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RELATIONAL LEARNING: A STUDY OF PEER MENTORING EXPERIENCES  
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION MAJORS (265 pp.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Christopher A. Was, Ph.D.  
Anne B. Morrison, Ph.D.

Peer mentoring is a topic that has been prevalent in the literature for the past several decades and plays a significant role in the learning experiences of many students. This study investigated the experiences of peer mentors in one specific mentoring project, in order to learn how the mentors describe and understand those experiences.

Eighteen mentors participated in this qualitative study, which examined mentoring-influenced-by-relational-learning in pre-service teachers through in-depth, phenomenological interviews. These interviews were supplemented by photo elicitation and reflecting processes. These mentors defined mentoring as a multifaceted endeavor, which exhibits, among others, traits of teaching, friendship, learning, building relationships, and communication. They defined relational learning both in terms of the course they took, and as a construct which revolves around working together, talking through experiences, being open to new possibilities and ideas, and, through these, being in relationship with one another. Four themes were identified: (a) Mentors experienced relational learning; (b) Mentors experienced investment; (c) Mentors experienced challenges; and (d) Mentors identified ways mentoring can be different. An overarching theme was, mentors and the mentoring project experienced a process of becoming. Mentors also described their overall experiences, explained the ways in which they feel

they benefitted from the project, and discussed why they believe this project has been successful. Implications of these findings are also discussed, as they relate to both research and practice.