

**MENTORING AS A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVITY FOR ADMINISTRATORS
IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

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*A thesis submitted for partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Masters in Education*

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Australia
October, 1998

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to consider the possibilities of mentoring as a professional development activity for those in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration (APA). Mentoring is considered worthy of investigation, as it appears to be a professional development activity that is self-directed and capable of meeting the individual needs of the practitioners engaged in the role. Professional development for many administrators appears to have become a laborious task of attending courses and collecting certificates. As a professional development activity, mentoring is a flexible alternative in the provision professional and personal growth opportunities for administrators within an educational context. The aim of the study is to provide an understanding of mentoring as a professional development opportunity for administrators and to explore in one specific context the receptivity of those in the role of APA, to the concept of formal mentoring.

This study utilises the research methodology of action research and the process of reflective deliberation. The study was conducted over a period of six months involving six participants who are currently working in Catholic systemic primary schools in the role of APA.

The conclusions of the study identifies a shift in understanding about mentoring and support for mentoring as a professional development activity for those in the role of APA.

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Peter Anthony Hill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have supported and encouraged me while preparing this thesis. I am particularly grateful to my supervisors Dr Gayle Spry and Dr Denis McLaughlin.

I would also like to thank the participants who contributed to the research contained in this study. Their generosity and patience are very much appreciated.

Finally, I must thank the person who completes me, my wife Josephine, who has encouraged me and made many sacrifices to enable me to complete this degree.

CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH DEFINED

1.1 Introduction to the research

Since the 1970s the role of the Assistant to the Principal, Administration (APA), has existed within systemic primary schools of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. During this era the position was a local appointment and the role loosely defined. In response to a recommendation from *Project Catholic School* (1978) the position of Deputy Principal (DP) was formalised in secondary schools and the position of Assistant to the Principal, Administration (APA), established in the primary sector. During the mid 1980s Brisbane Catholic Education (B.C.E) introduced the concept of the administration team and reclassified the position of Religious Education Coordinator to that of Assistant to the Principal, Religious Education (APRE) in all systemic Catholic primary and secondary schools.

Brisbane Catholic Education appointed an APA to systemic primary schools with a full time enrolment that exceeded 500 students. The primary staffing schedule dictates that schools with an enrolment that exceeds 601 students will be appointed an APA on full time release from face to face teaching duties while schools with enrolments between 501 and 600 will be appointed an APA for 16 hours per week. Due to this staffing schedule only 20 of the 114 primary Archdiocesan systemic primary schools¹ has an APA as part of

¹ Archdiocesan systemic primary schools are educational settings under the governance of Brisbane Catholic Education.

their administration team.

Since the 1980s a number of issues have arisen in relation to the role of the APA within primary systemic schools. Some of these issues have been resolved by Brisbane Catholic Education with the formulation of the "*The Role of The Catholic School Deputy Principal/Assistant to the Principal Administration*" (Brisbane Catholic Education, 1997) and the development of localised duty statements.

Broader issues such as professional development, the division of duties between principal and the deputy, the role as an understudy to the principal, the importance of the administrator as an active teacher, the shared responsibility for the leadership and management of the school while acknowledging the principal's authority, remain ongoing issues for reflection and development for those associated with the role of APA.

1.2 The purpose of the study

Because there is an interest in the staff development process of APAs, many of them often consult one another. Indeed the more experienced APAs appear to have assumed the role of mentor. The researcher has been an APA for two years. The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring can be used by those in the position of APA as a professional development strategy. The researcher identified the purpose of this study while engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. The purpose of the

study was further refined by the researcher's reflection upon the complexity of the leadership and management components of the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration within the organisational structure of the Catholic systemic primary school.

The researcher, as a reflective practitioner considered the possibilities of mentoring as a professional development activity for this group of administrators as being more self-directed rather than an externally prescribed process (Butler, 1996).

The researcher considered mentoring worthy of investigation as it appeared to be an appropriate professional development experience that had the potential to promote the development of educational administrators in their own context. The assumption made by the researcher was that reflective practitioners have a desire to learn and perform more effectively (Butler, 1996). Indeed the human agent, as a practising administrator, is "always in the process of 'becoming' what is required by the ever changing parameters of the context" (Butler, 1996, p. 265). The study therefore is a potential vehicle to provide an understanding of mentoring as a professional development activity for administrators. This aim led the researcher to identify two research questions, which guided the research process.

Research Question One

What are the possibilities for mentoring as a professional development strategy for school administrators?

Research Question Two

How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program?

1.3 Significance of the study

The exploration of these research questions enabled the researcher to identify the value of mentoring as a professional development opportunity. The study also provided an opportunity for the researcher to focus on his role as APA and to consider ways in which professional development activities might be enhanced. For many practitioners, professional development has been associated with attending courses and collecting certificates (Butler, 1996). Mentoring, as opposed to structured courses, is one form of professional development that offers administrators the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills, build authentic relationships and work within a learning organisation (Duignan, 1997).

This research may offer a practical alternative to others who are seeking professional development. This research attempts to blend the theory of mentoring with the practical insights associated with the professional development for one group of administrators. It is hoped that others in

administrative roles associated with education may also benefit from this study.

1.4 Design of the research

Action research as a qualitative research methodology is considered the most appropriate form of inquiry for this study. Action research is best described as “the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it” (Elliott, 1991, p. 69). Action research is primarily about involving practitioners in the critical analysis of their own situation with a view to transforming them in ways which may improve their educational context.

As a research methodology, action research is a form of inquiry that develops from a practical understanding of a situation and fully acknowledges the realities of that situation (Elliott, 1991). To facilitate the action research associated with this study, the process of “reflective deliberation” (Bonser & Grundy, 1988) was used. Reflective deliberation as an action research methodology is guided by the twin goals of improvement and involvement. Reflective deliberation provides opportunities for participants involved in the study to talk, reflect and write about their ideas. The process allows for the emergence of shared agreement but does not permit conflict to be glossed over or negated by dominant personalities with opposing points of view.

The collection of data for the study involved a number of processes. Firstly the researcher maintained a journal of personal reflections during the course

of the project. Later a group of six participants, currently working in Catholic Primary Schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, in the role of APA, completed a written survey and participated in a semi-structured interview. The participants published a jointly written statement from their own reflections which provided recommendations and implications associated with mentoring.

1.5 Limitation of the research

There are certain limitations associated with this study. The study is limited to examining mentoring as one possible professional development activity for those in the role of APA within Catholic primary systemic schools. The study does not reflect the views and perceptions of all administrators in all Catholic Schools. This study is also limited by the time (six months) that the researcher was able to devote to it. This meant that the researcher is limited to research the perceptions of six practitioners currently engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration.

1.6 Definition of terms

A definition of terms often used in the study is provided below.

Mentoring: Is the relationship, which gives people the opportunity to share their professional and personal skills and experiences. It is a personal giving and sharing of experiences, feelings, skills and encouragement that enable colleagues to grow and develop in the process. Mentoring is a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is enabled to increase

awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action to develop themselves (Hay, 1995, p. 40).

Mentor: a wise or trusted adviser or guide (Collins Dictionary). The term originates from Greek mythology and appears in Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, in his absence from Ithaca, asked his trusted friend, Mentor, to act as a teacher, role model, adviser, challenger and encourager to Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

Mentee: a person guided or advised by the mentor.

Informal mentoring: An informal or social network of significant others to assist in problem solving.

Formal mentoring: An organised relationship between mentor, mentee and the organisation, in response to a specific need. This relationship involves the training of participants. It has clear parameters and exists for a designated length of time.

Dyad: The pairing of a mentor and mentee.

Cross gender dyad: The pairing of a man and a woman in a mentoring relationship.

Reflective deliberation: This is a process that enables participants to express ideas through discussion and to reflect upon written perceptions. This leads to a written statement which is considered to be an authentic account of the participant's ideas. It is this written codification of ideas which then becomes the basis of group reflection.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

The following chapter presents a review of the literature on mentoring as a professional development activity for administrators. This review enables the researcher to gain an appreciation of mentoring within a cross cultural context. A review of the literature examines mentoring in a range of countries throughout the world. Studies of mentoring for administrators are presented from the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Singapore, South Africa and Australia. This review of the literature provided the means for the researcher to explore the advantages and shortcomings of mentoring as a professional development activity, and assists the researcher with a conceptual framework upon which to base the findings of the research. Chapter three details the research design. The choice of action research as a research methodology is justified as the most appropriate approach to suit this study. In this chapter a description of action research is undertaken with specific emphasis given to the process of "reflective deliberation" (Bonser & Grundy, 1988). The design of the data collection process is also outlined in this chapter. Chapter four presents an analysis and discussion of the research. In this chapter an analysis of the data gathered from the participants is undertaken. Chapter five offers conclusion to the research and addresses implications for subsequent research on the topic of mentoring as a professional development activity for administrators.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring, as a professional development strategy, can be used by those in the position of APA. It seems appropriate for a review of the literature to define mentoring, present the history of mentoring as well as the current social context for professional development, examine the benefits of mentoring for the mentee, the organisation and the mentor, and lastly to consider the challenges and shortcomings associated with mentoring.

2.2 Mentoring defined

Making use of mentoring to enhance relationships and enrich professional development is not a new concept, since the literature consistently identifies an historical link with mentoring and Greek mythology (Bell, 1996; Caldwell & Carter, 1993; Daresh, 1995; Hay, 1995; Hurwood, 1997a; Shelton & Herman, 1993). The concept of a “significant other” assisting another colleague’s learning dates back to Homer’s *Odyssey* (*Ulysses*, Latin translation) circa 800 BCE (Curruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1993. p, 7). As Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, is preparing to fight the Trojan War he realises that he must leave behind his son, his only heir, Telemachus. Mentor is entrusted by Odysseus to remain in Ithaca and raise the king’s young son, Telemachus. Mentor had to be a teacher, role model, counsellor, a trusted adviser, a challenger and an encourager to the young Telemachus so that Telemachus could one day

become a wise ruler. Greek mythology also acknowledges the importance of balance between masculine and feminine qualities. Athene (the female goddess of wisdom) would also assume the role of Mentor to provide a feminine perspective to Telemachus' education and development (Bell, 1995; Daresh, 1995).

From this Greek mythology comes the image of a "developmental alliance" (Hay, 1995), a "significant other", a "critical friend", a "peer pal" (Limerick, Heywood, & Daws, 1994), a "cognitive coach" (Barnard, 1995) endowed with masculine and feminine qualities, skills and knowledge to develop a person to their full potential.

The classic mentoring relationship defined in Greek mythology has been elaborated upon in the literature devoted to the topic (Caldwell & Carter, 1993; Daresh & Playko, 1995; Murray, 1991 & 1996). *The Collins Dictionary* defines a mentor as " a counsellor, a wise and prudent adviser". Other contemporary definitions of mentoring include, " a structure and series of processes designed to create effective relationships, guide the desired behaviour change of those involved, and evaluate the results for the mentees, mentors, and the organisation" (Murray, 1996). Daresh and Playko, (1995) define mentoring as "the forming of mutually supportive and learning relationships between two individuals working in the same or similar organisation". Modern mentors are defined as "influential people who

significantly help you to reach your major life goals” (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1995).

The literature suggests a fresh approach to mentoring and prefers to refer to transformational mentoring as a developmental alliance. Transformational mentoring (a developmental alliance) is defined as “ a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is able to increase awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action, to develop themselves” (Hay, 1995. p. 3). In suggesting a range of definitions it is important to consider that mentoring “is not a neat, nor precise activity - it can be all things to all people and there in lies both its strength and potential weakness” (Southworth, 1995, p.19).

Greek mythology not only offers the story of the Mentor but also presents a popular metaphor to describe organisational discontinuity. Around the year 500 B.C. Heraclitus provides the metaphor of the river in which the water is constantly flowing. The notion of the flowing water illustrates the image of permanence and change. The river remains constant but the water is never the same. Heraclitus explained that it is not possible to step into the same river twice because the water keeps flowing by. The application of Heraclitus’ metaphor to contemporary organisations is simple. The faster the river flows, the quicker we lose touch. Mentoring within this state of discontinuity is about innovation, adaptation and the facilitation of learning for transformation (Hay, 1995, p.12).

2.3 Social context for mentoring

Catholic education, like society, is presented with a complex, uncertain and turbulent world of constant change (Duignan, 1997). It appears to remain in a state of “permanent white water” (Valli, 1996), a “moving mosaic” (Hargreaves, 1994) of tensions, dilemmas and paradoxes that are inevitable, endemic and perpetual (Handy 1995). Western society is undergoing a sharp transformation, a state of discontinuity, where “within a few short decades society will rearrange itself - its world view, its basic values, its social and political structures, its arts and key institutions. We are currently living through such a transformation” (Drucker, 1993,p.1). Society is identified as being in a discontinuous state where slow evolutionary change has been replaced by traumatic revolutionary change (Drucker, 1993, p.3) The only certainty that appears to exist in this post-modern age of uncertainty is that the “closer one looks at a real world problem the fuzzier becomes its solution” (Zadeh in Duignan, 1997, p.7).

During this time of discontinuity the science of management embraced concepts of productivity, accountability, profits, prestige and outcomes. It has neglected the human side of enterprise (Duignan, 1997, p. 4). The path forward through this state of discontinuity is to reclaim an authentic sense of leadership where rhetoric and action match reality, and right relationships, built on the Christian values of justice, love, peace and liberation, become the

heart of the reality of a living and learning community (O'Murchu, 1997a). If there is to be an escape route, "any release into a new belonging, it must be through facing what we are, and what we have in fact chosen, one way or another, to become" (Kelly, 1993, p. 131). "Our vision for the future should be built on what we currently do well; it needs to be firmly based on the here and now and should derive its energy and direction from current organisational members" (Duignan, 1997, p. 23). Leaders are able to communicate the vision of the organisation. They have the capacity to inspire and encourage. Leaders also mentor (Bell, 1996; Hay, 1995; Murray, 1996). Mentoring is part of a leader's role that promotes learning and growth. Mentoring is also a successful professional development strategy to assist people to be "intentional and authentic" (Duignan, 1997) and to operate within organisations which are "moving away from the certainty of the right answer to a process of transformation and a world of the unknown" (Hay, 1995, p.7).

2.4 The Benefits of Mentoring

A professional development activity includes any learning which improves knowledge, understanding, attitudes and performance related to current or future roles (Logan, 1994). Mentoring has become an important aspect of professional development in many countries including the United Kingdom (Bolam, 1995; Kirkham, 1995), Singapore (Chong, Low & Walker, 1989; Tin, 1995), The United States of America (Bell, 1996; Hay, 1995), South Africa

(Daresh, 1996) and Australia (Brady, 1993; Hurwood, 1997a). The notion and value of mentoring is similar in these different societies and cultures and incorporates the dual concepts of transformational learning (Starratt, 1993) and professional development. A review of the current literature on the topic of mentoring, as part of professional development for educational leaders, suggests a situation of accepting a strategy that appears logical. In response to this perceived need, a systematic review of the existing research and current literature will attempt to enhance the understanding of the nature and impact of mentoring for educational administrators.

The literature refers to numerous benefits of mentoring in a range of countries and cultures throughout the world. Studies in countries such as United Kingdom (Bolam, 1995; Kirkham, 1995), Singapore (Chong *et al*, 1989; Tin, 1995), The United States of America (Bell, 1996; Hay, 1995), South Africa (Daresh, 1996) and Australia (Brady, 1993; Hurwood, 1997a) have identified specific benefits to the mentee, mentor and the organisation.

The literature reports that mentoring is mutually beneficial to both the mentor and the mentee "because there is often little professional development available for administrators" (Bush & Coleman, 1995, p. 66). As a professional development activity, mentoring presents itself as "a rare opportunity to participate in a truly cooperative learning process" (Gordon & Moles, 1994, p. 69).

2.5 Benefits to the mentee

2.5.1 Mentoring reduces isolation and improves confidence.

The literature reports overwhelmingly that mentoring assists with what has become known as “professional loneliness” or isolation for administrators (Bolam, 1995; Brady, 1994; Kirkham, 1995; Southworth, 1995). For many administrators the status and responsibility of the position typically isolate them from other staff. Mentoring with colleagues who share a professional interest is a powerful learning tool. There is a common feeling among educational administrators who are engaged in mentoring programs of “an enormous sense of relief knowing that there is someone whom one could turn to in confidence, for advice, encouragement and help” (Pocklington & Weindling, 1996, p. 183).

Access to a mentor who is prepared to listen to concerns provides not only professional but also emotional support to the mentee. Research has reported that administrators spend so much time being supportive or directive that it is important to be able to vent personal feelings within an environment of trust (Pocklington & Weindling, 1996, p. 186). The opportunity for a cathartic release is highly valued by administrators in a mentoring relationship as it provides the chance to “let off steam and release pent up anger and frustration” in an effort to view school or organisational circumstances in a more objective fashion (Pocklington & Weindling, 1996, p. 187).

Another widely mentioned benefit of mentoring identified in the literature is the improved self-confidence of administrators as a result of the contact with a mentor. (Bolam, 1995; Playko, 1995). The literature suggests that having a mentor enables an administrator to feel more comfortable in trying newly learned skills with someone who is experienced and trusted. In many ways, mentoring assists in providing administrators with the confidence and competence to get the job done. Yet, "success is not simply getting the job done, but also getting it done in a way that is not offensive to local or cultural norms" (Playko, 1995, p. 88).

Mentoring assists in gaining another perspective for administrators on leadership and management issues (Pocklington & Weindling, 1996, p.183). The mentor can assist the mentee in developing an increased understanding of the organisation. Through identification of problems, a mentor can assist a paradigm shift, enabling the mentee to "take the wide view" and "prioritise pressing tasks and identify what can be safely left" (Bolam, 1995, p. 37). Professional growth is typically attributed to the fact that regular career counselling and guidance takes place. Those supported by mentoring in the literature reported that they were "goal directed, increasingly serious about detail, self confident and reflective" (Daresh & Playko, 1995, p. 150).

When administrators make the shift from the academic preparation phase of professional development to the reality of an administrative role, a mentor can assist in the "learning of the tricks of the trade" (Playko, 1990, p. 31). Some of the tricks of the trade include proven leadership and management

techniques that can be utilised in varying settings. Learning the tricks of the trade also involves knowing how to function in the political world. Following formal guidelines, policies and handbooks is often very different from the reality that can confront a school administrator (Playko, 1990, p. 32).

Mentoring can play a key part in the transition of a new administrator in making the change from their previous post to that of a new administrator in a school (Southworth, 1995, p.21). Becoming an administrator involves accepting leadership and the fact that there is a different kind of authority, influence and responsibility attached to the role. Mentoring assists in the formation of an individual's professional identity, and this is more a process than an event (Walker, 1994; Wilmore, 1995).

2.5.2 Mentoring promotes reflection.

Effective professional development involves "breeding C.A.R.P (critical, analytic, reflective practitioners)" (Kirkham, 1995, p.82). Reflection is a mentoring strategy that is a catalyst for developing an administrator's expertise. If reflection is conducted in a thoughtful way so that practitioners can expand their knowledge and skills, then there is every reason to believe that this learning will become integrated into an administrator's thinking and practice (Barnett, 1995, p.45).

Reflection is a form of transformational learning if the reflection identifies the evolution of the unknown to known (Butler, 1996, p. 269). Mentoring offers the opportunity to reflect and improve performance through a journey of

personal evolution and learning. Transformational learning (Mezirow, 1977) involves participants being unsettled and challenged in their thinking. Mentoring facilitates transformational learning and accommodates an administrator's desire to live, learn and perform within a learning organisation. Most professional development or training occurs outside the workplace. The very context of training requires the administrator to return to school to implement the knowledge and training gained at courses. The message from this structure for administrators is that professional development is only related to the mastery of new techniques rather than the genuine development associated with reflection and change of professional practice. Training alone does not appear to meet the demands of continuous learning through diverse stages of individual growth (Butler, 1996).

Reflection also helps new administrators to make sense of a new setting. New administrators will "need assistance in interpreting events in a new setting, including surprises, and help in the interpretation of cultural assumptions" (Kirkham, 1995, 77). Reflection on current practice is a process where professionals can test their intuitive understanding of the complexities that surround their work in schools. As a process, reflection facilitates the rehearsal of ideas, plans and strategies and allows administrators to use a valued colleague, whose opinion they trust, as a sounding board (Southworth, 1995, p. 21).

2.5.3 Mentoring provides opportunities to under represented groups.

In the past, mentoring has been associated with senior managers who were

male and white and Anglo-Saxon. This was a notable problem associated with traditional mentoring (Hay, 1995, p. 65). Mentoring for equal employment opportunities aims to improve the status of, and increase promotional opportunities for, target group members such as women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disabilities (Hurwood, 1997a, p. 6). Research conducted on the advantages of mentoring for women found that women as a target group greatly benefited from mentoring (Limerick *et al*, 1994, p. 2). Women appear to gain an increased understanding of organisational dynamics and politics, and report an increased perception of legitimacy in the organisation from their association with a mentor (Luebkeermann & Clements, 1994; Welch, 1993).

2.6 Benefits to the mentor

The literature identifies benefit to the mentor from the mentoring process (Bolam, 1995; Playko, 1995; Pocklington & Weindling; 1996, Shelton & Herman, 1993; Shultz, 1995). According to the research presented in the literature, the main benefits for the mentor were: extending their professional experience, engaging in self reflection and a reduction in the isolation associated with administration (Bolam, 1995, p. 39). To be selected as a mentor served as a powerful indicator that an individual had real worth in terms of his/her personal attributes, experience, knowledge and skills. This was considered a "powerful form of recognition" for mentors that could not be duplicated in other ways (Playko, 1995, p.86). Serving as a mentor allows

experienced administrators to return to a teaching role where they can share information and insights with others. Teaching was identified as a valuable benefit of mentoring as many administrators cease direct daily classroom contact with children, (Playko, 1995, p. 87). Finally the mentoring relationship allows the mentors to engage in a process of learning and development through allowing someone to ask questions and disturb their established routine (Otto in Wunch, 1994, p. 15).

2.7 Benefits to the organisation

When participants in a mentoring relationship benefit, it is obvious that the organisation would also benefit. Various studies have demonstrated that mentoring improves recruitment, assists induction, improves organisational communication and is cost effective (Bell, 1996; Hay, 1995; Murray, 1991).

An important feature of mentoring that can be overlooked is that it often puts people together who would not otherwise have had any contact. The advantage of this pairing can be an increase in awareness, understanding and sensitivity particularly where there is a focus on gender differences, multi-generational issues or multicultural issues within a dyad (Shultz, 1995, p. 65).

Mentoring programs develop an "organisational spirit, or culture of collegiality" (Playko, 1995, p. 89). Administrators often receive the message either explicitly or implicitly that their primary function is to solve the problems

specific to their school setting. When an organisation endorses a mentoring program it articulates a clear message that there is no longer any need for administrators to approach their work in isolation and that it is acceptable to work with colleagues in a climate that promotes collaborative problem solving (Playko, 1995, p.85). Mentoring sets the tone for cooperative teamwork and collaboration where colleagues can be seen as a source of information and support rather than as competitors. As a result, networking begins, and this has a positive impact on a school administrator's professional growth (Shultz, 1995, p. 63).

Mentoring has been identified as perhaps "the best method of passing on the norms, values, assumptions and myths that are central to an organisation's successful survival" (Bush & Coleman 1995; Chong et al, 1989; Daresh & Playko, 1995; Limerick *et al*, 1994). As a professional development strategy, mentoring has the power and ability to reinforce and reproduce the existing organisational culture. This has both advantages and disadvantages to the organisation. The shortcomings of this aspect of mentoring will be discussed later in this chapter.

2.7.1 Mentoring reduces turnover of personnel

Mentoring assists in the retention of personnel in senior management positions as administrators are less likely to burn out and leave the system as a solution to their problems (Wunsch, 1994, p. 12). "Mentored administrators experience significantly less emotional exhaustion, less depersonalisation

and more personal satisfaction than non-mentored counterparts” (Shultz, 1995, p. 63). Through mentoring, administrators learn how to utilise best the resources of the organisation and how to function best within its structures. This creates administrators who are confident about their effectiveness and their abilities, who have more control over their environment, who retain ownership and responsibility for their decisions and who ultimately place less demand on the organisation’s infrastructure (Shultz, 1995, p. 64).

Studies of the Headlamp program in the United Kingdom (Bolam, 1995; Kirkham, 1995), the Diploma of Educational Administration in Singapore (Chong *et al*, 1989; Tin, 1995) and the Crosslink program in Queensland (Hurwood, 1997b; Gietzel, 1997) all report that mentoring is a low cost, high quality professional development. It makes good business sense for organisations to find ways to reduce the amount of initial learning time required of a new administrator prior to his/her becoming an effective leader of a school community (Kirkham, 1995, p. 79).

Mentoring is often a valuable way for an organisation to identify future generations of potentially effective school leaders (Playko, 1995, p.89). Organisations are often unable to locate truly strong candidates for available principalship or other senior administration positions. In becoming active participants in identifying, recruiting, selecting and preparing future leaders through mentoring, school governing bodies report that they now have a ready and available pool of administrators who are capable of stepping into

leadership positions when required (Playko, 1995; Shultz, 1995).

2.8 The challenges and shortcomings of mentoring

It is essential to assert from the outset that mentoring "is not a neat, precise and self contained activity - it can be all things to all people and therein lies both its strength and potential weakness" (Southworth, 1995, p. 19). An identification of the potential difficulties associated with mentoring assists in establishing what mentoring can and cannot do as a professional development activity.

The pairing of mentors and mentees is problematic and remains a tricky and imprecise part of the activity. Incompatibility in a pairing can result in the breakdown of mentoring partnerships (Bush & Coleman, 1995; Hay, 1995; Playko, 1995; Southworth, 1995). To make it more likely that the pairing of mentor and mentee succeed, the literature makes the following suggestions. Firstly, successful mentoring should be voluntary (Hay, 1995; Southworth, 1995). The voluntary principle means that mentoring is a process which occurs between consenting adults, and unwilling participants are not forced to engage in this professional development activity. Secondly, there are no ironclad rules or formulas used in the matching of participants. Issues such as gender, ethnicity, age and qualifications are merely a guide to assist in the matching of mentors and mentees (Playko, 1995, p. 92).

The responsibility for planning a formal mentoring program must be given

careful consideration. This, in particular, is often overlooked by governing bodies. In fact, many organisations “will spend infinitely more time on deciding the decor of the new board room than they will on deciding effective strategies to support their leadership teams” (Playko, 1995, p.92). Governing organisations require “a clear focus and commitment for mentoring programs otherwise they will fail” (Bush & Coleman, 1995, p.67). Many organisations have viewed mentoring as a way to make certain that beginners have a “buddy” in the system to “show them the ropes” or as a “survival tool” only to be used when people land in trouble and need to be rescued (Playko, 1995, p. 90). This motivation, although basic, is reasonable but the induction and support for beginning administrators is only one aspect of mentoring. The true goal of mentoring must be seen as “promoting leadership and not survivorship” (Playko, 1995, p. 91).

Another shortcoming of many mentoring programs is that they are based on the assumption that anyone who has experience as a teacher and administrator will automatically be able to be an effective mentor (Playko, 1995, p.91). Those who undertake the responsibility of mentor will require specialised training provided by the organisation in the area of human relations skills and leadership skills, and possess a basic understanding of what mentoring is as a professional development strategy.

Any professional development activity requires time. Lack of time, above any other difficulty associated with mentoring, was identified as one of the most

significant hurdles to successful mentoring (Bell, 1996, Bolam *et al*, 1995, Hay, 1995, Hurwood, 1997b, Playko, 1995). Administrators, by the nature of their role, have many demands placed on their time. Mentoring requires time for travelling to and from locations for partners to meet, the actual meetings take time and the staff can complain that mentoring is a waste of time because it takes administrators away from school (Bolam *et al*, 1995, p. 40). The issue about time is in fact an artificial drawback. If time is not given to professional development, organisations will "cease to exist as they will not develop new ideas, new skills and new leaders for the future" (Hay, 1995, p. 70).

2.8.1 Effects, phenomenon and other obstacles to mentoring

Colleagues who are not involved in mentoring can become jealous when their peers become professionally recognised, and may label the strategy as "elitism" (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1994, p.18). Mentors can also consider mentees as perceived threats and become jealous of talented mentees who might become professional threats for future promotion. Spouse jealousy can also develop, with or without reason, in cross gender dyads.

The term the "Matthew effect", derives from the gospel passage (Matt 25:29) "For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough, but for the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Jerusalem Bible translation). The "Matthew effect" describes the

circumstance in which confident and competent participants find mentors more easily than participants who are less confident, disadvantaged or marginalised in some way (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1994, p.19).

The “Salieri phenomenon” is based on the story of Salieri, the musical composer, who kept the genius of Mozart from being publicly discovered and recognised in his own lifetime. As applied to mentoring, the “Salieri phenomenon” exists when a mentor consciously or unconsciously prevents the work of a partner from being recognised (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1994, p.19).

Cloning is another potential problem associated with mentoring. Mentors may view the relationship with their partners as simply a cloning of their norms, values and expectations as well as those of the organisation (Zulmara, 1997, p. 12). A mentor may also offer too much protection and not allow the mentee to fully develop, thus fostering a relationship of dependence rather than growth (Bush & Coleman, 1995, p. 68). Staff can feel neglected by mentors and mentees and can consider the process as nepotistic, perpetuating a culture of “jobs for the boys” (Limerick *et al*, 1994, p. 4).

Mentors may tend to select partners who are “a safe bet”, individuals who show potential, exhibit predictable behaviours and are more likely to be compatible in styles of management, and are content to maintain the “status quo”. The literature identifies that if organisations continue mentoring the

same kind of people in an attempt to perpetuate organisational norms and values, then a state of "hyperconformity" will develop (Zulmara, 1997, p. 9). It is suggested that those who appear different (like women and minorities) can be expected to "hyperconform", to give up being who they are in order to succeed in the organisation. Organisations, which participate in mentoring programs, must be conscious of fostering conformity, homogeneity and the perpetuation of the status quo. A diversity of gender, ethnicity, attitudes and philosophies should be welcomed, promoted and celebrated within a formal mentoring program that involves the organisation (Zulmara, 1997, p. 12).

An implication from identifying some of the difficulties associated with mentoring is the recognition that mentoring may not be the best way for all administrators to learn about their career and roles (Daresh & Playko, 1995, p.9). Mentoring can be acknowledged as an effective and innovative professional development strategy but it may not fit the learning styles and needs of all individuals.

2.9 Relationships, the key to mentoring

"Mentoring is the art of listening without judging, enabling without guiding, exploring without directing, the art is in the relationship" (Southworth, 1995, p. 20). Like science and many other disciplines, leadership and management have been driven by a mechanistic and fragmented approach towards the administration of organisations. Quantum physics is now suggesting a different understanding of world that can be applied to leadership and

management. This understating is based on the participatory nature of reality and the assumption that nothing exists at the subatomic level without engagement with another energy source (Wheatley, 1992, p.144). The new science of management suggests that the focus is no longer on the efficient management of discrete parts, but on relationships. Leadership and management, like science, is “always dependent on the context, but the context is established by relationships” (Wheatley, 1992, p.144). It appears that after a prolonged association with mechanistic structures “our broken and fragmented world yearns to be whole again” (O’Murchu, 1997a, p. 89).

In terms of leadership, a more specific orientation may be adopted for Catholic Schools. One way of exploring this orientation is through the use of the term “Kingdom of God”. This is a specific Christian concept exploring aspects of moral leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992). In particular, leadership according to Kingdom values means that the Catholic School must develop within it an ethos and structure that mirror transformation through the living values that Jesus proclaimed (McLaughlin, 1998. p. 29). As a Christian leader “Jesus did not proclaim himself – he proclaimed the Kingdom” (O’Murchu, 1997b, p.119).

Wholeness requires a balance between the head, the intellect, heart, the spiritual/emotional and the hands, the physical. A spiritual relationship with a presence greater than ourselves enables people to find meaning in life and work (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997, p.126). For Catholics, the spiritual

understanding of the Trinity has been a “theological jigsaw puzzle” (O’Murchu, 1997a, p.82). O’Murchu (1997a) suggests that the doctrine of the Trinity is an attempted expression of God’s capacity and power to relate. Belief in God is essentially about relatedness and relationships, for “what we are as individuals, and what we will become in the future is determined by the quality of our interdependence on others” (O’Murchu, 1997a, p.83). For the Christian, interdependence, through co-operation, in order to bring about God’s Kingdom, is an essential guiding gospel value.

“The challenge for us is to accept full responsibility for the process of transformation, initiated in and through Jesus and commit ourselves to its unfolding by building up a world order marked by right relationships of justice, love and peace” *that lead to liberation* (author’s addition and emphasis) (O’Murchu, 1997a, p.118).

Leadership to bring about God’s Kingdom is communal and shared. A leader exists only because of the relationship that is developed with followers. This relationship also allows followers to assume leadership, and leaders, in turn, to become followers. Leaders, in short, create other leaders, and it is in this fashion that leadership becomes a shared and communal process. (Foster in Smyth, 1989, p.57). Relationships are crucial to providing organisations with effective leadership, unity and purpose. Right relationships provide the opportunity to balance creativity with social responsibility and accountability. As it is “through meaningful relationships that individuals come to recognise, accept and appreciate the emergent social reality of living and working together in organisation” (Duignan, 1997, p.17).

Mentors and mentees require ownership of core values such as trust, respect and ethics, based on the notion that they will be operating in a learning situation as equals (Hay, 1995). Within this learning relationship there must be an acknowledgment of differing personal styles (eg. transactional models of ego states²), thinking styles, working styles and psychological styles (eg Myers-Briggs type inventory³). The common factor that transcends all of these constraints is the core value of equality within the mentoring relationship (Bell, 1996; Caldwell & Carter; 1993; Hay, 1995; Wunsch, 1994). Successful mentoring requires working to strip any nuance of rank, power or status from the relationship as, "mentoring is about equality not sovereignty" (Bell, 1996, p.81). Mentoring as a relationship is a partnership.

Partner does not mean 'servant' (Greenleaf 1996). The word 'servant' implies deference; partner implies mutuality. 'Servant' calls for power over; partner requires power with. 'Servant' connotes compliance; partner connotes community. 'Servants' acquiesce; partners assert. 'Servants' show patronage; partners show passion (Bell, 1996, p.15).

2.10 Structures for Mentoring

If we consider some of the better known mentors in history, names such as Socrates, Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Mohammed and Confucius come to mind.

² Transactional analysis refers to the ego states known as 1) controlling parent, 2) nurturing parent, 3) functional adult, 4) adapted child, 5) natural child. See Hay, J. (1992). *Transactional analysis for trainers*, McGraw Hill. London.

³ Psychological styles of extroversion/introversion, sensing/intuitive, thinking /feeling, judging/perceiving are labels used to provide a profile on how people focus their attention, take in information, make decisions and how they relate to the world. See Myers-Briggs, I. (1980). *Gifts differing*, Consulting Psychological Press, Boston.

Their influence was partly due to a heightened understanding of human relationships and the capacity to question (Bell, 1996, p. 75). These mentors had the ability to challenge their learners, as well as the capacity to question, and the ability to listen carefully to the meaning behind the answer or the silence. The effective use of human relations skills such as questioning “brings insight, which fuels curiosity, which cultivates wisdom” (Bell, 1996, p.68).

In work settings, mentoring traditionally develops informally when mentors and mentees “stumble upon” each other. Informal mentoring relies totally on natural selection, personality congruence and happenstance (Wunch, 1994, p. 290). Mentoring in these situations usually evolves slowly over time into a friendship. It develops as pairs come to know and trust one another. These ad hoc mentoring relationships may develop more readily between those participants with pre-existing social relationships, those with similar cultural or ethnic backgrounds and from within, rather than across, genders (Morzinski & Fisher, 1996, p. 17).

Rather than simply viewing mentoring in terms of an ad hoc relationship, it can be conceptualised as a process. Four common features identify formal mentoring:

1. Less experienced mentees are matched with more experienced mentors.
2. There is an orientation for participants and a system of monitoring the program.

3. Organisational recognition is given to participants.
4. Matches between mentor and mentee pairs usually last from six months to two years (Morzinski & Fisher, 1996, p. 44-45).

Formal mentoring is an approach that covers long-term, significant growth rather than short-term problem solving. It relates to the whole person, in career and personal life. As a growth process, mentoring can be defined, planned and evaluated and “when one member of the benefiting triad is the institution, it is the responsibility of that organisation to originate, coordinate and support formal programs” (Wunch, 1994, p. 29).

Planned mentoring requires a rationale for choosing participants and matching them within the triad of the mentor, mentee and organisation. An accepted practice for a mentoring pair is to generate a contract with negotiated rules and boundaries that each party finds acceptable and useful. A person selected as a mentor should always have the option of agreeing or not agreeing to undertake the role. Ultimately, mutual consent and commitment underpin effective mentoring relationships.

In terms of matching mentors and mentees, there are no expert methods to assess compatibility. Pairing can be undertaken by the organisation, the mentor or mentee. Issues such as the geographic location of the participants, personality, age, qualifications, gender and ethnic background must be taken into consideration when forming a mentoring partnership (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1993, p.14). The significance and potential impact of

these factors cannot be underestimated, but, in the final analysis, mentoring is a set of behaviours that can be defined, learned and practised.

Mentoring relationships have identifiable cycles that include induction, development and completion. Training and preparation offered by the organisation are an essential components of effective mentoring in a formal mentoring situation (Hurwood, 1997a; Wunsch, 1994). The induction process for mentoring should expose participants to, and train them in, the use of human relations skills such as attentive listening, assertiveness, communication skills, feedback and questioning methods and affirmation techniques (Wunsch, 1994, p.30). Mentors also need a current knowledge of their discipline, and mentees must be able to clarify their goals and know what mentors can and cannot do. A comprehensive training program offered by the organisation is an essential feature of a formal mentoring program for participants to understand the goals of the program and to know how to effectively use the mentoring process.

2.11 Summary of Literature

This chapter has attempted to define the place of mentoring as a professional development activity for school administrators within the current social and educational context. The benefits of mentoring for the mentor, the mentee and the organisation have been identified and the shortcomings of mentoring discussed. Structures for formal and informal mentoring were elaborated upon and relationships were identified as being pivotal to a successful

mentoring relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring can be used by those in the position of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, as a professional development strategy. The unique role of the Assistant to the Principal Administration, within the organisational structure of Catholic systemic schools of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, led the researcher to investigate two research questions.

Research Question 1

What are the possibilities for mentoring as a professional development strategy for school administrators?

Research Question 2

How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program?

3.2 Research orientation

Within education, there has historically been a heavy emphasis on quantitative research (Candy, 1989), an approach identified with “hard” scientific truth (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). Qualitative research, as a contrasting approach, was characterised by “hard nosed” positivists as a “soft” option for educational research due to the degree of “subjective”

interpretation associated with this perspective. However, qualitative approaches such as phenomenological, ethnographic, naturalistic or anthropological are becoming increasingly “ a part of the intellectual landscape in educational evaluation” (Tam, 1993, p. 19). A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it involves reflection upon current practice and dialogue, that will inform professional judgement in the area of professional development.

3.3 Action research

One particular research methodology that is appropriate for this study is action research. Action research exists within the landscape of qualitative educational research methodologies and was considered appropriate for the purpose of this study. The term “action research” was first used by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946) who placed value in combining theory and practice to investigate effective change in an effort to improve relationships between members of a group (Burns; 1997: Elliott, 1991). Action research can best be defined as “the study of a social situation with the view to improving the quality of action within it” (Elliott, 1991, p. 69). Action research is primarily about involving educational practitioners in the critical analysis of their own situation with a view to transforming them in ways which will improve their educational context. Ultimately, action research is a form of “conscientisation”, a commitment to the improvement of education (Burns, 1997, p. 357). There are four basic characteristics of action research:

Action research is *situational* - diagnosing a problem in a specific

context and attempting to solve it in that context.

It is *collaborative*, with researchers and practitioners working together.

It is *participatory*, as team members directly take part in implementing the research.

It is *self-evaluative* - modifications are continuously evaluated within the ongoing situation to improve practice (Burns, 1997, p. 347).

Authentic action research usually commences with observations from the real world. It involves questioning why practice has not led to expected results and the formulation of personalised intuitive theories. The development of a personal theory assists in the identification of the problem and in essence is the start of the qualitative research process. Once the problem has been identified it can be investigated in conjunction with a tentative guiding hypothesis that attempts to improve the situation. Action research is a form of inquiry that develops from a practical understanding of a situation and fully acknowledges the “messy complexity” and the realities that face practitioners (Elliott, 1991, p. 52).

Action research unifies inquiry, the improvement of performance and the development of persons in their professional role. With respect to the latter it informs professional judgment and thereby develops practical wisdom, ie. the capacity to discern the right course of action when confronted with particular, complex and problematic states of affairs. I know of no better statement about the nature of practical wisdom than the prayer asking God for the patience to accept the things one cannot change, the courage to change what can be changed and the wisdom to know the difference (Elliott, 1991, p. 52).

While numerous models of action research are evidenced in educational research, all seem to derive from Lewin's cyclical model. This model involves a cyclic sequence that has two major phases (Burns, 1997).

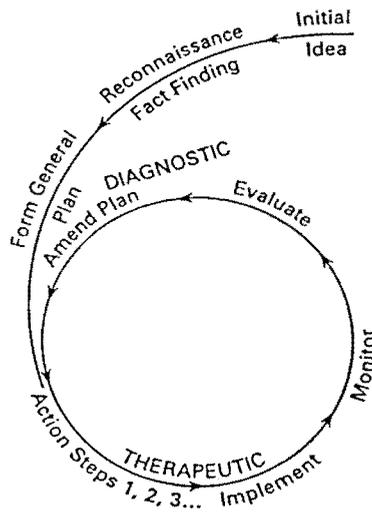


Figure 1. Lewin's Cyclic Model

Lewin's model provides the structure for reflection on current practice. Within Lewin's model two major stages can be identified:

1. Diagnostic, in which problems are analysed and hypotheses developed; and
2. Therapeutic, in which hypotheses are tested by a consciously directed change experiment in a real, social, life situation (Burns, 1997, p. 347).

Within these two major stages exists specific sub-stages or procedures (Cohen & Manion 1994; Burns, 1997):

Stage 1. This involves the identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem perceived as being critical to the educational setting. The

general idea refers to a situation a participant wishes to change or improve. "One important reason for wishing to investigate something is an uncertainty as to what to change and how" (Winter, 1989, p. 13).

Stage 2. This is the assembly of information and discussion so that a full description can be given of the situation. All of these facts help to clarify the nature of the problem.

Stage 3. This stage involves a review of the literature to find out what can be learnt from comparable studies. After consideration of the literature an hypothesis can be formulated.

Stage 4. Information is collected that is relevant to the hypothesis. The gathering of evidence may also suggest further explanations of the problem situation. There is the recognition that "any phase data-gathering and interpretation can only be one step forward, not the final answer" (Winter, 1989, p. 14). There may be a modification or redefinition of the initial statement of the problem.

Stage 5. A research method is selected and a plan of action is devised through discussion and negotiation with interested parties. The action will be a practical response to the initial problem in the context of the research undertaken, " and that the action decided upon as a result of the inquiry will inevitably generate further professional problems, which could well be the topic of further inquiry" (Winter, 1989, p. 14).

Stage 6. This stage involves the implementation of an action plan. A method of data collection must be decided upon in conjunction with a strategy of how the data will be classified and analysed. A range of

techniques will enable the researcher to consider the research from a number of viewpoints. This is referred to as triangulation.

Stage 7. The final stage involves the interpretation of the data and the overall evaluation of the project in the form of a written report. A general statement may be included in this stage where outcomes of the project are reviewed, implications identified, recommendations made and arrangements for the dissemination of results to interested parties decided upon.

3.4 Research methods

3.4.1 Reflective deliberation

Within the qualitative methodology of action research exists research strategies such as “reflective critique” and “dialectical analysis” (Winter, 1989). To facilitate the action research associated with this study the process of “reflective deliberation” will be used (Bonser & Grundy, 1988). Reflective deliberation as an action research methodology is guided by the twin goals of improvement and involvement. Reflective deliberation provides opportunities for participants to talk, reflect and write about their ideas. Dialogue with the participants and the publication of jointly authored statements “facilitate the emergence of authentic points of agreement and dissent within a group” (Bonser & Grundy, 1988, p. 37). Consensus in the deliberation approach involves making meaning based upon the rational interchange of ideas among collaborating participants. The process does not allow for conflict to be glossed over or negated by dominant personalities

with opposing points of view. The process of spoken and written articulation of ideas provides participants with the confidence to express and defend their points of view.

3.4.2 Research methods.

In order to gain an appreciation of the place of mentoring within Education Queensland, the researcher attended a workshop entitled “Mentoring for Leaders” at the Centre for Leadership Excellence. A written survey was used to obtain an understanding of what practitioners working within Catholic Education, in the role of APA, knew about mentoring. From this survey a schedule of responses was formulated to table this information (appendix, 1). Six agents working in the role of APA volunteered to be interviewed. From these interviews a codified matrix of responses from the interviews was generated (appendix, 3). The codified information from the matrix of responses became the basis of reflection for a jointly authored statement written by the participants. After further reflection and deliberation, the participants produced a jointly authored statement. During the study the researcher maintained a journal of reflections on the research process

3.5 Setting and participants

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, the position of APA in Catholic primary schools is generated by the Brisbane Catholic Education staffing schedule. The participants for this study are selected because of their role in Catholic primary schools located in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Of the 114 primary systemic schools in the Archdiocese, 20 have a human agent in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration.

This group is identified before other administrative groups (eg. Principal, Assistant to the Principal, Religious Education) within the Archdiocese because of the researcher's membership of the group and the working knowledge the researcher had about the role and function of the APA within the context of Catholic primary schools.

Initially, all members of the group undertaking the role of APA were involved in the study. These people were approached to participate in the study at a meeting held each school term. With varying enthusiasm the entire group agreed to participate in the study. In particular, six administrators volunteered to provide detailed information for the research. Using this modified approach, the researcher tightly defined a population, limiting the applicability to a specifically defined group (Stainback & Stainback, 1984, p. 299). These six people were chosen because the researcher knew of their interest in the professional development opportunities offered to those in the role of APA. Of the six administrators involved in the study there were three females and three males ranging in age from 30 - 50 years. There was also a range of experience in the role of APA from 1 - 8 years (appendix 2). The participants were scattered geographically throughout the Brisbane metropolitan area.

3.6 Validity and reliability issues

Issues of validity and reliability are a priority for qualitative research. If the research process is not valid and reliable, qualitative research will continue to be considered a “soft” option in the eyes of scientific research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). It is argued that action research as a research methodology within the qualitative paradigm “can really only possess internal validity as it is a one off intervention in a specific context” (Burns, 1997, p. 353). Action research has been criticised for lacking replicability due to the uniqueness of the setting and the participants in the process. It is also argued that action research has numerous applications for educational institutions and that it is the most practical way to unite improvement in practice and increased knowledge and understanding of an area of concern (Elliott, 1991; Winter, 1989).

The role of quantification in qualitative research can assist the validity and reliability of the study. Due to the nature of qualitative research it generally relies on the “thick descriptive approach” (Tam, 1993; Dey, 1993). Qualitative research uses the “thick” description of the participants as a method of reporting research findings. A challenge for qualitative research methodologies such as action research is to use quantitative methods to describe and analyse the “thick” description associated with this approach. Because of the “thickness” of the information, qualitative methods can help to “thin down” qualitative data (Dey, 1993; Tam, 1993).

As an action research strategy, the process of reflective deliberation promotes validity and reliability as it encourages critical reflection on the part of the participants. The process necessitates repeated semi-structured interviews and the publication of a jointly authored statement to negotiate meaning and arrive at consensus on issues. Rather than the researcher's imposition of a preconceived bias on the data, the process of reflective deliberation involves meaning making for participants which is based on negotiation. Consensus is arrived at through the rational interchange of ideas among participants in a climate of collaboration and reflection (Bonser & Grundy, 1988, p. 43).

Triangulation also contributes to validity and reliability as it promotes the use of a variety of strategies in the data collection process that improves the trustworthiness of the information. Triangulation is a process by which the researcher can guard against the accusation that the study's findings are simply an artefact of a single method, a single data source, or a single investigator's bias (Stainback & Stainback, 1984, p. 300). The literature also suggests that triangulation is not only a technique for monitoring, but also a more general method for bringing varieties of evidence into some relationship with each other so that they can be compared and contrasted (Elliott, 1991, p. 82). Instruments used for data collection in this study included surveys, semi-structured interviews, group discussion, journals, brainstorming and jointly authored statements.

3.7 Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher in the reflective deliberation process is that of a colleague. In action research, reflective deliberation is a process that is essentially a power-neutral strategy. Reflective deliberation is a powerful methodology in facilitating the discovery of meaning and negates any “top down” or hierarchical concerns through the negotiation. The group was so composed that any attempt by the researcher to exercise power or authority was negated. All members of the group share the same role, title, remuneration and status within the organisation. There was an equal ratio of men to women in the participatory group and at no time during the course of the research was the role of the researcher “hierarchically determined” (Bonser & Grundy, 1988, p.44). The research was conducted in the spirit of collaborative action.

As the researcher shared a common role with the participants, an authentic rapport was developed quickly and easily. The participants trusted the researcher and were willing to share their honest opinions, and answered questions in a straightforward and truthful manner. Possibly the most difficult problem for the researcher engaged in action research is the task of remaining detached from the research problem and the participants, while at the same time being reflective and empathically involved (Stainback & Stainback, 1984, p. 298). The fact that the researcher shared the same role assisted in the balance between empathy and reflectivity.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Qualitative methods such as the interview are highly personal interventions into people's lives. The interview, as a reflective process, can be the catalyst to open or reopen thoughts and feelings and has the potential to leave the person being interviewed knowing things about themselves that they did not know, or at least were unaware of, before the interview (Patton, 1990, p. 353-354). A well directed, reflective interview can become an opportunity to express disappointment or hostility in the presence of an interested listener. The power of the interview can also put the interviewer at risk in that people may tell the interviewer things they never intended to express in the interview situation (Patton, 1990, p. 355). As researchers offer a promise of confidentiality, interviews can become a confession. Researchers do not have legal protection and in rare cases some information must be reported to legal authorities. Because of these issues, the researcher conducting this study developed the following ethical framework to guide the study.

- I. Ethics approval must be gained from the university where the researcher is enrolled as a student.
- II. Informed consent must be gained from Brisbane Catholic education to approach administrators in the role of APA
- III. Informed consent must be gained from the agents participating in the study.
- IV. At no time should the research be consciously exploitative or destructive to the people involved in the investigation.
- V. All participants must be able to influence the study and the

wishes of those who do not wish to participate respected.

- VI. Anonymity of the participants must be maintained.
- VII. The development of the study will remain open to suggestions from others such as the researcher's supervisor and colleagues.
- VIII. The researcher will accept responsibility for maintaining reasonable promises of confidentiality.
- IX. The participants involved in the study may access the data generated by the study.
- X. The researcher's supervisor will undertake the role of confidant and counsellor for the researcher on matters of ethics during the study.

3.8.1 Outsider, Insider Issues

Outsider academics have been responsible for many teacher-based action research projects. The outsider academics involved in these research projects are usually teacher educators who have interpreted their role as a facilitator of teacher reflection (Elliot, 1988, p.164). Except for teacher-based investigation conducted by outsider academics, action research is primarily an activity conducted by those on the inside of a social situation. Although action research is almost exclusively an insider activity, it does not exclude those on the inside from reflecting and engaging in dialogue about each other's observations and interpretations. For the facilitator involved in action research "being is always the process of becoming" Elliott, 1988, p. 164).

As an insider, the researcher has the opportunity to examine a problem from the differing points of view of the participants involved in the study and reflect upon the problem in dialogue with the participants. The facilitator works with insiders, as an insider is tolerant of the possible divergent outcomes resulting from debate. The role of the researcher is to stimulate the process of reflection, which will enable insiders to generate their own critiques of ideological structures. The insider as an action researcher assumes a “bottom up” theory of educational change and believes that the research should empower the “under dog” (Elliott, 1988, p. 165). The researcher as a “neutral broker” believes that educational change, can be one of “democratic negotiation” (Elliott, 1988. p. 165). As insider research is an effective methodology to empower practitioners to negotiate educational change the outcomes of the research should remain the property of the insiders.

3.9 Data analysis

Describing phenomena, classifying it, and appreciating how the concepts are interconnected are the central processes related to the analysis of data. Essentially, data analysis is about what story the researcher and the data can tell (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.133). In attempting to tell a story, the data must be organised, examined and interpreted to make sense of what the researcher has learned. Data analysis is also the ability to “make complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts” (Bernard, 1988, p. 317). The analysis of data usually involves a

number of sub processes. Researchers rarely adopt generic terminology for these processes but they can be categorised in the three broad areas of data reduction, data display and the synthesis of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Tesch, 1990).

The data reduction related to the research consisted of firstly summarising the twenty responses from the written survey. The summary was the preferred form of data reduction as it provided a comprehensive summary of all the comments made by the whole group without omission. The second form of data reduction chosen was that of coding participant responses from the interviews. The codes chosen represented the “funnels” (Dey, 1993, p. 43) for the categorising of the data. The coding or classification of the data was considered an important conceptual process because it enabled pieces of the data to be examined, while at the same time they remained part of the whole story.

The data display compresses the research into a focussed summary. The first of these focussed displays is a summary combining all of the written survey responses to provide consistency in the data (appendix 1). The second method of data display is a matrix tabling the common themes identified from the six participants involved in the interview process (appendix 3). The final display of data takes the form of a jointly authored statement formulated by the six participants (appendix 4).

The synthesis of the data is the major focus of the next chapter of this study. Comprehensible vignettes of the data taken from the appropriate context or “pool of meaning” (Tesch, 1990, p. 118) are used by the researcher in the interpretation and the drawing of meaning from the data. Through the use of these methods it is hoped that the researcher is able to provide a thorough description of the participants thinking as opposed to the “thick description” that is often associated with qualitative research.

3.10 Design Summary

Research Questions:			
1. What does mentoring have to offer as a professional development strategy for school administrators. 2. How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program.			
<i>Obtaining Information</i>			
Information Required	Source of Information	How	When
Background to mentoring in Queensland	Centre of Leadership Excellence: Education Queensland	Attendance at a Workshop: Mentoring for Leaders	September 1997
An appreciation of the advantages and disadvantages of the "Crosslink" Mentoring Program operational in Queensland.	Centre of Leadership Excellence: Education Queensland	Interview with staff from the Centre of Leadership Excellence.	January 1998
What do colleagues in the role of Assistant to the Principal Administration think of mentoring.	Those who are in the role of Assistant to the Principal Administration	Written survey given at meeting. (N=20)	February 1998
Reflection by practitioners on the place of mentoring as a professional development activity.	Agents employed in the role of Assistant to the Principal Administration.	Interviews (N=6)	March-April 1998
What does a group of administrators believe to be the implications and recommendations for mentoring as a professional development activity.	Interview group.	Process of reflective deliberation producing a jointly written statement of the implications and recommendations for mentoring (N=6).	May 1998

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring can be used as a professional development strategy by those in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. Mentoring was considered worthy of investigation, as a professional development activity, as it appeared to be a strategy that is more self directed than imposed learning and capable of meeting the individual needs of the practitioners engaged in an administrative role. Professional development for many administrators has become a laborious task of attending courses and collecting certificates (Butler, 1996). As a professional development activity mentoring seems to offer professional and personal growth opportunities for administrators within an educational context. The aim of the study is to provide an understanding of mentoring as a professional development opportunity for administrators and to explore the receptivity of those in the role of APA to the concept of a formal mentoring program.

4.2 Design of the Research

In this chapter, an analysis of the data generated by the participants involved in the research is undertaken. The design of this study is based on a model for action research, and data was gathered through a written survey, interviews, brainstorming, journal writing, group discussion and the writing of a jointly authored statement. The researcher maintained a journal throughout the project as a method to record events and thoughts associated with the development of the project. As the study was based on action research methodology, reflection by the researcher and practitioners became the

“active communication channel between the outside context and the inner self” (Butler, 1996, p. 20).

The bulk of the data consisted of responses to the written survey (appendix 1), and interview responses where the themes and sub themes raised by the six participants are recorded and displayed in a matrix (appendix 3). Through the process of reflective deliberation, a jointly authored statement (appendix 4) was written outlining the group’s recommendations and implications associated with mentoring.

2.11 Findings

Mentoring was highly valued as a professional development activity by all participants. This response also correlated with the response to question 2 of the written survey where 80% of participants also rated mentoring as a highly valued professional development activity. The following quotations from three of the participants reflect response.

I do rate mentoring highly but I think it needs a helping hand as to who initiates everything. I think there is a lot of greyness there. (04)

I would rate mentoring highly as a professional development activity, it’s all about people and people are the essence of our work. In my eight years I’ve learnt a lot and often its been learnt by making mistakes, and there is nothing wrong with making mistakes, because I believe we are all learners, but I think there are more successful ways of learning than learning by making mistakes. I think in our role as APA, because it is fairly difficult, and complex, I think we need people we can go to for advice, or knowledge or expertise and that’s why I rate mentoring so highly. (03)

Any professional development activity that a person would take the time and energy to seek for themselves has to be highly beneficial. (05)

The data collected in response to defining mentoring reflected the participants' understanding of mentoring. As represented in the interview matrix (appendix 4) the responses to interview question 1 centred on the main themes of mentoring as being a professional relationship where a more experienced person worked with a less experienced person. Other responses suggested that mentoring was a deliberate, supporting and learning relationship. The following quotation is illustrative of the participants' responses.

For me mentoring is some kind of deliberate process between two people, one being more experienced than the other. The more experienced person offers some guidance and I think the outcome would be some kind of empowerment for the less experienced person. In being a deliberate relationship it would be one that both people would have one hundred percent consent to be involved in such a process. (05)

As indicated in the matrix of interview responses to question 9 (appendix 3) the participants identified seven core values as being necessary for mentoring to be a successful professional development strategy for administrators working in Catholic Primary Schools. These core values were also evidenced in the written survey (appendix 1). The participants interviewed identified "shared core values" as essential to the success of a mentoring relationship confirming the work of Hay (1995). Two participants evidence this in the following responses.

A core value for me that under pins any sort of relationship is trust. Trust for me is very important and along with trust is that honesty allows for open communication, and a lot of that groundwork is perhaps more important than the content of the program. (03)

The most important core values for me would be truth, honesty, trust, and respect - all the big ones I guess. (01)

The participants also considered that participation in a formal mentoring program should exist on a voluntary basis. This finding matched the recruitment practice of other mentoring programs (Hurwood, 1997). The following quotation eloquently articulates the stance of five respondents.

If you force someone to do something they don't want to do then it's not going to work. You are going to get a far better result if people want to be involved. I think it would be very comforting to walk into a formal mentoring program in our role. In all of this though you have to respect the individual and you are going to get people who, maybe, that's not for them, and that will always be the case. (04)

The summary of the written survey (appendix 1) and the matrix of interview responses (appendix 3) indicate that all participants consider mentoring to be operating in an informal way among APAs. The majority of participants interviewed suggested that social events and communication, using devices such as the telephone and e-mail, facilitated informal mentoring. Four participants, (01, 03, 04, 06) considered cluster meetings as the main instrument for informal mentoring. The following quotation from one participant is illustrative of this.

Yes I do, our own APA meetings are forum for informal mentoring and it's only in the last year or two I've come to know some of those people quite well and you can hop on the phone and have a bit of a gas bag about an issue and I think it is quite comforting to know that there are people going through some of the things you are. (06)

The participants identified a range of knowledge and skill areas that could be included in a formal mentoring program. All participants interviewed

identified “defining their role” as a content area for inclusion in a formal mentoring program as this seemed so different from school to school. The matrix of responses to interview question 4 of the interview schedule (appendix 3) and the summary of responses to the written survey for question 4 & 5 (appendix 1) present the participants suggestions of specific areas of knowledge and skill that could be included in a formal mentoring program. Three of these participants (03, 04, and 06) reflected on their first year in the role in an attempt to illustrate the significance of role definition.

My first year as an APA was a baptism of fire. I don't know how I really survived that first year to be honest (pause), but I think entering into this sort of role it would be good to have a mentor arrangement. Obviously it may apply to some people more or they may feel the need more. (04)

If it is formalised, oh can I say this, because I don't think as new APAs that we get a lot of support. We have our four meetings and that's great but we are really thrown into the job cold. I think its sink or swim, I really do, reflecting on when I first started I think it is sink or swim, the role changes from school to school and there is no induction process whatsoever. (03)

Thinking back to when I started. I think it is a role where most people come from the history of being a class teacher, full time, five days a week and all of a sudden you end up in this other role. I went into the role very blind and very cold and learnt my way into the role by fumbling and making mistakes I suppose. (06)

Most participants in both the written survey and the interview suggested other areas of knowledge and skill to be included in a formal mentoring program. Frequently suggested areas included interpersonal skills, organisational policy and practice and supervision. Other topics suggested for inclusion were finance and budgeting, staffing, time tabling, managerial skills, curriculum issues, time management and reviews. These findings closely correlated with mentoring programs that are operational in Singapore (Tam,

1993), South Africa (Daresh, 1996) and the United Kingdom (Kirkham, 1995).

The following quotation from one participant is illustrative of many responses.

I guess the expectations are different from school to school and looking at your role and what you want to do with your role. You've got people on site who can help you with the day to day running of the school and a lot of that comes down to a bit of common sense, but it's who to talk to about what and when so that you're not continually going back to the boss. But even from the word go nobody sat me down and said this is how the finances work, nobody sat me down and said this is the big picture of how the whole staffing thing works. I've kind of learnt those things over time through experience and filling out forms and working with budgets and all that other stuff. (01)

From the matrix of responses to question five of the interview schedule (appendix 3) and the summary of the written survey (appendix 1), three potential advantages for the organisation are identified. Participants in both the interview and the written survey suggested that mentoring, as a professional development activity, was advantageous to the organisation, the mentee and the mentor and that it would assist in development of more efficient and effective practitioners and improve the organisational culture. The following quotation reports one participant's suggested advantages for the organisation.

Let me start by saying for me Covey was the most important professional development we ever did and it was based on relationships with people and for me any professional development has its basis as relationships can only be fruitful and I see mentoring as a similar structure. It is based on relationships between people and too often in an organisation we can be so caught up in the task, in trying to get the task done without realising that there are people along the way who can support us in getting the task done. To me any organisation that offers professional development for the improvement of relationships, that is based on relationships, and has a balance of relationships and tasks and how they intertwine will be a successful organisation. 03

Four main themes associated with the potential advantages for the mentee are reflected in the matrix of interview responses (appendix 3) and the responses to question 8 of the written survey. The four main advantages were identified as feeling supported in the role, not feeling isolated, self-improvement and an increased sense of self-worth. These findings were also evidenced in mentoring programs currently offered to administrators in Australia (Hurwood, 1997; Caldwell & Carter, 1993). The following comments from two participants (02 , 03) supported these four advantages.

If mentoring is occurring, this whole process is going to enrich the culture of the school, because people in their role are going to be happier, people are going to have better job satisfaction and they know they will be doing a good job, but if there is a problem that they know they will need help with, they know they can reach out to someone. (03)

For me, I would say to feel good about doing my job well, to be a success, and know that you're not alone , that someone is out there to help you. I can imagine for others, that would be the same for their work. (02)

Other advantages, less frequently identified in the matrix of responses (appendix 3) were objective problem solving, reflection on current practice leading to change, and improved communication skills.

The participants identified two potential advantages for the mentor stemming from their involvement in a formal mentoring relationship. Five respondents to the interview and numerous written responses identified that the mentor would be exposed to new ideas and a new perspective. Four respondents to the interview and many written responses suggested that a mentor engaged

in a mentoring relationship would find the involvement an affirming activity. The following quotation from two participants (05, 06) illustrates the possible advantages for the mentor.

When I had to mentor a beginning teacher it gave me a sense of importance. I felt as though I had something not to just offer my school or my class but my colleagues as well. I think as a teacher you don't really realise you do have an abundance of qualities and abilities that you probably don't even realise you've got sometimes, until a new person comes along and they are struggling with things and you know you can help because you've got an answer in the back of your head but you don't realise it, and that's come from ten or fifteen years of experience. (06)

A mentoring relationship might be presented to a person who is not that way inclined and they might take it on recognising the learning and development of their leadership skills and then realise the benefits from it. (05)

Other areas identified as potential advantages for the mentor from the interviews, included involvement in learning, assistance with problem solving and improved communication. Some respondents to the written survey also identified evaluation and review of the mentor's own attitudes, values and practices through reflection, as an advantage for the mentor. Some respondents also articulated that the advantages to the mentor would be similar to those of the mentee, as the relationship would be reciprocal.

The matrix of interview responses (appendix 3) nominated five dominant themes as potential disadvantages associated with mentoring. The main suggested disadvantages included cloning, the availability of time, the pairing of participants and the matching of participant's needs. Other issues identified to a lesser extent as disadvantages included the concept that neither the mentor nor mentee may have had adequate training or

preparation for the process, and the concept of a breach of confidentiality. These findings corresponded with shortcomings experienced in existing mentoring programs (Caldwell & Carter, 1993). The summary of the written survey (appendix 1) matched these findings with the addition of the suggestion of the possibility of disharmony among those involved in a mentoring relationship, if it was mandated and directly linked to the process of promotion. One participant articulated his/her concern relating to cloning, the following way.

One of the really obvious disadvantages would be if I'm the mentee and I take on a sponge mentality where all I want to do is soak up all of your knowledge and all of your skills and I don't want to give anything back. That's going to be a disadvantage because I might be getting all this fantastic information and wisdom but I think in the long run we are going to end up with a group of people that all have the same ideas, think alike, and do things exactly the same. I don't think that's healthy for anyone. (01)

Another participant provided the following insight into his/her concern about the availability of time.

A shortcoming if you like is the time factor, because you need to invest time to do this, to do it well. If you are going to formalise it, you can't just make it a "Mickey Mouse" sort of thing, you have to really believe in it and for that belief to work you are going to have to invest time and energy into it and I'm not sure where that time would come from. (03)

Some of the interviewed participants identified their lack of training and preparation for the mentoring program as a potential disadvantage. The following quotation reflects the participant's concern.

If people weren't trained or prepared for a mentoring relationship I'd say that that would be a shortcoming. I'd say

that if the people involved, particularly the mentor not really knowing what they are meant to do, not having some experience, they could in fact cause more harm than good. To start them off you would have to get an outsider come in, an academic or someone who has an interest or expertise in the area to get it going. I think someone has to set it up and structure it for the first few times to get people on the road. I think that this facilitator person would need to be available to both people otherwise it could be a complete disaster and that would be a pretty big disadvantage. (02)

It would appear from the matrix of responses to question 11 (appendix 3) that the configuration of cross gender dyads was not an issue of concern for those interviewed. This contradicted the concerns found in the literature (Carruthers in Caldwell & Carter, 1993). Two participants interviewed (03, 04) suggested that mixed gender mentoring pairs was a distinct advantage for them in their role. The following quotations express two participants' views on the advantages of cross gender dyads.

I don't see the male, female thing as a problem. I feel very comfortable in relationships with men as well I do with women. Sex entities doesn't form part of it. I really do believe a male mentoring a female in a professional relationship the male learns about the female dimension of approaching things. (03)

It's great to have women in professional relationships. They give you a different perspective and if anything a mixed sex mentoring relationship might be better. (04)

As evidenced by the matrix of interview responses to question 12 (appendix 3) the participants did not consider nepotism an area for concern. Two participants articulated that nepotism could occur in any professional relationship. Three participants suggested that nepotism was not particular to mentoring and that it did not match the philosophy of mentoring as a professional development activity. The following quotations illustrate the participants' responses to this issue.

I suppose it is all in the attitude you come in with. It could be a criticism that could be levelled at any professional relationship. It is not a disadvantage particular or peculiar to mentoring. (01)

Some people might see it that way, construe it that way. I'd like to see it positively. We are all trying to develop ourselves and grow as people. I don't think it is what mentoring is all about. It is not in the spirit of what we're on about. The majority of people in our system are there for the right reasons. There are some rat bags out there who might have a barrow to push and that could cut against the grain of what Catholic schools stand for. There is the potential for a cross cut or something going against the grain in anything. (04)

I've never believed that. To me I don't think that is what the whole process is all about, it can happen but it can happen with anything. (03)

The participants identified six potential obstacles to the establishment of a formal mentoring program for those engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. As evidenced in the summary of survey responses (appendix 1) and the matrix of interview responses, the most frequently cited obstacle was time. The following quotation reflects this concern.

Time constraints mainly. If the organisation is a stakeholder and they intend to get anything out of it they need to provide some of the time for it to happen. Otherwise they are really saying it is up to the individual to do it for themselves, but if they intend to get any benefit from it for themselves they really should provide the structure, the time and the money. (02)

Another obstacle identified by four participants (01, 02, 04, 05) was that mentoring was not a priority for administrators, given the demanding workload at the school and at the organisational level. One participant articulated his/her concern the following way

The stuff that is coming out of BCEC (Brisbane Catholic Education Centre) to the schools is enormous. The system

initiatives, goals and issues are just massive. This is another one. And look if I was in the seat at BCEC and I was driving things, and you had to prioritise, I don't know where I would put mentoring in the really big picture. (01)

Two participants (03, 06) suggested that another obstacle to the establishment of a formal mentoring program was that the role of APA was not valued by the organisation. The following quotation is illustrative.

The role of APA, while in primary anyway, in some quarters doesn't get a lot of credence. It probably a case of why bother. (06)

Another obstacle to the establishment of a formal mentoring program identified by two participants (02, 05) was that of a human agent having the vision to initiate the process. Two participants (01, 03) also suggested that mentoring was not valued as a professional development activity by the organisation. The following quotations are illustrative.

There is not much standing in its way, you just need someone with the vision to get it going. It would need to have backing from people. I think to get a certain number of people involved. Someone would need to say, yes this is a good idea, otherwise administrators would say that they are too busy and don't have the time for something like that. Someone who has a little vision would get it up and running. I think more and more people would come in all the time. I think people would come in and out of it as they needed it. (02)

I'm sort of thinking who would get involved with something like that anyway, and if it is valued from the APA level that's great and that's what should happen. If it is not valued from say the leadership team in the system but its a noise that they are hearing from the APA group then they might feel the need to get something organised. I think what tends to happen is O.K lets have a look among our ranks in the office, um who needs a job? Oh yeh this person doesn't do very much we'll give the job

to them. That usually creates more problems because you've got someone who doesn't have a real interest in it. So I think you have to be really careful in that regard. (05)

The summary of the written survey responses to question 12 supports the obstacles identified in the matrix of interview responses (appendix 3). An obstacle identified in the survey and not evidenced in the matrix of interview responses (appendix 3) was the possibility that increased competitiveness for advancement and promotion could result between members of the APA group who were involved in the formal mentoring program.

4.4 Summary of findings

The jointly authored statement of recommendations and implications written by the participants is in itself a summary of the issues relating to mentoring for administrators (appendix, 4). An implication arising from this statement for the researcher was that further study would be required in the future if mentoring for administrators working in Catholic Education were to be developed formally. In the jointly written statement (appendix, 4) the participants articulated that mentoring was a valuable professional development activity not only for those in the role of APA but also for all administrators. Due to the absence of formal mentoring as a professional development opportunity for those working within Catholic Education as an administrator, the participants recommended that the organisation consider trialing a formal mentoring program for those interested. If a program were to be established the participants recommended that the program and related issues be given careful consideration and that those involved in the program

be given formal training. The participants also recommended that enforced "time out" be scheduled for administrators to undertake mentoring.

The main implication arising from the recommendations is that mentoring has value as a professional development opportunity and should be offered to all administrators. Further implications suggested by the participants included the acknowledged need for organisational support of the concept, and support in terms of resources, time and finance to establish a formal mentoring program. A further implication related to the function of mentoring as a potential mechanism to assist with the supervision and review process for administrators. The final implication suggested by participants was that involvement in a formal mentoring program would increase practitioners' sense of value and worth within the school and the organisation.

CHAPTER FIVE

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to explore how mentoring can be used as a professional development strategy by those in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. Mentoring was considered worthy of investigation, as it appeared to be a professional development activity that was more self directed than imposed learning and capable of meeting the individual needs of the practitioners engaged in the role. Professional development for many administrators has become a laborious task of attending courses and collecting certificates (Butler, 1996). As a professional development strategy mentoring seems to offer professional and personal growth opportunities for administrators within an educational context. The aim of the study is to provide an understanding of mentoring as a professional development opportunity for administrators and to explore the receptivity of those in the role as APA to the concept of a formal mentoring program. These aims led the researcher to identify two research questions.

Research Question One

What are the possibilities for mentoring as a professional development strategy for school administrators?

Research Question Two

How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program?

5.2 Design of the study

The design of the study is based on the methodology of action research. Action research was considered the most appropriate research methodology for the study as it develops from a practical understanding of a situation and fully acknowledges the realities of that situation. Initially this action research involved reflection by the researcher in the role of APA to establish an area of concern on which to base the study. This concern related the professional development opportunities available for those engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. A review of the literature on mentoring for administrators in a range of contexts was undertaken in order to reveal prior learning on mentoring that could be applied, and to guide the action of mentoring for those in the role of APA.

The process of “reflective deliberation” (Bonser & Grundy, 1988) enabled participants to talk, reflect and write about their ideas. The reflective process commenced with participants’ responding to a survey. The participants were then interviewed and a codified matrix of responses generated to be used as a catalyst for further reflection. The composition of a jointly written statement of recommendations and implications was the final stage of the process of reflective deliberation.

5.3 Research questions answered

Research Question One

What are the possibilities for mentoring as a professional development strategy for school administrators?

Formal mentoring involving the organisation, the mentor and mentee as stakeholders appears to be an attractive form of professional development for school administrators because of the benefits it offers to practitioners and the organisation. The main advantage of mentoring is that it is able to reduce professional loneliness and isolation. Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship and the mentor also experiences many of the advantages experienced by the mentee. Mentoring is capable of extending professional experience, fostering critical self-reflection and the development of more confident practitioners. Through mentoring, the organisation is able to pass on its norms, values, myths and assumptions. As a stakeholder in a formal mentoring program, the organisation can offer an alternative and cost effective form of professional development and identify human resources from a pool of talent.

Informal mentoring is valued and active among those in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration. This form of mentoring is normally friendship based and evolves over time. The involvement of the organisation in a formal mentoring program suggests a formalised relationship between the organisation, the mentor and mentee. Mentoring is a valued form of professional development because it is capable of meeting the needs of the individual. The value obtained from formal mentoring seems to result from the integrity of the program. To maintain the integrity of a formal mentoring program it is suggested that the voluntary principle be the form of recruitment. This means that mentoring occurs between consenting agents and unwilling participants are not forced to engage in the activity.

The organisation initiating a formal mentoring program is an equal yet vital stakeholder. If the mentoring program does not match the expectations of the

practitioners involved, it will not be useful and will not be utilised. An awareness of the importance of prior training for the mentor and mentee are essential to the successful establishment of a formal mentoring program. Prior training also provides the opportunities to alert participants of the known shortcomings associated with mentoring such as cloning and spouse jealousy in cross gender dyads. The organisation and the participants must work collaboratively to foster a culture within the structure where the core values of trust, respect, humour and ethics based on equality are central to the formal mentoring program. Once the organisation has become involved in a formal mentoring program specific to an administrative role, a “jobs for the boys” culture could develop if there is not a diversity of gender, ethnicity, attitudes and philosophies among the participants. Mentoring is an activity for professional growth and development, not a vehicle for nepotism.

Research Question Two

How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program?

In a range of settings throughout the world, mentoring has proven to be a beneficial professional development activity for administrators. Mentoring programs as professional development for administrators have been initiated successfully in Singapore, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South Africa and Australia. The participants in the role of APA involved in the study, were very willing to become involved in a formal mentoring program.

The research suggests that this involvement would be cautious until the

ownership, structure and staffing of the program was established. A number of obstacles to the formation of a formal mentoring program were identified. These obstacles include the organisation's motivation for involvement in the program, the availability of time and funding, and the availability of personnel to take ownership for the initiation of the process. The research also suggests that those in the role of APA, do not have enough status or kudos in the organisation to warrant being given a professional development opportunity like mentoring. The research also suggests that mentoring as a professional development activity is not a priority for the organisation because of the many other demands placed on the organisation and its administrators.

5.4 Conclusions of Research

The research suggests that there is a paradigm shift away from the simplistic understanding of the mentor as the wise, old, experienced counsellor pouring his or her knowledge into a younger, less experienced, "empty vessel". Mentoring has developed into a professional, learning relationship where a more experienced person working with a less experienced person shares ideas and offers support. The evolution of mentoring within the context of professional development seems to be best articulated as "a relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is able to increase awareness, identify alternatives and initiate action to develop themselves" (Hay, 1995, p. 3)

This study has attempted to provide an insight into mentoring as a professional development activity for administrators. It is hoped that findings from this study will influence the formation of future mentoring programs and

benefit future studies on mentoring. As a professional development activity, mentoring remains one possibility that exists in the current landscape of professional development opportunities for administrators. This study has presented mentoring as self directed and reflective, as opposed to an externally prescribed process.

Mentoring is a purposeful activity that promotes learning, reflection, relationships and personal being and becoming. The study has attempted to present mentoring as an effective and innovative professional development activity that attempts to meet individual needs. The study also suggests that mentoring is not a neat or precise activity and that it may not suit the learning styles and needs of all individuals.

5.5 Implications for the profession

Further study of mentoring and professional development for administrators is recommended. Research could be undertaken to investigate the likelihood of the introduction of a formal mentoring program for administrators currently working in Catholic education. This implication identifies an absence of mentoring for current administrators and a desire for mentoring to be made available as a valued professional development opportunity.

This research may take the form of an investigation into mentoring involving all administrators associated with Catholic schools. This research could benefit the scholarship related to mentoring and provide the basis on which to develop a valuable professional development activity for all administrators working in the ministry of Catholic Education.

The focus of this study has been on mentoring for those in the role of APA, but mentoring is of potential value to all administrators. In terms of professional development, the study recommends that mentoring be considered as an addition to the range of professional development opportunities for those in the role of APA and be made available to all administrators. This would be a significant undertaking and would take time; time to consult with interested groups, time to train personnel and time to develop appropriate structures. Administrators currently working within Catholic Education will require time, reflection and effort to implement mentoring as an effective professional development opportunity for those involved in the leadership and management of Catholic schools.

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Appendix 1

A Summary of the Mentoring Survey

Number of Participants = 20

1) *In your own words how would you describe mentoring?*

(Responses to this question = 20 /20)

- I. Mentoring is a process by which professional development can be attained through a relationship with a colleague, sometimes more experienced than oneself. Professional development comes via the sharing of ideas, plans, successes, failures and other experiences.
- II. A deliberate relationship between an experienced person and a less experienced person that involves genuine care for the nurturing and holistic growth of each person (ie. growth in self-esteem, relationships, skills and knowledge).
- III. A process of sharing, guiding, encouraging, supporting between people engaged in similar occupations where one person is the “experienced” one.
- IV. The sharing of skills, ideas, values.
- V. The formal/informal system for guidance of less experienced persons in a particular work setting.
- VI. A system of working with a “buddy” whom you can trust and who is listening to you and critically evaluate what you are doing.
- VII. A two way process of learning between experienced professionals and less experienced professionals.

- VIII. An experienced person in a field being available to another for advice, example and inspiration.
- IX. A mutually beneficial relationship involving a long standing member of a group communicating his/her ideas, norms and expectations, with a new member who contributes perceptions and new insights.
- X. A process of cooperative learning/sharing, affirmation, evaluation and renewal.
- XI. Support. Someone to challenge me to achieve my aims and goals.
- XII. Useful professional development model.
- XIII. A formal system of support whereby a more experienced person aids a less experienced person.
- XIV. A system which allows a person who is new to a position to receive guidance, direction and support from people who have expertise in that position.
- XV. Sharing skills, knowledge values etc between a more experienced staff member and a less experienced person.
- XVI. Guiding and assisting of another to achieve their goals and that during the process the member feels supported so that the person may grow in self- esteem and self-confidence.
- XVII. A way of helping people to professionally develop to their potential.
- XVIII. A dialectic process of sharing insights, wisdom and skills that promotes growth.
- XIX. A process of helping, guiding, counselling etc from an experienced

person to a person of lesser experience in a particular role.

XX. Two peers who work together evaluating and being able to critique each other's work with the aim of improving their work performance.

2) *On the scale below, rate the importance of mentoring as a professional development activity (1= very low, 5=very high).*

(Responses to this question = 20/20)

1 (very low)	= 0
2 (low)	= 0
3 (moderate)	= 2
4 (high)	= 16
<u>5 (very high)</u>	<u>= 2</u>
TOTAL	= 20

3) *Do you think that administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, currently use mentoring in an informal way?*

(Responses to this question = 20/20)

Yes	= 20
No	= 0

4) *In your opinion what areas of knowledge could be presented in a mentoring program?*

(Responses to this question = 18/20)

I. Knowledge of systems - goals and processes, knowledge of curriculum areas.

- II. Organisational knowledge; national, interstate, system and curriculum initiatives. (Being new in the position -it's difficult to determine exactly what I don't know?).
- III. All areas of knowledge, well at least many.
- IV. School procedures, methods of planning, behaviour management etc.
- V. System objectives, law, procedures.
- VI. Tasks completed as part of your role, eg method of staff appraisal.
- VII. Local culture, new initiatives in curriculum, system procedures etc.
- VIII. Curriculum, teaching skills.
- IX. Curriculum and co-curricula issues or life issues of importance and relevance.
- X. Work related skills. Interpersonal skills. Social skills.
- XI. Curriculum issues. The "unwritten or hidden" aspects of an organisation. Career development.
- XII. All practical areas.
- XIII. BCEC procedures, curriculum content.
- XIV. School based culture, school issues, curriculum, conflict resolution.
- XV. Knowledge of community – wider and school. Curriculum issues, behaviour issues, time management.
- XVI. Teaching methods and behaviour management.
- XVII. Classroom management, planning/assessment, ways to incorporate multiple intelligences into the curriculum.

XVIII. Knowledge of pedagogy and management techniques.

5) *In your opinion what skills could be developed in a mentoring relationship?*

(Responses to this question =20/20)

- I. Planning skills, interpersonal skills especially conflict resolution and effective management of personnel, time management and organisational skills.
- II. Relationship skills, goal setting skills, problem solving skills.
- III. Skills developed could only be limited by the process and people involved - therefore messy.
- IV. Behaviour management and classroom management skills.
- V. Interpersonal skills.
- VI. "How to" information; skills for handling staff relations.
- VII. Communication skills, two way listening.
- VIII. Interactive skills, teaching skills.
- IX. Listening skills, evaluation of practice, communication skills, attitudinal adjustment.
- X. Interactive, people skills.
- XI. Personal/relational skills
- XII. Computer skills, administrative and interpersonal skills.
- XIII. Most obvious would be communication skills, but most skills.
- XIV. Practical skills eg. how to do rosters
- XV. Dealing with parents, staff members, children, teaching skills, discipline skills etc, etc.
- XVI. Conflict resolution, communication skills, people skills.

XVII. Behaviour management skills and how to handle parents.

XVIII. Active listening, refining of personal insights, knowledge of self and others.

XIX. Time management, organisational skills.

XX. Communication skills, self evaluation skills.

6) *What core values or attitudes would be essential to a mentoring program?*

(Responses to this question =20/20)

- I. Openness, honesty, collegiality, time commitment, respect, sense of humour, a willingness to listen and share.
- II. Trust, empowerment and openness.
- III. Openness, honesty, flexibility.
- IV. Honesty, trust and openness.
- V. Trust.
- VI. Trust and confidentiality.
- VII. A respect for each person's dignity and professionalism.
- VIII. Openness, honesty and integrity.
- IX. Trust, respect, openness to learning and flexibility.
- X. Genuine respect, confidentiality, shared goals and direction.
- XI. Supportive positive attitude, caring and not being negative.
- XII. Collaborative approach obviously needed tolerance and cooperation.
- XIII. Needs assessment identified, personalities matched, role of supervisor would be important in education.

XIV. Respect for individual's differences and loyalty.

XV. Trust, openness, a willingness to listen and grow or change.

XVI. Trust, respect and active listening.

XVII. Trust and openness.

XVIII. Trust, empathy and compassion.

XIX. Empathy, enthusiasm for the role, acceptance of differences.

XX. Trust, acceptance of opinions, honesty with tact.

7) *What would you identify as the advantages associated with mentoring for the mentor?*

(Responses to this question =20/20)

I. Learning through teaching, some say the that the best way to learn and clarify one's own ideas/skills/knowledge is to teach.

II. Self-reflection.

III. A recognition of "expertise" and an opportunity to pass on knowledge.

IV. Reviewing own skills, attitudes, values etc through the sharing of them.

V. A way of displaying acquired skills and knowledge.

VI. Self worth - sharing of skills and knowledge - not wasted human resource.

VII. Developing skills as a listener, counsellor, learning new skills from mentees.

VIII. A chance to reflect on own behaviour and inspire others.

- IX. Opportunity to share expertise and experience, as well as to question current practices, approaches, strategies etc.
- X. Self evaluation, consideration of alternatives, exposure to new ideas.
- XI. Opportunity to help, value another and develop one's interpersonal skills.
- XII. Increased self-esteem, recognition of leadership skills.
- XIII. Confidence in own ability, social contact. Possibility that they may become the mentees themselves.
- XIV. Clarifies concepts and skills and develops skills of guiding.
- XV. Improved self-esteem, development of leadership skills and learning.
- XVI. Own professional development. Passing on of own experiences.
- XVII. Skills of listening, modelling, gaining new ideas, enthusiasm etc.
- XVIII. Improved self-esteem.
- XIX. Evaluate one's particular skills and strategies in the role.
- XX. An affirming exercise for own belief in one's ability. Time to share insights on philosophical issues.

8) *What would you identify as the advantages associated with mentoring for the mentee?*

(Responses to this question =20/20)

- I. A clarification of one's own strengths and areas for improvement.
Hopefully all round professional development.
- II. Direction, opportunity to reflect and articulate needs.

- III. Model provided by mentor, support,.
- IV. An insight into the routines, values, aims of the organisation.
- V. Someone to turn to, a "security blanket".
- VI. Guidance, one to one.
- VII. Learning the role from a practical and caring point of view.
- VIII. Gain useful practical experiences and knowledge.
- IX. Familiarisation with an organisation, welcoming the development of self-esteem with the realisation that their contribution is valued and desired.
- X. Affirmation, direction and security.
- XI. Opportunity to have support, constructive feedback, alternatives presented in a positive way.
- XII. Opportunity to learn.
- XIII. Obvious professional growth, stability and confidence in self.
- XIV. Gain confidence, know you are not alone.
- XV. Upskilling and the development of community. To know that you are not alone.
- XVI. Confidence, competence and self-esteem.
- XVII. Support, someone to go to, increased confidence, productivity
- XVIII. Gaining skills.
- XIX. A companion on the journey, short cut way of developing skills (ie. without having to find it out the hard way by yourself after a long time).
- XX. A trusting environment in which to trial new ideas. The

development of a professional relationship.

9) *What would you identify as the advantages associated with mentoring for the organisation (eg. the school or BCEC)?*

(Responses to this question =19/20)

- I. More effective, efficient leadership. A system in which central goals and values, especially in the area of leadership, are shared by more individuals and strengthened.
- II. Improved productivity.
- III. Synergy $1 + 1 = 3$
- IV. Professional development is achieved.
- V. If organised equitably a chance for the transmission of skills, values etc from within.
- VI. The working together of employees in a very real, positive way is professional development for the organisation.
- VII. Helps with continuity, communication and professional development.
- VIII. Improves relationships and performance.
- IX. Improved relationships, communication and respect for individuals.
- X. Two heads are better than one.
- XI. Less stress for staff. Problems sorted out before they become mountains.
- XII. "Wisdom sharing", increased morale and camaraderie.
- XIII. Mentoring will aid the school in that the children and staff will benefit from a more experienced person.

- XIV. Improve the skills of those in the organisation.
- XV. Assisting in members' reaching their full potential, caring for employees.
- XVI. The development of a cohesive community.
- XVII. Better productivity.
- XVIII. Gaining of skills and organisational strategies from other schools.
- XIX. Improvement in the quality of personnel and a more collegial atmosphere.

10) *What are the disadvantages associated with mentoring?*

(Responses to this question =20/20)

- I. The mentee could become too reliant upon advice from the mentor.
A certain degree of "cloning" could occur.
- II. Following up the talk with action.
- III. Worry that the formalisation of an already existing practice would somehow stifle or spoil what we have.
- IV. Possibility of disharmony if mentoring is directly linked to the process of promotions.
- V. Possible bias.
- VI. Works for some but not others.
- VII. Making sure the appropriate knowledge was passed on eg. don't have a gossip as a mentor.
- VIII. Mentor and mentee would have to be very closely matched
- IX. Could be personality clashes.
- X. Poor matching and misguided direction.

- XI. Difficulty with time commitment, intrusion, finding oneself out of one's depth.
- XII. Personality clashes and time restraints.
- XIII. Time.
- XIV. Time factor, indiscretions.
- XV. Personality clashes for a variety of reasons. May not suit every situation.
- XVI. Mentor sees himself/herself as the "guru" possessing all the knowledge.
- XVII. Jealousy.
- XVIII. Could stay in the same rut - become insular.
- XIX. Could be a threatening situation to some. Some people like to learn it all themselves without outside influence.
- XX. Time required, the matching of people, people feeling as though their needs have been met.

11) What processes do you think could be used to achieve a formal mentoring program?

(Responses to this question =14/20)

- I. Negotiating parameters and goals.
- II. Evaluate people as to what it involves. Establish networks of those interested, pair people off etc.
- III. Evaluate the needs of teachers. Consider inservice in regions, policy and practice document etc.

- IV. Ascertain interest and call for volunteers, need to have people list the ways they can help others and also areas they require help in, so a match can be made considering age, experience etc.
- V. Formal guidelines adopted by staff - purely voluntary.
- VI. It has to be valued as a process by the organisation.
- VII. Matching set direction, goals, parameters, activities action, evaluation.
- VIII. Asking for volunteers.
- IX. Co-ordination by a small team, expressions of interest from potential participants which indicate interest and needs of each individual.
- X. Workshops for both mentor and mentee to have a clear understanding of goals and expectations from both parties.
- XI. Clear guidelines, volunteers only, careful matching, providing release times.
- XII. Guidelines clearly established and confidence built up. Establish vision, goals and structures to implement scheme.
- XIII. List of particular skills of the APA group.
- XIV. Input on mentoring, modelling from other administrations, programmed times for debriefing until process is familiar.

12) Do you perceive any obstacles to establishing a formal mentoring program for those in the role of Assistants to the Principal, Administration?

(Responses to this question = 14/20)

- I. Time pressures and, in some cases distance. The willingness of

people to become involved.

II. Making the time.

III. Distance between some members, competitiveness between members of the group for advancement.

IV. None, beside the usual ones of finding someone to liaise with, for support.

V. More meetings in already busy schedules. Use of the phone and e-mail may be easier.

VI. People valuing it.

VII. Informal - no it already happens. Formal – yes, time constraints.

VIII. Lack of interest.

IX. Time constraints. Stick with the informal.

X. Time, distance.

XI. Distance, time - other work commitments, principal's perception.

Who would mentor another APA or would a principal see this as his/her role?

XII. Distance, time availability.

XIII. Time.

XIV. Time.

13) *How could administrators be prepared for a formal mentoring program?*

(Responses to this question =10/20)

I. Supply inservice, develop policy, and use in practice.

II. Be reassured that they don't have to have all the answers.

III. Providing opportunities to upgrade communication and professional skills.

IV. Educational workshops etc.

V. Need a good understanding of how it works.

VI. To be informed of what it involves.

VII. Professional development in people skills and communication.

VIII. Participation in professional development and examine how other mentoring programs work.

IX. Be aware of the system and the logistics of putting it into practice.

X. Determine needs and benefits.

14) Would you be willing to participate in a formal mentoring program as a mentor?

Yes	=	11
No	=	7
<u>Unsure</u>	=	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	=	20

15) Would you be willing to participate in a formal mentoring program as a mentee?

Yes	=	13
No	=	4
<u>Unsure</u>	=	<u>3</u>
TOTAL	=	20

Appendix 2

Description of the participants interviewed and involved in the jointly authored statement.

All participants are currently engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, in Archdiocesan primary systemic schools.

- 01 Male.
2 years in the role.
16 hours release.
- 02 Female.
2 years in the role.
16 hours release.
- 03 Female.
8 years in the role.
16 hours release.
- 04 Male.
5 years in the role.
Full time release.
- 05 Female.
First year in the role.
Full time release.
- 06 Male.
3 years in the role
Full time release.

Appendix 3 - Interview Matrix.

Responses to interview schedule.

Research Question 1:

What are the possibilities for mentoring as a professional development opportunity for administrators?

Research Question 2:

How receptive are school administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration, to the notion of a formal mentoring program?

Interview Question 1						
<i>What is an appropriate definition of mentoring for mentoring as a professional development activity?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Professional relationship.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. An experienced person working with a less experienced person.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
3. Sharing of ideas and offering support.	✓		✓			
4. Collegiality.	✓	✓				
5. Human resource.				✓		
6. Deliberate process.			✓		✓	
7. Consensual.					✓	
8. Learning.	✓		✓		✓	

Interview Question: 2						
<i>Is mentoring valued as a professional development activity by administrators?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Very low.						
2. Low.						
3. Moderate.						
4. High.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Very high.						

Interview Question: 3						
<i>Is mentoring currently being used by administrators in an informal way?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Yes.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. No.						
3. The APA cluster meetings are an example of where informal mentoring is occurring.	✓		✓	✓		✓
4. Telephone calls encourage mentoring.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
5. e-mail assists with informal mentoring.				✓		✓
6. Informal mentoring occurs at social events.	✓			✓	✓	

Interview Question: 4						
<i>What skills and areas of knowledge should be included in a formal mentoring program?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Defining the role.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Finance and budgeting.	✓			✓		
3. An understanding of the staffing schedule and the appropriate forms.	✓					✓
4. Timetabling.	✓					
5. Organisational policy and practice. Who to talk to about what and when.	✓		✓	✓		✓
6. Managerial skills.			✓		✓	
7. Interpersonal skills and relationship skills.		✓	✓		✓	✓
8. Curriculum information.			✓			✓
9. Time management, especially balancing teaching time and release time.					✓	✓
10. Supervision of staff.		✓		✓	✓	✓
11. Performance reviews.				✓		

Interview Question: 5						
<i>What are the advantages for the organisation stemming from involvement in a formal mentoring program?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. People become pro-active problem solvers.	✓					
2. Better knowledge of the job.	✓					
3. More efficient and effective practitioners.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4. Mentoring is a professional development activity.	✓			✓	✓	✓
5. An aspect of the induction program.	✓					
6. Improves the organisational culture.		✓	✓		✓	
7. Improved job satisfaction for administrators.			✓			
8. Able to identify talent in human resources.				✓		✓
9. Saves the organisation money in the long run.				✓		✓

Interview Question: 6						
<i>What are the advantages for the mentee stemming from involvement in a formal mentoring program?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Feeling supported.	✓		✓		✓	✓
2. Not feeling isolated in the role.	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3. Improvement in communication skills.	✓					
4. Increased sense of self worth/self value.		✓		✓	✓	✓
5. Reflection on current practice leading to change.		✓			✓	
6. Objective problem solving.					✓	
7. Gaining or improving skills for the job.		✓		✓		✓

Interview Question: 7						
<i>What are the advantages for the mentor stemming from involvement in a formal mentoring program?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Involvement in professional development and learning.	✓		✓			
2. Sharing of ideas may result in new ideas or a new perspective for the mentor.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
3. Involvement in the relationship may help own problem solving skills.	✓				✓	
4. Improved communication skills and interpersonal skills.	✓	✓				
5. An affirming activity resulting in a sense of self worth or value.		✓		✓	✓	✓

Interview Question: 8						
<i>Should involvement in a formal mentoring program be voluntary or compulsory?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Voluntary.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Compulsory.	✓					

Interview Question: 9						
<i>What core values are essential to a mentoring relationship?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Honesty.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Open communication.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Authenticity.	✓			✓	✓	
4. Commitment.	✓	✓	✓			
5. A sense of humour.	✓					✓
6. Trust.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Respect combined with the room to make mistakes.		✓			✓	✓

Interview Question: 10						
<i>What are the disadvantages or shortcomings associated with mentoring?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Cloning/stereotyping.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
2. The availability of time.	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3. The matching of needs and pairing of participants.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
4. Breach of confidentiality.		✓				
5. Mentor/mentee not having adequate training or preparation for the process.		✓			✓	

Interview Question: 11						
<i>What are the issues associated with the composition of mixed gender mentoring pairs?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. It is a professional learning relationship and it is not an issue.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. It would be an advantage for those involved having a male/female perspective.			✓	✓	✓	

Interview Question: 12						
<i>Is mentoring considered a nepotistic device?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. This is a criticism that could be levelled at any professional relationship.	✓	✓				
2. It is not something that is particular or peculiar to mentoring.	✓				✓	✓
3. It does not match the philosophy of mentoring.		✓	✓	✓		

Interview Question: 13						
<i>What are the obstacles that exist preventing the establishment of a formal mentoring program for administrators in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Mentoring is not valued as a useful professional development activity by the organisation.	✓		✓			
2. Money/funding.	✓					✓
3. Time.	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Mentoring is not a priority due the demanding workload at the organisation level and the school level.	✓	✓		✓	✓	
5. The role of Assistant to the Principal Administration is not valued by the organisation.			✓			✓
6. Someone having the vision to start.		✓			✓	

Interview Question: 14						
<i>Would you be willing to participate in a formal mentoring program?</i>	Respondents to Interview Schedule					
Theme and Sub Categories of Themes Identified	01	02	03	04	05	06
1. Yes.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. No.						
3. Yes, but only if the practitioners it was designed for, owned it.					✓	

Appendix 4

A jointly authored statement of recommendations and implications arising from reflection on the topic of mentoring as a professional development activity by those engaged in the role of Assistant to the Principal, Administration.

Recommendations:

- Recognise mentoring as a valuable form of professional development for all administrators and work towards an organised mentoring program on a voluntary basis of involvement.
- Realise the worth of collective knowledge, skills and perspectives of others and consider not only mentoring pairs but also mentoring in regional cluster groups.
- Match mentoring participants carefully with consideration of participants' personalities and needs.
- Encourage the development of mentoring relationships considering the constraints of time, distance and personality differences.
- Organise formal training for mentors and mentees and provide opportunities for gatherings on a regular basis with incentives offered for attendance.
- Provide the opportunity for mentoring to exist during enforced "time out".
- Approach Brisbane Catholic Education with a request to trial a formalised mentoring program for administrators working in Catholic education.

Implications:

- Mentoring has the potential to be used as an induction strategy for all administrators.
- Mentoring may be a device to assist and inform the supervision and review process.
- Participation in a mentoring program would provide participants with a sense of value within the school and the organisation.
- Mentoring provides benefits to all parties involved in the process.
- Resources of time and money will be needed to establish mentoring as a professional development activity.

