feedback. Specifically, the participants in the current research suggest opportunities for more experienced mentors to help younger mentors deconstruct the experience and articulate the lessons learned is beneficial to both the peer mentor and the peer mentee. Additionally, these results encourage colleges and universities to strategically include mentoring in their leadership development programs. As these findings reveal that mentor growth is developmental over time, mentoring relationships are encouraged to be longitudinal in nature (i.e. three years) in order to experience the various stages of the mentoring relationship and maximize the positive spiral effect of growth (Johnson & Murphy, 2016; Machida & Shaubroeck, 2011). Given that curricular peer mentoring experiences often last for just a semester, these findings suggest the need to creatively match leadership education classes with co-curricular mentoring programs to achieve student learning outcomes among mentors.

Ultimately, based on these findings, leadership development programs for mentors ought to include pre-mentoring training and education, a mentor-guided relationship with the mentee for

three or four years, regular peer mentor groups for reflection and feedback, the opportunity to invest in younger mentors, and the encouragement to actively observe the ripple effect created by the mentoring relationship. Considered holistically, these results suggest that mentoring relationships provide a contextual experience where mentors must immediately perform leader behaviors, such as generativity and aspects of psychological capital, thus creating an opportunity to apply aspects of curricular education. Further, being a mentor creates an avenue for immediate feedback and analysis of the mentor's behaviors, encouraging mentors' reflection and development (Middlebrooks & Haberkorn, 2009).

Limitations and Future Directions

The current paper possesses several limitations that hinder its applicability. The sample size of 10 mentors in each study were in one context (i.e., a collegiate leadership mentoring program) and both studies had more women than men (i.e., 8 women, 2 men). Therefore, the studies lacked a heterogeneous group from diverse contexts, which is recommended by qualitative scholars for transcendental phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, the sample may lack the data depth needed for a full and thick description of the phenomenon, namely how mentors perceived their growth (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Guetterman, 2015). A broader sample might reveal different findings. Further, as leadership scholar-practitioners, we brought bias into the research process, despite the process of bracketing out preconceived ideas. Another limitation is that in-person interviews on perceptions of personal development might have resulted in the participants over-inflating their own growth (Neuman, 2011). Finally, we only interviewed the mentors and did not interview the mentees, though the study did establish triangulation of data through participant feedback, researcher bracketing, and peer review.

Future researchers might consider larger quantitative studies to examine the themes presented in this paper on how mentors grow. The empirical results

from these studies could extend the literature on mentoring and further inform leadership development practitioners and leadership educators. Researchers might also consider exploring mentoring in various organizations beyond collegiate mentors or explore mentors not focused on leadership development to extend our understanding of how mentoring impacts the mentor. Mentors of different ages or in different types of organizations with different mentoring aims might describe other experiences of growth. Additionally, exploring mentors' perceptions of growth in various leadership outcomes beyond generativity and PsyCap might yield alternative outcomes and extend the understanding of how being a mentor affects growth. Finally, as future researchers examine the relationship between mentoring and various leadership outcomes, they might consider these growth themes and others, such as mentors having a formal or informal mentor, as mediators or moderators of specific leadership outcomes. These studies and more may extend the literature on mentoring and leadership development and also inform suggest practices for mentoring programs and relationships, along with leadership development interventions.

and peer mentoring groups. These findings are particularly relevant given the widespread emphasis on leadership development in college.

Conclusion

This paper sought to fill a gap for research by exploring how mentors experience growth in leadership outcomes. Two separate studies revealed that student leaders perceive growth in their generativity and PsyCap as a result of mentoring a younger student for leadership development. Considered together, the two studies presented themes related to how the mentoring experience influenced the mentors' growth. Six themes emerged that suggest leadership development for mentors includes both curricular learning and experiential learning. These themes also encourage leadership development programs to adopt being a mentor as a pedagogical tool and include training in leadership behaviors, skills and outcomes for mentor. Additionally, the current study urges that mentors engage in a lengthy mentoring relationship with simultaneous debrief via reflection

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