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Cross-cultural mentoring relationships are an important site of struggle for learning and for power. We use the example of one mentoring relationship to illustrate six common issues facing people involved in these relationships.

Cross-Cultural Mentoring as a Context for Learning

Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Ronald M. Cervero

Mentoring across cultural boundaries is an especially delicate dance that juxtaposes group norms and societal pressures and expectations with individual personality traits. Why would you choose to traverse such tumultuous territory, and how do you survive the journey? In our own successful mentoring relationship with each other, the answers are simple. We never approached our sojourn with a consciousness burdened by societal dictates. Of course, there were those invisible knapsacks of privilege and disenfranchisement on our backs (McIntosh, 1995), but more important there were sincere and somewhat naïve beliefs that people are free to act beyond cultural confines in spite of their fears. The common ground of our working-class families, Catholic school histories, leftist political leanings, and love of rhythm and blues lay undiscovered, but our generational understandings of the world, as children marked and forever changed by the civil rights struggle and the Kennedy assassination, afforded a common basis on which to build a relationship.

We start off the chapter with individual accounts of our mentoring relationship. In the second section, we use our relationship and the literature to illuminate common issues and strategies of a cross-cultural mentoring relationship. Finally, we discuss implications for assembling the infrastructure of a successful cross-cultural mentoring relationship and the importance of mentoring in building a diverse and strong academy.

Personal Stories

We wrote these individual accounts of our mentoring relationship independently of each other. This allows the reader to gain a sense of what each of us as an individual brings to the relationship.

Ron's Mentoring Narrative. Our story is one of transitions and constants, similarities and differences. At the level of formal roles, we have transitioned through four status changes: from student to teacher, from student to major professor, from assistant and associate professor to professor, and from faculty member to department head. The constant in our lives has been the mentoring and friendship roles that have sustained our fluctuating existence. Over time we have developed a close personal relationship as colleagues and friends, and we have traveled together in our family units, enjoying relationships with the other's family. We were both raised in working-class, Catholic families and have birthdays two years and four days apart; at the same time, I am a white man raised in the north and Juanita is a black woman raised in the south.

I have vivid memories of each phase of our relationship, especially how it began and where it currently stands. When I first met Juanita in 1990, she and Barbara, also a black woman, were in a class I taught. They were the only two black students in the class—and in our graduate program. They always sat together and for the most part kept to themselves, usually interacting as a team. In contrast to that tenuous beginning is my most recent and vivid memory of our relationship: a paper session we did at the Adult Education Research Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. The topic was the "Invisible Politics of Race in Adult Education." I felt as if we were in battle together with a fairly hostile audience who disagreed with the notion that race and racism were present in our work as adult educators.

I had a lot of help in learning how to be in this relationship. My parents showed me that every person was a human being and thus deserved to be treated with dignity and respect. My own mentor, Phyllis Cunningham, and I worked together for over ten years in Chicago in exciting, though sometimes very difficult, multiracial work environments. I learned a lot about power and relationships from Phyllis. She continues to be a beacon for me in my own work as an adult educator.

For any relationship to be successful, both people must benefit. However, I tend to fully realize only the benefits that accrue to me. Of course, at the most basic level, I enjoy Juanita's intelligence, honesty, and friendship. There is no way I could quantify the significance of the insights and learning that have resulted from our work together. Indeed, I often wonder who is mentoring whom in this relationship.

Juanita's Mentoring Narrative. My first significant experience with Ron occurred in the summer of 1990, when I was in my second quarter of classes at the University of Georgia. I sat in his Curriculum and Development course in an atmosphere that I imagine is similar to that of most

Research One universities: white, competitive, and surface-friendly. Add to this setting the desegregation legacy of a southern university, and you have an uneasy armistice: a cease-fire classroom environment where the blacks sit with the blacks and the whites sit with the whites. Rarely does anyone reach across the racial divide, and even more rarely does someone reach across this chasm with a high degree of comfort and sincerity. Ron was that someone.

Our mentoring relationship did not begin that summer, but my observations and assessment of his character did begin in those weekend classes. Despite his kindness, I was cautious. I remember that my confidant (another black woman student) and I would wonder why he was so different. We wondered why he cared. I concluded that he acted the way he did because he remembered "when." You see, there are many of us in academia who wear the banner of our humble origins, or of our working-class background as a badge and proof of our understanding of the disenfranchised. Yet oftentimes our actions show such claims to be hollow and utilitarian. But this man lived with an ever-present cognizance of what exclusion looked, smelled, and felt like. I stopped second-guessing Ron and began to take reluctant small steps toward trusting him.

A first meaningful marker in our mentoring relationship occurred when Ron strongly encouraged me to submit an abstract to the first African American preconference of the Adult Education Research Conference to be held at Penn State. As is characteristic of him, he followed up. When he called several days before the abstract was due and asked to see my submission, I was too ashamed not to produce the work. Going to that conference, meeting black scholars and black professors, and seeming to belong was a turning point for me.

The definitive litmus test for our mentoring relationship was his response when I confided in him that I wanted to be a professor: he didn't laugh. He seemed to believe also, and most probably his belief in my ability to achieve this goal predated my acknowledgment and reclamation of this deferred dream.

We've come a long way since then, surviving every status change. Most mentoring relationships don't survive the natural maturation process, the occasional shift in role, and the inevitable blunders and missteps. I think that one very important reason for the durability of our relationship is that our association is multifaceted—a sociocultural context that encompasses struggle, reciprocity, learning, and scholarship.

Cross-Cultural Mentoring Relationships: Issues and Experiences

We now tell our shared story together to illuminate how social and cultural positionalities and power dynamics are inherent in a mentoring relationship. Juanita discusses the aspects of mentoring that she considers the most

basic and crucial building blocks for a successful cross-cultural mentoring relationship: trust, understanding of the impact race has on the career of a minority academician, and the oppositional perspective of many marginalized faculty. Then Ron discusses the learning and power dimensions of mentoring, how the mentor benefits from this relationship, and the quandary faced by the mentor who must always be cognizant of how race frames the mentoring relationship while consistently looking past the issue of race.

Trust as the Essential Element of the Cross-Cultural Relationship. Establishing trust in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship is crucial to developing such a relationship, more so than in a same-race mentoring relationship (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000; Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Thomas, 2001). On the surface, the concept of trust as it applies to mentoring appears simplistic: it needs to be reciprocal in nature and it's a matter between the mentor and protégé. However, in cross-cultural mentoring what should be a simple matter of negotiation between two persons becomes an arbitration between historical legacies, contemporary racial tensions, and societal protocols. A cross-cultural mentoring relationship is an affiliation between unequals who are conducting their relationship on a hostile American stage, with a societal script contrived to undermine the success of the partnership.

The historical legacy of relationships between black and white Americans is a one-sided scenario of mistrust. Black Americans have endured hundreds of years of suffering and abuse at the hands of white Americans who consistently espoused a mythical rhetoric of democracy and equality. Through hundreds of years of oppression, blacks remained loyal citizens, fighting in every war, working peacefully in often menial jobs, and waiting for the demise of Jim Crow so that they too could enjoy the American dream. Despite the myth of the violent angry black, it is white American citizens who have acted against blacks through legislated segregation, discriminatory customs, and mob violence (Franklin, 1956; Sitkoff, 1978). In essence, there is every reason for whites to be comfortable with (and yet to trust) blacks. There is very little reason for blacks to trust whites. It is against this backdrop of American history that trust must be built across the races before cross-cultural mentoring is to be attempted.

Initially we had to accept this circumstance as our own truth so that we would not be entrapped by such an inheritance. It was Juanita who had to trust Ron, and it was Juanita who was more at risk since she had less power and was therefore more vulnerable in the mentor-protégé ratio (Murrell and Tangri, 1999). The other component of the dynamic was that society supports the congruency of whites being in the more powerful position and encompasses set rules and expectations for a mixed-race relationship, in which deference and authority are essential components. Therefore a cross-cultural mentoring relationship can be negatively affected by unrecognized patterns of stereotypical behavior that is encoded in the American

psyche, a paradigm that dictates "staying in one's place," refraining from being aggressive or threatening, and avoiding the perception of intimacy (Thomas, 2001). Trust was also a factor for Ron to consider. However, he was doubly protected from any possible risk by his status as a tenured full professor and his position as a white male.

Working through trust on the individual level is routinely discussed in the mentoring literature, but one must also recognize that the mentoring relationship is much broader than an association between two persons. Mentoring occurs on two dimensions: the internal aspect transpires between the mentor and the protégé; a second, external aspect takes place between the mentoring pair and their institution (O'Neill, Horton, and Crosby, 2000). Given that Ron and Juanita's working environment is a predominately white institution with a current record of court battles over affirmative action and racial quotas, the connection to the institution and its members is a weighty part of their mentoring union. In the tenuous atmosphere of their institution, Juanita has struggled with a hostile environment and contentious colleagues and watched in confusion, subdued anger, and resentment as Ron experienced that same setting with relative ease and a seeming degree of good cheer. The reality that the mentor and the protégé have differing experiences and reactions in their shared work environment is a source of unease and uncommon ground that can weaken the bonds of trust and set up an impasse of cyclical anger and guilt. Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams (2000) cite white guilt as a major impediment for a black-white mentoring team. However, the literature neglects to suggest why white guilt intrudes into a cross-cultural mentoring situation and also fails to propose any solution for the dilemma. White guilt, on the part of the mentor, could be a reaction to the awareness of unearned white privilege, or it might be a natural defensive reaction to black anger.

For an answer, it seems practical to refer to two frequently touted recommendations. One stresses the importance of ongoing and honest discussion about race and racism in cross-cultural mentoring situations. A second advises that the protégé be paired with a mentor with whom he or she shares a similar worldview. Indeed, the continuous foregrounding of candid conversation about race and the important stipulation of matching mentor and protégé on the basis of their life philosophies are plausible solutions for creating an environment where trust is likely to grow between like-minded individuals.

Racism as a Hidden Destructive Force in Cross-Cultural Mentoring. Race and racial group membership are defining markers in our world; consequently, these signs of membership and exclusion are powerful forces in the academy. However, race often remains invisible to the privileged white majority in academia, and racism in this setting is characteristically shrouded in rational discourse. When assessing the experiences of blacks in the academy, black faculty are routinely viewed as interlopers and rejected as rightful participants (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams,

2000; Epps, 1989), and the circumstances of the academic lives of black faculty are marred with racist incidents, isolation, or benign indifference (Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Ragins, 1997). Thus racial group membership becomes a powerful force in the lives of minority faculty. To offset this uneasy state of black existence within the academy, Blake (2000) believes that it is essential for a cross-cultural mentoring team to spend considerable time and emotion acknowledging the burden of racism encountered by black academicians.

Certainly, an important factor that contributed to the early success of our own mentoring relationship was Ron's acceptance of Juanita's racist experiences as real and not the imagining of an oversensitive or paranoid black woman. He would listen (without offering any rationalizations) to her tales of being harassed by the campus police as she left her classroom, and of being rescued by a white student who vouched for her credibility. This psychosocial aspect of their relationship, wherein Ron counseled Juanita and demonstrated his acceptance of her narrative, helped to build a solid foundation (Kram, 1985; Smith, Smith, and Markham, 2000).

Fortuitously, a research agenda grew out of Ron and Juanita's conversations about race, and in turn it facilitated their personal discussion. When these issues arose, they were more easily mediated because the twosome had previously read and digested examples of the same. For example, mentoring articles address the varying cultural communication patterns, interpersonal styles, and cultural-racial-ethnic heritages that abound in cross-cultural mentoring relationships (Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000). Ron understood Juanita's culture-bound style of communicating through stories, which often took the scenic route in making a point. Juanita came to understand that Ron's brief answers, silences, and probing questions were not a sign of detachment but were part of his problem-solving technique and his composed approach to life.

Visibility, Risk, and Negotiation from the Margins. Academia is a hostile and unaccepting environment for minority faculty. Only 3 percent of all college and university faculty are black, and the majority of the meager 3 percent are concentrated in the junior ranks or else at historically black colleges and universities. Furthermore, black women are even more underrepresented, at less than 1 percent of college faculty (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000; Menges and Exum, 1983). Although the number of minority students steadily increased over the past four decades, there has been no corresponding increase in the number of minority faculty. The literature notes that black women are more disadvantaged than their white female counterparts and their black male brethren because they experience the double impact of sexism and racism (Menges and Exum, 1983). In fact, black women in the academy have been characterized as being "isolated, underutilized, and often demoralized" (Carroll, 1973, p. 173).

The low percentage of black women faculty makes Juanita especially visible and susceptible to being solicited to serve on diversity committees, work on minority initiatives, and nurture minority students. Advising Juanita on which invitations to accept or refuse and how to weigh these decisions on the tenure scale has been part of Ron's vigilant stance as a mentor. Another jeopardy for Juanita is her race-based research agenda, which is perceived as provocative in conservative academic circles. Menges and Exum (1983) note that "unfortunately, but understandably, much of that provocation is experienced by senior academics as a threat. Junior professors seeking promotion and tenure are caught between obeying the maxim, 'Thou shalt not threaten senior colleagues,' and maintaining their integrity as scholars and teachers" (p. 135). For Juanita, part of this risk has been mitigated by the fact that she and Ron co-research many of these issues. In addition, an integral part of the acceptance of her work is due to his sponsorship of her. Brinson and Kottler (1993) regard this public endorsement of the protégé as an important part of the mentor's responsibilities.

Two other serious obstacles that have to be faced by minority protégés and white mentors are the paternalistic and political nature inherent in the mentoring process. The hierarchically prescribed mentor-protégé relationship resembles the paternalistic model of the authoritative superior and deferential subordinate that is a painful part of a racist American legacy. Many black faculty react negatively and almost unconsciously to this objectionable inequality (Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Margolis and Romero, 2001). Again, for Ron and Juanita an understanding of this societal pattern and a shared social justice worldview meant there was no place for paternalism. The trust in their relationship made the occasional hierarchical situation palatable, flexible, and at times unnoticeable.

From a sociopolitical perspective, a black woman like Juanita at a predominantly white institution "is incongruent with the racial distribution of power both in the institution and in the larger society within which the institution is embedded" (Murrell and Tangri, 1999, p. 215). Ron's position in the academy and his place as the superior in the mentoring pair fits with the hegemonic patterns of the university and does not create any great risk for him. However, his successful sponsorship of Juanita marks him simultaneously as a champion for the downtrodden and as a possible traitor who has broken with the ranks. Juanita's lifelong position of being on the margins of society has led her and many minority faculty to situate their lives in opposition to a society that devalues them (Johnson-Bailey, 1999). This resistance for survival's sake is frequently reflected in the research of scholars who are members of a disenfranchised group (Menges and Exum, 1983; Margolis and Romero, 2001). This oppositional lens of the faculty at the margin projects mentoring as an instrument of socialization wherein mentors "control the gates of social reproduction" (Margolis and Romero, 2001, p. 82). Mentors naturally seek to recreate their protégé in their own image, relying on a previously successful plan. But the attempted replication is an

ill-fitting likeness for a minority protégé. To his credit, Ron always recognized and celebrated Juanita's difference and sought to find a way to optimize a fit between her talents and the academy. For example, he encouraged and advocated her culturally based work on narrative years before narrative was accepted as a valid methodological research approach. It has been Ron's ability to support his protégée and his ability to model a generous spirit of creativity and scholarship that has helped their mentoring relationship evolve through many phases and challenges.

Mentoring Relationships Are the Site of Struggle for Learning and Power. Most definitions frame the relationship between mentor and protégé as one of "intense caring," where a person with more experience works with a less experienced one to promote both personal and professional development (Hansman, 2001). However, this framing of the relationship in purely psychological terms, though partly true, ignores the central dynamic of any mentoring relationship, its hierarchical nature (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000). This power relationship is further magnified in cross-cultural mentoring, where the people are in differing locations in societal hierarchies of race and gender. As Ragins (1997) explains, "Diversified mentoring relationships are composed of mentors and protégés who differ in group membership associated with power differences" (p. 482). As we have argued about all adult learning situations (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 1998), the power relations that structure our social lives cannot possibly be checked at the classroom door. Likewise, the learning dimensions of the cross-cultural mentoring relationship are enacted within the political and social hierarchies in which both people live. This has implications for both the instrumental learning and the psychosocial counseling that are part of an effective mentoring relationship (Thomas, 2001).

At the structural level, our mentoring relationship is hierarchical in terms of both race and gender, which is typical of how many black women are mentored (Blake, 2000). This type of relationship may occur since there are more white men in a position to mentor. Another explanation may be that white men can afford to be more generous with their time and power than others who are still negotiating access to high organizational levels. We recognize the interlocking nature of these societal hierarchies, and the aforementioned sexism of the culture, but our experience has been that gender plays a less significant role than does race as a site of struggle for learning and power. One way that race plays out is in the content of Juanita's need for mentoring, almost all of which has been about her experiences as a black person teaching white students. This mentoring takes the form of coaching about strategies for dealing with incidents that arise in her teaching as well as psychosocial counseling to process the negative ramifications of being verbally attacked by students.

Who Benefits? The Mentor as Learner. Virtually all of the literature about mentoring assumes a "teacher centered view of learning" (Margolis and Romero, 2001, p. 85). In fact, the very definitions of mentoring speak

about "coaching and counseling" functions, which effectively define the learning as unidirectional. One problem with this understanding is that it is highly paternalistic in that the mentor is seen as above the fray. However, to be real and truly human, we need to understand that a relationship affects both people and that the mentor gains from the relationship: career enhancement, information exchange, recognition, and personal satisfaction (Smith, Smith, and Markham, 2000). Margolis and Romero (2001) point out it is rarely acknowledged that "mentoring is an agent of socialization and that part of the game of mirrors is that the mentor shines by reflection" (p. 84). Ragins (1997) has discussed three ways that the mentor benefits: in terms of diversity outcomes, intrinsic outcomes, and organizational outcomes. All mentors obtain intrinsic and organizational outcomes, but diversity outcomes are achieved only in a cross-cultural relationship. In particular, Brinson and Kottler (1993) argue that the mentor needs to develop a working knowledge of the protégé's culture and worldview, which in the long run benefits the mentor as well.

These diversity-related outcomes were particularly important in our relationship. As we discussed in the previous section, the major learning has related to the racial differences between us. Ron had to learn what it means to be a black faculty member at a university since his knowledge and experience was limited by his social condition of being white. Without this knowledge, he would engage in color-blind mentoring, which could prove to be detrimental to Juanita's development. For instance, the question of whether to pursue a research agenda based on issues of race plays out very differently for white and black faculty members. Black faculty members are often seen as having an agenda when they pursue this line of research, whereas white scholars are seen as progressive. Thus there is a "cultural taxation" (Padilla, 1994) for any ethnic or racial minority scholar; the mentor must understand this.

Seeing Race and Forgetting Race in a Mentoring Relationship. One key site of struggle for learning in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship "is the nature of [the] mentor's and the protégé's attitudes towards diversity" (Ragins, 1997, p. 506). In fact, studies (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000; Thomas, 2001) have shown that mentors in cross-race relationships carry out career development and psychosocial functions when both members share similar understandings and strategies for dealing with racial differences in the relationship. However, when the mentor and protégé engage in "protective hesitation" (Thomas, 2001), where they refrain from raising touchy racial issues, then the relationship lacks psychosocial support. Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams (2000) say that an effective strategy when mentoring black Americans is to see the protégé as an individual and not as a category: "remember that they are Black Americans and forget that they are Black Americans" (p. 38). As we discussed in the section about the issue of trust, the protégé also needs to see the white mentor as an individual and not a category or representative of the larger white society.

We are congruent in our understanding of the role that race and racism play in American society (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero, 2000). We have argued in our research that although race is clearly a social construct, its effects are real in our daily lives. Our theoretical understanding of race is one factor that shows us how to both see race and forget race in our mentoring relationship. We recognize that although our racial differences are a necessary part of our daily interaction, we also can connect as people. We have learned that the first step in getting beyond the barriers and boundaries of race is not to pretend that they do not exist.

Implications for Mentoring and Learning

What implications can be drawn from our examination of cross-cultural mentoring? There are two major areas that encapsulate our discussion: the impact and significance of mentoring at the organizational and individual levels.

Most of the literature examines the individual dynamics of mentoring: issues concerning trust, risk, and matters of interpersonal style. Overall, the literature effectively analyzes the factors that influence the psychosocial and developmental components of mentoring. In sum, it is clear that mentoring benefits both parties. The protégé gains access to an experienced and expert guide; mentored faculty achieve more job success, report higher salaries, and have greater career mobility (Murrell and Tangri, 1999; Smith, Smith, and Markham, 2000). In exchange for his or her services, the mentor receives career enhancement, recognition, and personal satisfaction (Smith, Smith, and Markham, 2000). Indeed, both persons involved in the mentoring equation grow from the exposure to another culture and from the challenge of stepping outside of their comfort zone.

In terms of the rudimentary facets of mentoring, it is generally reported that the protégé is responsible for seeking a mentor and that faculty of color have difficulty obtaining a mentor (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000; Margolis and Romero, 2001) because of the theory of homogeneity: people prefer to mentor those from their own ethnic group. Given the direct benefits imparted by mentoring, including cross-cultural mentoring, it is essential that new faculty be mentored. Therefore, we recommend a proactive stance from senior faculty who are willing to mentor their younger colleagues. We also suggest that new faculty be assertive in creating a mentoring consortium to fulfill their range of needs. Minority scholars can form self-mentoring groups (Margolis and Romero, 2001) or they can acquire other mentors to satisfy specific needs (Bowman, Kite, Branscombe, and Williams, 2000). For example, there might be a senior coworker who is good at understanding the organization's political landscape and another associate who is a dynamic teacher and classroom manager. Both colleagues would be indispensable in a collective of mentors.

Mentors in cross-cultural relationships must also understand that their job does not end with the individual protégé. As Thomas (2001) argues, the mentor must do more by actively supporting broad learning initiatives at the organization to help foster the upward mobility of people of color. For example, the mentor can promote workshops that address racial issues and support networking groups among racial minority faculty. This is a key strategy in changing the face of higher education so that it looks more like the society it serves.

Our mentoring experiences occurred at a Research One university, but the environment is nevertheless a workplace. We believe that our experiences and recommendations are applicable to any workplace, since grappling with power struggles, guarding one's turf, managing diversity, making on-the-job adjustments, learning, changing, and growing are not exclusive to the university setting.

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JUANITA JOHNSON-BAILEY is an associate professor of adult education and women's studies at the University of Georgia, Athens.

RONALD M. CERVERO is a professor and department head of adult education at the University of Georgia, Athens.