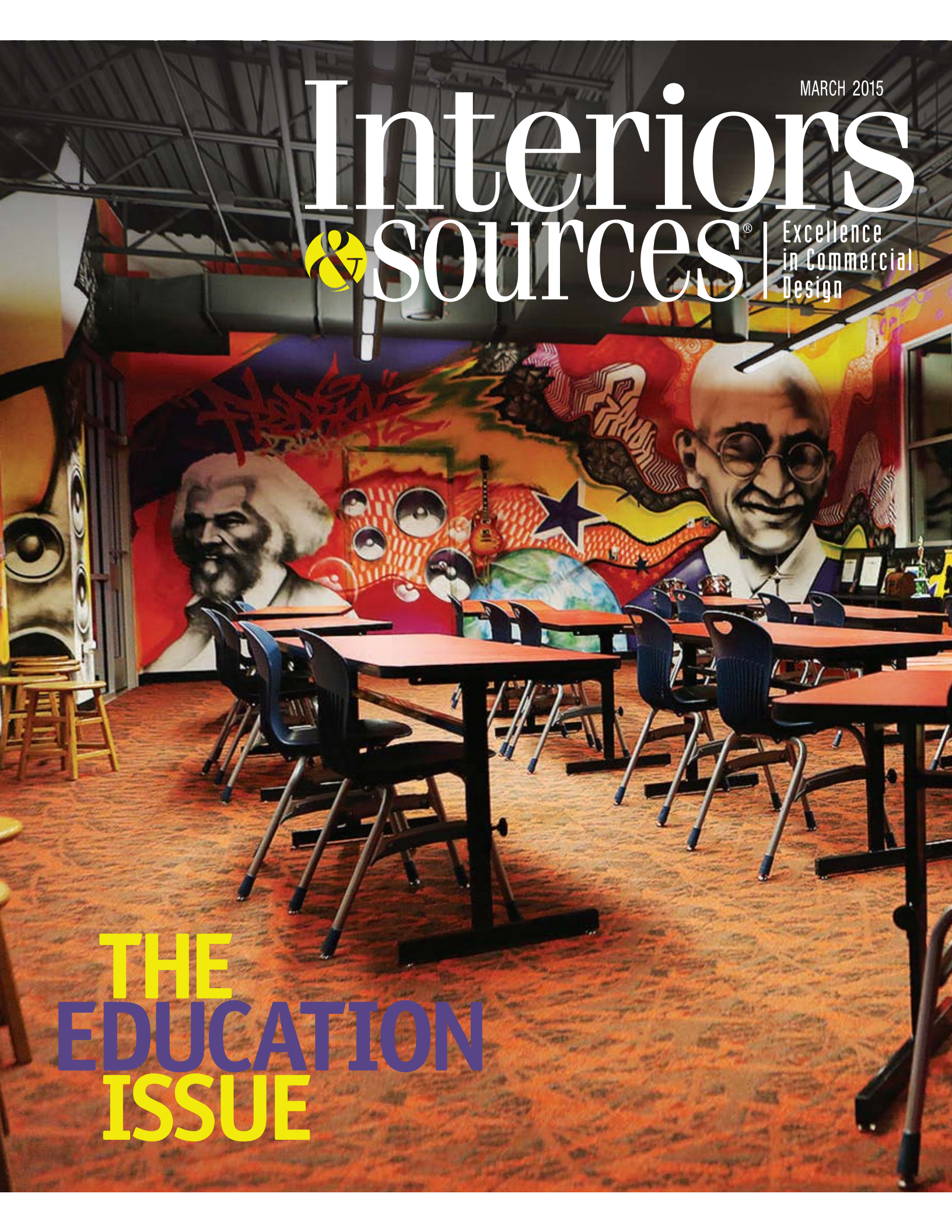


MARCH 2015

# Interiors & Sources<sup>®</sup> | Excellence in Commercial Design

**THE  
EDUCATION  
ISSUE**



Discuss and decide upon the relationship you want to build together in advance. The most successful mentoring relationships are those founded on clear goals and ground rules. Be upfront—your mentor will thank you.

### SEEK MULTIPLE MENTORS

Traditionally, mentoring relationships are characterized by a two-person model with a senior person discussing a student's goals, needs, weaknesses, and accomplishments. In a perfect world, one person is enough to help you tackle all your concerns. But can you really have just one mentor? You will most likely need multiple mentors of various ages, skills, and traits to guide you with each of your needs.

Research on mentoring relationships and programs shows that mentoring is most effective when the mentee has a diverse constellation of mentors, from a traditional primary mentor to peer and short-term ones as well. Do you aspire to be an interior designer with your own firm? Consider reaching out to both an interior designer and a business owner. Each person brings different perspectives and wisdom. Take your search further—explore outside your boundaries and tap into the networks of your friends and colleagues.

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK AND INVEST

Prepare for each meeting with your mentor as if it's a task for your job. Dress professionally. Show up on time with a notebook and pen, ready to listen and take notes. Research your mentor's interests, ask questions, and talk about the why behind the answers. Share your portfolio.


Mentoring is a two-way street. Go beyond "checking in" and give your mentor opportunities to offer insight and advice. As you get to know your mentor, think of ways you can add value to the relationship. Bring up a recent news story or study that you think would be of interest or provide your mentor a new networking connection.

### BE OPEN


Your mentor will challenge you. Giving you honest feedback is his or her job. Come into the relationship appreciating that there is a chance you will reexamine your goals and consider new ideas. While setting clear goals and objectives at the beginning of the relationship is crucial, also realize that these goals and objectives may change as the relationship progresses.

### BE HONEST

Do you get along with your mentor? If the fit doesn't feel right, bow out. Mentoring should be established as no-fault relationship where either you or your mentor can end it for good reason at any time without risk of harm to your respective careers.

When done right, mentoring is a powerful tool that can change careers and lives. So be fearless in what you want and humble when someone agrees to be your mentor. You'll be surprised by how much people want to help you if you just ask for it. 

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