

MATCHED VERSUS EPISODIC MENTORING: AN EXPLORATION OF THE PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES FOR LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS ENGAGED IN PROFESSIONAL MENTORING

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I INTRODUCTION

In spite of the growing number of formal mentoring programs aimed at facilitating the transition from law school studies to law practice, as well as evidence suggesting that law students need to proactively seek out and gain information and support from legal professionals, little empirical research examines mentoring as a source of professional and personal development among law school students. In order to address this gap in the literature, an independent law school¹ located in the United States teamed up with one of its educational partners, a major university in the area,² to undertake a qualitative study of the impact and effectiveness of mentoring on law students by lawyers. In particular, the researchers compared traditional mentoring, which they defined as involving a long-term relationship between one law student and one lawyer, and episodic mentoring, which they defined as one-time sessions between a law student and a lawyer which could be repeated by that law student with many different lawyers.

Although this study was conducted with American students and lawyers, the findings are relevant to Australian readers for two reasons. First, legal mentoring programs in Australia and the US are similarly focused to provide guidance to the less experienced by seasoned professionals, so the findings are likely to be of interest globally. Second, it appears that Australian legal mentoring

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programs also include both matched and episodic in nature, although episodic mentoring is a rarer and perhaps a more recent development facilitated by the opportunity to engage in mentoring by email.³ One factor that merits consideration is that the study of law is generally an undergraduate degree in Australia, while it is a graduate degree in the US. Thus, the participants in this study are likely to differ from typical law school students in Australia in terms of age, educational background, and work/life experiences. Readers are cautioned to keep this in mind when considering the applicability of these results to the Australian settings.

II THEORETICAL FRAME

A *Divine Roots of Mentoring*

Mentoring has no doubt existed since the beginning of human relationships, but as a professional development tool it is currently a topic of great interest, and has been applied across a multitude of settings and contexts.⁴ The term ‘mentoring’ can be traced back to Homer’s *The Odyssey*, in which Odysseus, as he was called away to the Trojan War, entrusts his son, Telemachus, to the care of Mentor. Mentor subsequently guides Telemachus on a journey to find his father and toward a deeper understanding of himself.⁵ There are, however, two manifestations of Mentor, one human and one divine. Powell noted that the figure of Mentor is that of a wise, gentle, elderly community leader but that this human Mentor never speaks directly to the young Telemachus. In fact, it is the goddess, Athena, disguised as Mentor, who guides Telemachus directly on his journey of self-discovery. Accordingly, the critical features that have come to be associated with mentoring — guidance, advising, introducing the

³ See eg the University of Queensland Law Mentor Program, www.law.uq.edu.au/uq-law-mentor-program (episodic); the Law Society of Western Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Mentoring Program 2011, <<http://www.lawsocietywa.asn.au/aboriginal-mentoring-program>> (matched) the Law Society of New South Wales Women’s Mentoring Program 2012/2013, <<http://www.lawsociety.com.au/ForSolicitors/advocacy/thoughtleadership/Advancementofwomen/index.htm>> (matched); the University of New South Wales Law Society Headstart Mentoring program, <<http://www.unswlawsoc.org/?q=acev>> (episodic); the University of Melbourne, Law School Mentor Program <<http://www.law.unimelb.edu.au/melbourne-law-school/experience/careers/current-students/melbourne-law-school-mentor-program>> (matched); the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association National Mentoring Program, <<http://www.acla.com.au/careers/acla-mentoring-program>> (matched).

⁴ Tammy D Allen et al, ‘Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Protégés: A Meta-Analysis’ (2004) 89 *Journal of Applied Psychology* 127; Dawn E Chandler, Kathy E Kram and Jeffrey Yip, ‘An Ecological Systems Perspective on Mentoring at Work: A Review and Future Prospects’ (2011) 5 *The Academy of Management Annals* 519.

⁵ Homer, *The Odyssey* (R Fitzgerald (trans), Doubleday, 1961); Michael V Smith, ‘Modern Mentoring: Ancient Lessons for Today’ (2005) *Music Educators Journal* 62.

mentee or protégé to important individuals, and running interference when necessary — are all grounded in a divine rather than mortal figure, and the divine nature of a mentor's knowledge rests on authority and power.⁶

B *Definitions of Mentoring*

Many researchers have described the difficulty in conducting and evaluating research on mentoring due to the varying definitions of mentoring, both across and within various disciplines.⁷ Jacobi, for example, identified 15 definitions of mentoring in educational, psychological, and management literature, and Kram identified as many as 37 different usages of the term.⁸ Among contested issues related to the mentoring relationship are the duration of the relationship, the level of involvement between the mentor and mentee, and the function of the relationship. Eby, Rhodes and Allen noted that it is important to distinguish between mentoring relationships and other types of relationships that involve power and authority. To this end, these authors distinguish mentoring from that of role-model and observer, teacher and student, advisor and advisee, supervisor and subordinate, and coach and client, based on the context, primary scope of influence, degree of mutuality, relationship initiation, relational closeness, interaction, and power difference.⁹ One must also distinguish between contextual definitions of mentoring, such as youth mentoring, academic mentoring, and workplace mentoring.

Smith stated that mentoring is fundamentally a 'relationship between a caring and experienced professional reaching into the life and practice of a generally [though not necessarily] younger and less experienced colleague.'¹⁰ Effective mentoring is intentional (systematically undertaken and not left to chance), nurturing, insightful, permissive of mistakes and growth by the protégé, supportive and protective, and ultimately results in the transformation and growth of the mentee as an individual and professional. This definition of mentoring is consistent with that espoused by Aronovitz, who explained that 'within the legal profession, mentoring means a

⁶ Brenda J Powell, 'Mentoring: One of the Master's Tools' (1999) 59 *Initiatives* 19

⁷ Connie R Wanberg, Elizabeth T Welsh and Sarah A Hezlett, 'Mentoring Research: A Review and Dynamic Process Model' (2003) 22 *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* 39

⁸ Maryann Jacobi, 'Mentoring and Undergraduate Academic Success: A Literature Review' (1991) 61 *Review of Educational Research* 505; Kathleen Kram, *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (Scott, Foresman, 1985).

⁹ Lillian T Eby, J Rhodes and Tammy D Allen, 'Definition and Evolution of Mentoring', in Tammy D Allen and Lillian T Eby (eds), *The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspectives Approach* (Blackwell, 2007) 7

¹⁰ Michael V Smith, 'Modern Mentoring: Ancient Lessons for Today' (2005) *Music Educators Journal* 62

voluntary, mutually beneficial relationship of professional growth, career development, and personal fulfillment that serves both the mentee as well as the mentor.¹¹ Thus, most current definitions of mentoring describe such a relationship as one that involves care, guidance, nurturance, and protection, is intentionally developed, and offers reciprocal benefits to both mentor and protégé.

Research has begun to make headway in clarifying common attributes across mentoring relationships. For example, a recent review of 124 mentoring articles published over two decades in the management literature highlighted three core attributes: reciprocity (mutuality of exchange rather than a one-way relationship), regular/consistent interactions over time, and developmental benefits (partnerships that aid the protégé's career and support the mentor in various ways).¹² In an effort to distinguish mentoring that involves the aforementioned attributes from other types of mentoring such as peer or team mentoring, scholars have begun to refer to mentoring by a more experienced mentor of a less experienced protégé as 'traditional mentoring'.¹³ For the purpose of this article, the construct of mentoring is confined to that which takes place between students exploring and embarking on a specific career and seasoned professionals within that career.

C Functions and Outcomes Associated with Mentoring

In addition to efforts to distinguish mentoring from other relationships and define it as a unique construct, the mentoring literature examines the functions that mentors provide and the outcomes associated with mentoring. For example, Kram's seminal study of informally cultivated mentoring between senior and junior employees in two corporate settings provided the foundation for three decades of empirical research on the provision of mentoring functions by the more experienced mentor. These functions include career support such as sponsorship, visibility, role modelling, and coaching as well as psychosocial support such as friendship, acceptance, and confirmation.¹⁴ Numerous studies have identified positive effects associated with having a mentor, including subjective outcomes such as job and career satisfaction and commitment, and objective outcomes such as promotions and compensation. These

¹¹ Tod Aronovitz, 'Mentoring is for You!' (2003) 77 *Florida Bar Journal* 4

¹² Dana L Haggard et al, 'Who is a Mentor? A Review of Evolving Definitions and Implications for Research' (2011) 37 *Journal of Management* 280

¹³ Tammy D Allen et al, 'Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring for Protégés: A Meta-Analysis' (2004) 89 *Journal of Applied Psychology* 127; Kathy E Kram and Belle Rose Ragins, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Sage, 2007).

¹⁴ Kram, above n 8.

studies have been largely cross-sectional and conducted across diverse professions and contexts.¹⁵

Although most of the mentoring literature to date is US-based, studies with participants of different nationalities, including Australian,¹⁶ Nigerian,¹⁷ Chinese,¹⁸ and Japanese studies,¹⁹ suggest that mentoring processes, quality, and outcomes have some consistency across jurisdictions. Australian studies include examinations of mentoring in health care,²⁰ workplace mentoring aimed at indigenous populations,²¹ transitional mentoring for library and information professionals,²² and mentoring in a state police service.²³ Our review of these studies confirms a relatively consistent understanding of the definition, processes, and outcomes of mentoring across national contexts. Furthermore, Hofstede's work on national culture suggests a great deal of similarity between national cultures within Australia and the United States — a finding that suggests the results of research on mentoring are broadly generalisable across these national contexts.²⁴

III MENTORING IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

In spite of a sizeable body of literature on mentoring across a wide range of professions, the legal profession as a whole has been largely neglected as the subject of examination. In fact, while there has in recent years been a call for practising lawyers to serve as mentors for young and inexperienced lawyers, little empirical research has been conducted on the prevalence and success of professional mentoring

¹⁵ Tammy Allen and Lillian Eby, above n 9.

¹⁶ Linda MacGregor, 'Mentoring: The Australian Experience' (2000) 5 *Career Development International* 244

¹⁷ David E Okurame and S K Balogun, 'Role of Informal Mentoring in the Career Success of First-Line Bank Managers: A Nigerian Case Study' (2005) 10 *Career Development International* 512

¹⁸ Nikos Bozionelos and Li Wang, 'The Relationship of Mentoring and Network Resources with Career Success in the Chinese Organizational Environment' (2006) 17 *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 1531

¹⁹ Mark Iain Bright, 'Can Japanese Mentoring Enhance Understanding of Western Mentoring?: Young Researcher' (2005) 27 *Employee Relations* 325

²⁰ John R Moss et al, 'Mentoring for Population Health in General Practice Divisions' (2006) 30 *Australian Health Review* 46

²¹ John Burgess and Sharlene Dyer, 'Workplace Mentoring for Indigenous Australians: A Case Study' (2009) 28 *Equal Opportunities International* 465

²² Gillian Hallam and Carol Newton-Smith, 'Evaluation of Transitional Mentoring for New Library and Information Professionals: What are the Professional and Personal Outcomes for the Participants?' (2006) 27 *Library Management* 154

²³ Mark A Tyler and William E McKenzie, 'Mentoring First Year Police Constables: Police Mentors' Perspectives' (2011) 23(8) *Journal of Workplace Learning* 518

²⁴ Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (McGraw-Hill, 1997).

in the legal profession.²⁵ Arguably, the legal profession is higher-risk than most, in that lawyers are more likely to report being depressed, anxious, or facing some sort of addiction such as drugs or alcohol than their peers in other professions. These effects seem to stem from admission into law school and appear in many countries, including Australia.²⁶ Mentoring can be viewed as a way to potentially mitigate these deleterious effects on individuals who embark upon a career in the legal profession.

Among the few published studies examining mentoring and the legal profession, Higgins conducted a study investigating the level of satisfaction at work among early career lawyers and its relationship to the number of mentoring relationships experienced and the amount and type of assistance received. Although Higgins concluded that a positive relationship exists between the number of 'developmental relationships' an early career lawyer experiences and subsequent job satisfaction, her results also demonstrated that receiving a high amount of psychosocial support from a single individual is also associated with higher work satisfaction.²⁷ Higgins and Thomas, in examining multiple examples of what they term 'developmental relationships', examined the effects of the quality of the primary developer as well as the structure and quality of the constellation of developmental relationships on lawyers' subjective (work satisfaction and intent to stay) and objective (promotion and retention) outcomes. These findings, however, are confounded by the fact that the authors did not distinguish between formal mentoring relationships and other types of developmental relationships within the work environment (eg, peer support, workplace friendships, and one-time encounters with a superior).²⁸

²⁵ Aronovitz, above n 11; Douglas B Ammar, 'On Being Mentored in Law School: A Lawyer's Perspective' (2004) 14 *Widener Law Journal* 461; D C Indiano, 'The Lost Art of Mentoring' (2006) 11 *The Federal Lawyer* 53 (9); G Chin, 'Make a Difference, Be a Mentor' (2007) 6 *Utah Bar Journal* 20 (3); H M Coxe, 'Seasoned Mentors Catch Young Solos Before they Fall' (2007) 6 *Florida Bar Journal* 8 (1).

²⁶ Kennon M Sheldon and Lawrence S Krieger, 'Understanding the Negative Effects of Legal Education on Law Students: A Longitudinal Test of Self-Determination Theory' (2007) 33 *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 883; Todd David Peterson and Elizabeth Waters Peterson, 'Stemming the Tide of Law Student Depression: What Law Schools Need to Learn from the Science of Positive Psychology' (2013) 9 *Yale Journal of Health Policy, Law, and Ethics* 2; Judith McNamara, Rachel Field and Catherine Brown, 'Learning to reflect in the first year of legal education: the key to surviving legal education and legal practice' (Paper presented at the First Year in Higher Education Conference, Townsville Queensland, 29 June–1 July 2009) Ciara O'Loughlin, 'Voices from the Law: An Analysis of Student Perceptions of the Transition to Studying Law' (A Report Prepared for the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning and the University of Western Australia, July 2010).

²⁷ Monica C Higgins, 'The More, the Merrier? Multiple Developmental Relationships and Work Satisfaction' (2000) 19 *Journal of Management Development* 277

²⁸ Monica C Higgins and Kathy E Kram, 'Reconceptualizing Mentoring at Work: A Developmental Network Perspective' (2001) *Academy of Management Review* 264

According to Aronovitz, mentoring facilitates the transfer of valuable information and insight from seasoned lawyers to novice practitioners.²⁹ He suggested that there are three ways in which law firms can facilitate the mentoring process: by creating a culture in which all lawyers mentor and learn from one another (a model described as ‘co-mentoring’ in the field of education);³⁰ by training lawyers in the skills necessary for successful mentoring relationships and then recognising and rewarding outstanding mentors; and by establishing a structured mentoring program that is carefully designed and monitored. Indiano went further and stated that mentoring is not restricted to the office, and that the court system could do much to encourage mentoring.³¹ Furthermore, studies by Sonsteng and Camarotto provide evidence that observations of experienced lawyers by early career lawyers, and advice from them, were the most important factors in the development of several important skills, including: (1) the ability to obtain and keep clients; (2) understanding and conducting litigation; (3) counselling clients; (4) negotiating; and (5) diagnosing and planning solutions to legal problems. The authors contend that legal education as it is currently conducted in many law schools contributes little to the development of these critical professional skills. But even if such skills are taught and practised in law school, mentoring is an important adjunct to legal education for the development of interpersonal, ethical, and practical judgment skills as observed and practised in the ‘real world’.³²

While these articles are suggestive of the value of mentoring to lawyers, very little empirical research has been conducted to date. This study is intended to help fill this gap.

IV BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A The Call for Mentoring in the Legal Profession

In 2001, the United States Conference of Chief Justices (of state Supreme Courts) recommended, among other things, that judicial leadership promote mentoring programs for both new and established lawyers.³³ In response, a number of states established mandatory and voluntary mentoring programs in order to help smooth the transition from law school to legal practice, and to allow new lawyers to learn about different practice areas as well as to benefit from the experience and expertise of practising lawyers. For example the State Bar of

²⁹ Aronovitz, above n 11.

³⁰ Carol Mullen, *New Directions in Mentoring: Creating a Culture of Synergy* (Routledge, 1999).

³¹ Indiano, above n 25.

³² John Sonsteng and David Camarotto, ‘Minnesota Lawyers Evaluate Law Schools, Training and Job Satisfaction’ (2000) 26 *William Mitchell Law Review* 327.

³³ Conference of Chief Justices, *A National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct and Professionalism* (2001) 6, 26.

Georgia and its Commission on Continuing Lawyer Competency implemented the Georgia Transition into Law Practice Program in 2005 in order to teach the skills, professional values, and judgment necessary to practise law in accordance with the highest ideals of the profession.³⁴ During the mandatory year of the program, protégés attend programs that emphasise lawyer skills, and relationships with clients, other lawyers, the courts, and the public. However, despite the fact that the program has been replicated in other states and has gained international attention, the efficacy of this program has not been tested.

Other states have also implemented mentoring programs with some degree of perceived success. For example, Ohio pilot-tested a mentoring program in 2006 in which attorneys newly admitted to the practice of law in Ohio were paired with experienced and ethical professional attorneys. The new lawyer and mentor created a mentoring plan together based on a selection of suggested activities and topics, each of which was supported by curricular materials, discussion questions, and instructive articles. Program participants were surveyed and responses were ‘overwhelmingly positive’, so the Supreme Court approved a permanent, voluntary mentoring program for new lawyers beginning in 2008.³⁵ North Carolina has also developed a one-year, voluntary mentoring program for new lawyers, and Illinois has a six-month mentoring program that matches new lawyers with mentors based on professional interests and personal characteristics. Currently, 34 state bar associations, including the District of Columbia, have implemented some form of mentoring program.³⁶ It appears that all of the programs that have been designed and implemented involve pairing law students or new lawyers with practising lawyers, following the ‘traditional’ model of mentoring relationships.³⁷

At the 2007 National Conference of Bar Presidents, a number of states and counties informally reported on their success, or lack thereof, with their mentoring programs. At that time, many reported that the programs failed. Most said it appeared that there were plenty of enthusiastic mentor lawyers, but that the protégé lawyers failed to make time to meet with their mentors. During a work session at

³⁴ State Bar of Georgia, *Transition into Law Practice Program* (2013) <<http://www.gabar.org/membership/tilpp/index.cfm>>.

³⁵ Supreme Court of Ohio, *Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring Program* <<http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/mentoring/default.asp>>.

³⁶ American Bar Association, *Mentoring Programs Listed by State* (2013) <http://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/resources/professionalism/mentoring.html>.

³⁷ Kram, above n 8; Terri A Scandura and Ekin K Pellegrini, ‘Workplace Mentoring: Theoretical Approaches and Methodological Issues’, in Tammy D Allen and Lillian T Eby (eds), *The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspectives Approach* (Blackwell, 2007) 71.

that conference,³⁸ the group members also indicated that established-lawyer new-lawyer mentoring relationships tend to fail because:

- neither party knows how to make it work;
- mentors do not want to be seen as potential employers;
- protégés do not see the benefit of the relationship;
- the parties fail to continue the relationship, even when it starts out well;
- newer lawyers prefer mentors who are closer to their age and who share a similar lifestyle;
- matching is difficult and administratively time-consuming;
- the parties believe it will require time they would rather spend another way; and
- new lawyers don't believe they need the help.

B Changing Career Contexts and Episodic Mentoring

In addition to the difficulties with implementing traditional mentoring programs cited above, other contextual factors have resulted in alternative or new approaches to mentoring. The career context in which mentoring occurs has changed dramatically, constraining opportunities for long-term single mentoring relationships to flourish and limiting the time that would-be mentors have to dedicate to aiding their protégés.³⁹ Introducing a critical turn to the mentoring literature, Higgins and Kram asserted that globalisation, changes in technology, altering organisational demography, and other trends have given rise to the need for an individual to seek out the assistance of multiple 'developers' who provide varying amounts and types of relational support rather than relying on a single mentor. Consistent with the notion of 'boundary-less' careers in the wake of externalisation of work and loss of long-term job security, in the current work climate the individual no longer anchors his or her identity to an employing organisation but proactively seeks out professional development opportunities formerly provided by an employer.⁴⁰

Taken together, the notions of the boundary-less career and 'developmental networks' — a group of individuals who take an active interest in and action to advance a protégé's career — suggests that individuals entering the legal profession may not rely solely

³⁸ The work session was attended by Amy Timmer, who was also a speaker, and is one of the project researchers on this article.

³⁹ Monica C Higgins and Kathy E Kram, 'Reconceptualizing Mentoring at Work: A Developmental Network Perspective' (2001) *Academy of Management Review* 264

⁴⁰ Michael B Arthur and Denise M Rousseau, *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Philip H Mirvis and Douglas T Hall, 'Psychological Success and the Boundaryless Career' (1994) 15 *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 36

upon a matched mentoring program but can experience unique opportunities associated with seeking out support from multiple individuals. Mentoring episodes are developmental interactions that occur during one or more occasions between individuals.⁴¹ Unlike traditional mentoring relationships that involve regular, consistent involvement between a single mentor and protégé, episodic mentoring involves episodes of mentoring, usually initiated by the protégé, with multiple mentors, each sought out for a particular area of expertise or support. It is no longer enough to simply require that early career lawyers find a mentor and work with that individual. First, the relationship must be considered dynamic, reciprocal, and flexible, and focused on clear objectives. As stated by Hamilton & Brabbitt, ‘the definitions of a mentor and mentoring must be focused on professionalism if the profession is to realize its ideals and core values.’⁴² Second, the concept of mentoring *episodes* offers the opportunity to be mentored in a single session by more than one person, each chosen for specific skills, expertise, or support. Thus, the notion of episodic mentoring challenges some of the definitional attributes of mentoring, specifically the idea that mentoring must involve regular and consistent interactions over time.⁴³

While some consider episodic mentoring to be less desirable than traditional mentoring, the changing context of work and multiple demands on young professionals may actually create needs that are best filled through developmental networks and episodic mentoring rather than relying on traditional approaches to mentorship.⁴⁴ Fletcher and Ragins observed that relational stances such as mutuality and co-responsibility combine with relational skills to create behaviours and processes that involve interdependency, reciprocity, fluidity, and mutual learning. These relational processes result in growth-fostering interactions or mentoring *episodes* that involve increased zest, empowered action, self-esteem, new knowledge, and a desire for more connection. This new understanding of mentoring — particularly the opportunity for *episodes* of mentoring, as opposed to relationships of mentoring — has significant implications for professional mentoring programs.⁴⁵ As yet, however, little research has been conducted to investigate the efficacy of episodic mentoring compared to traditional mentoring. And despite the widespread call for the development and implementation of mentoring programs

⁴¹ Joyce K Fletcher and Belle Rose Ragins, ‘Stone Center Relational Cultural Theory’, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice* (Sage, 2007) 373

⁴² Neil Hamilton and Lisa M Brabbitt, ‘Fostering Professionalism through Mentoring’ (2007) *Journal of Legal Education* 6.

⁴³ Haggard, above n 12.

⁴⁴ C Suzanne Cutter, ‘Filling Mentorship Voids’ (2006) 34 *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* 90

⁴⁵ Fletcher & Ragins, above n 41.

for new lawyers, only a relative handful of states have actually implemented formal mentoring programs. Of those that do exist, little evidence has been collected, beyond the anecdotal, to study and compare the efficacy of such programs. This pilot study is intended to begin to fill this gap in the knowledge base, and also to focus efforts at evaluating the efficacy of two models of mentoring — traditional and episodic — on *specific outcomes* including development of professional identity, and improvement of work-life balance among new lawyers, by starting those relationships while the protégés are still in law school.

IV METHODS

Although, based on the literature review above, many questions can be asked about mentoring, this study focused on comparing the process and outcomes of two different approaches to mentoring law students: traditional matched-pair mentoring and episodic mentoring. The driving question for this study was: How does the experience of being mentored differ for students in a traditional matched-pair mentoring program compared with an informal series of mentoring episodes with a variety of attorneys?

A Sample

Sixty-seven students in their second or third year of law school who were also enrolled in a professionalism course at a large US law school were initially recruited as participants in this study. Students were then randomly assigned to one of two mentoring programs: matched-pair mentoring or episodic mentoring. Of the original sample, 59 students attended an initial workshop during which they were given information about the study and informed consent was obtained. Student demographic information obtained at this initial meeting indicated that 56 per cent were female and the average age was 29, within a range of 23–50 years of age. Students self-identified their ethnicity as Caucasian (50 per cent), African American or Black (22 per cent), Middle Eastern (8 per cent), Hispanic or Latino (7 per cent), Asian (5 per cent) and no response (7 per cent). Thirty-one per cent of the sample indicated that they were preparing for law as a second (or beyond) career, and had previous careers in construction, education, sales, business, engineering, and the justice system (police officer, child support officer, probation officer). Post-hoc analyses indicate that the two groups — matched-pair and episodic mentoring — were equivalent on all demographic variables, and that the sample was generally representative of the population of students attending law school in the United States in 2010. In addition, 25 volunteer mentors were initially recruited from the state bar association to serve as mentors for students assigned to the

matched-pair mentoring program. Fifty-six per cent of the mentors were female, 88 per cent self-identified as Caucasian, and they had an average of 16 years of practice experience, with a range of 2–20+ years.

B *The Mentoring Program*

The mentoring program took place over the course of seven months. It began with the initial training workshop in early November and continued until the end of May. Prior to the initial workshop, students who were assigned to the matched mentoring program were asked to rank the importance to them, in ascending order of preference, of up to five criteria for mentor-matching. Student survey responses indicated that the most important criterion on which they hoped to be matched with a mentor, based on weighted mean of responses, was area of specialisation. This was followed by the mentor's prioritisation of career and family, and then by years of experience practising law. Of the 41 per cent of students who chose prioritisation of career and family as a criterion for matching, 14 (10 of whom were female) preferred a mentor who prioritised career success and 10 (6 of whom were female) preferred mentors who prioritise family. Gender and ethnicity were indicated as the most important criteria for less than 15 per cent of the sample.

Two half-day workshops were conducted — a morning workshop for students who were assigned to the matched mentoring program and the volunteer mentors, and an afternoon workshop for students who were assigned to the episodic mentoring program. An expert on mentoring was brought in to conduct the workshops and provide the students and the mentors with tips on initiating, developing, and maintaining a mentoring relationship (in the case of students matched with a mentor) or methods for initiating and engaging with mentors during mentoring episodes. In addition, the development of goals for the mentoring experience was discussed and students were encouraged to think through what they hoped to gain from their mentoring experience. Both groups were asked to focus the mentoring on professionalism in legal practice and on the development of the protégés' professional identities, including how to balance work and home life, how to deal with unethical conduct in others, and how to make good career choices.

During the morning session, protégé mentor matches were revealed, and the dyads met to introduce themselves and make plans for their first meeting. Those students whose mentors were unable to attend or who had not yet been matched with a mentor (there were fewer volunteer mentors than student participants initially) met with an associate dean of the school (also a project researcher) to discuss the next steps. The afternoon session focused on episodic mentoring and the consultant provided students with an understanding of the nature

of this form of mentoring as well as ideas for various ways to engage in mentoring episodes and to make contact with potential episodic mentors. Students in this program were, additionally, offered support meetings to take place on Friday afternoons with an associate dean (also a project researcher) and were given a list of coming events, such as bar association meetings, at which they might engage with episodic mentors. The weekly support group meetings with episodic protégés continued throughout the study. The project researcher who organised those meetings (which protégés could choose to attend or not) found that the meetings were a necessary part of an episodic mentoring program for some but not all participants. Those who benefited did so for three main reasons: (1) protégés shared ideas on how to set up mentoring episodes; (2) the meetings were a source of inspiration to others when success stories were shared, which helped motivate all protégés to continue to set up meetings with lawyers; and (3) the introverted protégés found the meetings to be a safe place to share their reluctance to set up meetings with lawyers they didn't know, and try to overcome that reluctance. These meetings were not a planned part of the study, but the need for them became clear almost immediately; the researchers believe that, without them, some protégés assigned to the episodic mentoring condition might not have undertaken any episodes.

C Data Sources

At the conclusion of the two terms during which this pilot program took place, participant students were asked to complete a four-part survey designed to collect information on the nature, outcomes, and perceived effectiveness of the mentoring relationships as well as the professional identity development of the participant protégés.⁴⁶ Volunteer mentors who were matched with a protégé were asked to complete a similar survey, but it did not include questions about professional identity. Participants assigned to the episodic mentoring condition kept journals in which they recorded detailed information about their mentoring episodes including the date, name, and position of the mentor, a description of the episode, the nature of the activity or discussion, the contribution of the episode to the protégé's career, professional identity, and personal growth, and any other noteworthy comments regarding the episode.

Because episodic mentoring is a relatively new approach to mentoring and because, based on the initial surveys, it appeared that participants assigned to the episodic mentoring program had very

⁴⁶ The development of a law student's professional identity was of particular concern to the researchers, due to the conclusion of the authors of the Carnegie Report on Educating Lawyers, who noted the absence of this development in traditional law school curricula: William M Sullivan et al, *Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Profession of Law* (Jossey-Bass, 2007) vol 2.

different experiences from those assigned to the matched mentoring program, seven participants in the episodic mentoring program were purposely selected (based on having either a very positive or a very negative perception of their experience) for individual interviews that followed a semi-structured protocol and were audio recorded and transcribed. The interviews were designed to elicit information about the participants' general experiences (both positive and negative) with episodic mentoring, their perceptions of what makes a successful mentoring episode, the benefits and challenges of episodic mentoring compared to traditional mentoring, the extent to which the participants' mentoring episodes impacted their professional identity and views on work/life balance, and suggested changes to the program for the future. Since a deeper understanding of the experience of the episodic mentoring participants was the intent of the interviews, rather than generalisability of results, purposeful selection was undertaken, and additional interviews were not scheduled because saturation was reached (the participants' experiences began to converge and new information was no longer being revealed by the final interviews).

D Results

Methods of Connecting

Participants in episodic mentoring program reported on average a higher number of encounters with mentors than did those in the matched mentoring program. Protégés as well as mentors in the matched mentoring program reported an average number of one or two meetings during the course of the study, whereas the protégés in the episodic mentoring program reported an average of three to four mentoring episodes. In the episodic mentoring program, however, it was sometimes difficult for protégés to report the actual number of encounters because they came to see that many different types of meetings could be considered an episode of mentoring. For example, one participant engaged with episodic mentors through Twitter by sending a request to give him their best career advice in 140 characters. As a result, this protégé had encounters with several practising attorneys in addition to many informal and spontaneous encounters that he considered episodes of mentoring. Participants in both programs also reported similar methods of communicating with mentors, the most common of which was in-person meetings followed by email, and then telephone contact, with a few reporting the use of texting. However, some participants in the episodic mentoring program used social media and other networking tools such as Twitter, LinkedIn, or Facebook to make contact with mentors and engage in mentoring episodes. Some of these encounters then led to face-to-face meetings, but this was not always the case.

2 *Perceived Strengths*

When asked to respond to items intended to assess the effectiveness of the mentorship program, participants in the two groups did not differ overall in their perceptions. The only survey item for which a statistically significant difference between the episodic and matched-pair groups was found was ‘demonstrated content expertise in my area of interest’ ($p < .038$). Here protégés in the episodic mentoring program were more likely to respond positively. This was initially surprising, since protégés in the matched mentoring condition were matched, whenever possible and requested, with a mentor with a particular area of specialisation. However, further analyses of the data revealed that protégés in the episodic mentoring program were often able to make multiple and purposeful connections with attorneys specialising in a particular area of interest.

When asked about the strengths of their mentoring program, protégés in the matched mentoring program reported positive experiences when they felt a personal connection to, and had interests in common with, their matched mentor; the matched mentor had professional expertise from which the protégé could benefit or learn; the matched mentor was accessible and communicated effectively and easily; they felt a sense of personal investment from their matched mentor; and the matched mentor was able to facilitate further connections or networking opportunities for the protégé. For example, one participant noted, ‘I feel like my mentor was actually invested in me. She cared about my academic and personal life, and she had an agenda set of things we were to discuss during our meetings’. Another noted, ‘My mentor was very approachable and willing to answer any questions I had. He seemed interested in things I was involved in and willing to openly share some of his experiences. He took an interest in my personal life as well and provided me with advice on particular career ideas I had.’ Other common themes that emerged from protégé response included ease of communicating with the mentor, the mentor’s willingness to be open and share information, and the ability to ‘click’ with the mentor on a personal and professional level.

Protégées in the episodic mentoring program perceived the strengths of their experiences to lie in the variety of contacts they were able to make; the variety of needs or topics that were the focus of mentoring episodes; improvement in their own ability to reach out to attorneys and non-attorneys as well as their ability to listen and learn from a variety of encounters; and the fact that episodic mentoring is flexible, can be less time-consuming, and one is free to search out multiple mentors and choose to pursue the relationship further or not, depending on the outcome of the encounter and the interest from both parties. One participant responded, ‘The best part about episodic mentoring is that you get to choose who you want to

engage in a mentoring episode with. It allows you to cover a broader range of skills and is more flexible than being randomly matched with someone. It also helps to work on your communication and networking skills'. Another noted, 'I found I was more apt to listen carefully. Knowing the mentoring encounter might last only a few minutes, I found myself more focused on what the mentor had to say. I think it helped me become better able to extract the information I was looking for while at the same time being alert to the pearls of wisdom I might not have been specifically seeking.'

Additionally, several protégés in the episodic mentoring program spoke about the fact that the program 'forced' them out of their comfort zones and provided an impetus to reach out to others. For example one participant noted, 'I was rather hesitant to engage prospective mentors at the beginning for fear of being turned away or being considered a nuisance. But over time, the episodic mentoring program allowed me to learn how to "feel out" whether a prospective mentor would be willing to engage with me.' Another participant stated, 'I am pretty introverted so reaching out was the difficult part for me. But what I found from my interactions was that it seemed like everybody was very willing to be as helpful as possible.' Furthermore, some participants in the episodic mentoring program reported that, while initially discouraged that they were not assigned or matched with a mentor, they eventually came to appreciate the outcomes of the mentoring episodes and were ultimately happy that they had the opportunity to participate in the episodic mentoring program. For example one participant reported that, 'I was hoping to be assigned to the matched mentor group so I wouldn't have to worry about finding mentors. But I think the episodic mentoring was almost better because I realized that a lot of what I had been doing all along was episodic mentoring. It reminded me of something I read — like having a personal board of directors.' And whereas participants in the matched mentoring program were more likely to focus on the networking opportunities that were facilitated by their matched mentor, participants in the episodic mentoring program focused on the fact that their own ability to develop professional networks and make connections had been improved.

3 Perceived Challenges

When asked about the challenges of their mentoring program, protégés in the matched mentoring program generally stated that there were few or no weaknesses if they had been successful in establishing a relationship with their mentor. Discussions about challenges tended to focus on difficulty with scheduling and difficulty on the part of either the mentor or the protégé in finding time to meet. For example one participant stated, 'We met only once a month or so. I think it would have been better to meet more often but, at the same time, I

understand that it would be difficult to meet more often considering he had a family and other activities in which he was involved.’ In a few of the mentoring pairs, weaknesses in the relationship were seen when there was a failure to communicate specific goals or expectations for the relationship or when the protégé felt that the mentor did not have the area of specialisation in which he or she was interested. For example one participant noted, ‘Since neither of us really knew what to do at the meeting, we failed to set goals or really follow through with anything. Additionally, neither of us understood the dynamic of our relationship — it was like an awkward first date.’ Finally, there was some degree of intimidation reported by both protégés and mentors. For example, one protégé would have liked to have the opportunity to visit his mentor’s office and shadow him for a day but did not feel he could impose such a request on someone so busy, while one mentor reported feeling that, being a young attorney, he did not have much practical experience to share with his protégé. These challenges highlight the importance of ensuring that volunteer mentors have both the time and experience to effectively mentor early-career attorneys.

For participants in the episodic mentoring program, the most common challenge reported was the lack of accountability or motivation: many participants reported having difficulty reaching out to potential episodic mentors either because of shyness or introversion, not knowing where to find potential mentors, or because they perceived that there would always be a ‘next time’ opportunity that allowed them to pass on what might have been a fruitful mentoring episode. For example one participant noted, ‘One weakness of episodic mentoring is that it allowed me to pass on various opportunities that I didn’t necessarily feel comfortable with. Knowing that I had so many different opportunities, I found myself thinking there would always be a “next time”.’ In addition, many participants reported feeling a lack of engagement or follow-through as a weakness of episodic mentoring, and many assumed that if they had been matched with a mentor, they would have experienced a deeper relationship in which the mentor had a vested interest in them. Furthermore, the issue of trust and caution was raised frequently by participants in the episodic mentoring. One participant stated, for example, ‘There isn’t the traditional mentoring session so once you speak to someone you might not hear from him or her again. There also isn’t the opportunity to really get to know someone the way you would in a traditional mentoring situation.’ Another participant noted, ‘I still think you need a more traditional mentor who has a vested interest in your well-being and your success, and you have a trust level established with them so that they can tell you things that might be hard to hear.’ While most reported that they did not see it as a challenge per se, some participants nevertheless noted

that it is important to be judicious in accepting advice. Receiving contradictory advice was also an issue from participants engaging in episodic mentoring, and it was noted by several protégés in this program that one had to be able to sort through and reflect effectively on advice they were given. This can be seen in the example of one protégé who admitted to being easily influenced and who reportedly changed her entire career plan based on the advice received during a single mentoring episode. This challenge highlights the importance of providing initial training and continuing supervision of episodic mentoring: law students and early career attorneys may not have yet developed the ability to discern good professional advice from advice that should be disregarded, and may feel overwhelmed by seemingly conflicting advice from different sources.

4 *Outcomes of Mentoring*

Participants in both programs reported similar outcomes from their mentoring experiences. The most common outcome was reported to be exposure to mentors' professional expertise, followed by improvement in the development of the protégé's professional identity. Many participants, especially in the episodic mentoring program, reported increased confidence in their ability to fit into the profession and engage with other attorneys on a professional level. For most participants in the episodic mentoring program, these mentoring episodes were the first attempts they had made to make connections in the legal community as a professional, and represented a shift in their own professional identity. For example one participant stated, 'My mentoring relationships let me know that I have much to offer the legal community. While I have a tremendous amount of learning to do, I feel that I belong in the legal community.' Another participant stated, 'I feel the advice given to me by a judge who served as an episodic mentor helped me to know more of what to expect as a young lawyer. Admittedly, it is rather intimidating to know that I will be across the courtroom from many seasoned attorneys who are skilled in their craft. However, with this mentor's advice, I know better what will be expected of me in the early years of my career.'

Interestingly, participants in the episodic mentoring program frequently reported a sense of relief in learning from their mentoring episodes that it is not critical to focus on a particular legal specialisation, and many reported that a positive outcome of their episodic mentoring was coming away with a greater sense of *who* they wanted to be as a professional rather than what they wanted to specialise in. For example one participant stated, 'My mentor helped me see the human side of law. They also helped me to see that good attorneys do not get involved in the senseless games I worry about. Really, my mentor helped me to start constructing a

solid framework for the way I want my career to be'. Another noted, 'These meetings helped me to remember that approaching every situation with a lawyer's mentality is not always the best approach — that there is a human element to what I am pursuing.' Participants in the episodic mentoring were also twice as likely to report thinking about a change in legal specialisation as participants in the matched mentoring program. Based on participant responses, this appears to be a direct result of having had access to mentors across a variety of specialisations. For example one participant stated, 'Episodic mentoring broadened my horizons a bit. One of my mentors advised me to look to other professions in which I can use my degree to secure a good paying job.'

Participants in both programs also reported that a positive outcome was discussing issues of work life balance and learning from their mentors about how they negotiate this balance and what they would have done differently in retrospect. One participant in the matched-mentor program noted that working with her mentor 'Helped me conceptualize the attorney I want to become. Through our relationship, I realized that I value family far more than work, and that working in a smaller firm may be better suited to me than working in a large, more competitive environment.' A female participant recounted how one of her mentors advised her: 'He was really helpful in giving me insight, telling me that I am going to be busy with school, work, having a new house, but to not forget to work on my relationship and keep it separate and important. That was good advice, especially coming from a male.'

While it was hoped that both mentoring programs would result in protégés engaging in community service, pro bono legal work, and political activity, this did not appear to be the case; when it was mentioned at all by either protégés or mentors in both programs, it was based on discussion of the importance of rather than actual engagement in such activities.

Overall, the outcomes of mentoring in both the traditional matched-pair and episodic programs were similar despite initial assumptions on the part of many participants that being assigned to a traditional mentor would result in better mentoring outcomes than engaging with episodic mentoring.

V DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of law students engaged in two different mentoring approaches: traditional or matched-pair mentoring and episodic mentoring. Not surprisingly, we found that matched mentoring sometimes worked well, and sometimes did not. We found the same to be true with episodic mentoring. Participants in the matched-pair mentoring program

who were able to establish a trusting and ongoing relationship with a mentor generally reported being very satisfied with their experiences, while those who reported being dissatisfied reported a failure to establish a true mentoring relationship, due primarily to either a lack of time and appropriate goal-setting (most common), or difficulty establishing a meaningful connection with the mentor. Participants in the episodic mentoring program had a wider range of experiences, and reported having positive experiences related to the range of exposure they had to a wide array of mentors reached through various methods, including telephone, in person, e-mail, and even Twitter. Those in the episodic mentoring program who reported negative experiences tended to struggle most with making the necessary connections and distinguishing episodic mentoring from general networking. However, both types of mentoring resulted in similar outcomes, especially in the areas of professional identity development, exploration of career options, and work life balance. This finding challenges the assumptions participants had at the beginning of the study, that being matched with a traditional mentor would result in better outcomes as well as assumptions in some literature that 'episodic mentoring is not ideal, but can be very helpful in the absence of a formal mentor.'⁴⁷ However, there were two significant differences between the two types of mentoring: administrative costs and emotional commitment to mentoring.

A Costs and Benefits

The advance preparation and administrative work involved in a matched mentoring program is an added cost. Not only does a matched program require more administrative work to establish and maintain, it also requires more work when a match fails, because another match must be found by the program administrator. Further, there seemed to be greater expectations of success at the beginning of a matched relationship, so the emotional let-down experienced by the protégé and/or the mentor when it didn't work, and the possibility that both parties will therefore decline any future attempts at mentoring, is an additional detriment. Again, this finding highlights the importance of being careful to select volunteer mentors who have both the time and interest as well as experience in mentoring. When protégés are counting on and looking forward to a mentoring relationship and it does not work out, protégés can be left with a feeling of inadequacy and fear of further rejection. Thus, greater risk and cost, both administrative and emotional, is involved in operating a matched mentoring program as compared with an episodic program in which both protégés and mentors are free to establish and develop a variety of mentoring relationships.

⁴⁷ Cutter, above n 44.

After initial training in ways to meet attorneys and make ‘cold calls’ to attorneys, a program administrator was not required to maintain the episodic mentoring program; therefore, less administrative cost was involved. Furthermore, when the mentoring episodes were not successful, less emotional cost was involved because there was neither the expectation of, nor the emotional investment in, a long-term relationship.

One cost of episodic mentoring that should be considered, however, is that of a weekly support group. This component, while not required of the participants assigned to episodic mentoring, seemed to be helpful and, for some participants, necessary to keep the protégés motivated to seek out the next mentoring opportunity. In the current study, the support group was led by the associate dean of the law school who recruited the participants because she felt that the episodic group needed encouragement and support. In particular, shy or introverted participants benefited from hearing the success stories of other participants when they shared their experiences at weekly meetings. However, support meetings could occur among the participants without an administrator being hired or utilised. As an alternative, lawyer groups and law schools considering this approach could build into the program a person who will organise, attend, and lead the meetings when necessary.

The greatest benefit of episodic mentoring was that successes were often unexpected by the protégés, and therefore a surprising delight. Participants attending the support group each Friday would often report things like, ‘I can’t believe this guy returned my email and now we’re going to meet!’ or, ‘I reached out to a lawyer who does exactly what I want to do for a living and now she’s going to help me find an externship!’ In reviewing the journals, we found that one protégé was in fact offered a job by his episodic mentor, and another was offered an externship, both after only one meeting. These results, especially when shared with other participants in the support group setting, provided encouragement to continue seeking out mentoring episodes. One benefit that might be experienced only by a matched mentoring pair is the development of a relationship that persists and may thus allow the mentor and protégé to work together on such things as community service, pro bono legal work, and political activity. Although these activities did not occur during this study, one advantage of matched mentoring is that specific goals and outcomes can be targeted. This is inherently a limitation of episodic mentoring, as its nature is a series of short, often single, mentoring episodes. One question worthy of further investigation is the extent to which episodic mentoring is likely to lead to such long-term mentoring relationships.

B *Study Outcome*

The project researchers found that it was much easier to identify potential mentors when they were asked to mentor for short episodes (for example one hour), and when they were asked by the protégé rather than the program administrator. Furthermore, mentors who were initially eager to offer long-term mentoring often had difficulty establishing a relationship with their matched protégé due to circumstances, including scheduling conflicts, time limitations, and poor interpersonal connections. As a result of this finding, the local Bar Association with whom the researchers partnered (along with the state bar) for this study now has an established episodic mentoring program for their less experienced lawyers and for law students. The '60-Minute Mentoring' program came into existence due entirely to those lawyers' participation in this study. They were so happy with the experience that they determined to make it a part of their bar programming. In addition, the law school has made 60-Minute Mentoring an assignment in its professional development course. As early as their second term of law school, students in this course are offered instruction in 'cold calling' lawyers, including the school's alumni, to seek half-hour meetings, and are given suggested questions they can ask any lawyer that will contribute to their professional development. They are required to have at least one such experience every term during the first two years of their enrolment. They are also instructed in how best to maintain those relationships through occasional informative emails. Thus, in addition to receiving useful advice, many are establishing contacts with these lawyers that will endure into the first years of their law practice. And, as noted, sometimes those contacts become important sources of externships and employment.

C *Methodological Limitations*

The authors of this study acknowledge several methodological limitations that should be kept in mind when considering the extent to which the results are applicable to other settings. To begin with, participants in this study were recruited from a professionalism course. By its nature, this course attracts students who are highly motivated to succeed, and who are willing to take extra steps in their law education to achieve their goals. Thus, participants were not necessarily representative of typical law school students. It should also be remembered that this study was undertaken primarily as a qualitative investigation of participants' experiences with two different mentoring programs. To that extent, quantitative data that are generalisable across different participants, programs, and settings were not collected. Thus, readers are cautioned to consider carefully the extent to which results of this study are applicable. In addition,

other factors that potentially could have had an impact on participants' experiences with mentoring, including personality (for example, introversion vs. extraversion), the presence or absence of existing connections to the legal profession (for example, having family members or friends who are practising attorneys), and the existence or absence of personal support networks were not addressed in this study. The authors acknowledge additional research investigating the impact of these factors on law school students' experiences with mentoring to be an important avenue for further investigation. Finally, the data collected for this study were primarily self-reported data; while the authors purposely selected a qualitative research method in order to capture participants' experiences with mentoring, they acknowledge that this is an inherent limitation of the research. Additional research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of mentoring for law school students using measures such as objective, longitudinal outcomes of the mentoring process for the participants. Despite these methodological weaknesses, however, the authors believe that results have provided some insight into the experiences of law school students with two different forms of mentoring, and that these results may prove useful for institutions that are considering implementing some form of formalised mentoring process.

VI CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to address a gap in the existing literature on the effectiveness of mentoring for law students. While results of the study indicated that the outcomes of the mentoring programs did not differ substantially and each program was associated with different strengths and weaknesses, the costs and benefits of episodic mentoring outweighed that of matched-pair mentoring, especially when considering the time and effort lost when matched pairs did not work out. When law schools have the resources to operate a matched mentoring program that will result in a lasting match, then a successful mentoring program may be developed. The benefit of match-pair mentoring appears to lie in the ability to make successful matches and for the pair to develop and maintain an ongoing relationship based on well-established goals. In the absence of resources necessary to implement a successful matched-pair mentoring program, however, the episodic mentoring approach encourages practising attorneys to mentor law school students and early career lawyers on a limited basis without making a long-term commitment. This approach allows protégés to receive useful, succinct professional development advice while also expanding their network of contacts, and these contacts sometimes become important sources of externships and employment. As a result of this study, the local bar association with whom the researchers partnered (along with the state bar) now has an established episodic mentoring program,

the 60-Minute Mentoring Program, for law students and early career lawyers, and the law school involved in the study has made episodic mentoring an assignment in its professional development course. A limitation of this study was its relatively short duration. Future research might take a longitudinal approach in order to investigate the long-term impact of mentoring on career satisfaction, work–life balance, and ability to deal effectively with stress. Additionally, a quantitative approach comparing matched and episodic mentoring may be able to better identify specific program and outcome factors that differ between these approaches, as well as identifying causal direction and effect sizes.