

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

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the growing number of formal mentoring programs aimed at facilitating the transition from law school to law practice, as well as evidence supporting the need for law students to proactively seek out and gain information and support from numerous legal professionals, little empirical research has examined mentoring as a source of professional and personal development in the field of law. To help address this paucity in the legal literature, an independent law school in the mid-western United States, Thomas M Cooley Law School, teamed with Oakland University to undertake a qualitative study on the experiences of law students participating in one of two mentoring programs: traditional matched-pair mentoring and episodic mentoring. Results of this study indicate that both forms of mentoring result in similar outcomes, although the strengths and challenges experienced by participants in each program differed somewhat. However, the relative costs and benefits of each program resulted in the identification of episodic mentoring as a viable and useful way for law schools to provide systematic mentoring to law students.