Prior Mentoring and Computer-Mediated Experiences Influence on Willingness to Engage in E-Mentoring

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MENTORING AND CMC EXPERIENCES ON WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN E-MENTORING

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Perspectives of mentoring

- Images of a mentor?
- Characteristics of good mentor?
- Characteristics of a bad mentor?
- Outcomes from a mentoring program?
- Outcomes from an e-mentoring program?
  - In theory, provides opportunities for mentoring that would not be possible in face-to-face setting
Challenges in e-mentoring research

- Research has difficulties in keeping pace with the rapid implementation of mentoring/e-mentoring programs (Clutterbuck, 2007)
  - Several types of mentoring exist (e.g., peer (McManus & Russell, 2007); group (Ensher & Murphy, 2005); e-mentoring (Ensher & Murphy, 2007)

- Internet technology changes rapidly (e.g., consider the “face” of Facebook five years ago; Remember those mobile phones on Seinfeld in the 90’s)
Our Research Hypothesis

- Positive prior mentoring experiences will increase the likelihood of participating in e-mentoring programs.
- Positive prior experiences with CMC will increase the likelihood of participating in e-mentoring programs.
- The type of CMC that is used will influence the nature of the e-mentoring relationship.
Three Theoretical Perspectives

- Social Exchange
- Social Presence
- Power
Social exchange

- Mentoring relationship should provide benefits to both the mentor and protégé
- Eby, 2007: Investment model (Mentors and proteges determine whether the relationship is worth the investment)
- Prior mentoring is a predominant factor in predicting future willingness (Allen, 2007)
Social Presence

- Level at which social cues are perceived
- For example, you send an e-mail to someone asking to meet. The person responds “OK”. Name the ways someone could perceive that response.
- F2F is considered the “gold standard” (Harms, 2005)
- Issues with social presence can cause relationship to rapidly deteriorate (“Flaming” - insulting comments)
What images come to mind when you consider power?
- Power is neutral (Darder, 1996) depends on how used
  - Johnson-Bailey and Cervero (2004): Mentor providing credibility to protégé within the academic community
- Influence both social exchange and social presence
Study

- Electronic survey to pre- and in-service teachers
- Prior experiences with mentoring (e.g., rate your prior mentoring experiences on a scale of 1-5)
- Prior experiences with CMC (e.g., comfort level with using various technologies)
- Willingness to participate in e-mentoring
Positive prior mentoring experiences will increase the likelihood of participating in e-mentoring programs.

- Mean 1.3 units higher, $p < 0.05$ (prior mentoring experiences) for those willing to participate in e-mentoring
- Pre-service teachers were more likely to be willing to be e-proteges than in-service teachers, $p < 0.05$
Findings (Hypothesis 2)

- Positive prior experiences with CMC will increase the likelihood of participating in e-mentoring programs.
  - Comfort level using instant messaging was higher for those willing to participate in e-mentoring (M 3.9 vs. 2.8, p < 0.01)
  - Comfort level using chat rooms higher for those willing to participate in e-mentoring (M 2.5 vs. 1.7, p < 0.05)
  - Those willing to be e-mentors rec’d 4.9 fewer e-mails/day
The type of CMC that is used will influence the nature of the e-mentoring relationship.

- Two groups emerged factor analysis
  - Comfortable using various technologies (e-mail, chat rooms and discussion boards)
  - Pre-service teachers comfortable using IM, chat rooms, but less comfortable with e-mail

Impact of emerging technologies

- Video teleconferencing had lowest mean comfort level, but high mean scores on perceived usefulness and willingness to learn more about
Implications

- What are the characteristics of the participants?
  - How they like to use CMC?
  - What are they seeking from the relationship?
- Impact of emerging technologies
  - How to implement to improve mentoring relationship (beyond just being “cool”)?
  - How to train participants in using these technologies to meet the objectives?
How is mentoring used at your institution?

- Goals?
- Implications of using e-mentoring?
- How would you implement e-mentoring?