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MENTORSHIP AS A CAREER ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY IN THE
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE NURSE CORPS

BY

KRISTIE RASTATTER MATHEWS

B.S., Florida State University, 1977

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Nursing

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

May, 1988

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DEDICATION

To my mother, [REDACTED]
whose spirit of independence and self-reliance has been
my greatest legacy

To my husband, [REDACTED]
who loves me the way I always dreamed it would be
and

To my dearest friends,
who taught me, through example, about all that is
glorious in life

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fact that this thesis is completed, and I still have my sanity, can be partially attributed to the guidance and support that I received from the members of my committee. They are talented and dynamic individuals and to have worked with them on this project was both a joy and a privilege.

Dr. Dodie Collier was my Chair. Dr. Collier was everything a thesis Chair should be--supportive, accessible, knowledgeable. Her commitment to learning the research process while producing a quality product was evident from the very beginning of this study. I will always be grateful for the insights and perspectives she shared during our time of working together.

Dr. Jacque Rhoads brings magic and excitement to education. During the past year she has earned my respect for more reasons than she will ever know.

Dr. Breda Bova, Educational Administration, brought her expertise in the area of mentoring to this project. Her knowledge and guidance proved invaluable. Many thanks are in order for her willingness to serve on my committee despite numerous responsibilities within her own department.

Words could never express how grateful I am to the Air Force Nurse Corps for this opportunity to attend Graduate School. It has truly been the chance of a lifetime.

Finally, I must acknowledge the men and women of the United States Air Force Nurse Corps, who practice their profession of nursing with pride, and serve their country with honor and dignity.



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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Kristie Rastatter Mathews

B.S., Nursing, Florida State University, 1977
M.S., Nursing, University of New Mexico, 1988

△ This study investigated whether mentoring was perceived by senior Air Force Nurse Corps officers as enhancing an individual's professional socialization and the ability to develop the qualifications necessary for advancement. The sample consisted of 107 randomly selected Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels in the Nurse Corps. A newly developed questionnaire of career and mentorship issues was completed by the subjects. Content validity was established by a panel of experts. Reliability measures included tests for stability and internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents indicated the presence of a mentor during career development and stated that this mentor served as a role model (100%), information-giver (78%), and career-developer (95%). The results of the study indicated that a significant number of Nurse Corps officers indicated the presence of a mentor during career development but that a mentor was not essential for career success.

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CHAPTER ONE

Background of the Problem

Introduction

The concept of a mentor is not a new or recent phenomenon. The term has its roots in ancient Greek mythology. In Homer's The Odyssey, when Ulysses left home to fight the battles of the Trojan War he appointed his trusted companion Mentor to be the guardian of his household and his son, Telemachus. Even though Ulysses was away from home for over ten years, Mentor never betrayed the trust that had been placed in him. Thus the term "mentor" has become a widely used expression to denote a wise and faithful guardian and tutor (Hamilton, 1981; Dalton & Thompson, 1986).

In the past decade there has been a plethora of articles written on the concept of mentoring in business periodicals, the popular press, and nursing publications. This enthusiastic interest in the phenomenon can be partially attributed to recent studies involving career stages, organizational milieu, and increased competition for good assignments and advancements in today's professional work force (Vance, 1982; Dalton & Thompson, 1986). Business literature overwhelmingly supports mentorship in today's highly competitive complex organizational structures (Anthony, 1981; Roche, 1979; Cook, 1977; Kanter, 1977; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Zaleznik,

1977). It is viewed as one essential element in an overall career development plan. Prominent nursing leaders not only advocate mentorship but insist that it is vital if the profession's quest for autonomy, power, and independent practice is to become a reality (Kelly, 1984; Hinshaw, 1986; Schorr, 1978). The mentor relationship is viewed by most authors as a desirable and positive phenomenon which offers benefits to both the individual and the organization. It is often considered an essential element of successful career development and achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Although mentorship has been discussed in the nursing literature, it has never been examined in the setting of the United States Air Force Nurse Corps. This study will examine the phenomenon of the mentor relationship in this unique setting.

Purpose of the Study

This study will investigate whether mentoring is perceived by senior Nurse Corps officers as enhancing an individual's professional socialization and the ability to develop the qualifications necessary for advancement.

Operational Definitions

Mentor - An individual who acts as a teacher, advisor, advocate and counselor and who takes an active and

personal interest in the career advancement of another (Levinson, 1978; Vance, 1977).

Protege - An individual who receives the attention and interest of a mentor.

Senior Nurse Corps Officer - An individual within the Air Force Nurse Corps who currently holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel.

Advancement - The promotion in rank of an individual either from Captain to Major, Major to Lieutenant Colonel, or Lieutenant Colonel to Colonel.

Qualifications - The positive attributes of officership such as character, integrity, and leadership as well as training and accomplishments that reflect individual achievement such as graduate education, professional military education, ratings on Officer Effectiveness Reports, breadth of job assignments, and awards and medals.

Significance of Study

Literature emerging from the fields of business and industry strongly advocates the presence of a mentor if career success is to be achieved. If an individual is to avoid feelings of frustration, bewilderment, and betrayal it is essential that an accurate preview of life in a complex organization is presented (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977). "There is no better method for quickly learning management skills, organizational politics, and the work environment than by having a seasoned executive

develop a younger, less experienced employee" (Cook, 1977, p. 84). Mercer (1984) states that a mentor relationship plays a central role in the professional development of a young adult. "An unstated but widely-known fact is that promotions and high-level jobs are frequently filled on the basis of personal relationships effected through mentor relationships" (Cook, 1977, p. 84). Promotion opportunities within the United States Air Force Nurse Corps are based on a competitive, pyramidal system. As an individual moves up the organizational chain the competition for available slots within each rank becomes increasingly fierce. An officer initially enters active duty as a Second Lieutenant. This rank is held for two years at which time the individual is then promoted to First Lieutenant. The promotion from Second Lieutenant to First Lieutenant is virtually automatic with a promotion rate of almost 100 percent. After an officer spends two years as a First Lieutenant he becomes eligible for Captain. Approximately 90 percent of all eligible officers are promoted to Captain. Captains and Lieutenants comprise about 77 percent of the Nurse Corps. These individuals occupy staff and middle-management positions. They often serve as clinical nurses and charge nurses. A small percentage occupy special duty assignments such as Flight Nursing and Recruiting. Lieutenants and Captains are considered "young officers" in the Nurse Corps. It is

during these years that individuals are adapting to the military structure and to the roles of professional officer and nurse. Adaptation and some degree of professional socialization is vital during these early years if these officers are to understand and function effectively in the military environment. After approximately seven years in the rank of Captain, an officer becomes eligible for Major. The promotion to Major is seen as an extremely prestigious one for it is at this time that an individual is considered a career officer, a corporate member, a "lifer," if you will. The rank of Major carries with it status and increasing authority, power, and responsibility. It is also at this time that promotion opportunities become increasingly competitive. Promotion to the rank of Major is more competitive in that only 80 percent of individuals are selected for promotion. Those who are not selected are usually required to leave the military. After three years as a Major an individual is eligible for Lieutenant Colonel. Once again the competition becomes increasingly fierce as only about 40 percent of eligible Majors are promoted. Those Majors who are not promoted may remain on active duty until they have served 20 years. At the completion of 20 years of service, they are then automatically retired. After three years as a Lieutenant Colonel, an officer is eligible for Colonel. Here again promotion opportunities lessen as only a small percentage

of individuals are selected for the increase in rank. Individuals in the ranks of Major through Colonel are the senior officers of the Nurse Corps. They hold powerful command positions and are the policy and decision makers of the Corps. Each increase in rank carries with it increasing status, prestige, power, authority, and responsibility. The competition for promotion becomes increasingly tough as an individual moves up through the rank structure. Many factors influence promotion opportunities including Officer Effectiveness Reports, breadth of job assignments, professional military education, civilian graduate education, and leadership potential. While the above factors are significant elements in career progression, it is important to examine whether the presence of a mentoring relationship enhances a person's professional socialization and the ability to develop those qualifications that are significant in career advancement. That is, does a mentor aid in learning the "nuts and bolts" of the competitive structure while at the same time acting as an agent of professional socialization. It is the contention of this researcher that a mentor in the Air Force Nurse Corps does indeed act as an agent of professional socialization. This mentor also aids the individual in the development of those qualifications that are necessary for career advancement. Because of the mentor's presence the process of socialization and the

acquisition of needed knowledge is more thorough and expeditious. Logic and experience suggest that mentoring offers an avenue for propagating career development and achievement. If a significant number of senior Nurse Corps officers identify a mentoring relationship during their career, implications might be drawn that a mentor is an important part of a successful military career. If these successful officers do not identify a mentoring relationship, then perhaps mentoring does not play the prominent role in the military environment that it appears to have in civilian bureaucratic organizations. In either case, insights will be gained as to the role mentorship plays within the organizational structure of the Nurse Corps.

Theoretical Framework

The phenomenon of mentoring can be examined within the context of professional socialization. "Professional socialization is the complex process by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, and sense of occupational identity that are characteristic of a member of that profession" (Watson, 1982, p. 33). "The process involves the internalization of the values and norms of a professional group into one's own behavior and self-conception" (Jacox, 1973, p. 10). The process of professional socialization is linked to the relationship between the organization and the individual. In the

mentor/protege dyad it is the mentor who represents the organization and who, by the nature of the relationship, assumes responsibility for the socialization of the protege.

Professional socialization has four distinct goals. The novice or newcomer must (a) learn the technology of the profession--the facts, skills, and theory, (b) learn to internalize the professional culture, (c) find a personally and professionally acceptable version of the role, and (d) integrate this professional role into all other life roles (Cohen, 1981, p. 15). The above goals of professional socialization imply that an individual must change and adapt in an effort to satisfy the requirements of the organization. While this is true to a certain extent

it is highly unlikely an individual will change substantially in his basic personality structure and his pattern of psychological defenses, but he may change drastically in his sense of developing new attitudes and values, new competencies, new images of himself, and new ways of entering and conducting himself in social situations. (Schein, 1971, p. 412).

The individual will show evidence of having been influenced by the socialization process but only in certain areas of behavior. The new member or novice will feel an identification or closeness to the organization only to the extent that he is able to fuse his personal expectations of roles and behaviors to those of the organization.

The process of professional socialization continues throughout an individual's tenure in the bureaucracy. Its impact is felt most heavily during initial entry into the organization. It is during this time that the new member must gain "acceptance" and prove himself worthy of further attention and efforts. The individual is anxious and motivated to learn. As a member transitions into new positions the socialization process is once again paramount as new roles and behaviors are learned. Because of promotion there may be self-induced pressure to reciprocate by displaying the attitudes and values that the organization supports. It is important to realize that professional socialization may not be a totally successful endeavor from either an organizational or individual perspective. If socialization is not complete, there are four career options available to the individual (Schein, 1971). The individual may elect to switch careers and pursue an entirely different occupational focus. There may be a lateral transfer within the organization and a permanent leveling off with respect to rank or position. The individual may be forced into an early exit or retirement from the organization. Finally, the individual might be retained by the organization in a specific job or position despite marginal performance.

If the process of professional socialization is successful, the individual will obtain a specific

professional identity, a feeling of commitment, and a sense of career (Bucher & Stelling, 1977). These attributes not only aid the individual in efforts to gain acceptance in the organization but also ensure promotion and advancement within the corporate structure. Positive career development depends on the ability of the individual to integrate the expectations, values, and norms of the organization with his own perceptions of self and appropriate behaviors. In the military environment professional socialization to some degree is vital for a successful career. An officer is expected to support, through actions and words, the philosophy, mission, values, and norms of the military structure.

Research Questions

1. Do senior Nurse Corps officers identify the presence of a mentor during their career development?
2. Do senior Nurse Corps officers who identify the presence of a mentor feel that this mentor aided in career development and achievement?
3. Did the identified mentor aid in professional socialization by offering information about the values, appropriate behaviors, and expectations of the organization?
4. Did the identified mentor also serve as a positive role model?

5. What are the negative aspects of a mentoring relationship?

Assumptions

It is assumed that the study participants filled out the questionnaires in a thorough and honest manner.

Limitations

Because of the various meanings associated with the term "mentor" it is possible that study participants confused the concept with other roles and relationships that were not truly mentor relationships. A second limitation is that study participants are restricted to Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels in the Air Force Nurse Corps.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The past decade has witnessed an abundance of literature on mentoring in the fields of industry and business and to a lesser extent in the profession of nursing. Mentors have been called creators of competence (Epstein, 1970), visionary (Policinski & Davidhizar, 1985) and investors and supporters (Darling, 1984). Some authors boldly state that in order to succeed in business today an individual must have a mentor (Roche, 1979). This chapter will examine the various characteristics of the mentoring relationship as described by business and nursing leaders. The term "mentor" will be clarified and defined and the distinct characteristics of the mentor/protege relationship will be explored. The attributes of both the mentor and the protege will be presented along with a discussion of the hazards and benefits of the mentor relationship. The ending of the relationship is also examined. Research studies regarding mentoring in the nursing profession will be explored and a critical analysis of the literature will be presented. Finally, mentoring in the military setting will be discussed.

Clarification of Terms

There is no one precise, universally accepted definition of the term "mentor." Levinson (1978) states

that a mentor

acts as a teacher to enhance the young man's skills and intellectual development; serving as sponsor he may use his influence to facilitate the young man's entry and advancement; he may be a host and guide, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting him with its values, customs, resources and cast of characters; through his own virtues, achievements and way of living, the mentor may be an exemplar that the protege can admire and seek to emulate; he may provide counsel and moral support in time of stress; the mentor has another function and this is developmentally the most crucial one: to support and facilitate the realization of the Dream (p. 98).

Vance (1977) defines a mentor as a teacher, sponsor, guide, patron, advisor, a person with whom the mentee develops an intimate, highly personal, exclusive, intense, emotional relationship. Zey (1984) states that a "mentor is a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting and at times promoting or sponsoring" (p. 7). A mentor is a role model, career counselor, teacher-coach, and feedback-giver (Darling, 1984).

Although numerous definitions of the term mentor exist every author seems to agree that the relationship includes the positive attributes of support, guidance, counsel and encouragement. For the purpose of this study a mentor is defined as an individual who acts as a teacher, advisor, advocate and counselor and who takes an active and personal interest in the career development and promotion

of another. While it is important to determine what the role of a mentor is, it is equally important to establish what a mentor is not. A mentor is not a peer pal or preceptor.

Peer pals are individuals who are on the same level in the hierarchy. There may be the sharing of information, strategy, and support but peer pals are not in a position to foster and promote the career progression of another (Shapiro, Haseltine & Rowe, 1978).

In a preceptor relationship one individual teaches, supervises and coaches another. These relationships are quite limited in scope and depth. The sharing of information is usually limited to matters concerned with job orientation and job performance (Puetz, 1985).

Although the above dyads may be present during career development they do not possess the intense personal involvement and commitment that is present in the mentor relationship. The mentor relationship is characterized by the humanistic dimensions of concern and caring supplemented by commitment and accountability (Rogers, 1982). It is a relationship based on trust, preference, and mutuality (May, Meleis, Winstead-Fry, 1982).

Characteristics of the Mentor/Protege Relationship

"Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles but in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves" (Levinson, 1978, p. 98). Despite the

fact that a universal definition of mentoring does not exist the literature reveals that authors agree on certain underlying components of the phenomenon. Williams (1977) states that "achieving a mentor relationship is like falling in love--you can't force it to happen, and it only works if the chemistry is right" (p. 198). Kelly (1984) affirms this idea when she acknowledges that there is a "chemistry that can't be defined" in the mentor relationship (p. 1). Pilette (1980) maintains that mentorship is "job-focused, profession-focused but still available, accessible, and concerned with the affirmation of our being" (p. 22). She goes on to state that mentorship is concerned with the "human-relatedness" factor--the human presence and spirited meeting and engagement between mentor and protege (p. 22). Vance (1982) contends that the relationship between mentor and protege is "intense, emotional, exclusionary, and transitional" (p. 8). Joel (1981) states that "trust and openness lie at the heart of the relationship" (p. 37). It is clear that the mentor relationship is viewed as an intimate and highly personal one. It involves commitment, emotional investment and the willingness to share in the pursuit of professional and personal growth (Roche, 1969).

Characteristics of a Successful Mentor

Not every individual is capable of becoming a successful mentor. While there are people who may see

potential in younger members of their profession, they are excluded from the mentor role because of "rigidity, discipline, high expectations, and the inability to create an atmosphere for the sharing of ideas" (Hamilton, 1981, p. 9). Mentors must be self-actualized individuals who are risk-takers (May et al., 1982; Cameron, 1982). The mentor must feel secure in both a professional and personal sense, for it is always possible that the protege may surpass the mentor in accomplishments and achievements. Mentors must possess knowledge of both the formal and informal organizational structure. Without this knowledge their advice may be invalid and inaccurate (Woodlands Group, 1980; Dalton & Thompson, 1986). It is this intimacy and first-hand knowledge of organizational politics that contributes to the privileged communication of the mentor relationship.

It is vital that a mentor has some base of influence with decision makers. If a mentor is going to have an impact on career development, he must be close to those persons who have the power and authority in the organization (Collins, 1983). Without status, power, and influence, the mentor's ability to affect career progression is negligible. The mentor must be viewed as being a credible individual with important decision makers or his support will be meaningless (Kanter, 1977).

It is necessary that a mentor possess professional expertise and be established in the area in which he is to mentor (Collins, 1983; Rogers, 1986). The mentor must be able to offer insights, advice, and information in problem areas the protege may not be familiar with. Phillips (1977) states that mentors must have both experience and knowledge in order to affect a protege's career. Because of their knowledge and the willingness to share information, mentors train proteges for increased responsibility and allow latitude and autonomy (Kanter, 1977).

Finally, if a mentor relationship is to be successful the mentor must be willing to commit time, energy and emotion to the relationship (Collins & Scott 1978; Puetz 1985). This is often a difficult aspect of the entire mentor/protege relationship. Mentors are usually busy, successful individuals with a variety of demands placed on them by both professional and personal circles (Dalton & Thompson, 1986). The personal commitment that is a cornerstone of the mentor relationship may place demands on the mentor that he is unable to meet. Without this investment the association will never evolve into a true mentor relationship. Just as the mentor must possess certain traits and characteristics if the mentor relationship is to be successful so must the protege. The

relationship is one of mutuality and symbiosis and requires a complementary exchange if it is to be successful.

Characteristics of the Protege

It is generally agreed upon that it is the mentor who selects the protege and not vice versa (Phillips, 1977; Newton, 1979). While this is true there are certain actions proteges can take and certain characteristics they can display to attract the attention of potential mentors. Kelly (1978) states that those nurses seeking the power of influence must begin early in their careers to seek out mentors who can provide the "nourishment" necessary for success (p. 339). Kelly (1984) states that mentors look for proteges that possess

intelligence; interest in the same field; a self-starter, a hard worker, someone looking for new challenges and directions; someone with good interpersonal and communication skills, someone with a curious mind, who has and understands ideas, someone who wants to be professional; someone with integrity; someone who makes a good appearance, since that person may be seen as representing the mentor (p. 1).

Phillips (1977) stresses that there may be times when the protege must seek the initiative by volunteering to serve on committees or to take on projects that will give visibility and advertise the fact that the protege is interested in preparing himself for future responsibilities. It is important that the protege presents himself as someone worth investing in, someone who can make a return on the investment that the mentor

makes in them (Hennig & Jardim, 1977). Zey (1984) points out that mentors seek out proteges who exhibit ambition, intelligence, the desire and ability to accept power and risk, loyalty, commitment to the organization and the ability to establish alliances. Collins (1983) echoes these perceptions when she states that mentors are "attracted to dedication, enthusiasm, intelligence and hard work" (p. 41). Newton (1979) points out that a mentor is drawn to a protege because of "competence, character, energy and ambition" (p. 24). Whatever the precise characteristics of a protege are, it is clear that they must demonstrate certain attributes if a mentor is to find them worthy of the investment that the relationship will require.

Hazards of Mentoring

It must be acknowledged that a mentor relationship is not a panacea. There are intrinsic dangers which lie in any interpersonal relationship and a mentor/protege situation is no exception. Both members of the dyad are subject to certain risks and uncertainties. Levinson (1978) states that "there is plenty of room for exploitation, undercutting, envy, smothering and oppressive control on the part of the mentor, and for greedy demanding, clinging admiration, self-denying gratitude and arrogant ingratitude on the part of the recipient" (p. 334). Phillips (1977) states that difficulty may occur

when the mentor or protege turns out to be not quite what was expected, for whatever reason. If a mentor halfheartedly assumes the role, the relationship will be doomed to failure. Vance (1982) compares the problems of mentors and proteges to those of parents and children when she says there is "the potential for oppressive control, over-dependence, exploitation, molding of clones, smothering, envy, and excessive altruism" (p. 8).

The mentor who offers his experience and expertise runs the risk of rejection (Woodland Group, 1980). This can be an especially painful experience for a potential mentor who thought a protege was worthy of his attention. A mentor has the potential to misuse the power that is inherent in the relationship by selectively relinquishing and dispersing the resources and information that they control (Rogers, 1986). Zey (1984) points out that a protege may damage a mentor's reputation if he performs poorly in the work setting after the mentor has promoted the competence of the protege and acted as an advocate. Regardless of the individuals involved in the mentor/protege dyad there are certain hazards which are innate in the relationship. The relationship may at times be both precarious and uncertain and should never be regarded as one without possible limitations.

Ending the Mentor Relationship

Similar to most human relationships, the mentor relationship is not stagnant but rather dynamic and changing. It is essential that the relationship evolves and takes on new directions; without this change there may be exploitation and dominance. The goal of the relationship is that both the protege and the mentor grow in competence, talent, and experience and emerge as peers (Bolton, 1980). After varying lengths of time the mentor/protege relationship ends. Darling (1985) identifies three factors which influence the ending of the mentor relationship.

1. Where values are shared and control is not an issue, the relationship can change to suit the current needs of both parties.

2. Where values and interests are no longer shared and control is not an issue, the relationship may naturally die, through gradual distancing and drift.

3. Where control is an issue, the relationship is not likely to end peacefully or cleanly unless both parties respect each other and have the skills to negotiate a change (p. 41).

Collins (1983) states the protege may want to terminate the relationship when the feeling of intellectual growth ceases. When this happens the protege can end the relationship and feelings of friendship and collegiality

may emerge in its place. While many mentor/protege relationships die slowly either because of the gradual drifting apart of the participants, the increasing competence and autonomy of the protege, or simply because of neglect, the relationship may end with feelings of bitterness and resentment. Levinson (1978) states that

most often an intense mentor relationship ends with strong conflict and bad feelings on both sides. The young man may have powerful feelings of bitterness, rancor, grief, abandonment, liberation, and rejuvenation. The sense of resonance is lost. The mentor he formerly loved and admired is now experienced as destructively critical and demanding, or as seeking to make one over in his own image rather than fostering one's individuality and independence. The mentor finds the young man unreceptive, touchy, irrationally rebellious and ungrateful (p. 100).

With the inevitable shifting of the roles in the mentor/protege dyad, both members must make transitions and adaptations (Hamilton, 1981). The relationship has changed and may now take on new dimensions and meaning. For in having "created an environment in which both members of the relationship were secure and comfortable they will both be able and impelled to move; the proper sendoff is the final gift of a good mentor" (Daloz, 1983, p. 27).

Benefits of Mentoring

While it is impossible to state conclusively what the definitive values of mentoring are, numerous studies have proposed the benefits of mentoring relationships in terms of both organizational and individual profit (Fagan &

Walter, 1982; Collins et al., 1978; Roche, 1979; Ellis, 1986; Vance, 1977; Levinson, 1978; Hennig & Jardim, 1976; Williams, 1977). Mentoring is seen as person-centered leadership which provides for personal, professional and organizational growth (Pilette, 1980). The mentor, the protege, the profession and the work force gain from the mentor relationship (Vance, 1982).

Benefits to the Protege. "It's a widely accepted management theory today that a person cannot make it alone inside the corporation, no matter how good the technical skills, abilities, performance or stamina" (Cook, 1977, p. 84). Because of today's complex bureaucratic and corporate structures "organizational circumstances dictate that from many only a few may be chosen" (Jennings, 1971, p. 2). It is in this environment of competition and the masses that a protege may realize the benefits of a mentor relationship. Zey (1984) describes four levels of mentoring and the benefits of each level to the protege.

Level I is where the protege reaps the profits from the mentor's teachings. It is here that the protege learns not only the skill aspects of the job but more importantly the nonskill aspects. Information about the politics of the organization, the personalities of the corporate managers and the correct presentation of self are shared. The protege learns about the "state secrets" of the organization and has access to confidential data and

information. The protege is provided with information regarding career opportunities within the organization and the quickest route to success.

In Level II the protege receives the benefit of personal support from the mentor. The protege is helped to overcome the pressures and strains of the work environment and is aided in the transition process when moving to jobs of greater responsibility. The protege learns to deal with conflicts and dilemmas and develops a sense of perspective on organizational matters.

Level III affords the protege the benefit of increased organizational exposure as the mentor provides opportunities for visibility among senior management. Resources of the organization including funds and communication lines become available. The protege enjoys the protection of the mentor as threatening situations such as incompetent superiors, mergers, and reorganization occur.

In Level IV the protege is given help in receiving prestigious appointments on boards, committees, and planning councils. Admission to training and management programs is fostered. The mentor aids the protege in expanding his responsibilities, staff and control. The mentor works overtly and covertly to propagate the protege in the system.

Zey (1984) contends that the mentor relationship offers benefits to the protege in terms of promoting individuals to higher management positions, offering an awareness of organizational politics, fostering knowledge of business operations, setting of clear objectives and realistic career goals and aiding in the knowledge of environmental dynamics and the personalities involved. The concept of the importance of access to information regarding the informal power structure is supported by Cameron (1982) when she states that a mentor relationship helps the protege learn the "rules of the power game" (p. 18). The real power of the organization lies in the informal power structure and it is only through the guidance of a mentor that the protege will have access to this information. In a mentor relationship "the young person has access to the wisdom of the tribe; generally learning of the values, knowledge, acceptable ways to get along, and practical tips of the trade as far as work is concerned are all handed down from elders of the tribe" (Darling, 1984, p. 38).

Vance (1982) states the three major benefits to the protege of the mentor relationship is the preparation of the protege for leadership roles, accelerated career advancement and success and greater personal satisfaction, increased self-esteem and self-confidence. In Roche's (1979) historic study of the mentor relationship he

examined the career paths of top executives mentioned in the Wall Street Journal. He found that those who identified mentor relationships earned more money at a younger age, were more likely to follow a career plan and reported greater job satisfaction.

While mentoring is not seen as a substitute for competence, motivation or enthusiasm it is seen as one valuable component of a career development program. "Although one might assume or hope that excellence and productivity is all that is needed for recognition, in reality ideas are more likely to be accepted if they are promoted or mentioned by important sponsors" (Phillips, 1977, p. 10). A mentor gives an individual the visibility, self-confidence, counsel, support, knowledge, and access to the corporate power structure that is necessary for upward career mobility. The important one-to-one relationship of a mentor/protege dyad accelerates and intensifies career development (Zaleznik, 1977).

Benefits to the Mentor. While the protege reaps many benefits from the mentor relationship the mentor himself is not without profit. While the rewards to the mentor are often intangible, long-range, intimate, and difficult to describe, mentoring is growth producing and a mentor cannot help but continue in her own growth and expansion (Hamilton, 1981; Vance, 1982). Mentors experience personal satisfaction and vicarious self-fulfillment (Policinski,

et al., 1985). Sheehy (1981) states that mentors often gain an unusual sense of importance and singularity. Many of the benefits to the mentor will be intrinsic in nature. "Every paper published by a protege, every speech delivered, and every honor received testifies to the mentor's competence (Rogers, 1986, p. 81). While Zey (1984) expands on the benefits of the mentor relationship to the protege at great length he also points out that the benefits are actually mutual in the relationship. The mentor often gains help in doing a job, receives information and intelligence regarding the organization, and builds an empire of loyal followers. The followers in turn increase the influence, prestige and power of the mentor (Rogers, 1986).

Mentors enjoy the benefit of being able to influence the next generation by passing on skills, knowledge and values. Erikson (1950) refers to this as the stage of adult psycho-social development when the task of "generativity vs. stagnation" must be resolved. It is at this time that adults should realize that they have made lasting, significant contributions to the next generation. Mentoring can be one manifestation of the fulfillment of this task. Regardless of the specific rewards that each mentor reaps, the mentor relationship is a reciprocal one and offers the mentor both intrinsic and concrete rewards.

Benefits to the Organization. Not only do members of the mentoring dyad benefit from the relationship, the organization and corporate structure profit as well. Zey (1984) states that organizational benefits include the integration of the individual into the organization making him more accepting of mores and goals and the smooth transfer of managerial reins from one generation to the next. Mentoring also produces managers who are comfortable with power and have the ability to use their power in the accomplishment of corporate objectives. Mentorship also has a positive effect on the morale of organizations (Woodland Group, 1980). Proteges feel like they are significant as individuals and not just another corporate commodity. Members do not feel isolated but instead realize that the help and counsel of the mentor is available if needed. "The supportive relationships of mentors are necessary for harmony between the objectives of the organization and the needs and wishes of individual members" (Wolf, 1982, p. 72).

Mentorship in Nursing

The presence of research studies regarding mentorship in the profession of nursing are scarce. While many articles have been written advocating the promotion of mentor relationships among nurses, little has been done in the area of descriptive research. In an often quoted study from 1977, Vance studied 71 leaders in nursing whom she

called nurse-influentials. She constructed a group profile of these individuals in which she identified career characteristics and mentor connections. Vance found that 83 percent of these influential nurses reported having one or more mentors and that these mentors were helpful in the areas of career advice, guidance and promotion, career role modeling and intellectual and scholarly stimulation. Vance states that "the mentor system developed more widely in nursing will strengthen the profession by increasing its numbers of competent, successful and satisfied professionals" (p. 13).

In 1986 Ellis found that nurses who reported a mentor relationship experience greater job satisfaction than those who did not have a mentor. At the conclusion of her study Ellis (1986) states that a mentor not only increases the opportunity for job satisfaction but is an "important tool for nursing leaders to use in advancing their career" (p. 58). Mentorship is necessary in the areas of nursing practice, education/research, and administration. "Mentorship presents the potential opportunity of implanting steel reinforcement rods in the concrete base of nursing's future" (Wolf, 1982, p. 69).

Hamilton (1981) states that "mentorship in nursing has the potential to become an effective, exciting and rewarding way of developing our future leaders" (p. 10). This is extremely important for never before in our history

"has the demand for highly knowledgeable, politically astute, and skilled leaders been so apparent" (Leininger, 1974, p. 29). Duncan and Partridge (1980) state that "a good mentor is perhaps the most valuable support mechanism an aspiring leader can utilize to enhance professional growth and progress toward career goals" (p. 20).

Hinshaw (1986) points out that a mentoring relationship is valuable when nurses seek to integrate the roles of scientist, teacher, and expert clinician. If the scientific base of the profession is to continue its expansion, nurses must successfully mesh these roles; a mentor can be an invaluable asset in this process. Mentors are also important when preparing grant proposals and manuscripts for publications as well as serving as consultants for research projects (Kim & Felton, (1986).

Kelly (1978) states that nurses now in positions of influence "must take on the responsibility of grooming other promising nurses" (p. 339). Instead of complaints and competition there must be commitment and cooperation. "The strength of the professional nursing system comes from within, through the self-directed learning pursuits of proteges in nursing who seek the support of a mentor (Wolf, 1982, p. 74).

Critical Analysis of the Literature

"The literature on mentoring is biased in favor of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1983, p. 169). Studies done in

the fields of business, industry, and nursing expound on the perceived benefits and career advantages of the mentor relationship. A review of the literature would be incomplete without acknowledging existing criticisms of past research concerning the phenomenon. Merriam (1983) states that there are three serious flaws in the current literature. First, the phenomenon of mentoring is not clearly conceptualized. The term "mentor" means different things to different people, so a researcher can never be sure if the actual phenomenon being measured is indeed mentoring. A second flaw of the research concerning mentoring is that study designs are unsophisticated. The majority of studies involve questionnaires often with low return rates. Data obtained from interviews is subject to the effects of prompting and leading questions by the researcher--a researcher who is probably biased in favor of the phenomenon. Construct and criterion related validity is often absent (Hagerty, 1986). Finally, the research rarely deals with the negative aspects of the phenomenon. Potential drawbacks or dangers of the relationship are never discussed with the same fervor that is lent to the advantages of the phenomenon. Hagerty (1986) states that "it is apparent that there is some type of phenomenon that is helpful in promoting individual and professional growth; we need responsible discussion and investigation of the mentoring phenomenon" (p. 19).

It cannot be denied that the literature regarding mentorship has areas which need further exploration and examination. Nor can it be denied that research studies done in the past might be subject to criticisms regarding design or methodology. Certainly this researcher is not so bold as to think this study is above reproach. It will attempt, however, to add to the knowledge concerning the mentoring relationship by examining the phenomenon in an environment which has thus far been unexplored, by looking at the negative aspects of the mentor relationship and by using a sound methodological approach. It is through continued research that the concept of mentoring can be further analyzed and understood.

Mentoring in the Military

A review of the literature reveals that there have been no studies done on the phenomenon of mentoring within the military setting. While there is an abundance of literature which addresses other aspects of the military structure such as law, policy, ethics, and history, mentoring has not been discussed. Within the Air Force Nurse Corps the subject remains unexplored. Peripheral issues such as leadership opportunities, availability of expanded roles, benefits of the rank structure, and promotion potential are dealt with in the literature but mentoring as an aspect of career progression has not been dealt with. Clearly, insights are needed as to the role

the phenomenon of mentoring might play within the structure of the Air Force Nurse Corps. Most specifically, mentoring as a career advancement strategy and as an aspect of professional socialization needs to be explored and investigated within this unique setting.

Summary

The mentor relationship is a complex phenomenon that has received increasing attention in the fields of business, industry and nursing during the past decade. It is seen by authors as a desirable, if not essential, component of a successful career. Through the mentor relationship individuals gain information and insights that smooth the way for success in the organization. Despite the complicated nature of mentoring it is viewed as a positive relationship capable of enhancing career progression and advancement.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which mentoring is perceived by senior Nurse Corps officers as enhancing an individual's professional socialization and the ability to develop the qualifications necessary for advancement. Mentoring has been studied extensively in the business and corporate environment but it has not been examined in the unique setting of the Air Force Nurse Corps. This study will provide valuable insights as to the influence of mentoring within the organizational structure of the Nurse Corps. This chapter will present a description of the research design, the methods to be used in the pilot and major studies, sample selection techniques, and data analysis procedures. The protection of human subjects is also described.

Research Design

The design of the study is non-experimental and descriptive in nature. In descriptive research "the investigator merely searches for accurate information about the characteristics of particular subjects, groups, institutions or situations, or the frequency of a phenomenon's occurrence" (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1986, p. 130). Descriptive research is not concerned with

cause-and-effect relationships but rather it is concerned with obtaining information about the current status of the phenomenon of interest. "Descriptive correlational research is often quite useful in its own right and sometimes lays the groundwork for further, more rigorous research" (Polit & Hungler, 1983, p. 177). Because there is no control of variables, descriptive studies cannot test hypotheses nor can relationships be predicted. These studies can, however, "make assessments of relationships between phenomenon based on accumulated information" (Williamson, 1981, p. 117). In the present study the variable of interest is the presence or absence of a mentor during the career development of senior Nurse Corps officers. If a mentor has been identified as an element of a senior officer's career, the role that the mentor may have played in professional socialization and career achievement will be examined. Because of the nature of the research questions, the variable being studied, and the literature presently available concerning the phenomenon of interest, this study lends itself to a descriptive, non-experimental design.

Research Methodology

The approach used in this study will be one of sample survey research. "The term survey can be used to designate any research activity in which the investigator gathers data from a portion of a population for the purpose of

examining the characteristics, opinions, or intentions of that population" (Polit & Hungler, 1983, p. 189). The type of survey used in this study will consist of a questionnaire. Brink and Wood (1983) state that the advantages of a questionnaire include (a) the format is standard for all subjects and is not dependent on the technique of the interviewer, (b) subjects feel a greater sense of anonymity, (c) large samples, covering large geographic areas, compensate for the expected loss of subjects and, (d) a greater amount of data over a broad range of topics may be collected. LoBiondo-Wood & Haber (1986) state that "if a sample is representative of the population a relatively small number of respondents can provide an accurate picture of the target population" (p. 130).

It should be mentioned that despite the benefits of a questionnaire there are also inherent disadvantages such as low response rates and relatively superficial information. Mailed questionnaires often yield low response rates because there is no consequence for the individual if they choose not to participate; participation is entirely voluntary. Low response rates can sometimes be offset, however, if follow-up reminders are sent to subjects. "Thirty percent is a good response to a mailed questionnaire" (Williamson, 1981, p. 222). Information gained from a mailed questionnaire is often considered

superficial in that it may lack depth and breadth. Because questionnaires usually rely on fixed responses the individual cannot elaborate on or justify responses.

Despite the disadvantages mentioned above the inherent advantages of a questionnaire make it a valuable information gathering tool. A questionnaire is an appropriate method of data collection for this study because of the research design and the population of interest. Subjects of the study reside in almost every state and in several foreign countries, making personal or phone interviews impractical. A questionnaire provides the means of contacting these subjects despite their diverse locations.

The Sample

The sample for this study will consist of 140 individuals randomly selected from the population of interest. The population of interest consists of Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels presently on active duty in the Air Force Nurse Corps. At the present time there are 355 members of this population. One hundred forty of these individuals will be sent a questionnaire in an effort to obtain a response rate of at least 20% from the population of interest.

A list of all Air Force Nurse Corps officers presently occupying the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel and their current duty addresses was obtained from

the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. The Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels who comprise the population of interest are located at various duty stations world-wide and occupy a number of administrative and management positions.

The individuals who will be asked to participate in the study will consist of a simple random sample generated from the list obtained from the Manpower and Personnel Center. The names of all possible subjects will be placed into a hat and 140 names will be drawn. It is these individuals who will receive the questionnaire. The advantages of a random sample such as this are (a) the sample selection is not subject to the conscious biases of the researcher, (b) the representativeness of the sample in relation to the population characteristics is maximized, and (c) the differences in the characteristics of the sample and the population are purely a function of chance (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1986, p. 212). "The main purpose of random sampling is to allow the results from the sample to be generalized to the population" (Brink & Wood, 1983, p. 151).

Instruments

A review of the literature revealed that there is presently no instrument which will provide the information necessary to examine the research questions proposed by this study. Because of this an instrument was designed by

the investigator to generate the desired information (See Appendix E). The questionnaire which has been developed consists of 26 statements which are presented in a Likert-scale format. These statements were generated as a result of an extensive review of the literature as well as telephone interviews conducted with three senior Nurse Corps officers. The questionnaire also contains two open-ended questions. The first open-ended question deals with the possible negative aspects of the mentor relationship. The second open-ended question invites respondents to provide any additional information regarding the mentor relationship which they feel might be pertinent.

The Likert-scale format was chosen because it provides a means of quantifying information regarding the construct of mentoring. By using structured, fixed-response items the subjects must choose the response which most closely reflects their feeling, attitude or opinion (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1986). The summation feature of the Likert format makes it possible to determine fine discriminations among individuals (Polit & Hungler, 1983). It is recommended that the questionnaire consists of 10 to 30 items (Green, 1967). The questionnaire designed for this study has 26 items in the Likert format. There are four choices that the respondent may select from each statement. An even number of responses is preferable for scales that range across dimensions because it does

not allow the respondent to take an "undecided" or "fence-sitting" approach to a question; the subject is forced to choose between the alternatives (Wilson, 1985). Rating scales are useful research tools. They are an efficient way to elicit, record, and quantify information. Respondents find them interesting and easy to complete. They are also considered very reliable (Williamson, 1981; Polit & Hungler, 1983). As with all research tools there are inherent disadvantages to Likert-type scales. These tools are subject to response set biases if subjects consistently respond in what they consider to be a socially desirable way. A second disadvantage is that validity is very difficult to establish for these instruments.

Prior to its use in the major study a pilot study will be conducted to determine the reliability of the instrument. Ten individuals will be randomly selected from the population of interest by the same methods previously described. A copy of the cover letter (See Appendix A), demographic data sheet (See Appendix D), and the mentoring questionnaire will be sent to the subjects. They will be asked to complete the questionnaire within 24 hours. Three days later another questionnaire will be sent to these same individuals and they will once again be asked to complete the form. A cover letter will be included to explain why a second questionnaire was sent (See Appendix B). After the respondents return their two questionnaires

statistical analysis for test-retest reliability will be conducted.

Test-retest reliability measures the extent to which the same results are obtained on repeated administrations of the instrument (Polit & Hungler, 1983). The test-retest method is designed to provide an indication of the stability of the instrument. If an instrument does indeed possess stability in regards to the phenomenon being measured respondents should answer the same questions with the same answer on repeated administrations (Brink & Wood, 1983). The individuals will be asked to complete the questionnaire three days apart so that the probability of remembering exact answers will be reduced. After the two sets of scores are received a correlation coefficient will be completed. A reliability coefficient ranges between 0.0 and 1.00. The higher the coefficient the more stable the instrument. A reliability coefficient of .70 is considered satisfactory (Polit & Hungler, 1983). For the purposes of this pilot study the above value will be accepted as a measure of the instrument's stability.

In addition to the test-retest method described above, the instrument will be evaluated in terms of its internal consistency at the conclusion of the major study. "An instrument is considered to be internally consistent to the extent that all of its subparts are measuring the same characteristics" (Polit & Hungler, 1983, p. 389).

Coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha) is considered a reliable index of internal consistency. The range for coefficient alpha is 0.0 to 1.00. The higher the score the higher the internal consistency. A coefficient alpha will be calculated at the conclusion of the major study rather than at the conclusion of the pilot study because of the small sample size to be utilized in the pilot study. Such a small sample would not yield an accurate measurement of the internal consistency of the instrument utilizing the formula for coefficient alpha.

The validity of an instrument is the degree to which it measures what it purports to measure. Validity is always difficult to establish. Content validity is "concerned with the sampling adequacy of the content area being measured" (Polit & Hungler, 1983, p. 395). There are no objective methods of assuring the adequate content coverage of an instrument. Because there is no statistical method to determine content validity a panel of experts may be utilized to review the instrument and determine whether the questions adequately sample the construct being measured. The questionnaire designed for this study was reviewed by a panel of three content experts and was deemed to have content validity. Breda Bova, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Educational Foundations, University of New Mexico; Rebecca Phillips, Ph.D., Training Department, Los Alamos National Laboratories; and Lynn

Taylor, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Adult Education, University of Colorado, served as content experts. These individuals have all done extensive research in the area of mentoring and have had their findings published in various professional journals. Each has also presented seminars and lectures regarding mentorship to professional organizations.

It is not possible to determine criterion-related validity for this instrument because there is no existing reliable and valid criterion to which it can be compared. Likewise, construct validity could not be obtained because there is no other instrument available which measures the construct under investigation, therefore no relationship or correlation can be drawn between an existing instrument and the one designed for this study.

Data Collection and Recording

Each questionnaire will receive a numerical code which will be known only to the investigator. As questionnaires are returned they will be reviewed for usability and placed in a log which will be used to record their return. This record keeping activity will assist in monitoring response rates and will help determine if a follow-up is necessary for subjects who have not responded.

Data Analysis Procedures

Descriptive statistics will be used for data analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSSX) will be used for computer analysis of survey results. The first research question regarding the presence or absence of a mentor during career development will be evaluated in terms of the total number of individuals who identify a mentor and what percentage that number represents of the total respondents. The second research question regarding the mentor's role in career development and achievement will be analyzed by examining statements numbered 15 through 26 of the questionnaire. In order for the researcher to consider the mentor an agent of career development, respondents must score a total of 34 points out of a possible 48. A total number of points of 33 or below will be considered a negative response to the research question. The third research question regarding professional socialization and information giving will be analyzed by examining statements 8 through 14 of the questionnaire. A positive response to this question will include a total number of points of 20 out of a possible 28. Total points of less than 20 will be considered a negative response to the third research question. The fourth research question will be analyzed by examining statements one through seven of the questionnaire. In order to conclude that the mentor acted as a role model a total score of 20 out of a possible 28 must be obtained. Research question number five regarding the negative

aspects of the mentor relationship will be collated and discussed in the narrative of Chapter Four.

Protection of Human Subjects

Each participant in the study will sign a consent form. Both the cover letter and the consent form (See Appendix C) indicate that participation is entirely voluntary. All responses will be presented as group rather than individual data. In addition, all respondents are protected under Air Force Regulation 12-35, the Privacy Act.

Summary

This study is descriptive in nature and will utilize a questionnaire to obtain responses from a random sample of 140 individuals. A pilot study will be conducted to determine the reliability of the instrument. Content validity has been established by a panel of experts. All subjects in the study will sign a consent form indicating their voluntary participation in the study. Confidentiality of responses is protected under government regulation.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results of Data Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether mentoring is perceived by senior Nurse Corps officers as enhancing an individual's professional socialization and the ability to develop the qualifications that are necessary for career advancement. This chapter will present the results of the data obtained in this study. An in-depth discussion of the data will be presented in Chapter Five. The data was obtained by sending a mailed questionnaire to 140 senior Nurse Corps officers who were randomly selected from the population of interest. The tools for this study consisted of a demographic data sheet and a questionnaire involving professional and mentorship issues. A pilot study was conducted prior to the major study to determine the reliability of the instrument and to identify any problem areas associated with comprehension or readability of the tool. Validity was established by a panel of experts prior to the pilot study. The results of the pilot study will be presented, followed by an analysis of the results obtained from the major study.

Results of the Pilot Study

Ten individuals were randomly selected from the population of interest. A copy of the cover letter,

demographic data sheet, and mentoring questionnaire were sent to the subjects. They were asked to complete the questionnaire within twenty-four hours. Three days later another questionnaire was mailed to the same subjects and they were asked to complete the questionnaire for a second time. The purpose of the second questionnaire was to establish the stability of the instrument utilizing the test-retest method. All ten subjects returned the initial questionnaire. Seven respondents (70%) identified the presence of a mentor during their career development. Three respondents (30%) stated that they had never had a mentor at any time during their Air Force career. Of the seven respondents who identified the presence of a mentor during career development, six returned a second completed questionnaire. Test-retest reliability measures were then conducted on the two questionnaires returned by these six individuals. The comparison procedure yielded a reliability coefficient of .96. This reliability coefficient indicates a high correlation between the response obtained on the first and second administrations of the questionnaire. Because of this high reliability correlation the instrument can be said to possess a high measure of stability. This is important because the "reliability of a measuring instrument is a major criterion for assessing its quality and adequacy" (Polit & Hungler, 1983, p. 385).

There were no problem areas identified in the pilot study associated with the readability or understandability of the questionnaire. All of the respondents completed the entire tool and returned the questionnaire as requested in the cover letter. The questionnaires had no missing data. Many of the respondents took the opportunity to respond to the two open-ended questions regarding the mentor relationship which were at the end of the questionnaire.

The pilot study indicated the questionnaire designed by the researcher possessed stability and was readable and comprehensible by the sample subjects. Based on these findings, the major study was conducted without altering either the demographic data sheet or the mentorship instrument. There is one final comment regarding the instrument itself. At the conclusion of the major study a coefficient alpha was calculated to determine the instrument's internal consistency. A value of .86 was calculated, further documenting the reliability of the instrument. The coefficient alpha was not calculated as part of the pilot study due to the small sample size ($n=10$) which would have not yielded an accurate result.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The personal and career development characteristics of the respondents will be presented in this section in an effort to provide background information regarding the senior Nurse Corps officers who participated in this study.

One hundred forty subjects were mailed questionnaires and asked to participate in this study. A total of 107 were returned, for a response rate of 76%.

Of the 107 subjects in the study, 94 (87.95%) were female and 13 (12.1%) were male. Seventy five (70.1%) hold the rank of Lieutenant Colonel while 32 (29.9%) hold the rank of Colonel. The age distribution for this group is shown below in Table 1. The age range was 36-58 years, with a mean age of 45 years. The age range of 41-45 years was the largest with a frequency of 39 (36%). There were three (.02%) respondents over the age of 56.

Table 1
Age of Respondents

Age	n	%
36-40	17	15.9
41-45	39	36.4
46-50	34	31.8
51-55	14	13.1
56 and over	3	2.8
Total	<u>107</u>	<u>100.0</u>

A frequency distribution of the marital status of the respondents (Table 2) indicated that 49 (45.8%) were single, 50 (46.7%) were married, and 8 (7.5%) were widowed or divorced.

Table 2
Marital Status of Respondents

Status	n	%
Single	49	45.8
Married	50	46.7
Widowed/Divorced	8	7.5
Total	107	100.0

The number of dependents that the respondents claim is shown in Table 3. Sixty-three respondents (58.9%) had no dependents. Nine individuals (8.4%) had three or more dependents.

Table 3
Number of Dependents

Dependents	n	%
0	63	58.9
1	19	17.8
2	14	13.1
3	7	6.5
4	2	1.9
5 or more	2	1.9

The highest level of education attained by the respondents is shown in Table 4. Nineteen (17.8%) of the respondents held a Bachelor's degree while 88 (82.2%) individuals held a graduate degree.

Table 4
Highest Level of Education

Degree	n	%
Bachelors	19	17.8
MSN	38	35.5
MEd	4	3.7
Master's (unspecified)	46	43.0
Total	<u>107</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The duty positions which are held by the respondents are shown in Table 5. Fifty-six (52.3%) individuals presently serve as either a Chief Nurse or an Assistant Chief Nurse. Nineteen (17.8%) individuals occupy nurse practitioner roles. Four (3.7%) respondents are involved in anesthesia while 2 (1.9%) are in environmental health roles. Twenty-six (24.3%) individuals serve in positions other than those mentioned above. Many of these positions are staff positions such as command nurses, quality assurance/executive management fellows, and Inspector General Team members. Other areas represented by these individuals include recruiting services, the Manpower and Personnel Center, aeromedical evacuation, and medical development, acquisition, and research.

Table 5
Present Duty Positions

Title	n	%
Chief Nurse	37	34.6
Asst Chief Nurse	19	17.8
Nurse Practitioner	19	17.8
Nurse Anesthetist	4	3.7
Environmental Health Staff Position	2 26	1.9 24.2
Total	107	100.0

The demographic data presented above is intended to provide insights into the personal and professional characteristics of the subjects in this study. The Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels who participated in this study and comprise the sample represent 30% of the total population of interest.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do senior Nurse Corps officers identify the presence of a mentor during career development?

The presence or absence of a mentor during career development was determined through a direct question to the respondents. Seventy-two (67.3%) respondents identified the presence of a mentor during their career development. Thirty-five (32.7%) stated that a mentor had not played a role during their Air Force career (Table 6).

Table 6
Presence/Absence of Mentor

Mentor	n	%
Yes	72	67.3
No	35	32.7
Total	<u>107</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Of those individuals who identified the presence of a mentor 48 (66.7%) were either a Lieutenant or Captain at the time they were influenced by their mentor, while 24 (33.3%) were either a Major or Lieutenant Colonel. Table 7 illustrates the rank of the protege at the time when they first met and were influenced by their mentor.

Table 7
Rank of Protege

Rank	n	%
Lieutenant	7	9.7
Captain	41	57.0
Major	18	25.0
Lt. Col.	6	8.3
Total	<u>72</u>	<u>100.0</u>

The rank of the mentor is illustrated in Table 8 below. Two (2.8%) of the individuals who served as a mentor occupied the role of Captain while 70 (97.2%) individuals held a rank higher than that of Captain at the time they occupied the role of a mentor.

Table 8

Rank of Mentor

Rank	n	%
Captain	2	2.8
Major	10	13.9
Lt. Col.	33	45.8
Colonel	27	37.5
Total	72	100.0

Research Question 2: Do senior Nurse Corps officers who identify the presence of a mentor feel that this mentor aided in career development and achievement?

This research question regarding the mentor's role in career development and achievement was analyzed by examining statement numbers 15 through 26 of the questionnaire. Of the 72 individuals who indicated that they had a mentor during their Air Force career, 68 (94.4%) stated that the mentor directly aided in career development and achievement. In order for the mentor to have been considered an agent of career development and achievement, respondents had to score a total of 34 points out of a possible 48. The mean for the respondents on this set of questions was 43.7. Four (5.6%) of the respondents indicated that although they had a mentor at some time during their career, this mentor did not aid in career development and achievement. The results discussed above are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9

Role of Mentor as Career Developer

Career Developer	n	%
Yes	68	94.4%
No	4	5.6
Total	<u>72</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Research Question 3: Did the identified mentor aid in professional socialization by offering information about the values, norms, appropriate behaviors, and expectations of the organization?

This research question was analyzed by examining questions number 8 through 14 of the instrument. In order for a mentor to be considered an information-giver and agent of professional socialization a respondent must score 20 out of a possible 28 points. Of the 72 individuals who indicated the presence of a mentor, 56 (77.7%) stated that the mentor had acted as an agent of professional socialization. Sixteen (22.3%) respondents indicated that the mentor had not acted as an information-giver and agent of professional socialization. Table 10 summarizes the above results. The mean for the respondents on this set of questions was 23.2.

Table 10
Mentor as Information Giver

Information Giver	n	%
Yes	56	77.7
No	16	22.3
Total	72	100.0

Research Question 4: Did the identified mentor serve as a positive role model?

This research question was analyzed by examining questions 1 through 7 of the instrument. In order for a mentor to be considered a positive role model, a respondent must score a total of 20 points out of a possible 28. Seventy-two (100%) of the respondents stated that the mentor had served as a positive role model.

Research Question 5: What are the negative aspects of the mentor relationship?

This research question was presented in the instrument as an open-ended question. Although answering this question was optional, many respondents took the opportunity to respond to the question. Forty-four (61.1%) subjects stated that there were no negative aspects to their mentor relationship. Seventeen (23.6%) subjects did not respond to the question. Eleven (15.2%) respondents indicated that there were negative aspects to their mentor relationship. Of the eleven individuals who

identified negative aspects of the relationship, several themes emerged. One theme which was identified by four individuals was that of extensive work hours which often interfered with personal and private time. One individual stated that she was "expected to work eighteen-hour days including weekends and holidays." Another stated that "her (mentor's) expectations did not include any latitude for family life or problems which might distract from a 150% commitment to the Air Force Nurse Corps." Another theme expressed by four of the respondents dealt with the tensions and frustrations that arose because of differing philosophies and opinions. One subject stated that "there were times when our philosophies were at odds on major issues as far as ethics was concerned." One individual stated that her mentor was a "her way only" person and that as her protege she "didn't always agree with her opinions." Other negative aspects of the mentor relationship which were identified by respondents included having to deal with "resentment from superiors" because of the relationship, as well as having to deal with a mentor "who often spoke and acted abruptly." One individual stated that she "felt threatened by my mentor's power over people."

Summary

The data analysis and findings presented in this chapter represent the responses of senior Nurse Corps

officers to a questionnaire involving career and mentorship issues. The respondents represent 30% of the population of interest. An in-depth discussion of the implications and conclusions to be drawn from this study are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The ultimate goal of any research project is to provide new knowledge, insights, and perspectives. Research provides a means whereby new understandings can be gained and phenomenon of interest can be explored. At the conclusion of any research endeavor it is paramount that the researcher objectively review the findings and evaluate the study in terms of its implications and limitations. This chapter will present the findings associated with this research study and will provide an interpretation of these findings. Problems, limitations, implications, and suggestions for further research will also be explored.

Review

In recent decades there has been a plethora of literature written regarding the concept of mentoring. Mentoring is viewed by most authors as a desirable and positive phenomenon which benefits both the individual and the organization. Mentorship is often viewed as one essential element in an overall career development plan. The mentor serves a variety of functions including that of role model, information-giver, and career-developer. The mentor also serves as agent of professional socialization by offering information regarding the norms, values, and

expectations of the organization to which the protege belongs. The mentor helps the protege transition into the organization by offering information that is vital to the protege's success within the institutional setting. The mentor aids the protege in the development of those skills which are necessary for success and advancement within the organization. Although mentoring has been extensively studied in the business and corporate settings it has never been examined in the unique setting of the Air Force Nurse Corps. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether mentoring is perceived by senior Nurse Corps officers as enhancing an individual's professional socialization and the ability to develop the qualifications necessary for career achievement.

The research design of this study was descriptive and non-experimental in nature. The sample consisted of 107 senior Nurse Corps officers who had been randomly selected from the population of interest. The respondents completed a demographic data sheet and a questionnaire concerning mentorship and career issues. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher for use in this study. The instrument was first used in a pilot study where its stability was determined by the test-retest method. Content validity was determined by a panel of experts. At the conclusion of the major study the instrument was evaluated for internal consistency by calculating a

coefficient alpha. The results of this test determined that the instrument also possessed internal consistency. The data that was collected from the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and confidentiality of all responses was assured.

Summary of Findings

Results of the study indicate that 67.3% of the senior Nurse Corps officers who responded to the questionnaire identified the presence of a mentor during their career development. This number indicates that a large percentage of these successful officers has been positively influenced by the presence of a mentor during their Air Force career. This would support the current literature that purports that a mentor is an essential element of a successful career. On the other hand, however, 32.7% of these successful career officers stated that a mentor did not play a part in their career development and achievement. This would seem to be contradictory to the entire philosophy that is based on the premise that a mentor is necessary for career achievement. One of the criticisms of the literature regarding mentoring is that there are not a significant number of well designed studies that demonstrate sound methodology. The literature is often considered to be biased in favor of the phenomenon. The data from this

study would seem to indicate that a mentor can, and indeed has, played a significant part in the career development of a substantial number of individuals, but that a mentor is not essential for career success. Perhaps in the military setting success can simply be obtained by exemplary actions in the areas of job performance, education, and leadership. Although a mentor may have a positive effect in all of these areas, success can be achieved without a mentor's influence.

Of those individuals who identified the presence of a mentor during their Air Force career a high percentage (94.4%) stated that the mentor aided in career development and achievement. This would substantiate the literature on mentorship which states that one of the benefits to a mentoring relationship is that the mentor offers guidance and advice on how to succeed within the organization. The mentor also "sells" the protege to other individuals within the organization. This helps the protege achieve name recognition and gives the protege visibility within the organization. Within the Air Force structure, guidance which can ultimately lead to career achievement includes advice on such issues as conflict resolution, career broadening assignments, and the importance of Officer Effectiveness Reports. The results of this study support the contention of the literature that the mentor acts as an agent of career development.

The literature overwhelmingly states that a mentor serves as an agent of professional socialization by offering information about the norms, expectations, and values of the organization. Seventy-seven percent of those who identified the presence of a mentor stated that the mentor aided in professional socialization and acted as an information-giver. Information which the mentor might provide deals with areas such as promotion boards, institutional politics, and effective use of the chain of command. Once again, the results of this study support the literature. The mentor, in a large percentage of cases, served as an information-giver and therefore aided the protege in the process of professional socialization.

All of the subjects in the study indicated that the mentor served as a positive role model. This supports the literature which asserts that one of the primary functions of the mentor is to serve as a positive example for the protege. The mentor portrays the positive example by being competent, dynamic, enthusiastic, and politically sophisticated. This study would substantiate the premise that one of the primary functions of a mentor is to be a good role model.

A review of the literature shows that the mentor relationship is not without risks and hazards. Respondents to the questionnaire validated this assertion by their comments regarding the negative aspects of their mentor/

protege relationship. Themes which emerged included long hours which interfered with private lives and personal time. Another theme was that of philosophical differences which often contributed to frustration and tension. Although the large majority of respondents indicated that there were no negative aspects to the relationship, 15.2% indicated that there was at least one drawback to their relationship with their mentor.

One final note regarding the findings of this study. Many of the respondents took the opportunity to offer additional comments and thoughts regarding their relationship with their mentor by writing brief narratives at the end of the questionnaire. Some of these verbatim comments and thoughts are presented in Appendix F. They are presented for the purpose of providing additional insights and perspectives into the nature of the mentor relationship. The comments are almost unanimously positive in nature, further substantiating the literature which overwhelmingly supports the mentor relationship.

Implications of the Study

As with any research study, it is essential to evaluate the results of this project and determine what implications might be drawn from the findings. Clearly, a significant number of senior Nurse Corps officers have identified the presence of a mentor during their career. This mentor acted as a positive role model, an agent of

professional socialization, and a career developer. Perhaps members of the Nurse Corps should be made more conscious of the positive influence a mentor relationship can have on an individual's career achievement. Although a mentor/protege relationship cannot be forced, perhaps a greater awareness of the advantages of the relationship would make individuals more cognizant of the benefits which might be accrued. Benefits accrue not only to the individual but to the organization as well. Younger officers who demonstrate the characteristics and abilities necessary for a successful Air Force career could be "groomed" by mentors. This could help make the adjustment to the role of professional nurse and career officer a smoother one. As these younger officers move into positions of increasing authority and gain in rank, they can then serve as mentors and the cycle can repeat itself. This pattern of support and knowledge sharing might serve to combat feelings of burn-out and frustration among Nurse Corps officers. Consequently, nurse retention may be increased. Learning from the experiences of others can help younger officers make better, more informed decisions regarding career and professional issues. Mentorship can affirm those qualities and traits that are necessary for a successful career in the military setting. At the same time it can foster feelings of organizational belonging and esprit de corps. The mentor relationship provides an

avenue whereby competent and talented individuals are afforded every opportunity for career success, thus ensuring that future leaders of the Nurse Corps are chosen from among the best and brightest. Although the results of this study indicate that a mentor is not essential for career achievement, the fact that such a significant number of officers did identify a mentor in career development indicates that it is a phenomenon worthy of attention and consideration.

Limitations of the Study

Any research study, regardless of design, is hampered by limitations and problems. It is important that these limitations be recognized and acknowledged by the researcher and those individuals who are reading the study results. There were a number of problems and limitations that were encountered in the process of implementing this research study which should be considered when interpreting the data.

One of the inherent difficulties when studying the phenomenon of mentorship is that there is not a universal, precise definition of the construct. The phenomenon is very abstract and not easy to define. It is possible that the respondents who indicated they had been involved in a mentoring relationship during their career development were actually confusing the phenomenon of mentoring with another supportive type of relationship. If this were

true, the number of mentoring relationships experienced may actually be significantly smaller than what the study would suggest.

Because the study utilized an instrument which was specifically designed for this project, the tool does not possess the benefits of refinement. Refinement is only possible after a tool has been used over a period of time or in more than one study. Although the validity of the instrument was determined by a panel of experts, it would be beneficial if other types of validity could also be established.

Because a questionnaire was used in this study the information obtained was somewhat superficial and limited in nature. Although respondents were encouraged to include additional comments and thoughts regarding the mentor relationship at the conclusion of the questionnaire, many did not do so. The quality of data obtained on a questionnaire lacks a certain depth and richness. By utilizing interviews in conjunction with a questionnaire the researcher could gain greater understanding of the phenomenon being studied and the study would in turn, gain in richness.

Finally the generalizability of the study is limited. Because the sample was drawn from such a unique population it would be difficult to universally apply the findings to other populations. Although the information contained in

the study is useful and insightful, caution should be used when applying the results to other populations.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Utilize interviews as a data gathering method. This would add depth and richness to the quality of the data being generated regarding the mentor relationship.
2. Replicate the study within the setting of the Army Nurse Corps or the Navy Nurse Corps. Does mentoring seem to play a role within these organizations which is similar to the role it plays within the Air Force Nurse Corps.
3. Construct a personality profile of both mentors and proteges. Do these individuals possess similar personality traits and characteristics?
4. Design a study to investigate whether those individuals who had a mentor during career development are more likely to serve as mentors themselves once they are senior officers.

Summary

This study investigated mentoring within the unique structure of the Air Force Nurse Corps. A significant number of senior Nurse Corps officers identified the presence of a mentor during career development. These mentors aided in career achievement by serving as a role model, information-giver, and career-developer. The mentor

relationship is viewed by most authors as positive and dynamic. Nursing leaders advocate mentoring as an avenue of pursuing the profession's quest for autonomy, power, and independent practice. There is still much to be learned about the mentoring phenomenon. As new studies are conducted and new insights gained, mentoring may well prove to be an invaluable tool in the growth of both the individual and the profession.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter

808 Rio Arriba, SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123
(505) 299-4692

27 November 1987

Dear

I am currently an AFIT student at the University of New Mexico working on my Master's in Nursing. My thesis research is being conducted on mentorship in the Air Force Nurse Corps. Mentorship as it relates to professional socialization and the development of qualifications that are necessary for career advancement and development will be explored.

I am surveying Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels to determine if mentorship played a role in your successful career development. It is vital your input be included if an accurate picture of this phenomenon within the Nurse Corps is to be developed. Although you are extremely busy, I hope you will take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and provide the data needed by my study. The questionnaire takes about twenty minutes to complete. If possible, please complete the questionnaire within the next two days.

In accordance with AFR 12-35, the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a) mandates that all replies will be strictly confidential and results will be presented as group data, not as individual responses. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at the address/phone number above. Please accept my sincere thanks for the investment of your time and energy in this project. It is my hope that the information gained from this study will provide insights as to the role mentorship plays within the Nurse Corps.

Sincerely,

Kristie R. Mathews, Major, USAF, NC
AFIT Student, University of New Mexico

USAF SCN 87-114 (Expires 1 March 88)

APPENDIX B

Follow-Up Cover Letter

808 Rio Arriba, S.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87123
(505) 299-4692

30 November 1987

Dear

Several days ago you received a questionnaire regarding mentorship and the role it might play in the successful career development of Air Force Nurse Corps officers. Enclosed you will find another copy of that questionnaire. I would like you to fill the questionnaire out for a second time. The two questionnaires which you have submitted will be used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire prior to its distribution to the larger population of interest. You are one of a small number of individuals who are being asked to complete two questionnaires as members of this pilot study. I realize that you are extremely busy but I hope you will once again take the time to complete the questionnaire.

Please accept my sincere thanks for the time and effort you have put into answering these two questionnaires. Without your help this study would not be possible. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me at the address/phone number above.

Sincerely,

Kristie R. Mathews, Major, USAF, NC
AFIT Student, University of New Mexico

USAF SCN 87-114 (Expires 1 March 88)

APPENDIX C

Subject Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

PROJECT: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF MENTORSHIP AS A CAREER
ADVANCEMENT STRATEGY IN THE UNITED STATES
AIR FORCE NURSE CORPS

INVESTIGATOR: KRISTIE R. MATHEWS, MAJOR, USAF, NC

I understand my participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. I will be asked to complete a questionnaire involving career and mentorship issues. My identity will remain confidential and the results of the study will be presented as group data rather than as individual responses. I also understand that all questionnaires will be destroyed at the completion of the research project.

Name _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D

Demographic Questionnaire

Demographics

1. Age _____
2. Sex _____
3. Marital Status _____
4. Number of Dependents _____
5. Highest Level of Education _____
6. Current Rank _____
7. Present Duty Position _____
8. Time in Grade _____
9. Time in Service _____

APPENDIX E

Mentoring Questionnaire

Code # _____

MENTORING SURVEY

Part I

Directions: For the purpose of this questionnaire, a mentor is an individual who acts as a teacher, advisor, advocate and counselor and who takes an active and personal interest in the career development of another. Of particular interest in this study is the role a mentor may have played in your successful career development. If you have had more than one mentor, choose the one you consider most significant in your career. When you have completed the questionnaire, simply return it along with the consent form in the envelope provided. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

1. Have you had a mentor at any time during your AF career? NOTE: If you have not had a mentor there is no need to answer the remaining questions: simply return the questionnaire and consent form. Yes No

2. What rank were you at the time you first met your mentor? Lt Capt Major Lt Col Colonel

3. What rank was your mentor? Lt Capt Major Lt Col Colonel

Part II

Directions: Below is a list of statements regarding the mentoring relationship. Please indicate your response by circling the appropriate number. The definitions which are provided may be used as a guideline when selecting your answer.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Never: | The behavior did not occur at any time. |
| Rarely: | The behavior was uncommon, infrequent, or isolated. |
| Occasional: | The behavior was not consistent, but it had occurred on more than one occasion. |
| Usually: | The behavior was expected, occurred in a more consistent or frequent manner. |

Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Occasionally (3)	Usually (4)
1.	I respect my mentor as both an individual and a professional.	1	2 3 4
2.	My mentor had a positive attitude regarding an Air Force career.	1	2 3 4
3.	My mentor was both enthusiastic and dynamic.	1	2 3 4
4.	My mentor set high standards for himself/herself.	1	2 3 4
5.	My mentor had good problem-solving abilities.	1	2 3 4
6.	My mentor was politically sophisticated.	1	2 3 4
7.	My mentor invested extra time and energy in me	1	2 3 4
8.	I received negative feedback from my mentor when he/she thought it was appropriate.	1	2 3 4
9.	My mentor counseled me about the norms and expectations of being an officer.	1	2 3 4
10.	The importance of education (i.e., PME and graduate school) was stressed by my mentor.	1	2 3 4
11.	Strategies about how to achieve my career goals were discussed by me and my mentor.	1	2 3 4
12.	The intricacies of promotion boards were explained to me by my mentor.	1	2 3 4
13.	My mentor explained institutional politics to me.	1	2 3 4
14.	My mentor discussed effective use of the chain of command.	1	2 3 4
15.	I was encouraged to take risks by my mentor.	1	2 3 4
16.	Important jobs and responsibilities were delegated to me by my mentor.	1	2 3 4
17.	I was encouraged to apply for career broadening assignments by my mentor.	1	2 3 4

- | Never
(1) | Rarely
(2) | Occasionally
(3) | Usually
(4) |
|--------------|---|---------------------|----------------|
| 18. | My mentor spent a great deal of time and energy preparing my performance appraisal (i.e., OER). (NOTE: If your mentor was not in your chain of command and therefore was not in a position to recommend you for honors and special recognition, please write "Not Applicable" next to this question.) | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 19. | My mentor recommended me for honors and special recognitions (i.e., medals, awards). (NOTE: If your mentor was not in your chain of command and therefore was not in a position to recommend you for honors and special recognition, please write "Not Applicable" next to this question). | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 20. | My mentor encouraged me to take on new projects and responsibilities whenever possible. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 21. | My mentor helped me develop a sense of responsibility. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 22. | Because of my mentor, I have more confidence in my ability. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 23. | My mentor helped me develop a sense of pride in being an Air Force officer. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 24. | The importance of teamwork was emphasized by my mentor. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 25. | My mentor helped me deal with conflicts in a positive manner. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 26. | My mentor helped me realize my full potential. | | 1 2 3 4 |
| 27. | Were there any negative aspects to your relationship with your mentor? | | |
| 28. | If there is any other information you would like to provide regarding your relationship with your mentor or any comments you may have regarding the effect that a mentor may have had on your career development, please feel free to mention them below. | | |

APPENDIX F

Collation of Comments Regarding the Mentor Relationship

The following unedited comments were volunteered by respondents on their questionnaires.

1. She takes pride in my career advancements.
2. We continue to keep up the friendship and I call her for guidance yet.
3. The positive "can do" attitude related by my mentor stayed with me.
4. I am currently finishing senior PME even though I have been promoted. The main reason is because I promised my mentor I would finish it.
5. I have respect and admiration for my mentor and her ability to teach as well as role model.
6. My mentor was respected by my peers and by the senior people who worked with her. I was one of the "lucky ones".
7. I was extremely fortunate. . . (my mentor) is a rare treasure.
8. The biggest gain (from my mentor) was a reaffirmation of my professional goals.
9. My mentor made a special contribution to my career . . . I hope the process never ends.
10. My mentor was also mentor to many other nurses over the course of a number of years and we have all done well.
11. I believe mentors are critically important to career development.
12. My mentor was the key person in providing me with the concept of an "Air Force career." . . . a role model who practiced a philosophy of caring and understanding. . . . a strong leader with a sense of loyalty, commitment and humor.
13. Emotional support and guidance have been constant.

14. I have consulted with her frequently during the years. These consultations occurred most frequently at turning points of my career.

15. My mentor had great faith in my potential. He subsequently influenced others to believe that I could do a job, and the opportunities followed.

16. I believe he helped many people achieve their best.

17. Without this very positive influence in my life, I have an idea things might have been different.

18. She retired before I learned all I could have from her.

19. My mentor was very positive role model, you strove to do your very best. She was positive in her approach to people and situations and fostered that in others. Had it not been for her, I would not be where I am today nor had the jobs I've had - she was one in a million!

20. He made me go to schools and PME when I would rather not have done it and I now realize he knew what was needed even if I did not.

21. Approval on one's choices, actions, etc. by a highly respected senior officer was of tremendous value to me.

22. Working with a mentor is a wonderful relationship.

23. The mentoring relationship is one of the most important for the development of a career officer. I think that much of my success and the success of several other career nurses is directly related to this women's concern and nurturing. She is my role model.

24. My mentor always made sure that I had both sides of any given situation when discussing a particular problem and was concerned with how I felt with the final decision made.

25. Having someone you can trust makes all the difference in the world; your mentor sees your weak points but helps you overcome them by offering suggestions on what to do.

26. My mentor provided direction to me at a point in my career when I needed guidance and direction - I received

(26. continued) this information objectively which fostered a good relationship.

27. I believe strongly that a mentor's value lies in his/her willingness to spend time and interest in you and to share ideas and opinions with you as a younger officer.

28. . . . outstanding mentor whose concern and interest in my career 15 years ago undoubtedly helped me to be where I am now.

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