Chapter 13
Mentoring, Sponsorship, and Gender

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ABSTRACT

The lack of women in leadership roles is a systemic problem in the United States and is not unique to the field of education; however, it is important to continue to challenge the status quo and provide a path for women to achieve equality and equity in the workplace. The following chapter will identify and discuss the importance of mentoring and sponsorship so that women pursuing education careers, novice women teachers, and women college, and university faculty and staff can actively and better position themselves to move into leadership positions and/or ensure a "seat at the table" in situations where decisions are made that affect their personal and professional lives.

INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-20th century[1], women have dominated the U.S educational workforce (Wong, 2019). One would surmise that women would make up a large portion of leadership positions in education including principals, superintendents, deans, provosts, and college and university presidents, and yet they do not (AAUW, 2016; Morrison, 2018; Wong, 2019). Although this imbalance has been studied and written about for years, not much has changed to swing the pendulum toward gender equality in leadership roles (AAUW, 2016; Fry, 2019; Kalbfleisch, 2019; Moody, 2018). The lack of women in leadership roles is a systemic problem in the United States and is not unique to the field of education; however, it is important to continue to challenge the status quo and provide a path for women to achieve equality and equity in the workplace.

The following chapter will identify and discuss the importance of mentoring and sponsorship so that women students pursuing education careers, novice women teachers, and women college and university faculty and staff can actively and better position themselves to move into leadership positions and/or ensure a 'seat at the table' in situations where decisions are made that affect their personal and professional lives.

The gender leadership imbalance in education is clearly documented. Wong (2019) reports, "close to half of all principals today, including two-thirds of those serving high schools, are men as are more than three-quarters of school-district superintendents." The American Association of University Women (AAUW, 2016) claim that women in higher education lag behind men in top leadership positions and are underrepresented among the ranks of tenured faculty and full professors. In addition, white men still dominate chief academic officer positions, especially at research universities, while women administrators tend to hold positions that are "the least secure, least well paid, and least prestigious among faculty ranks in higher education" (Allan, 2001, p.52). Further, a 2017 American College President Survey conducted by the American Council on Education found that women comprised only 30% of college presidents across the country and women of color make up a far lower portion of college presidents (3-5 percent) (Moody, 2019). It is important that the obstacles that hinder women from obtaining leadership positions be addressed so that current and future generations of women find a more equitable path to leadership opportunities, both personal and positional. Participation in formal or informal leadership development opportunities and networks of colleagues and mentors that recognize and support women's desire is key to future gender equity and equality (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013).

Mentoring Programs

Mentoring programs provide a means of personal, professional, and social support. According Ragins & Kram (2007) mentoring is defined as "a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the protégé's career." Bruce and Bridgeland (2014) define a mentor as "a supportive adult who works with a young person to build a relationship by offering guidance, support, and encouragement to help the young person's positive and healthy development over a period of time" (p.13). Mentors help a mentee or protégé "learn the ropes" to advance within an institution or organization while providing social norming and confidence in the social development of the mentee or protégé. An effective mentor is knowledgeable about the culture of the institution or organization, confidential and trustworthy, willing to share their knowledge and experiences, and focused on outcomes of mentee or protégé (Adeyemi, 2011). The mentee or protégé should be self-aware of personal strengths and aspirations and goals, able to clearly communicate their needs, willing to seek and apply advice, and be prepared and organized. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is bidirectional and, therefore, the best model of mentoring needs to be determined by each involved party (Vaughn, Saint, & Chopra, 2017).

Different models for mentoring have been utilized in academic, corporate, and other types of settings, including one-on-one mentoring, peer mentoring and multi-mentoring. One-on-one mentoring is a more traditional model where one mentor is matched with one mentee or protégé in which the mentor provides guidance and development through mutually chosen personal and professional goals. Mentors offer their knowledge and expertise to help their mentee or protégé learn and grow. The voluntary sharing

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