

## *Mentoring and developing women leaders in our schools*

### *Introduction*

*Kate Broadley, Alliance Researcher*

In this issue of *In Alliance* our Research Review has been written by two women with expertise in the leadership and mentoring of women. Rather than take a purely theoretical approach to the topic of mentoring and developing women leaders in our schools, Karen Spiller and Nicole Archard were invited to write from their individual perspectives on this multi-layered subject. Although they have different styles, Karen and Nicole provide sage advice, personal stories, summaries of academic research and well-constructed arguments. There are also extensive reference lists which will hopefully inspire women in girls' schools to explore this subject further.

Karen and Nicole mount the case for why mentoring is necessary, both for the female staff in our schools and the girls who are educated by these staff. Few women would be unaware of the dire statistics about the number of women in senior leadership positions. Nicole reminds us that "on a global scale, the issue of women and leadership is one of inequity and is consequently a complex social phenomenon". Karen looks specifically at the number of female principals and states that "the imbalance occurs across all school sectors and at all levels".

Nicole Archard analyses the research literature and provides us with an "understanding of mentoring for women, both within and outside of

education. She also reports on the research concerning the importance of mentoring programs for adolescent girls within a girls' school context". Karen Spiller "considers some of the challenges with respect to obstacles women encounter in aspiring to leadership roles, and mounts a case for additional support for women through women's only courses and opportunities". Her article "highlights the vital importance of mentoring for all, and especially for women, and suggests how this operates in one school".

Dr Nicole Archard is Dean of Academic Studies at the Wenona School. She has worked in several Australian girls' schools and was awarded her PhD by Macquarie University after researching leadership development opportunities for girls in single-sex schools. Nicole continues to publish widely on the topics of women and leadership, girls' education and female student leadership.

Karen Spiller is the Principal at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School. She has an MBA and attended the Harvard Business School's Women's Leadership Forum in 2011. Karen was awarded a Churchill Fellowship (2011) and examined strategies for preparing female leaders for the position of Principalship in Australian schools. St Aidan's Anglican Girls School runs an annual *Aspiring Women Leaders Conference* which encourages female leaders in girls' schools to take the next step.

## *Change imperatives: mentoring women to become school leaders through women's networks*

*Karen Spiller, Principal, St. Aidan's Anglican Girls School*

*It is ironic that the gender known as the 'nurturer' of others seems less capable or unwilling to reach out to each other and network, mentor or seek mentors as naturally and eagerly as do men... Professional organisations need to promote a persona of leadership in the profession that focuses on ability, preparation and experience rather than gender. Dr Sandra Lee Gupton, Professor of Educational Leadership, University of North Florida*

Statistics continue to tell the story of why women, especially, need to be mentored and encouraged to take forward leadership aspirations. In fact rewind - it's not even take forward - it is think about, consider, speculate, imagine and start to envisage themselves as leaders. Marzano and Hattie (to name just a few) have made clear the link between school effectiveness and improved outcomes for students and

school leadership and leaders, so even aside from an equity or gender issue, there should be every encouragement in the world to ensure that our schools have the best leaders possible. This has to mean a focus on ensuring that more women apply for school leadership positions and more importantly, ensuring that these women are successful in their applications.

This article considers some of the challenges with respect to obstacles women encounter in aspiring to leadership roles, and mounts a case for additional support for women through women's only courses and opportunities. It highlights the vital importance of mentoring for all, and especially for women, and suggests how this operates in one school. The issue and importance of networking and sponsorship, while essential for women's leadership evolution, are not within the scope of this article.

## Change imperatives

So what is the issue really and why should we be concerned?

In spite of what has been termed the 'feminisation' of the teaching profession generally, the relative proportion of women in school leadership positions remains low. For example, the *Staff in Australia's Schools 2010 Survey* (McKenzie et al., 2011) showed that while 21 per cent of primary teachers in independent schools were men, they held 45 per cent of leadership roles. At the secondary level, 55 per cent of teachers in independent schools were women yet only 29 per cent held leadership positions. The imbalance occurs across all school sectors and at all levels. In Education Queensland, the percentage of female principals of Band 10 and above (schools of 2000 students or more) fell from 35% in 2000 to 11% in 2009.

Of the United States almost 14,000 school district superintendents, roughly 15% are women (Gupton, 2009). While the number of female principals in the United States approximately equals those of men, the distribution is far from even, with secondary and middle schools having the fewest number of female principals while elementary (primary) school principalships are about equally divided between men and women (Gupton, 2009). Gupton also notes that, "the average salary of a principalship is inversely related to the number of women who serve in those positions".

In a national survey of 1600 principals conducted by Principals Australia (2011), 83% were over 46 years old. The *Adelaide Advertiser* (16 Sept, 2011) reported that two thirds of the state's primary and secondary principals intended to retire in the next five to ten years. Where will the future principals come from and what will the quality of their experience and ability be like? Similarly, *The Age* (30 April, 2012) reported that, "Leadership in Australian Schools is about to reach tipping point". The article continued to advise that 70% of principals will retire in five years and it also noted that it takes, on average, 15-20 years for a teacher to secure their first position as an Assistant Principal.

In the workplace generally, only 15% of women across all industry sectors believe they have equal opportunity for promotion to senior management positions, according to Bain's 2011 Gender Parity Study. The main issues holding women back include perceptions about the challenges associated with competing work-life priorities, and the fact that women's leadership style is different from men's - and not as valued (AIM, February 2012). This 'managerial disparity' not only warns of a severe narrowing of women's career opportunities, it represents a critical shrinking of the leadership talent pool at a time when many principals are reaching retiring age (Milburn, 2012).

Research in the United Kingdom identified that "the data on the gender of senior leaders and head teachers suggests that increasing the number of female Heads to reflect the proportion of females currently at Deputy level would generate a further 330 potential Heads a year" (Maunder & Warren, 2008). Attracting the best possible candidates into leadership positions is now a priority for education around the world (Watterson, 2010). School Principals play key roles in creating and sustaining high performing schools.

What stops women reaching the top? *Confronting the tough issues* (Chief Executive Women, 2011) identified the biggest threat to

female advancement was that senior leaders were more likely to promote someone with similar leadership styles to their own. 60% of all respondents (842 Australian business professionals) and 78% of women participants felt that "style" differences - gender specific approaches to management situations and issues - were a bigger obstacle to women's career advancement. The survey also found that men were more likely to appoint or promote someone with a style similar to their own (90%) and women undersold their experience and capabilities (79%).

## Why is mentoring especially important for women?

Strong and positive mentoring relationships create positive opportunities for aspiring leaders to develop expertise and confidence in a safe and supportive environment. While Sheryl Sandberg has been widely criticised (unfairly in the writer's opinion) for her recently published book *Lean In* (2013), she makes a number of significant points highlighting how women systematically deselect themselves from leadership roles and opportunities. Sandberg describes what she terms the "leadership ambition gap" as being in part, the result of socialisation of girls and women from birth.

Are women reluctant to apply for positions? If so why is this? Inbuilt bias or fear of failure? Dr Jim Watterson (now Director General for the Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland) says, "women limit their own capacity to take on these roles because they are reluctant to apply until they feel they are perfect... they just deselect themselves in every criteria". Some women are plagued by self-doubt and a lack of confidence. They underestimate their own capacity for the position because they have unrealistically high expectations of the level of skills and experience needed, or they lack the confidence to articulate their own achievements and desire for career advancement. For others, career advancement and ambition are viewed as selfish and indulgent and, of great importance, risking the safety and sanity of their home life (i.e. partner and children).

Most surveys on leadership aspiration find a gender gap. Sandberg cites a 2003 survey of high level executives by the Family and Work Institute, Catalyst and Boston College which found that twice as many men as women aspired to becoming CEO. Also, of the 25% of Executives who said they had reduced aspirations, 34% were women as compared with 21% of men. The most frequently cited reason for reducing aspiration was "the sacrifices that I have to make in my personal or family life".

In a survey of aspiring women leader delegates to a conference St Aidan's has run since 2006, delegates have identified that what concerns them most about aspiring to leadership are issues of work/life balance (165), dealing with conflict (74), fear of failure/ not worthy (70), confidence (58), losing connection with students (57), and lack of knowledge (47). Women's only networks, courses and one on one mentoring have been proven to mitigate these concerns.

## Negative issues surrounding women leaders

John Gray (*Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* author) was recently interviewed by Rhys Blakely for the *Weekend Australian Magazine* (25 May, 2013) and stated:

The flat lining of women's rise to senior positions in government or business at around 14% is not caused primarily by institutional sexism or self-sabotage but by hormones and a consequent lack of ambition. Ambitious men strive because they have plenty of testosterone. By contrast, the majority of females, lacking this crucial go-go juice, are happy to stop mid-corporate ladder.

These destructive, damaging and completely incorrect opinions were again reflected in Gray's new book, *Work with Me*, where he refers to the "bully broad", a Silicon Valley term used to describe "women executives who behave more like their male colleagues and who became insufferable tyrants". These texts are illustrative of the kinds of popular culture myths which circulate about women in leadership.

Irene Lang, President and CEO of Catalyst recently spoke at the National Coalition of Girls' Schools, Conference in Boston (June 2013) and told of the gender stereotypes and double bind women often find themselves. She spoke of the double standards that women are held to and of the 'Goldilocks Syndrome' - too tough, too soft, but never just right - in describing women's leadership characteristics and the manner in which these are viewed by the broader community. She described how women are held to a higher standard of leadership expectation than are men, and if competent, they are often disliked. This dilemma has been highlighted in recent articles and studies (McGregor, 2013; Fradera, 2013; Bongiorno et al., 2013). These authors note a subtle form of prejudice: that both men and women are more forgiving of men when they deviate from expected forms of leadership but are far less forgiving of women in the same circumstances.

Sandberg cites the 2003 experiment run by Columbia Business School professor, Frank Flynn and New York University professor Cameron Anderson, which tested the perceptions of men and women in the workplace. They used a Harvard Business School case study about an entrepreneur named Heidi Roizen. Flynn and Anderson assigned half the students the case about Heidi Roizen and the other the case about Howard Roizen, thereby changing the gender of the person at the heart of the case study. When questioned about their impressions of Heidi/ Howard, the students rated them as equally competent. Howard, however, was seen as more likeable (by both female and male responders) while Heidi was seen as selfish and, "not the kind of person you would want to work for" (Sandberg, 2013).

Sandberg asserts that this experiment "supports what research has already shown: success and likeability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women. When a man is successful he is liked by both men and women. When a woman is successful, people of both genders like her less". She continues: "I believe this bias is at the very core of why women hold themselves back. For men, professional success comes with positive reinforcement every step along the way. Women are often regarded unfavourably".

Likewise Babcock and Laschever in *Women Don't Ask* (2007) cite a study where subjects who said they had no gender bias with respect to leaders were asked to evaluate a number of leaders. They consistently rated female leaders as bossier, more emotional and domineering, even though all the male and female leaders were using the same script. The Goldilocks Syndrome is yet another obstacle that women face in their consideration of the pursuit of leadership.

## Women's networks and courses

Mauder and Warren, Coleman, Gupton and others all make a cogent case for women only courses, events and conferences as a way of providing a safe place for women to share their stories and fears. There appears to be strong evidence to support the value of women only leadership development courses. These provide the opportunity to demystify the role of Principal and the appointment process, and

provide opportunities to develop specific skills for the role. There is great value in significant and successful women Heads telling of their story and of their enjoyment of their role. Without men in the group women are more likely to:

- Address doubts about the role and their ability to fulfil it
- Hear from successful women role models who are successfully doing so
- Appreciate that others have similar concerns
- Identify real and practical ideas to overcome self-doubt
- Reflect and learn in a supportive atmosphere
- Access peer support and build effective networks;
- Recognise their potential and develop ways to communicate (Mauder & Warren, 2008)

While there are already government and sector agencies offering women only courses (AISNSW and EREA schools to name a few) it is to be hoped that as the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) evolves, ideally such courses would be encouraged by the Federal Government. As one of the five Professional Practices articulated in the National Professional Standards for Principalship is *Developing Self and Others*, it should become a requirement of this standard, that current principals report on their efforts to encourage, mentor and support women into school leadership, and specifically, principalship.

Additionally, teacher training courses at universities should accept some responsibility for identifying talented and high achieving female students to be mentored and encouraged by women currently in leadership roles. Providing networking opportunities early can highlight the importance of career planning and future networking, allowing young women to understand the potential obstacles in front of them and commence planning for and around them. Coleman advises that women only courses offer a "kick-start" or immediate help for women (especially in skills or confidence building) but that these are most effective if followed up by mentoring. She points to the automatic male mentoring and sponsorship that occurs in the locker room conversations that women are excluded from.

## So where does mentoring fit in?

Having established that there are impediments and obstacles to women applying for leadership positions and that this should be a cause for at least some concern given the shortage of leaders, the need for good leaders in our schools and the value of women only courses and events... let's turn to the case for mentoring and how this can assist in demystifying the leadership role for women.

Carroll (2013) summarised the challenges faced by women on career route to principalship, as highlighted by the Moorosi (2010) report when she wrote, "Such obstacles included a lack of exposure to management, inexperience and a perceived lack of self-confidence with regard to management... for many women. However, as women became more acquainted with the management of schools, they overcame their fear of the unknown and their confidence and capacity to fulfil the role improved". Moorosi also referred to the critical importance of networking and mentoring as vital components of leadership preparation.

Carolyn Buck Luce (Global Pharmaceutical Sector Leader at Ernst and

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Young and a well known voice on women's issues) discloses the value of mentoring and networking. "For every five mentors, you probably need twenty-five strategic alliances. Men do this extremely well. But too often women say, I have a mentor, I'm done". She concluded by noting that while 50% of a company's intellectual capital is its relational assets, for individuals, it's 75%" (Barsh & Cranston, 2011).

Marianne Coleman, in her recent study of 60 women leaders, *Women at the Top: Challenges, Choices and Change*, identified key factors that women identified in contributing to their success. Foremost was their own agency: their determination, hard work and qualifications. Secondly, they talked about success at work, particularly mentoring and coaching. Likewise, Germain and Scandura (2005) have speculated that the more informal types of mentoring work best, "where both mentor and protégée have made the decision to commit to the relationship and the protégée is exercising self-determination. This means they have both taken responsibility for the development and success of the relationship (Coleman, 2011).

Ideally, mentors should challenge the ceiling set by the aspirant and also assist her in becoming more comfortable with the 'taboos' of money, power, ambition and failure.

Women can be supported and encouraged to understand how best to use power and influence. Carter and Silva (2011) advise that women benefitted most by: making their achievements known, ensuring their manager was aware of their accomplishments, seeking feedback and credit as appropriate, asking for promotion when they thought it was deserved, and gaining access to powerful others. In other words, becoming comfortable with power and influence. More experienced mentors and sponsors can assist aspirants to understand the critical importance of strategic and political positioning.

The key point is that mentoring can help women learn specifics that will help: navigate the politics of organisations, the paths to advancement, the hidden traps to avoid, acceptable methods for gaining visibility, and characteristic stumbling blocks (Burke & McKeen, 1990). Career planning must extend to finding strong mentors, most likely women 'who look like you'. That is women to whom you can relate due to background, ethnicity or some other factors, such as a natural rapport. Mentors assist in making sense of the world around you, especially in career planning and also in terms of opening the doors to memberships of organisations or groups that are important professionally. Women, in turn, must support each other to 'reach back and bring other women forward' and to use the 'boys' club' format to create networks for women.

## St Aidan's story

So finally, this is how one school has made a start on assisting women's leadership development. My own career journey has been sponsored and supported by my previous Heads (both male and female) and other colleagues. As Lacey (2004) noted, "women only consider leadership roles when someone else suggests it to them", and so it was for me. Very happy as I was juggling a growing family and personal responsibilities with a full and active professional career, I was taken aside one day by a trusted friend who suggested I should apply for a deputy position that had been advertised. My immediate response was: I don't know enough, I'm not ready, I have young children; what will the effect on my family be? And all the other typical responses I hear regularly when I suggest senior leadership roles to women in schools around Australia. Through my mentors' encouragement and sponsorship, and my own agency and

preparedness, I secured a deputy principal's role and three years later my principalship.

In recent years I have been struck by the number of highly talented women who when asked the same question that was asked of me in 1996, reply with the same responses. Hearing Marie Wilson speak at a Coalition of Girls' Schools Conference in Boston in 2005 was the ah-ha moment for me, when I became determined to try to reach back and bring other women forward.

At St Aidan's we have a variety of programs and activities that are aimed at supporting aspirant leaders within our school and beyond. In the formal professional learning conference and course space, we offer the *Aspiring Women Leaders Conference* program (initiated by my colleague Ros Curtis and me) as well as a *First Steps in Leadership Conference* for beginning leaders. Of course, annual professional reviews which include the development of a one to three year professional learning plan are in place, as is encouragement to study, attend conferences as a presenter and to write for a variety of professional journals. Time and financial support are available to support these activities.

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The opportunity to undertake the shadowing of senior leaders both at St Aidan's and in other schools is readily provided. I acknowledge and thank the willingness of the senior leaders at St Aidan's who have given their time in supporting this process, and also colleagues in other schools who have made it possible for our staff to shadow members of their leadership teams. Such shadowing can be over a three day period, where the aspirant has the opportunity to understand a little more about the role and, hopefully, of the joys of leadership. Opportunities for 'acting' roles, replacing senior staff on leave, also provide significant insight into the nature of leadership and the diversity of the role. Women who step into

these roles can see that the role still involves contact with children and that it is do-able, manageable, makes a difference and is fun!

Formal mentoring includes career planning and regular career conversations. I am a firm believer now in strategic career planning. This picks up on Sandberg's exhortations to *lean into* one's career. Career planning certainly can assist women to negotiate the challenges of family responsibilities and time out of the workplace. Happenstance characterised my career and in hindsight I did a lot of the right things: further study, professional networks, took every opportunity offered. I now encourage all the women I mentor to look at every opportunity, to be strategic in their career planning and management. This is the value of an older, more experienced mentor who can shed some light on opportunities by offering encouragement. The mentor can help the aspirant understand the joys of the role and the do-ability of it. The mentor can shed light on how to gain the knowledge and experience, how to keep contact with students and staff, the overarching importance and influence of leadership and the sheer joy of making a difference.

Sandberg (2013) provides advice on how to get a mentor when she cites studies that reveal that mentors select protégées based on performance and potential. She notes that, "intuitively, people invest in those who stand out for their talent" and cites Oprah Winfrey who explained, "I mentor when I see something and say; 'I want to see that grow'". I too am the same: while committed to encouraging others to lead, I would rather invest my time and energy where I see interest, commitment and, of course, potential. Each of us has a responsibility to lean in and bring other women forward.

# The importance of mentoring women and girls in single-sex schools

Dr Nicole Archard, Dean of Academic Studies, Wenona

The imbalance between female and male leaders in society is well documented (EOWA 2012, 2010) and statistics verifying this disparity are often quoted as a driving force in order to incite action, both political and social, in addressing this concern. Despite more than 20 years of legislative (Still, 2006; Weyer, 2007) and educational (Moyle & Gill, 2005) change the workforce remains highly gender-stratified and gender-segregated in relation to both occupation type and leadership positions held (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). Whilst reports such as those produced by EOWA in Australia and Catalyst in the US are vital to our understanding of women's place in society, we run the risk of these statistics merely becoming the rhetoric of occasions such as International Women's Day. Of greater importance is how we use this knowledge to address the lower representation of women in leadership positions in an authentic and considered way, and with an outcome that has a positive impact on women's place within society. At the heart of this complex issue lies the role of female mentoring as well as girls' education.

Before continuing, it is important to differentiate between the more gender equitable girls' school context and the broader social norm of women in leadership positions. It should also be noted that any appearance of gender equity in education ends with the girls' school setting and does not extend into other educational modes or systems. Thus, on a global scale, the issue of women and leadership is one of inequity and is consequently a complex social phenomenon. Research into this concept substantiates that women are just as effective leaders as men (Carli & Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001, 2003). Yet the social and cultural constructions of gender have placed difficult, if not at times impenetrable, barriers for women in attaining leadership positions. It is in overcoming these barriers that mentoring plays a vital role. However, as part of the complexity in addressing gender inequity concerns, it is not only essential to understand the importance of mentoring relationships for women, there is also a necessity to explore this concept in relation to girls, and it is in girls' schooling experiences that an ideal opportunity prevails (Archard, 2012a). Accordingly, this article will assess through an analysis of research, an understanding of mentoring for women, both within and outside of education, as well as report on the research concerning the importance of mentoring programs for adolescent girls within a girls' school context.

## Women, leadership and mentoring

Arguably, women are presented with greater obstacles often resulting in more indirect paths in the process of attaining leadership positions. Consequently, mentoring has been seen as an important method in providing women leaders, as well as future women leaders, with support structures and processes to assist them in overcoming the challenges that they may encounter. Many work organisations have put into place formal mentoring programs for women in order to replace the informal networks that have traditionally existed between men, and from which women have been excluded (deVries, Webb, & Eveline, 2006; Ehrlich, 2008). With regard to understanding the purpose of

mentoring programs for women, deVries et al. (2006) have noted that there is a need to recognise the difference between mentoring programs that focus on women being the problem, and programs that help equip women with the knowledge and skills required to challenge the marginalising practices of gendered organisations. Blackmore and Sachs (2007) have made the following comment with regard to women in education:

*The 'problem' of the underrepresentation of women in educational leadership is not about women's lack, whether of ambition or capacities, but rather, it is the consequence of limited opportunities created by the systematically gendered cultural, social, and structural arrangements that inform women educators' choices and possibilities relative to their male colleagues. (pp. 12-13)*

Therefore, mentoring practices for women must not be centred on changing women and their leadership practices but rather supporting women in developing leadership skills and the acquisition of leadership roles.

Mentoring has been described as a process whereby an individual (mentee) is provided with support by traditionally a more experienced person (mentor) in order to enhance their career opportunities. Within this process two types of mentoring behaviours exist. These have been termed as career development and psychosocial functions (Burke, Burgess, & Fallon, 2006; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Career development functions include:

sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure, and challenging assignments, and are generally linked to preparing the mentee for career advancement. Psychosocial functions include: counselling, friendship, and role modelling, and are associated with enhancing the mentee's self-confidence and career identity. There has been considerable research and meta-analysis that has explored the impact of these differing mentoring behaviours in relation to gender. Of this research, Tharenou (2005) found that career mentoring increased women's career advancement more than men's, whereas psychosocial mentoring had little impact on women's career advancement. In conjunction with this research, a meta-analysis conducted by Allen et al. (2004) found that the effect sizes associated with compensation and promotion were higher when linked with career mentoring than with psychosocial mentoring.

In addition, other research has explored the outcomes for women mentees with regard to the gender of the mentor. Burke et al. (2006) found that women with female mentors reported greater role modelling and scored higher on the measure of psychosocial functions. However, Tharenou (2005) found that female mentors, over males, had a stronger effect that both helped and hindered mentees' career advancement. The findings of Tharenou's study and others (Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Metz & Tharenou, 2001) have established that women mentors were more likely to focus on psychosocial functions rather than career functions and that a stronger focus on psychosocial functions had negative or little impact on women's career advancement. This finding emphasises the need to ensure that female mentoring arrangements have a balance between career development and psychosocial

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functions. Nevertheless, it was ascertained by Tharenou that women who were mentored, regardless of the type of mentoring, had higher career advancement than those who were not mentored. Adding to this debate, Ragins and Cotton (1999) found that whilst women who had a history of male mentors received more promotions, they also received less compensation than their male equivalents. However, the findings of various studies (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; O'Neill, 2002) have concluded that women with female mentors are more likely to learn strategies for dealing with gender barriers, acquire role modelling, and gain greater career support.

Whilst mentoring relationships are normally viewed as a one to one or peer to peer process, research has also taken place with regard to the difference between dyadic versus collaborative mentoring models for women (Driscoll, Parkes, Tilley-Lubbs, Brill, & Pitts-Bannister, 2009; Wasburn, 2007). In response to the concern that dyadic models might reinforce gender hierarchies, Driscoll et al. (2009) proposed a mentoring model that involved the processes of peer mentoring and collaboration. This model employed social inquiry that was facilitated through a group mentoring process whereby women functioned as both mentor and mentee. The results of this study found that participant women increased their level of self-confidence and personal agency as well as acquiring a sense of collaborative action. A similar method of mentoring was also proposed by Wasburn (2007). This method, termed strategic collaboration, used a peer group approach whereby a few mentors served multiple mentees. This process utilised such methods as coaching and networking and was reported to be successful in developing women in both the areas of career and psychosocial functions.

Not only does the mentoring process have a positive impact on the individual, findings from various studies have also indicated that mentoring can have positive effects on the mentor as well as the organisation (deVries et al., 2006; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Through a study on the effects of a long-term mentoring program for women at an Australian university, deVries et al. (2006) found that male mentors "increased their understanding and sensitivity regarding gendered process in the workforce" (p. 573), and developed a greater understanding of their own leadership skills. Therefore, the utilisation of male mentors for women was important in developing men's understanding of the challenges for women in the workplace. The findings of other studies have also revealed that mentoring leads to greater job satisfaction and job commitment for both men and women thereby reducing employee turnover in organisations (Ehrlich, 2008; Ragins & Cotton, 1999).

With regard to developing women for leadership Kellerman and Rhode (2007) have acknowledged that, "aspiring women leaders need multiple sources of support contacts and career development opportunities from both inside and outside of the organization" (p. 22). Under this recommendation, female mentees should encompass a network of mentors and/or mentoring methods in order to meet their diverse career and psychosocial needs (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Valerio, 2009). In developing women for leadership the process of mentoring plays an important role, however, research highlights that in addressing the needs of women in leadership it is vitally important to develop young girls and adolescents for their acquisition of leadership as adults (Archard, 2012b). The role of mentoring for girls is therefore important in the development of future women leaders.

## The role of mentoring in developing girls for leadership

It has long been the view that education holds the key to challenging societal inequity with regard to gender (Yates, 1993; Arnot, 2002; Unterhalter, 2007). However, it is also important to be cognisant that the seemingly more equitable distribution of women in leadership positions within girls' school contexts does not lead us into a false sense of reality with regard to the broader position of women in society. With this in mind, there is great importance in preparing adolescent girls for leadership within girls' schools, not only through their development of skills and self-concept as a leader but also in their understanding of the challenges that they will face on their own journey to leadership in the future (Archard, 2013a; 2013b).

Research into student mentoring programs is not as extensive as that of adult programs and of this research very little has a focus on gender. Nevertheless, there has been a growing emergence of investigation into student programs within educational settings (Garringer, 2010) with a particular focus on the use of mentoring in order to enhance student achievement and engagement. Karcher (2005) explored the effects of a

cross-aged peer-mentoring program aimed at developing students' connectedness, self-esteem, identity, and academic attitude. The results of this study revealed that the success of the mentoring program was dependent on consistent attendance to the program by mentors and mentees, and inconsistent attendance by mentors could do more harm than good to the mentee. Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, and McMaken (2011) found in their study that students who were mentored through a cross aged Big Brother/Big Sister Program had more positive perceptions of their own academic abilities: however, these outcomes were not always sustained past the first year of the program.

Other research into student mentoring programs has revealed more positive

results. Caldarella, Adams, Valentine, and Young (2009) found that the outcomes of a student mentoring program in which adult volunteers were paired with primary/middle school students who were at risk of emotional and behavioural disorders, resulted in improved social skills and academic behaviours, and decreased antisocial behaviour. Likewise, Sims (2010) established that service-learning mentoring decreased students dropout rate from secondary schooling and increased civic engagement, self-esteem, and academic success. A further meta-analysis of school based mentoring programs by Wheeler, Keller, and DuBois (2010) revealed that such programs increased scholastic efficacy and peer support, whilst decreasing misconduct, absenteeism, and truancy. Whilst these mentoring programs have not explored gender specific issues, they do demonstrate the potential of such programs to positively influence personal and academic results for girls. Therefore, mentoring programs could be used prospectively in the development of female students for leadership both in the present as well as in post-school life.

However, a study by Archard (2012a) into Australian, New Zealand, and South African girls' schools revealed an important link between mentoring relationships for girls and their preparation for leadership in adult life. In this study it was found that mentoring relationships took place within the girls' school context in two different forms, that being student/student and teacher/student and could either be a formal or informal arrangement. Mentoring as an informal understanding

*"...there is great importance in preparing adolescent girls for leadership within girls' schools, not only through their development of skills and self-concept as a leader but also in their understanding of the challenges that they will face on their own journey to leadership in the future."*

was often linked to the psychosocial function of role modelling and involved leadership behaviour being role modelled to the younger or less experienced of the pair. It was noted, however, that this influence could be both positive and negative in outcome. In this study, girls' school staff highlighted that students often demonstrated positive leadership behaviour when in mentoring relationships with younger students, but when they were unsuccessful at a leadership task, the lack of teacher mentoring and role modelling was often cited as a possible explanation. Interestingly, it was found in this study that students were more likely to nominate female staff, and in particular female executive staff, when citing examples of positive leadership role modelling. The extent that female staff are aware that they are modelling this behaviour to girls requires further investigation. Female students in this study also cited that the lack of women leaders in society who could act as mentors and role models was problematic in their pursuits of post-school leadership roles.

## Conclusion

Mentoring programs for women and girls are an important way of supporting women who are both in leadership and aspiring to leadership roles, as well as preparing girls for future leadership paths. It will be important to be cognisant of how girls' school settings may support and influence mentoring and role modelling relationships for both female staff and students. Whilst it is essential to prepare women for educational leadership, schools also provide an ideal location as well as opportunity for exploring how mentoring and role modelling may influence student leadership behaviour and as a consequence, prepare girls for future leadership roles. Ultimately, we can use the girls' school context to foster an understanding of how women can assist and support other women in leadership and perhaps establish within our female students an understanding of the importance of establishing their own female support networks. If we can do this, then we may go some way in attempting to address broader societal gender inequity concerns.

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