

The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions

GREGG F. MARTIN, GEORGE E. REED,
RUTH B. COLLINS, and CORTEZ K. DIAL

Mentorship is a hot topic in academia, business, and the military. Recently, in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Robert Gross said it was evident from the Educational Resources Information Center's annual list of publications that virtually nobody was writing about "mentors and mentoring" in the 1970s, as only 33 articles appeared for that entire decade. He adds, however, "Then the topic took off: 230 pieces in 1980-84; 597 in 1985-89; 1,051 in 1990-94; 1,524 in 1995-99."¹ In February 2002, a subject keyword search (using the term "mentor") of Wilson Omnifile, an academic database of articles and publications, resulted in over 2,000 hits. Reflecting this trend, new mentorship web pages are being born across the internet.² Consultants have sprung up, promising that if only managers were better mentors, their profitability and retention of precious human capital would improve dramatically. A survey of Fortune 500 executives indicated that 96 percent of them saw mentoring as an important influence in their professional development.³ In some organizations, coaches and mentors are assigned and duties are formally outlined. Young professionals are encouraged to actively seek out people they admire to "be their mentors," as a way to accelerate their learning, development, and career progression.

Despite the widespread interest in mentoring and hopes that it presents potential for addressing a myriad of problems, the concept is not well understood within the Army. The term "mentorship" has different connotations and currently is used so loosely in describing such an array of leadership and human behaviors that well-meaning, intelligent people often talk past each other when trying to discuss it. The term elicits a wide range of responses, from enthusiastic endorsement to adamant cynicism, with confusion in between. In a recent Army War College strategy research project, Merrill Anderson-Ashcraft conducted a content analysis of 64 essays on mentoring submitted by members of the USAWC Class of 2002. Although most essays included positive and negative

comments, she observed that 71 percent of the statements in the papers addressed negative aspects of mentoring. Further analysis indicated that misunderstandings regarding mentoring goals, strategies, and implementation methods are a core problem contributing to confusion and cynicism.⁴

The purpose of this article is to help inform the developing dialog by assessing the current treatment of the mentoring concept in today's Army and then highlighting the issues, implications, and alternatives relative to a formal Army Mentorship Program. We believe that unless the concept and implications of a program are carefully reevaluated, this potentially useful leadership concept may remain a confusing cliché—or worse, a euphemism for favoritism—causing it to actually undermine the desired leadership environment.

Defining the Problem

Informal mentoring relationships have long existed in the Army, although they lacked definition as such until the 1980s when the term mentorship entered the business and academic lexicon. Recently, as part of a comprehensive description of future and ongoing actions to improve training and leader development, General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, announced that the Army has developed the framework for the Army Mentorship Program.⁵ Citing survey results that found “disconnects between what we as an Army believe and what we do in practice,” General Shinseki articulated that we “need to adjust our culture, get back to our roots in training, improve officer leader development and management, and establish healthy feedback to inform the force and make adjustments where necessary.”⁶

In an *Army Times* interview, General John Keane, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, stated that the “quality of leadership—as reflected in the mentoring process—has fallen off.” He argues, “We’re just not taking the time that we need to spend with our youngsters and their personal growth and development. We need to do more of that.”⁷ According to reporter Sean Naylor, “Keane’s comments were the first by so senior an officer to publicly acknowledge what many company and field-grade officers have been saying for several years.”⁸ The Center for Strategic and International Studies’ *American Military Culture in the 21st Century*,⁹ and a survey of 760 officers at the Army Command and General Staff

The authors are faculty members in the Department of Command, Leadership, and Management at the US Army War College. Each has over 20 years of military experience in a wide range of operational assignments. Colonel Gregg F. Martin is an Engineer officer with a Ph.D. in engineering management and public policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Colonel George E. Reed is a Military Police officer and doctoral candidate in public policy analysis at Saint Louis University and holds a Master of Forensic Sciences degree from George Washington University. Colonel Ruth B. Collins is an Adjutant General Corps officer with a Master of Arts degree in human resources management from Pepperdine University. Colonel Cortez K. Dial is also an Adjutant General Corps officer with a Master of Science degree in education from the University of Southern California.

College which ricocheted around the Army via e-mail,¹⁰ had earlier pointed to leadership disconnects within the Army. The alarming attrition rate of captains caused Dr. Lenny Wong to research and publish *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps*.¹¹ Wong observed that young officers have a strong desire for honest and professional relationships, camaraderie, cohesion, and work/life balance. He ended his monograph by saying, "Our captains are leaving and that says something about who they are and what the Army has become. It is time we took notice and did something about it."¹²

The most recent survey that the Chief of Staff cited, *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army*,¹³ had input from nearly 14,000 officers, NCOs, and civilians. Specifically regarding mentoring, the report concluded: "Officers believe mentoring is important for both personal and professional development, yet a majority of officers report not having mentors. The Army's mentoring definition and doctrine need revising. Officers would like to see a greater emphasis on mentoring, but do not want formal, directed programs."¹⁴

Many junior officers, when asked, report that they aren't being mentored or don't have a mentor. Many are confused and disappointed that they don't have this so called "mentoring relationship" about which leadership surveys have queried them. Such surveys have led them to believe mentoring is something they ought to have and of which they are being deprived.

In studying the mentoring issue and discussing it with people of varying grades and backgrounds (most recently in support of mentorship as a special theme for the Army War College class of 2002), we have experienced a wide range of reactions to the terms "mentor" and "mentoring." Junior and mid-grade officers generally think the concept is positive, but don't think they are getting enough of it, and are anxious that they will fall behind their peers who they perceive are being better mentored. Senior officers (former brigade commanders and above) generally view the concept of mentorship in a positive light, and believe it to be a powerful antidote for many of the Army's widely publicized morale and retention problems.¹⁵ A number of general officers have criticized battalion and brigade commanders for not doing enough mentoring. They speak fondly of growing up in an Army in which they were mentored by seniors, and they relate they've done much the same with their juniors.¹⁶

Many lieutenant colonels and colonels express frustration at being labeled as poor mentors, and portrayed as contributing to the attrition of captains. Moreover, many feel they have behaved and led in the tradition of current senior officers under whose tutelage they developed over the past 20-plus years. Very few see a significant difference between the way they have led and mentored their juniors, and the way their seniors led and mentored them.¹⁷ Of particular interest, many Army War College students and faculty members reacted with concern and unease over the term "mentorship." Many associate mentoring and mentorship with Courtney Massengale¹⁸ types who were able to connive their

***“Despite the widespread interest in mentoring . . .
the concept is not well understood
within the Army.”***

way into the good graces of powerful and influential superiors and hence receive special treatment and favors. A number questioned why the Army has clouded clear and well-understood leadership concepts by labeling them with the confusing and volatile term “mentoring.” Many related emotionally that the word “mentoring” has negative baggage, such as exclusivity, unfairness, cronyism, etc.—connotations that run counter to good leadership and the Army values of fairness and equality.

When one tries to discuss or operationalize the concept of mentoring, it is apparent that there is no commonly accepted definition or understanding of the term. While one person’s idea of mentoring evokes warm feelings of positive, caring leaders who invest in subordinates’ well-being for life, another gets resentful and angry because the term conjures up images of an exclusive “old boy” network that plays favorites and advances people based predominantly on who they know and what they look like. Many believe that mentoring is a part of—or included in—“good leadership,” and that the term serves only to confuse and obfuscate an already clearly understood and articulated concept, although one not consistently practiced.¹⁹

What is Mentoring, Really?

Stephen Gibb suggests that mentoring is something that almost defies description.²⁰ The term in contemporary use describes a wide range of relationships including coaching, teaching, networking, advising, and evaluating. The term “mentor” is actually derived from the character named Mentor, who was a faithful friend of the Greek hero Odysseus, in Homer’s epic story *The Odyssey*. When Odysseus went off to war, he left Mentor behind to serve as tutor to his son, Telemachus. Mentor served in this role, earning a reputation as being wise, sober, and loyal.²¹ It is from the relationship between these two characters that the classic understanding of the term “mentorship” has evolved.

In the classic sense, mentorship implies more than just good leadership. It involves a more senior or experienced person taking a substantial personal (in addition to professional) interest in a junior, less-experienced person’s future. The mentor is a guide, a sage, with important advice and experience that he or she voluntarily bestows upon the protégé. This personal aspect is important, as the classic notion of mentorship implies a genuine fondness and respect between the

mentor and the protégé. Personality, profession, life-style, personal interests, background, home, family, religion, and other such aspects all may become a part of the relationship, such that the protégé develops a profound admiration and respect for the mentor. When this mutual attraction, respect, and interest exist, then a voluntary mentoring relationship can develop in the classic understanding of the term.²² The nature of the relationship in the classical sense is an exclusive one. Some get mentoring while others do not. Since the relationship depends on a special chemistry between the participants, its formalization is problematic if not impossible, as we will discuss later in the article.

Current Army Description of Mentoring

Since the Army is on the road to an official Mentorship Program, it is important to understand how mentoring is currently defined and discussed in Army leadership doctrine. Throughout FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, the term is used in a number of different ways—but never in the classic sense as described above.

Concerning mentorship at the direct leadership level (battalion and below), FM 22-100 says, “As a leader, you help your subordinates internalize Army values. You also assist them in developing the individual attributes, learning the skills, and mastering the actions required to become leaders of character and competence themselves. You do this through the action of mentoring.”²³ Mentoring falls underneath the broader heading of “Improving Actions,” which are “things leaders do to leave their organizations better than they found them.”²⁴

FM 22-100 then expands its definition of mentoring, calling it “the proactive development of each subordinate through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, developmental counseling, and evaluating that results in people being treated with fairness and equal opportunity. Mentoring is an inclusive process (not an exclusive one) for everyone under a leader’s charge.”²⁵ The doctrine further describes mentoring as “totally inclusive, real-life leader development for every subordinate” and states that leaders must “strive to provide all their subordinates with the knowledge and skills necessary to become the best they can be—for the Army and for themselves.”²⁶ The doctrine then explains, “Mentoring begins with the leader setting the right example. As an Army leader, you mentor people every day in a positive or negative way, depending on how you live the Army values and perform leader actions.”²⁷ The doctrine states, “When you mentor, you take the observing, assessing, and evaluating you do when you operate and apply these actions to developing individual subordinates. Mentoring techniques include teaching, counseling, and coaching.”²⁸

At the organizational leadership level (brigade through corps), FM 22-100 states, “The payoff for improving actions might not be evident for years. . . . Precisely because of these difficulties, organizational leaders ensure the goals they establish include improving people and organizations.” It says commanders must “ensure that systems and conditions are in place for the mentoring of all organizational members” and cautions that excessive emphasis

on current operations at the expense of improving actions will threaten the future of the Army. Leader development, brought to life through “constant mentoring and experiential learning opportunities” becomes for senior leaders their “greatest contribution—their legacy. . . . Commanders must take the time to ensure they do developmental counseling. Nothing can replace the face-to-face contribution made by a commander mentoring a subordinate.”²⁹

At the strategic leadership level (theater army and above), doctrine specifies, “A fundamental goal of strategic leaders is to leave the Army better than they found it,” which implies “an ongoing tradeoff between today and tomorrow.”³⁰ Leaders at this level “develop subordinates by sharing the benefit of their perspective and experience,” by “act[ing] as a kind of sponsor by introducing them to the important players and pointing out the important places and activities.” It points out that “strategic leaders actually become mentors as they, in effect, underwrite the learning, efforts, projects, and ideas of rising leaders.”³¹ Army doctrine then states,

More than a matter of required forms and sessions, mentoring by strategic leaders means giving the right people an intellectual boost so that they make the leap to . . . thinking at the highest levels. Because those being groomed for strategic leadership positions are among the most talented Army leaders, the manner in which leaders and subordinates act also changes. Strategic leaders aim not only to pass on knowledge but also to grow wisdom in those they mentor. . . . Strategic leaders pay special attention to their subordinates’ self development, showing them what to study, where to focus, whom to watch, and how to proceed.³²

Across all three levels of leadership, Army doctrine describes mentorship as the actions of good interpersonal leadership (teaching, evaluating, coaching, and counseling), caring for people and growing future leaders—all performed by good role models. The doctrine specifies that this “leaders developing leaders” form of mentoring is a sound practice for all. Given this, it is easy to see why many feel positive about the mentoring concept and want to expand it. Why then is there the widespread negativity and cynicism described earlier?

Recalling the FM 22-100 description of mentorship at the strategic level, we can see that it appears to sanction the notions of exclusivity and sponsorship, a bold departure from mentorship at the organizational level. In essence, it seems to codify what has been occurring in many professions over time: senior leaders of the profession identifying, investing time in, and grooming those junior members of the profession in whom they see the most promise and potential to one day replace them as senior leaders.

Recall also the classic notion of mentorship first described: the relationship of a more senior or experienced person taking a special professional *and* personal interest in a junior or less-experienced person’s future. If one accepts the classic notion of mentorship, it is not possible to be totally inclusive and still label it mentoring. When measured against the classic understanding of the term,

“The term ‘mentorship’ . . . is used so loosely in describing such an array of leadership and human behaviors that well-meaning, intelligent people often talk past each other when trying to discuss it.”

the Army’s description of mentoring as “positive leader development” at the direct and organizational levels of leadership is not mentoring at all, since it is done primarily on a professional level and is owed equally to all members of the profession. The closer, two-way personal relationship implied in the classic notion of mentorship will not necessarily develop with all, or perhaps any, subordinates.

A senior officer who took part in writing the current FM 22-100 related that the very notion of discussing voluntary, unofficial mentoring relationships caused great consternation at the highest levels of the Army. It was believed that discussing these voluntary, long-term, personal relationships in official doctrine could be perceived as promoting or endorsing unfair and unequal treatment, and hence run head-on into two of the Army’s most cherished and hard-earned principles, equal opportunity and fairness for all.³³ Many felt there would be too much personality and selectivity involved in the concept of classic mentoring. Since it was believed that *all* Army leaders must develop *all* of their subordinates to their fullest potential in a fair, impartial, and inclusive manner, the final document reinforced the message that “good leadership equals mentoring, and mentoring equals good leadership.”

The Army’s use of the term “mentoring” in FM 22-100 (essentially as “good leadership”) was well-meaning, just as is the current plan to have a Mentorship Program. However, such leader actions as teaching, counseling, coaching, and caring for people are the competencies or tools used by mentors, not the process of mentoring per se. Why confuse the responsibility of leaders to develop all subordinates through leadership actions by calling it mentoring? If we really want to use the “mentor” label to describe this concept, then we should specifically state what mentoring is not, in order to eliminate the confusion and associated negative connotations, such as “special leadership for special people.”

Approaches to Mentorship

In a recent student paper at the Army War College entitled “Leadership: More than Mission Accomplishment,” Colonel Peter Varljen recommended the Army do away with the “mentor” term altogether and simply focus on educating

leaders to develop their subordinates through effective teaching, coaching, counseling, and role-modeling. He contends that if leaders perform these actions effectively, many of their subordinates will want to maintain a voluntary personal and professional relationship with them, long after they depart from their official senior-subordinate relationship. A positive mentoring relationship might well evolve, he argues, as a natural by-product of good, caring leadership.³⁴

When Varljen speaks of longer-term relationships, he refers to mentoring in the classic sense. These types of interpersonal relationships sometimes form when leaders effectively teach, coach, and counsel their subordinates in a way that fosters their long-term growth as professionals and as people. When leaders are not effective in this dimension, their subordinates generally do not stay in contact and may become disillusioned with the Army. Hence, there is a certain randomness or degree of luck in opportunities for these longer-term mentor relationships. If one has the good fortune of serving under a truly caring and people-focused leader who is also a positive role model, there is a higher probability of establishing this relationship. This classic notion of mentorship is by its nature a scarce and non-programmable relationship.

Colonel Thomas Kolditz, a military psychologist and professor of behavioral science and leadership at the US Military Academy, has studied these longer-term classical mentoring relationships that sometimes develop in the Army. In his research he used the following definition: “A mentor is defined as a senior person with whom you have had an intensive and lasting developmental relationship. A mentor relationship goes beyond a typical senior-subordinate relationship in that it is both professional in focus, yet personal in tone.”³⁵ It is this concept of mentorship that has been explored most widely in the academic literature in recent decades, but which the Army, for valid reasons discussed earlier, chose not to address in its leadership doctrine. This disconnect has surely widened the knowledge gap and increased confusion by failing to account for a widespread leadership phenomenon in the force.³⁶ Choosing to use the term mentorship to describe positive leadership actions within the Army has inadvertently led people to believe that they should all receive an equal share of mentorship, when in fact, in the classic sense, it will never be equally distributed or inclusive of everyone.

One tempting response to the reality of this behavioral phenomenon is for organizations to establish formal mentoring programs. Formal mentoring programs arise when organizations identify mentoring as beneficial and wish to extend, regulate, or facilitate the formation of otherwise naturally occurring relationships. Stephen Gibb identifies six motivations for establishing formal programs: targeting those who need mentoring, defining mentor competency, selecting mentors who can provide help and support, matching mentors and learners, developing guidelines, and providing training for mentors.³⁷ Although some organizations are trying this, Kolditz finds only spotty evidence for the success of personal relationships that are initiated through bureaucratic programs, rather than voluntarily by either mentor or “mentee.” He argues that these pro-

grams are often flawed because of the rules used to pair mentors with mentees.³⁸ His research suggests that we might be successful if we define mentoring as a unique professional relationship, and subsequently address the practices the Army might use to enhance or reinforce such relationships.³⁹

As seen in *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army*, this view is widely shared in the field. Officers report wanting mentorship “but do not want formal, directed programs.”⁴⁰ As one War College student put it, “A formalized bureaucratic mentorship program is an oxymoron.”

The Marine Corps took the voluntary approach in 1995 when the Commandant at the time, General Carl E. Mundy, Jr., directed commanders in White Letter 10-95 to develop voluntary, informal mentoring programs that give all officers opportunities to benefit from mentoring.⁴¹ In 1999, an article in the *Marine Corps Gazette* by Matthew Culbertson argued against formal mentoring programs, asserting that “attempts at formalizing this process may very well undermine the pivotal foundation of trust that mentoring is based upon.”⁴² Culbertson’s article reflects concern that formalization could result in a sacrifice of quality for quantity and effectively eliminate those rare but valuable instances of classical mentoring. Jules M. Rothstein holds a similar view, asserting that mentoring has “become commercialized.” He cautions, “When personal expectations become employment criteria and when the emphasis shifts from a behavior born out of personal commitment to a fashionable act, we put the continuity at risk. . . . Mentoring in my view does not consist of a laundry list of tasks. Instead, mentoring—at least in part—is a merging of spirit and shared aspirations.”⁴³

Before the Army moves forward with its Mentorship Program, it should precisely define leader behavior issues and desired outcomes, and then label and approach them accordingly. Otherwise, we are doubtful that any program will produce a demonstrable benefit, regardless of the terms used. A Mentorship Program (even as the subset of a training and leader development program) that does not address fundamental leadership deficiencies dooms the Army to perpetuate the disillusionment and fog that now surrounds the concept of mentorship.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The Army should carefully weigh its promotion of a mentoring policy, program, or campaign. Clearly, there are legitimate questions about the nature of the Army’s “leadership problem” or widespread perception thereof, and we should certainly address them. We are saying, however, that due to the competing definitions, unclear expectations, and perceived inequities associated with mentoring, the Army would be well-advised to resist reaching for a faddish solution reducible to a buzzword like mentoring. Rather, it should focus on the broader concept of leader development.

First, the Army needs to examine its most basic definition of mentoring at the direct and organizational leadership levels as described in FM 22-100. As

“The Army would be well-advised to resist reaching for a faddish solution reducible to a buzzword like mentoring.”

defined and described, it is simply a subcomponent of leadership that is focused on leaders developing subordinates through teaching, coaching, counseling, and leading by example. We recommend clarifying this desired leader behavior by calling it precisely what it is: positive leader development and role-modeling. In other words, what the Army is calling “mentoring” is in truth a component of good leadership that is focused on development of subordinates through the process of teaching, coaching, counseling, and leading by example. If recent studies are accurate, the Army’s neglect of such key skills as listening and counseling in the Officer Education System is a critical shortcoming. The Army should teach its officers at every level the fundamentals of these critical people and leader development skills, and should not call it mentoring.

The other type of leader development that many refer to as mentoring—identifying officers with unique potential and providing them with an exceptional degree of coaching, teaching, advising, etc.—should also not be called mentoring, but should be called exactly what it is: growing future senior leaders. In other words, it is the process whereby senior leaders identify promising juniors for key developmental and career-enhancing positions. This process occurs when a battalion commander chooses those lieutenants who will fill the more prestigious and developmental assignments, and runs all the way up to the Chief of Staff of the Army choosing a former brigade commander as his executive officer from among the dozens of highly qualified candidates. General George C. Marshall’s famous “Black Book,” and the subsequent selection and grooming of such leaders as Eisenhower and Bradley, are perhaps the most famous and high-level examples. The selection and grooming of Colin Powell by Caspar Weinberger and Frank Carlucci is another high-profile example. Although some may flinch at this, it does occur in all organizations and is a fundamental aspect of any senior leader’s responsibilities. In short, this is nothing more than senior leaders identifying, selecting, and grooming the future leaders of the Army. As long as it is done fairly (based on merit), openly, honorably, and with the best interests of the Army at heart, it should not be unhealthy for the profession.

Finally, the Army needs to decide if it wants to explicitly foster and encourage the classic form of mentoring. Perpetuating the notion that mentoring is just good leadership, while also encouraging the more exclusive form of classical

mentorship, sets false expectations among junior officers and is potentially damaging to the concept of equity. The long-term, classical mentoring relationships not currently mentioned in FM 22-100 are naturally occurring behavioral phenomena in some senior-subordinate relationships. These relationships may form either within the chain of command or outside of formal assignments. On the other hand, they may never materialize. These relationships develop when the junior (or less-experienced person) responds to the positive leadership and example of the senior (or more-experienced one) and both choose to continue the relationship. If either the junior or the senior chooses not to engage in the relationship beyond their official capacity, this deeper type of mentoring relationship will not develop.⁴⁴ We believe it is appropriate to restrict use of the term “mentoring” to the classic type of relationship. Other relationships are more appropriately called precisely what they are: positive leader development and role-modeling, and growing future senior leaders. We do not advocate that the Army adopt the classic notion of mentorship in leadership doctrine, policy, or programs. The problem of junior leader attrition and the need for leadership development are far too complex and important to hang on such an ill-defined and potentially divisive concept.

We advocate aggressive and focused training and leader development initiatives that reinforce responsible and equitable leader behavior. To be clear, *all* leaders owe “positive leader development and role-modeling” to all subordinates, and this means that leaders ought to take an interest in the personal as well as the professional lives of their subordinates. It should continue to be part of our Army culture, values, and doctrine that the leader does all he or she can do to help all subordinates reach their full potential, both professionally and personally. “Growing future senior leaders” is also a professional obligation. But decisions concerning who to groom must be based solely upon the potential of the subordinate, and remain independent of whether or not the senior “likes” the junior or has established a classic mentoring relationship. Although a senior might naturally select and groom a junior with whom he or she has developed a classic mentoring relationship, there should be no causal effect. Seniors have an obligation to select and grow the most promising future leaders, regardless of their personal relationship.

Army leaders are responsible for developing command and organizational climates that not only are conducive to positive leader development and role modeling and growing future senior leaders, but which reinforce, enable, and require those processes to happen. Although doctrine and stated beliefs indicate that these components of leadership are desirable and good, surveys indicate that the Army’s collective behavior is falling short of expectations. Army leaders at all levels should renew efforts to reduce the gap between stated beliefs and actual practice. Because the operational Army (where most young officers and soldiers are assigned) primarily focuses on short-term mission accomplishment, increasing emphasis on longer-term leader development and organizational ef-

fectiveness will not be easy to accomplish.⁴⁵ That which is urgent supplants that which is important.

There is nothing new in the idea that senior leaders must devote time to improving, developing, and inspiring their subordinates. It is especially important to delegate, empower, and trust subordinates to accomplish more short-term tasks so senior leaders can begin striking a better balance between short- and long-term responsibilities. We need to attempt to recognize, understand, and counter systemic organizational forces that drive individuals into conforming to the micromanaging/hyper-control mode that has become a common and highly rewarded modern leadership style. Leaders may have to forego such rewards so ingrained in the Army's evaluation and advancement systems and labor to revise a system that is more beneficial to the Army's long-term health.⁴⁶

Like farmers who do not invest the time and resources necessary to replenish their fields, if we give insufficient attention to comprehensive and effective leader development, we will deplete our soil to the point that it will no longer bear healthy crops. Efforts to sustain the profession have to extend beyond the level of buzzword and euphemism. The health of our profession is more likely to result from our focus on, and accountability for, truly good leadership for all, than on the exclusive and virtually unprogrammable classic mentoring relationships that are sometimes the by-product of a healthy leadership environment.

NOTES

1. Robert A. Gross, "From 'Old Boys' to Mentors," *The Chronicle of Higher Education: Career Network*, 28 February 2002.

2. In working on the USAWC's mentorship initiative, we easily found more than 100 websites on this topic, many offering some sort of fee-based service.

3. Sandra Hagevik, "What's a Mentor, Who's a Mentor?" *Journal of Environmental Health*, 61 (October 1998), 59-61.

4. Merrill Anderson-Ashcraft, "Mentoring Perceptions in the Army," USAWC Strategy Research Project, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 2002.

5. General Eric K. Shinseki, "Memorandum for The Army, Subject: Army Training and Leader Development Panel (Officer) Recommendations and Ongoing Actions," 22 January 2002, p. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

7. Sean D. Naylor, "Keane Blames Leadership for Junior Officer Exodus," *Army Times*, 25 December 2000, p. 10.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Walter F. Ulmer, Joseph J. Collins, and T. O. Jacobs, *American Military Culture in the 21st Century* (Washington: CSIS Press, February 2000).

10. Thomas E. Ricks, "Younger Officers Quit Army at Faster Clip; Study Finds Little Trust in Senior Leadership," *The Washington Post*, 17 April 2000, p. A1.

11. Leonard Wong, *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps* (Carlisle, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, October 2000).

12. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

13. Released by the Department of the Army on 25 May 2001.

14. US Army, *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army*, internet, <http://www.army.mil/atld/report.pdf>, accessed 24 June 2002, p. OS-10, hereinafter *ATLDP Report*.

15. Based on talks given by the Army's most senior leaders at the USAWC between July 1999 and March 2002, and at the Pre-Command Course one of the authors attended from January to March 2001.

16. As students and then instructors at the Army War College in recent years, the authors had the opportunity to hear many of the Army's senior leaders speak to recent classes. A theme that has come through loud and clear in the lectures—at least in the perception of the students—is that battalion commanders, due to poor com-

munication and lack of mentoring, are a very large, if not the key, problem in the attrition of record high numbers of captains in recent years. To paraphrase the message that many of the students have received, "The main reason for the high captains attrition rate has been *your* poor leadership."

17. Based on research and dozens of discussions with students and faculty at the US Army War College from July 1999 to March 2002. In Wong's *Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps*, the author argues that today's battalion and brigade commanders, who belong to the same Baby Boom generation as the general officers, share pretty much the same beliefs and behaviors as their more senior colleagues.

18. See Anton Myrer, *Once an Eagle* (rpt.; Carlisle, Pa.: Army War College Foundation Press, 1996). The Courtney Massengale character is a manipulative careerist who supposedly represents much of what is wrong in the officer corps.

19. Based on research and dozens of discussions with students and faculty at the US Army War College from March 2001 to March 2002.

20. Stephen Gibb, "The Usefulness of Theory: A Case Study in Evaluating Formal Mentoring Schemes," *Human Resources*, 52 (No. 8, 1999), 1,055-75.

21. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1996).

22. For a superb scholarly analysis of how these relationships develop, see Kathy Kram, "Phases of the Mentor Relationship," *Academy of Management Journal*, 26 (December 1983), 608-25.

23. US Army, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington: Department of the Army, 31 August 1999), p. 5-15, para. 5-82.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 5-13, para. 5-69.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 5-16.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 5-16, para. 5-83.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 5-16, para. 5-84.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 5-16, para. 5-85.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-26 - 6-27, paras. 6-125, 6-130.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 7-22, paras. 7-98, 7-99.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 7-22, para. 7-101.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 7-23, paras. 7-102, 7-103.

33. This fascinating not-for-attribution interview opened our eyes to the complexities of dealing with this concept doctrinally. There is a wealth of fine scholarly work on the difficulties and challenges that minorities and women face in terms of establishing classic mentoring relationships. See, for example, Remo Butler, "Why Black Officers Fail," *Parameters*, 29 (Autumn 1999), 54-69; David A. Thomas, "The Truth About Mentoring Minorities: Race Matters," *Harvard Business Review*, April 2001, 99-107; and M. M. Sullivan, "Mentoring in the Military: a Preliminary Study of Gender Differences," DEOMI RSP 93-3 (Patrick Air Force Base, Fla.: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, 1993).

34. Based on numerous discussions with Colonel Pete Varljen. See Peter J. Varljen, "Leadership: More than Mission Accomplishment," USAWC Strategy Research Project, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 2001.

35. Taken from the USMA survey instrument on Mentorship, 2000, provided by Colonel Thomas Kolditz.

36. A fine synthesis of leading scholarly articles is found in Monica C. Higgins and Kathy E. Kram, "Reconceptualizing Mentoring at Work: a Developmental Perspective," *The Academy of Management Review*, 26 (April 2001), 264-88. After a superb review of the literature, the authors then expand the existing body of knowledge.

37. Gibb, pp. 1,055-75.

38. Based on numerous discussions with Colonel Kolditz between March 2001 and March 2002.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *ATLDP Report*, p. OS-10.

41. Matthew C. Culbertson, "Death by Formalization," *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1999, p. 45.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Jules M. Rothstein, "Mentor: Another Word, Another Fashion Statement," *Physical Therapy*, 80 (October 2000), 954-55.

44. Our understanding of this phenomenon was greatly enhanced in discussions with Colonel Tom Kolditz as well as with faculty and students at the Army War College from March 2001 to March 2002.

45. For an excellent analysis of this, see: Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., "Military Leadership into the 21st Century: Another 'Bridge Too Far?'" *Parameters*, 28 (Spring 1998); Walter F. Ulmer, Joseph J. Collins, and T. O. Jacobs, *American Military Culture in the 21st Century* (Washington: CSIS Press, February 2000); and Varljen. See also William M. Steele and Robert P. Walters, "Training and Developing Army Leaders," *Military Review*, 81 (July-August 2001), 2-9, and "Training and Developing Leaders in a Transforming Army," *Military Review*, 81 (September-October 2001), 2-11.

46. Again, see Ulmer, "Military Leadership into the 21st Century," and John C. Faith, "Leadership into the 21st Century: Is It Time to Change the System?" *Army*, December 2000, pp. 10-14. In a discussion with Lieutenant General Ulmer on 15 June 2001, he amplified on this theme.