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**Superior, Peer, and Subordinate Mentoring in the U.S. Army**

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# Superior, Peer, and Subordinate Mentoring in the U.S. Army<sup>1</sup>

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This paper focuses on mentoring in the U.S. Army in terms of the relative position of the mentor to the person being mentored. It examines whether the behaviors that mentors exhibit and the perceived helpfulness of those behaviors differ as a result of the relative position of the mentor to the person being mentored (mentee).

Traditionally, the mentoring relationship is described as a “developmental relationship between senior and junior individuals in organizations” (McManus & Russell, 1997, p. 145). Thus, mentors are considered to be individuals who are superior in both rank and experience (e.g., Bagnal, Pence, & Meriwether, 1985; McManus & Russell, 1997). As such, they perform both Career and Psychosocial functions (Kram, 1985). The Career function includes sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and challenging assignments. The Psychosocial function fosters a sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in a professional role. It includes role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling, and friendship. A recent study by Steinberg and Foley (1999) found that mentors in the U.S. Army perform similar functions; Career Sponsoring and Job Coaching which are both covered in Kram’s Career function, and Personal Development which is similar to Kram’s Psychosocial function.

Mentors who are superior in rank may be inside the rating chain or outside it. The rating chain may include the supervisor who does the performance appraisal rating and the senior rater who rates the supervisor. The mentor’s relative position, inside the rating chain or outside it, may have different impacts. For example, Fagenson, Marks, and Amendola (1997) found that when mentors are in the chain, they are seen as performing more mentoring functions (e.g., career guidance, psychosocial support, and communication) than mentors outside the chain. On the other hand, when mentors are supervisors in the chain, there are two potential drawbacks. The first is possible perceptions of favoritism toward the mentee and the second is potential mentee reluctance to be open with the mentor. The reluctance to be open about developmental needs, weaknesses, and other sensitive issues may be due to concerns about potential impact on the performance appraisal (Harney, 2000; Singer, 1999). A third potential drawback is that when the mentor is in the chain, there is a possibility that dysfunction may occur within the mentoring relationship (e.g., bullying, sabotage, deception) that can be destructive.

When mentoring occurs outside the chain, there may be both advantages and disadvantages. The mentor and mentee may be more free to discuss sensitive work-related issues and mentee weaknesses. On the other hand, there is a possibility of problematic triangulation between the boss, the subordinate, and the mentor (Scandura, 1998).

In order to supplement traditional mentoring, or replace it when traditional mentoring is not available, other career development relationships have been proposed (Eby, 1997; Watkins,

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Army Research Institute or the Department of the Army.

Giles, & Endsleg, 1987). These other mentoring relationships may offer some, but not necessarily all, of the career and psychosocial functions that traditional mentors who are superior in both rank and experience can offer. They include mentoring by peers, subordinates, groups, or even computers. Each of these is discussed briefly below.

Peers as Mentors. Peers may mentor one another (e.g., Kram & Isabella, 1985; Russell & Adams, 1997) and their dyadic peer relationship may afford a variety of functions along a continuum of self-disclosure and trust (Kram & Isabella, 1985). At the low end of the continuum, peers exchange information about their work and the organization. At the mid-level, there is more trust and self-disclosure, resulting in career strategizing and the provision of emotional support, feedback, and confirmation. At the high end of the continuum, there is less pretense and formality, and peers may reveal central ambivalences about work and family. However, peer mentoring relationships usually lack the power differential that enables a traditional mentor to perform such career functions as challenging assignments, visibility, and protection (Watkins, Giles, & Endsleg, 1987). Also, peers may be in competition with one another for jobs or resources, and this may inhibit self-disclosure and trust (Kram & Isabella, 1985).

Subordinates as Mentors. Subordinates have not traditionally been considered possible mentors because they are typically seen as less experienced than superiors. Even when subordinates may teach or coach superiors on selected aspects of the job, their contribution to the general development of the superior is not usually considered sufficient enough in scope to be considered mentoring.

However, as Knouse and Webb (1998) point out, the military has a dual rank structure: enlisted and officer personnel. Thus, for example, the platoon sergeant, who is enlisted (typically staff sergeant or sergeant first class), and the platoon leader, who is an officer (typically a second or first lieutenant), both work at the same organizational level. Platoon sergeants are often considered lower in rank than platoon leaders, but typically have much more Army experience. They often advise platoon leaders on performing their job and, therefore, may be considered to be mentors by the lieutenants they help to develop.

Groups as Mentors. One alternative for individuals who do not have access to a traditional, one-on-one mentor is group mentoring (Dansky, 1996; Eby, 1997; Russel & Adams, 1997). In groups such as teams, members may gain training in skills, technical knowledge, interpersonal support, and personal feedback (Knouse, 2001). Teams include quality teams, project groups, research and development teams, combat teams, support teams, and training teams (Knouse & Webb, 1998).

The mentoring circle is another type of group mentoring format (Knouse & Webb, 1998; Russell & Adams, 1997). The mentoring circle consists of one or more senior individuals who act as mentors to a group. The circles may address a variety of issues (e.g., career problems) and offer role modeling, networking, and psychosocial support. However, individual skill development and feedback may be limited.

Computers as Mentors. Another alternative to dyadic mentoring is virtual mentoring (Knouse, 2001). Web pages on the Internet are used to mentor special groups. One popular such web site for the Army that fits into this category is [www.companycommand.com](http://www.companycommand.com). Advantages of the Internet include immediate access, cost effectiveness, availability of chat rooms, and anonymity (for privacy and to discuss sensitive issues). A disadvantage is the lack of ability to build and refine, and to provide feedback on interpersonal skills and performance.

This paper focuses only on dyadic mentoring relationships (and thus excludes group and computer mentoring). It describes U.S. Army enlisted and officer perceptions about their experiences of being mentored - by superiors, peers, or subordinates - and the behaviors exhibited by their mentors. Superiors are considered in terms of those inside the rating chain (raters and senior raters) and those higher in rank but not the rater or senior rater. More specifically, this paper addresses questions such as:

- Are Army officers and enlisted soldiers being mentored?
- Do those not being mentored want mentors?
- Are there gender or race differences in terms of who gets mentored?
- Who is doing the mentoring?
- What mentoring behaviors are exhibited and how helpful are they?
- Does the occurrence and perceived helpfulness of mentoring differ as a function of the relationship of the mentor to the mentee (e.g., superior, peer, or subordinate)?

## **Method**

### **Instrument**

The data collection instrument was the Fall 2001 Sample Survey of Military Personnel (SSMP). The SSMP is a semi-annual omnibus survey conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute. It is sent to an Army-wide random sample of Active duty commissioned officers and enlisted personnel. The survey items on mentoring are shown in Figure 1.

The issue of widely differing definitions of what a mentor is, was addressed in two ways. First, participants were asked whether, in their opinion, they had a mentor. Thus, instead of providing a definition of what a mentor is, we looked at their perceptions of whether they had a mentor. Then, their answers to the remaining questions revealed the relative position of the person they saw as a mentor (e.g., a superior [rater, senior rater, other superior], peer, or subordinate) and the behaviors the mentor exhibited.

### **Participants**

The data are from 2,802 Army officers and 4,022 enlisted soldiers who completed the SSMP. (Weighted, it comes to 64,677 officers and 370,424 enlisted soldiers.) The ranks of the officer and enlisted soldiers are shown in Table 1. Note that the ranks of sergeant through command sergeant major are considered noncommissioned officers (NCOs).

**In your opinion, have you ever had a mentor?**

- Yes, I have one now.
- Yes, I had one, but I don't have one now.
- No, but I would have liked one.
- No, and I never wanted one.

➔ **GO TO QUESTION 51**

**Who is your current mentor (or, if you have no current mentor, who was your most recent mentor)? MARK ONE.**

- A commissioned officer
- A warrant officer
- A noncommissioned officer
- A junior enlisted soldier
- A DA civilian
- Other (Please list on page 15.)

**Is your current mentor (or your most recent mentor) . . . ? MARK ONE.**

- your rater?
- your senior rater?
- a person who is/was higher in rank than you, **but not** your rater or your senior rater?
- a person who is/was at your same rank?
- a person who is/was lower in rank than you?
- a person who is not or was not in the military at the time the mentoring was provided?

**If your current mentor (or if none now, your most recent mentor) provides the following assistance, how helpful is (was) each to you? MARK A RESPONSE FOR EACH.**

	Not at all helpful	Slightly helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful	Not provided
Teaches job skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gives feedback on your job performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assigns challenging tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helps develop your skills/competencies for future assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides support and encouragement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides personal and social guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides career guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Demonstrates trust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acts as a role model	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protects you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Invites you to observe activities at his/her level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instills Army values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides moral/ethical guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaches/advises on organizational politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides sponsorship/contacts to advance your career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assists in obtaining future assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 1. Survey items on mentoring.

Table 1

Ranks of Survey Respondents

Commissioned Officers		Enlisted Soldiers	
2LT	Second Lieutenant	PV2	Private
1LT	First Lieutenant	PFC	Private First Class
CPT	Captain	CPL/SPC	Corporal/Specialist
MAJ	Major	SGT*	Sergeant
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel	SSG*	Staff Sergeant
COL	Colonel	SFC*	Sergeant First Class
		MSG/1SG*	Master Sergeant/First Sergeant
		SGM/CSM*	Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major

\*Note. These are noncommissioned officer ranks.

## Results

### **Who is mentored?**

As can be seen from Table 2, 69% of commissioned officers and 54% of enlisted soldiers say they have a mentor now or have had one in the past. Note that the higher ranked officers, LTCs and COLs, are less likely to be mentored now than lower ranked officers.

About the same percentage of officers and enlisted soldiers (26% and 23%, respectively) say they never had a mentor but would have liked one (see Table 2). Fewer officers than enlisted soldiers (6% vs. 23%) say they never had a mentor and never wanted one.

Table 3 shows that the percentage of officers and enlisted soldiers who are mentored now or who have ever been mentored does not differ by gender. Thus, for example, about the same percentage of male and female officers are being mentored.

Table 3 shows that the total percentage of White and Black officers who are mentored now or who have ever been mentored does not differ. However, more Black than White officers (44% vs. 32%) say they are being mentored now and more White officers than Black (37% vs. 25%) say they have been mentored in the past.

### **Who mentors?**

Table 4 shows that mentors tend to be part of the same rank structure as the mentee. Thus, 92% of the officers said their mentor is/was another commissioned officer, and 75% of enlisted soldiers said their mentor is/was an NCO. A total of 4% of the officers said their mentor was an NCO. However proportionately more lieutenants (15% 2LTs and 7% 1LTs) than higher ranked officers (e.g., .7% LTCs and .5% COLs) said their mentor was an NCO.

Table 5 shows the relative rank of the mentor to the mentee. Of those who have (had) a mentor, most (92% of the officers and 86% of the enlisted soldiers) said their mentor is/was higher in rank than them. Mentors who were higher in rank than the mentee were (a) their rater, (b) their senior rater, or (c) higher in rank but not their rater or senior rater. For both officers and enlisted soldiers who had mentors who were higher in rank than them, the mentors were less likely to be the rater or senior rater than they were to be another senior person. Only 12% of officers said their mentor is/was their senior rater.

Very few officers and enlisted soldiers said their mentor is/was a person at their same rank (3% and 5%, respectively). Similarly, overall, very few (3% of officers and less than 1% of enlisted soldiers) said their mentor is/was lower in rank. There were, however, differences by officer rank. About 8% of 2LTs and 1LTs said their mentor was lower in rank whereas 3% or less of the remaining officer ranks said this. Fewer lieutenants said their mentor was lower in rank than said their mentor was an NCO. Some lieutenants said the NCO mentor was higher in rank than they were.

Table 2

In your opinion, have you ever had a mentor?

		Officers						
Percent of officers who said:		2LT	1LT	CPT	MAJ	LTC	COL	Total
Yes, I have one now.		37%	36%	33%	33%	29%	24%	33%
Yes, I had one, but I don't have one now.		24%	34%	37%	33%	43%	46%	36%
No, but I would have liked one.		32%	24%	24%	28%	21%	24%	26%
No, and I never wanted one.		8%	6%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%

  

		Enlisted Soldiers								
Percent of enlisted soldiers who said:		PV2	PFC	CPL/SPC	SGT	SSG	SFC	MSG/1SG	SGM/CSM	Total
Yes, I have one now.		21%	22%	22%	22%	24%	25%	29%	29%	23%
Yes, I had one, but I don't have one now.		14%	17%	26%	41%	42%	41%	47%	47%	31%
No, but I would have liked one.		30%	27%	24%	20%	19%	20%	14%	12%	23%
No, and I never wanted one.		34%	35%	28%	17%	14%	14%	9%	12%	23%

Table 3

In your opinion, have you ever had a mentor?

	Gender				Race					
	Officers		Enlisted Soldiers		Officers			Enlisted Soldiers		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	White	Black	Other <sup>a</sup>	White	Black	Other <sup>a</sup>
Weighted n	54,317	10,168	307,966	56,871	52,896	5,782	4,794	199,955	93,845	44,030
Percent who said:										
6 Yes, I have one now.	33%	32%	23%	25%	32%	44%	29%	23%	24%	22%
Yes, I had one, but I don't have one now.	35%	38%	32%	29%	37%	25%	29%	32%	31%	30%
No, but I would have liked one.	25%	27%	22%	27%	24%	29%	34%	21%	23%	28%
No, and I never wanted one.	7%	3%	24%	20%	6%	2%	8%	24%	22%	20%

<sup>a</sup> Other races are grouped together because the size of each one is too small to present individually.

Table 4

Who is your current mentor (or, if you have no current mentor, who was your most recent mentor)?<sup>a</sup>

The percent who say their mentor is/was:	Officers	Enlisted
A commissioned officer	92%	6%
A warrant officer	1%	4%
A noncommissioned officer	4%	75%
A junior enlisted soldier	0%	4%
A DA civilian	1%	3%
Other	2%	8%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

Table 5

Percent of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentor is/was:<sup>a</sup>

	Officers	Enlisted Soldiers
Their rater	35%	23%
Their senior rater	12%	9%
A person who is/was higher in rank than them, <b>but not</b> their rater or their senior rater	45%	54%
A person who is/was at their same rank	3%	5%
A person who is/was lower in rank than them	3%	<1%
A person who is not or was not in the military at the time the mentoring was provided	2%	9%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

Overall, few officers and enlisted soldiers (2% and 9%, respectively) said their mentor is/was not in the military at the time the mentoring was provided. However, the lower level junior enlisted were more likely than higher ranks to say their mentors were not in the Army (about 26% of PV2s and PFCs).

### **What behaviors each do mentors exhibit and how helpful are they?**

Table 6 shows a list of 16 possible mentoring behaviors and the percentage of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentor did not exhibit each of these. Thus, the first 10 behaviors listed in the Table were exhibited by more than 90% of the mentors. The behavior least likely to be exhibited by mentors was “assists in obtaining future assignments.”

The percentages in Table 7 are for the set of individuals who said their mentor exhibited each behavior and who also said that these behaviors were very/extremely helpful. Thus, the Table indicates that when the 16 mentoring behaviors were exhibited, 70% or more of the mentees considered them all to be very/extremely helpful. The behaviors most likely to be seen as helpful were demonstrating trust, acting as a role model, and providing support and encouragement.

### **Do mentoring behaviors differ by type of mentor?**

Table 8 shows behaviors not exhibited, by type of mentor. It shows that mentors who are peers, lower in rank, or not in the military are less likely to exhibit the full range of mentoring behaviors that mentors who are senior in rank exhibit.

The percentages in Table 9 are for the set of individuals who said their mentor did exhibit each behavior and who also said that these behaviors were very/extremely helpful (by the relative position of the mentor to the mentee). It shows that:

- When mentors who are higher in rank than the mentee (raters, senior raters, and others at higher ranks) exhibit some behaviors, these behaviors are somewhat more likely to be seen as helpful than when mentors who are lower in rank exhibit these behaviors. Some examples include teaching job skills, helping to develop skills for future assignments, providing support and encouragement, assigning challenging tasks, providing sponsorship/contacts to advance careers, and assisting in obtaining future assignments.
- Senior raters are seen as more helpful than raters when they exhibit some behaviors such as advice on organizational politics, personal and social guidance, sponsorship/contacts to advance careers, and assistance in obtaining future assignments.

Table 6

Percent of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentor did **NOT** exhibit the following behaviors: <sup>a</sup>

	Officers	Enlisted Soldiers
Provides support and encouragement	2%	2%
Demonstrates trust	3%	2%
Acts as a role model	3%	3%
Provides career guidance	4%	4%
Helps develop your skills/competencies for future assignments	5%	5%
Instills Army values	5%	7%
Provides moral/ethical guidance	6%	4%
Provides personal and social guidance	8%	5%
Gives feedback on your job performance	8%	6%
Teaches job skills	8%	7%
Teaches/advises on organizational politics	11%	9%
Protects you	15%	10%
Invites you to observe activities at his/her level	15%	12%
Provides sponsorship/contacts to advance your career	16%	12%
Assigns challenging tasks	19%	10%
Assists in obtaining future assignments	22%	19%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

Table 7

Percent of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentor exhibited these behaviors and these behaviors were very/extremely helpful: <sup>a</sup>

	Officers	Enlisted Soldiers
Demonstrates trust	94%	93%
Acts as a role model	93%	90%
Provides support and encouragement	90%	89%
Instills Army values	89%	87%
Provides moral/ethical guidance	88%	87%
Provides career guidance	86%	87%
Helps develop your skills/competencies for future assignments	85%	89%
Assigns challenging tasks	85%	85%
Teaches/advises on organizational politics	84%	82%
Gives feedback on your job performance	83%	89%
Protects you	80%	82%
Teaches job skills	78%	85%
Provides personal and social guidance	78%	84%
Invites you to observe activities at his/her level	78%	82%
Provides sponsorship/contacts to advance your career	75%	78%
Assists in obtaining future assignments	70%	74%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

Table 8

Percent of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentors (who were senior, peer, lower ranked, or not in the Army) did **NOT** exhibit the following behaviors: <sup>a</sup>

	Mentor's relative position to mentee					
	Rater	Senior rater	Higher rank, not rater/senior rater	Same rank	Lower rank	Not in military
Provides support and encouragement	2%	1%	1%	7%	0%	4%
Demonstrates trust	2%	1%	2%	6%	7%	5%
Helps develop your skills/competencies for future assignments	3%	1%	4%	10%	7%	12%
Provides career guidance	3%	1%	4%	10%	22%	6%
Gives feedback on your job performance	3%	1%	6%	9%	9%	18%
Instills Army values	3%	2%	4%	10%	9%	42%
Assigns challenging tasks	3%	2%	16%	25%	37%	17%
Acts as a role model	3%	3%	2%	13%	10%	3%
Provides moral/ethical guidance	3%	4%	5%	8%	18%	5%
Provides personal and social guidance	5%	4%	5%	10%	20%	4%
Teaches job skills	5%	5%	8%	7%	6%	11%
Protects you	5%	8%	12%	22%	25%	12%
Invites you to observe activities at his/her level	5%	9%	16%	22%	21%	12%
Teaches/advises on organizational politics	6%	4%	9%	17%	21%	20%
Provides sponsorship/contacts to advance your career	8%	7%	13%	23%	32%	26%
Assists in obtaining future assignments	13%	11%	21%	32%	49%	31%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

Table 9

Percent of officers and enlisted soldiers who said their mentors (who were senior, peer, lower ranked, or not in the Army) exhibited these behaviors and these behaviors were very/extremely helpful: <sup>a</sup>

	Mentor's relative position to mentee					
	Rater	Senior rater	Higher rank, not rater/senior rater	Same rank	Lower rank	Not in military
Demonstrates trust	93%	91%	94%	93%	93%	87%
Gives feedback on your job performance	90%	90%	88%	88%	81%	73%
Acts as a role model	89%	89%	92%	88%	90%	83%
Helps develop your skills/competencies for future assignments	88%	90%	88%	90%	77%	81%
Assigns challenging tasks	88%	90%	85%	81%	55%	78%
Provides support and encouragement	88%	87%	91%	93%	75%	87%
Instills Army values	87%	90%	89%	88%	84%	67%
Provides career guidance	86%	89%	89%	88%	77%	81%
Provides moral/ethical guidance	86%	88%	88%	91%	87%	83%
Teaches job skills	84%	84%	85%	80%	76%	72%
Protects you	82%	85%	81%	75%	79%	79%
Invites you to observe activities at his/her level	82%	78%	81%	87%	73%	79%
Teaches/advises on organizational politics	81%	87%	84%	80%	73%	74%
Provides personal and social guidance	77%	83%	85%	93%	74%	85%
Provides sponsorship/contacts to advance your career	75%	82%	78%	86%	65%	70%
Assists in obtaining future assignments	71%	80%	74%	74%	62%	72%

<sup>a</sup> These percentages are for the set of respondents who said they have a mentor now or have had one in the past.

## Discussion

This study examined mentoring in the U.S. Army in terms of how much mentoring is occurring, who does the mentoring and how helpful the different mentoring behaviors were perceived to be. Particular emphasis was placed on the relationship of the mentor to the mentee. Below are some key findings in this study:

Prevalence of mentoring in the Army. A considerable amount of mentoring is occurring in the Army. About seven in ten commissioned officers and slightly more than five in ten enlisted soldiers say they are or have been mentored. However, about 1/4 of the officers and enlisted soldiers who have never been mentored say they would have liked to have had a mentor. Interestingly, very few officers say they never had or wanted a mentor, whereas about 1/4 of enlisted soldiers say they never had one and never wanted a mentor.

Concerns have been raised that both females and racial minorities may be at a disadvantage for being mentored (see Steinberg & Foley, 1999). However, the data in this study indicate that there is no difference between the percentage of females and males who are mentored, now or in the past. Also, more Black than White officers say they are mentored now. However, more White officers than Black say they have been mentored in the past. A contributing factor may be that the distribution of Blacks across the officer ranks differs from that of White officers; proportionately more Blacks are in the lower ranks.

The mentors. The mentors tended to be from the same rank structure as the mentee. Thus officers generally were mentored by officers and enlisted soldiers were mentored by NCOs. In terms of relative position of the mentor, about nine out of ten officers and enlisted soldiers say their mentor was higher in rank than them. Only 3% of officers say their mentor was a peer and 3% say their mentor was subordinate in rank to them. The officers most likely to be mentored by a subordinate were the lieutenants. Only 5% of enlisted soldiers said their mentor was a peer and less than 1% said their mentor was subordinate in rank. More enlisted soldiers than officers (9% vs. 2%) said their mentor was not in the Army. Lower ranked enlisted soldiers (PV2s and PFCs) are far more likely than higher ranks to be mentored by someone outside the Army.

The most frequent type of superior mentor was someone higher in rank to the mentee but not the rater or senior rater (45% for officers and 54% for enlisted). The least frequent type of superior mentor was the senior rater (12% for officers and 9% for enlisted soldiers).

The behaviors mentors exhibit. In general, mentors exhibit many types of behaviors. Almost all of the mentors were seen as giving support and encouragement, demonstrating trust, acting as a role model, and providing career guidance. The two behaviors exhibited by the fewest number of mentors were assisting in obtaining future assignments and providing sponsorship/contacts to advance their career. Both of these are key components of the Career Sponsorship function of mentoring (Steinberg & Foley, 1999). This function has not always been accepted as appropriate in the Army due to concerns about favoritism.

Whether a particular type of behavior was exhibited depended in part on the relationship

of the mentor to the mentee. Mentors who were superior in rank were more likely to exhibit the whole range of mentoring behaviors than were mentors who were at the same rank, lower in rank, or not in the military.

In general, when mentors exhibited mentoring behaviors, the behaviors were seen as helpful. Some behaviors that were exhibited were seen as more helpful when they came from mentors who were higher in rank than when they came from mentors who were lower in rank. A contributing factor may be that some behaviors (e.g., assigning challenging tasks, providing sponsorship/contacts to advance careers, assisting in obtaining future assignments) are not typically offered by those who are lower in rank.

Implications for improving mentoring in the Army. All of these findings suggest that the Army is doing well in terms of mentoring, but there is still room for improvement. A considerable number of officers and enlisted soldiers have never had a mentor and would like to have one. The most appropriate group to encourage as their mentors would appear to be those who are more senior in rank to the mentees. Mentors higher in rank are seen as exhibiting the whole range of mentoring behaviors and, in general, the mentoring is seen as more helpful than when exhibited by subordinates. This suggests that more leaders should be encouraged to mentor subordinates and that these leaders should be educated about the full range of mentoring behaviors so that they may offer them to subordinates.

Mentors who are peers, subordinates, or not in the military may also exhibit helpful mentoring. For example in this study, some behaviors were seen as very helpful by almost all of those who were mentored by peers (e.g., demonstrating trust, providing support and encouragement, providing personal and social guidance). Even though one often hears about officers having been mentored by peers or subordinates, the data indicate that only a very small percentage of officers and enlisted soldiers considered peers, subordinates, or those not in the military to be mentors. Further, these mentors were less likely to exhibit the whole range of mentoring behaviors. Therefore, it may be to the Army's advantage not to rely on peer and subordinate mentors as primary sources from which to draw a large number of additional mentors.

Given that those higher in rank appear to be the most appropriate group of mentors, the question then becomes why only a small percentage of officers and enlisted soldiers have senior raters as mentors. This is especially important considering the significant role of senior raters in developing future Army leaders. Senior raters fit the traditional model of mentoring between senior and junior level individuals in the organization. They have the potential advantage of providing broad perspectives based on a wide set of experiences. This allows them to exhibit a full range of mentoring behaviors. Further examination needs to be done to determine why senior raters are not being perceived as mentors. We recommend identification of the obstacles that hinder utilizing this valuable pool of potential mentors.

Another issue that was highlighted by the data in this study is that slightly more than a quarter of the PV2s and PFCs have mentors who are not in the Army. These ranks are new to the Army and therefore are less likely to have as strong a sense of belonging to the military as do more senior rank groups. Since the Army is striving to retain soldiers, it would appear to be to

the Army's advantage to provide more mentoring from within the Army. Providing this mentoring may help not only to develop these soldiers, but also to increase their sense of belonging and attachment to the Army.

Even though group and computer mentoring were not addressed in this study, they may offer some additional growth opportunities and enrichment. It would appear that they have the potential of offering some of the same mentoring behaviors as one-on-one mentoring from someone superior in rank. However, further research needs to be done to determine which types of group and computer mentoring would be most helpful (e.g., in terms of formats, skills and competencies addressed, specific topics covered, groups targeted).

In sum, this study has helped to clarify the current state of mentoring in the Army, highlighted what appears to be working, and pointed the way to increasing the amount and quality of mentoring in the Army

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