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A Look into the Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Process and its Effects on the Individual

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A LOOK INTO THE CROSS-AGE PEER MENTORING PROCESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON
THE INDIVIDUAL

by

JONNATHAN EDWARD SMITH

B.A., Indiana University, 2001

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The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
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A Look into the Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Process and its Effects on the Individual

Thesis directed by Dr. Susan Jurow

ABSTRACT

This study examined a cross-age peer mentoring program and the ways in which it may serve as a counter-social group to adolescent gang involvement. Two theoretical orientations, a risk factor approach and primary socialization theory, framed this study. The sample targeted three mentoring pairs for three different mentoring relationship quality categories: high, medium, and low. The quality level of the mentoring relationships were determined by the presence and/or absence of positive and negative internal and external indicators. Five methods of data collection were used in this study: (1) observation and audio recording of the enacted mentoring relationships; (2) interviewing participants; (3) surveying participants; (4) collection of school performance data; and (5) collection of program artifacts. Findings indicated that the different quality levels of the mentoring relationships resulted in different communication patterns, engagement strategies, and participation levels.

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CHAPTER I

Significance of the Problem

Adolescent gang involvement has long been associated with increased rates of delinquency and crime among its members (Curry, 2000; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993). When compared to adolescents who do not belong to gangs, individuals involved with gangs have been found to commit delinquent acts at a higher frequency, commit more serious delinquent acts, are more likely to carry and use a weapon, and have less attachment to social institutions (Delsi, Barnes, Beaver, & Gibson, 2009). Delinquent activities and/or crimes that have been associated with adolescent gang involvement range in severity from graffiti, arson, and petty theft to assault, robbery, rape, and homicide (Klein & Maxson, 2006). Involvement in delinquent and/or criminal activities can limit the future options of the adolescent gang members through dropping out of school, incarceration, and in extreme examples, death.

Research has shown that adolescent gangs act as social groups which can promote delinquency in their members (Fleisher & Krienert, 2004). In my dissertation study, I examined a cross-age peer mentoring program and the ways in which it may serve as a counter-social group to adolescent gangs. Cross-age peer mentoring programs have the potential to introduce the mentee and/or adolescent who is involved with gangs to a prosocial social group, provide protective factors, and potentially expand the mentee's future options (Karcher, 2005). Research on cross-age peer mentoring programs is a relatively new area of inquiry within the youth mentoring literature. This form of mentoring involves the use of peers who are a few years older than the mentee to provide examples of beliefs, values, and behaviors that are aligned with school expectations (Karcher, 2005). One of the most important potential benefits of this type of

mentoring is its ability to introduce a positive peer to the mentee. Research is needed on this type of mentoring to understand how the mentoring relationship can provide protective factors for adolescents and a positive socialization source to counter adolescent gang involvement. In the following chapter, two theoretical perspectives are outlined that describe this potential.

CHAPTER II

Conceptual Framework

This study's research into the promise of cross-age peer mentoring is grounded in two theoretical orientations: a risk factor approach and primary socialization theory. The risk factor approach was used to describe the potential of a cross-age peer mentoring program to increase the amount of protective factors to which an individual has exposure, while at the same time decreasing risk factors. Evidence has shown that cumulative risk found across several ecological domains (e.g., the individual, peer, family, neighborhood/community, and school) can lead to higher rates of adolescent gang involvement (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, Smith, & Tobin, 2003¹). Primary socialization theory was used to investigate how a mentoring program and in particular, the mentoring relationship can act as sources of prosocial socialization (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). Prosocial refers to norms and/or behaviors that promote ethical behavior and beliefs and minimize exposure to risk factors. From this perspective, if the mentee has a strong bond/relationship with the mentor/mentoring program, primary socialization theorists posit that the individual will adopt the norms/behaviors of the socialization source (in this case the mentor and mentoring program).

Risk Factor Approach

The risk factor approach assumes there are multiple and often overlapping levels of risk factors in an individual's background that increase the chances of an individual's vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes (Thornberry et al., 2003). In terms of this study, a higher level of cumulative risk, risk that occurs in different life domains, is strongly associated with increased

¹ Thornberry's et al. (2003) Rochester Youth Development Study will be cited throughout my prospectus, as it is an exemplar in the field of adolescent gang involvement and delinquency

levels of adolescent gang involvement and dropping out of school. Risk factors in the ecological domains of the community, family, school, peer, and individual have been studied to determine their effects on individuals joining a gang.

Community risk is associated with high crime and socially disorganized neighborhoods. Family risk includes factors such as low socioeconomic status, poverty, single-parent families, low family involvement, and parental conflict (Thornberry et al., 2003). Low education expectations, low school performance, and low commitment and involvement place adolescents at risk in school contexts. Adolescents' relationships with deviant peers have been shown to be a significant risk factor in the peer domain. Individual characteristics, such as low self-esteem, higher tolerance for deviance and illegal activities, and previous exposure to violence are risk factors that have been associated with higher gang involvement rates.

Thornberry's et al. (2003) Rochester Youth Development Study followed adolescents in their early teenage years until the age of 22. Each participant and a primary caretaker (usually the mother) were interviewed at six-month intervals for four years and, after a two-year hiatus, annually for an additional four years for a total of 12 cycles of data collection. The target population was 7th and 8th graders in the Rochester, NY public school system. To gain insight on adolescent delinquency the researchers used a stratified sample to over represent high-risk youth and youth from high-crime areas. One thousand youth were initially selected with 846 remaining in the last cycle of data collection. The study focused on adolescent gang membership and its relationship with the individual's cumulative frequency of delinquency and drug use, frequency of early delinquency and drug use, area characteristics, family socio-demographic characteristics,

parent-child relations, school factors, peer relationships, individual characteristics, and life-course transitions.

The Rochester Youth Development Study demonstrated that each of the risk factor domains of community, family, school, peer, and individual characteristics have the potential of putting a youth at risk of joining a gang. The researchers also found that experiencing risk in one domain increased the chances of experiencing risk in multiple domains. As the risk factors increased in the different domains, the likelihood of joining a gang increased. It is important to note that risk factors do not always appear across all domains, and it is possible that they accumulate in only a few of the domains. Thornberry et al. (2003) also found a wide range of risk factors within each of the domains that contributed to increased chance of adolescents becoming gang members. The impact of cumulative risk across domains led to a greater chance of joining a gang than did risk accumulated in only one domain.

In an attempt to identify the most salient risk factors associated with adolescent gang involvement, Klein and Maxson (2006) identified 20 studies that focused on the ecological factors most associated with adolescent involvement with gangs. The studies were selected using two criteria: large youth samples and sound research methods appropriate to analyze questions of why adolescents become involved with gangs. They found that “peers” and “negative peer influence” on the individual were the leading predictors of joining a gang.

Esbensen, Huizinga, & Weiher’s (1993) research further supports a risk factor approach to understanding adolescent gang involvement. They compared gang and non-gang members to determine their different levels of conventional attitudes. They found non-gang members to have “ 1) lower levels of commitment to delinquent peers; 2) high commitment to positive peers; 3)

lower levels of normlessness² in three different contexts (family, peer group, and school); 4) less negative labeling by teachers; and 5) lower tolerance for deviance” (p. 110). A significant reason why individuals join gangs is their lack of connection to societal norms and the influence of peers (Thornberry, et al., 2003; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993). The gang acts as a social institution that can fulfill the needs of its members. Based on this, protective factors such as positive peer contact and increased ties to other societal features could decrease the likelihood of joining a gang.

Protective factors.

Protective factors serve as moderators or buffers against the exposure to risk and/or involvement in risk behaviors (Jessor, 1992). These factors such as involvement in school and intolerance of deviance have both direct and indirect effects on the individual. Protective factors can lessen the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors as well as the adverse outcomes from participation. Mentors and mentoring programs have the potential to act as protective factors for the mentee (Darling, 2005). Mentors can reduce risk through assisting mentees’ social-emotional development and engagement in academic activities, thus increasing the protective factors in both the individual and school domains (Karcher, 2005). Participation in activities designed to increase social-emotional development within a mentoring program can increase the mentees’ resilience to risk, providing a buffer to future antisocial situations (Darling, 2005; Karcher, 2005). Academic support can both help prevent the mentee from failing and/or dropping out of school and strengthen a mentee’s connection to school.

² A normlessness scale was used to measure the three contexts of family, peer group, and school. Items were developed to measure if the individual believed it was permissible to perform different types of immoral activities within the context.

Peer and cross-age peer mentoring have the potential to provide the mentee with protective factors in the peer domain. Access to a peer whose behaviors are aligned with school expectations may help the mentee “re-socialize” his or her behaviors into ones that are associated with success in school. This would increase protective factors in the both the peer and school domains.

In summary, mentoring programs have the potential to increase protective factors for mentees in the ecological contexts of the individual, peer, and school. They have also been found to reduce risk in those domains as well. Mentoring programs also have the potential to increase mentees’ connection to school, a significant protective factor during adolescence (Jessor, 1992). Further research on mentoring programs is needed to understand the potential impact protective factors found within a program can have on a mentee.

Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Relationship

Despite the potential of youth mentoring, there have been limited efforts to develop a theoretical model (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Mentoring programs are often developed to address program goals and are not based on a developed theoretical model of youth mentoring. This has resulted in a lack of connection between theory, research, and practice. Also missing in the current youth mentoring research is the process that accounts for the mentor’s influence on the mentee (Rhodes, 2005).

Rhode’s (2005) model of youth mentoring assumes that mentoring relationships can promote positive change through a range of processes, specifically processes that support social-emotional, cognitive, and identity development. For change to occur within the mentee a strong

interpersonal³ connection characterized by mutuality, trust, and empathy must develop between mentor-mentee. Once a strong mentoring relationship has developed the mentor can then challenge negative views that the youth may hold and help the mentee achieve the mentoring program's goals (Painta, 1999).

In the cross-age peer mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentees are of a similar age within the same generation of one another. The mentor, in this case, is at least a few years older than the mentee. The relationship between the mentor and mentee has a hierarchal power imbalance in favor of the mentor and his or her views (Karcher, 2005). The mentor's perspective is also enhanced through the location of the program (typically held in a school) and the design of the program's activities (e.g., mentors often lead activities and mentors assist mentees with school work). Ideally, this relationship allows the mentor to facilitate the mentee's development according to program goals. Developmental domains targeted in this approach include: interpersonal skills, increased self-esteem, and school connectedness and related behaviors and/or attitudes (Karcher, 2005).

Primary socialization theory.

From the perspective of primary socialization theory, we can begin to understand how a positive mentoring relationship can create desired change within the mentee and across his or her life experiences. Theorists who hold this view propose that normative and deviant behaviors are learned through interactions with primary socialization sources including family, school, and peer clusters (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). The strength of the bond between the individual and the primary socialization sources determines the effectiveness of norm transmission. Though

³ A strong interpersonal connection in this case refers to a relationship in which the mentee is willing to share his or her feelings, self-perceptions, actively engaged in the mentoring relationship, and attempting to construct personal change (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1998; Rhodes, 2005).

families and schools can both teach norms that are not prosocial in nature (e.g., drug use, participation in illegal activities, smoking, and prejudice against minorities), according to proponents of primary socialization theories, they are more likely to advocate prosocial norms such as negative attitudes toward illegal drug use and deviance.

From this view, peer clusters are the major source of learned deviant behaviors. Peer interactions gain more influence when an individual's bonds with family and/or school agents are weak. Without strong bonds to the family and the school, the individual loses the protective factors from these institutions, and also access to the norms and/or behaviors they promote. These weak bonds then become risk factors for deviance. While not all peer clusters are deviant in nature, peer clusters, as a socialization source, have a higher probability than family and school socialization sources in transmitting deviant norms. The issue occurs when an individual who does not have strong prosocial bonds with family and school sources develops a strong bond with a deviant peer cluster.

Oetting and Donnermeyer (1998) describe peer clusters as "...cohesive, small cohorts that form strong bonds, that transmit norms through discussion and shared experience, and that directly monitor and reinforce attitudes and behaviors of their members" (p. 1011). A significant relationship is needed between the individual and the members of the peer cluster in order for the transmission of norms to occur. From this perspective, adolescent gangs and cross-age peer mentoring programs could potentially act as peer clusters. Both of these institutions attempt to develop strong interpersonal relationships between the individual and the members of the group and/or peer clusters that results in a transmission of norms from the group to the individual.

Based on this theory, cross-age mentoring programs need to develop a strong bond between the mentee and mentor in order for the program to transfer its norms to the mentee. If the recruiting and screening processes have been successful, the behavior of the mentors should be positive, promote prosocial behaviors, and be in line with the expected behavior of the school (Karcher, 2005; Wright & Borland, 1992).

The perspective offered by primary socialization theory is particularly valuable in this study because it illuminates the process of socialization for both adolescents involved with gangs and adolescents involved with cross-age peer mentoring programs. In both cases, depending on the strength of the relationship, the individual may adopt the norms of the peer cluster. Depending on the peer cluster, the norms may be deviant in nature (adolescent gangs), prosocial (cross-age peer mentoring programs), or a hybrid. Cross-age peer mentoring programs provide opportunities for involvement with peers whose behaviors are aligned with school expectations. O'Donnell and Michalak (1997) suggest that adolescent prevention programs include both prosocial peers (mentors) and youth experiencing difficulties (mentees) so that positive peer relations can develop and prosocial norms can take precedence.

Research Questions

The focus of this research is to investigate how a particular school-based mentoring program (the YESS Institute) promotes protective factors for youth involved in gangs, to identify characteristics of the mentoring relationships that facilitate the development of behaviors aligned with school expectations through the program activities, and document the changes (if any) that result through the participation of youth in the program. The specific research questions that guided this study are:

1. How does the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program act as/promote protective factor(s)?

- Through its curriculum?
- Through its intended relationships between the mentor and mentee?
- Through its official connections to the school (e.g., attendance policies, working with the school advocate, parent support)?

2. What are the characteristics of the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring relationships?

- What relationship features develop between the mentors and mentees?
- What features are found within the mentoring relationships?
- How does the mentoring pair and/or mentoring relationship act/not act as a socialization source and/or peer cluster?

3. How do the mentees change over the course of the year?

- Are there changes in the mentees' school performance as indicated by grade point average, frequency/severity of behavior referrals, and/or attendance?
- Are there changes in the mentees' school-connectedness and/or pro-school behaviors?
- Are there changes in the mentees' level of emotional intelligence (comparison of pre- and post- measures)?
- Are there changes in the mentees' gang involvement attitudes (comparison of pre- and post- measures)?
- What school practices did mentees learn from their mentors and/or from the mentoring program?

CHAPTER III

Literature Review on Adolescent Gangs

Perspectives in criminology have guided the development of theories and research methods on adolescent gangs. Potential adolescent gang members are, for the most part, identified by how they differ from societal norms. Although I do not fully agree with this purely deficit view of adolescent gangs and the roles it may play for its members (e.g., a benefit of being in a gang might be increased group support/solidarity, protection of identity, and safety from others who would do harm to the individual), the literature reviewed in this section makes the fundamental assumption that adolescent gang involvement increases participation in delinquent activities.

This section provides an overview of the reasons why adolescents join gangs and the effects on the individual from this involvement. This section highlights a very serious consequence of adolescent gang involvement: an increased rate of delinquency in adolescent gang members. This review concludes by describing how the same socialization process that occurs in adolescent gangs could also help prevent adolescent gang involvement. Two peer intervention programs, GRASP and B.U.I.L.D. (Building Urban Involvement through Leadership Development), that use former adolescent gang members to prevent/reduce adolescent gang involvement are highlighted. These two programs illustrate how peer interventions can be successful in reducing adolescent gang involvement. A cross-age peer mentoring program based on this peer intervention approach could provide protective factors in three important ecological areas: individual, peer, and the school.

Adolescent Gang Membership and its Impact on Delinquency

Adolescent gang members commit higher rates of delinquency when compared to peers in other delinquent groups (Battlin, Hill, Abbot, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1998; Fagan 1990; Huizinga, 1996; Thornberry et al., 2003). What accounts for this increase in delinquency? There are three models, *selection model*, *(social) facilitation model*, and *enhancement model*, which describe this relationship between adolescent gang membership and delinquency. Each model describes a group process that increases the individual's willingness to commit delinquent acts (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993). These models build on the fundamental assumption of primary socialization theory that an influential socialization source can have a strong impact on an individual's norms/behavior.

Evidence is mixed on which model best describes the relations between gang involvement and delinquency, and research has shown that all three models have been used to describe this relationship (Klein & Maxson, 2006). The one common element in these studies is the increased rate of participation in delinquent activities when an individual becomes a member of a gang and the reduction of delinquent activities when the member leaves the gang. The evidence indicates that gangs act as a socialization source that promotes higher levels of participation in illegal activities. This increase in participation in illegal activities is at a rate that is higher than what the individual would participate in if they were not involved with a gang, highlighting the potential severity of adolescent gang involvement.

Another facet of the relationship between gang involvement and delinquency is that gang members' account for a higher proportion of illegal activities than non-members. Curry (2000) found that gang members, as identified by the police, accounted for 72.1% of criminal offenses

recorded from the study population. The percentage of gang members was only 21.9%. Gang members' involvement in delinquency has also been compared to members of other groups and adolescents with delinquent friends (Battlin-Pearson, Thornberry, Hawkins, & Krohn, 1998; Huizinga, 1996; Thornberry et al., 2003). This research has shown that adolescent gang members committed delinquent acts, such as violent acts, drug use/sales, theft, property offenses, and public disorder, at higher rates than other youths who are either in delinquent groups or have delinquent friends. This suggests that membership in a gang promotes higher rates of delinquency even when compared to other delinquent youth who are not in a gang. This in turn suggests that this social group is socializing the individual further away from prosocial norms.

According to primary socialization theory behaviors are learned social actions and if a strong bond exists between the individual and a socialization source, in this case adolescent gang members, the individual will adopt the norms of the socialization source. Hritz and Gabow (1997) argue that there are five reasons why gangs have such a strong bond over individual members. They are:

1. Gang activities force youth to challenge authority, family, social norms.
2. Peer influences become more important than family and other authority influences.
3. Alienation from conventional influences interferes with internalization of conventional social norms.
4. Victimization among gang members strengthens the group.
5. Power and self-esteem are gained through gang activities.

This strong bond between the individual and the adolescent gang results in certain behaviors and acts being rewarded that differ from more prosocial socialization sources, including illegal and delinquent activities. The individual, through observing and participating in gang-related activities, learns that committing illegal activities is viewed positively in this community. If the individual has a strong identification with the gang, he or she will most likely seek a positive relationship and/or bond with the adolescent gang, and thus commit more delinquent activities (Winfrey & Backstrom, 1994).

Reasons to join.

What makes certain individuals more likely to join a gang than others? In essence, gangs are peer clusters. Like other peer clusters, they perform the function of fulfilling the needs of the individual members. These needs include status, identity, and protection. Self-report data suggest individuals join gangs for four main reasons: for fun, peer influences (friendship-based orientations), safety/protection, and family reasons including pressures to join from family members and weak family bonds (Decker & Curry, 2000; Decker & Van Winkle, 1996; Hagedorn, 1998, Spergel, 1995).

A gang acts as a social support group where an individual's identity can be appreciated. Vigil's (1988) work concludes that gangs provide needed positive reinforcement of the adolescent's identity and a release, through delinquent activities, of their frustrations toward society. The gang provides protection and a sense of belonging that confirms an individual's identity, which in turn promotes participation in the gang (Sun, 1993). The individual's antisocial behavior and aggression are rewarded by gang membership.

Reasons to leave.

The research on why adolescents leave gangs is not as developed as why they join gangs. The majority of studies suggest individuals mature out of gangs through a process of gradual disaffiliation (Esbensen & Huizinga, 1993; Klein & Maxson, 2006; Spergel, 1995; Thornberry, et al., 2003; Vigil, 1988). That is, the adolescent reaches a point when he/she becomes aware of and experiences the negative consequences, for example criminal delinquency, of being a gang member. Adolescents may also desire marriage, fatherhood/motherhood, or suffer from gang fatigue. Gang fatigue occurs when the individual becomes dissatisfied with the lifestyle and wants a less stressful way of meeting economic and social needs. These factors can all contribute to the individual leaving his or her gang.

Peer Intervention

Since adolescent gangs act as a supportive peer group for the individual, interventions for adolescents involved with gangs should include a supportive peer-group component. This type of intervention would fulfill the need of the individual to be supported by a peer-group while also providing contact with peers who have prosocial attitudes. GRASP is a structured peer-group intervention program for adolescents who are involved with gangs (Hritz & Gabow, 1997). These adolescents are introduced to former gang members who left the gang lifestyle. Current gang members' norms and values are challenged by these former gang members. A pilot study with 37 individuals using self-administered pre and post questionnaires found that the peer intervention led to increases in school involvement and employment, and decreases in gang membership and delinquent behaviors. This perhaps indicates that the peer intervention lead to socializing the adolescent away from gang involvement associated behaviors.

A similar program, B.U.I.L.D. (Building Urban Involvement through Leadership Development), uses a peer approach to educate youth who are at-risk for becoming involved with gangs (Leonard & Rhodes, 1989). The program is school-based and is led by former gang members. The former gang members teach the students the characteristics of gangs, how they recruit individuals for membership, and the violence that gangs can cause. The former gang members were found to be able to create norms, values, and expectations of what youth might face when being recruiting to join a gang, and thus create a higher resistance to joining a gang. Peer reviewed findings from this study indicated that participants in the treatment group were less likely⁴ to join a gang⁵ than the control group during the year the program took place (Thompson & Jason, 1998). B.U.I.L.D, like GRASP, is a demonstration of how peers can inform one another through their prior experiences about the negative impact of adolescent gang membership.

Research on peer intervention programs suggests that interaction with positive peers can increase protective factors available in the peer domain and provide access to a peer socialization source whose norms and behaviors are more prosocial in nature. Cross-age peer mentoring programs have the potential to act as peer intervention programs by providing at-risk adolescents with access to a peer group that is not associated with increased rates of delinquency and can support the individual's positive development.

⁴ Findings were not statistically significant.

⁵ The treatment group had one participant out of seventy-three join a gang and the control group had four out of forty-three join a gang during the year that the program took place.

CHAPTER IV

Literature Review on Youth Mentoring Programs

This section provides a brief overview of mentoring, a definition and some key findings as they relate to the field of mentoring and my dissertation research. Key articles were selected that provide findings on the effectiveness of mentoring, highlight best practices, and describe the importance of a quality mentoring relationship.

Definition

Brofenbrenner (cited in Hamilton & Hamilton, 2004) describes a mentor as:

...an older, more experienced person who seeks to further the development of character and competence in a younger person by guiding the latter in acquiring mastery of progressively more complex skills and tasks in which the mentor is already proficient.

The guidance is accomplished through demonstration, instruction, challenge, and encouragement on a more or less regular basis over an extended period of time. In the course of this process, the mentor and the young person develop a special bond of mutual commitment. In addition, the young person's relationship to the mentor takes on an emotional character of respect, loyalty, and identification.

This definition highlights several key points in detailing the mentoring process. The mentoring relationship is designed to develop the mentee through the experiences of the mentor. The mentor is by design older or, in the case of peer mentoring situations, more experienced than the mentee. Mentors share lessons gained from their experience, provide guidance, and can create an emotional bond in an effort to instigate positive change or the determined outcome as

designed by the mentoring program (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Traditionally these relationships are one-on-one and occur either at a community site or are school-based.

Research indicates that that the efficacy of participation in a mentoring program is mixed. Mentoring programs are not always successful and, in fact, can harm the youth depending on the nature of the mentoring relationship (Baker & Maguire, 2005). Harmful effects can include decreases in self-worth, self-esteem, and perceived academic competence (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Program effects are often small and limited. Research methodologies need improvement, and expectations of mentoring as a quick and easy solution need to be tempered. Mentoring does have an important place in the lives of today's youth, as youth continue to have less access to positive adults (Larson & Wilson, 2004). Mentoring programs can provide that access and, in the case of peer and cross-age peer mentoring programs, access to a positive and prosocial peer.

The Impact of Mentoring Programs on Youth

DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper (2002) performed a meta-analysis reviewing empirical studies on youth mentoring programs. The study focused on one-on-one mentoring between an older adult and a younger youth. Peer mentoring/tutoring, cross-age peer mentoring, and programs that used teenage mentors and younger children were not considered because of the smaller age differences between mentor and mentee, and because these types of programs generally do not match an adult with a younger youth. DuBois et al. (2002) found small but positive effects (.13) for emotional/psychological well-being, problem or high-risk behavior, social competence, academic/educational, and career/employment from participating in mentoring programs. They also found that there was not one single feature of the programs that was responsible for the effects, but instead the use of several practices or best practices emerged.

They included ongoing training for mentors, structured activities, expectations for frequency of contact, support/involvement of parents, monitoring program implementation, and support for mentoring relationship. Recommendations for improving programs included focusing on development/support of the mentoring relationships of which only 23% of the studies provided ongoing support for the relationship once the program had begun.

Within the DuBois et al. (2002) meta-analysis is a study conducted by Rhodes (2002) on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs. This study included 1,138 youth in eight programs. This study is often considered one of the more important studies on youth mentoring due to the large sample and the use of randomly assigned treatment and control groups. At the conclusion of the study, 78% of the treatment group had been matched with a mentor with the average length of the relationship lasting for 11 months. Findings indicated that after 18 months the treatment and control groups both showed decreases in academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and relationship quality over the 18 month period. However, higher levels of functioning were also reported that included decreases in the frequency of classes' skipped, lower levels of substance use, less physical aggression, increased scholastic competence and grades, and more positive parent and peer relationships.

Effect size was measured for both pre-program versus post-program estimates (.02), and post-program differences between participants in the treatment group versus the control group (.05), indicated a negligible impact. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) looked more closely at the Big Brothers/Big Sisters data comparing the duration of mentoring relationships to mentoring effects. They found harmful effects for relationships that were terminated within the first 3 months. Negative effects included declines in global self-worth (positive/negative feelings about

themselves) and perceived scholastic competence. Conversely, relationships that lasted 12 months or longer reported significant increase in self-worth, perceived social acceptance, perceived scholastic competence, parental relationship quality, school value, and decrease in drug and alcohol use.

Grossman and Rhodes (2002) suggest that for mentoring programs to be successful a quality relationship needs to be developed and be sustained for at least six months and upwards of one year. This finding supports insights from primary socialization theory, which states that strong bonds are needed for the individual to normalize the behavior of the socialization source, in this case the mentor. School-based mentoring relationships are shorter in duration, generally lasting no longer than the school year. Rhodes (2002) commented on this, remarking that mentees in short-term programs, such as school-based mentoring programs, enter with different expectations than longer term programs. Mentees come into the program understanding that the relationship most likely will end at the conclusion of the school year and are prepared for this, unlike in community-based mentoring relationships where there is not generally a set endpoint of the relationship.

Rhodes (2008) reviewed findings from eight comprehensive youth mentoring reviews and four meta-analyses on the effectiveness of youth mentoring. Findings indicated mixed results similar to the Dubois et al. (2002) meta-analysis. There were several findings of no effects to negative effects, with several instances of effects eroding to non-significance within a few months after the treatment ended. However, similar to Grossman and Rhodes's (2002) findings, mentees who experienced a longer quality relationship received larger benefits than those who were in shorter or weaker relationships.

Features of quality mentoring relationships.

The previous section highlights that a quality relationship is needed for youth mentoring to be effective, but what exactly is a quality relationship? Nakkula and Harris (2005) identified several internal and external indicators to measure the quality of mentoring relationships (See Appendix E and F for a complete list along with descriptions of the indicators used in this study). Internal indicators are constructs that describe what is occurring within the mentoring relationship and/or describe the mentoring relationship. Examples include: perceived support from the mentor to the mentee, mentor/mentee engagement in the mentoring activities, mentor/mentee conversation/sharing, mentor/mentee feelings of closeness, and current/historic meeting frequency and intensity.

External indicators are environmental supports that help develop the mentoring relationship. Examples of external indicators are: program supervision, mentor training and support, structured activities, and parent/guardian engagement. The external indicators highlight best practices for mentoring programs which have been shown to support the development of quality mentoring relationships (Dubois et al., 2002).

Cross-Age Peer Mentoring

The mentoring program studied was a cross-age peer mentoring program for youth who are at-risk of failing and/or dropping out of school and adolescent gang involvement. Cross-age peer mentoring is very similar to a traditional mentoring relationship; the significant difference is the age of the mentor in comparison to the mentee. The mentor is typically a high school student who is at least two years older than the mentee (Karcher, 2007). Other important features of a cross-age peer mentoring program are the use of a curriculum to structure the mentoring match, a

duration of at least ten meetings, and program goals that are not focused specifically on problem reduction.

Relationship features.

As stated in the primary socialization theory, a strong bond is needed for the socialization source (in this case the mentoring program and the mentor) to impact the norms/values of the individual. This continues to be true of the relationship needed in cross-age peer mentoring programs for positive changes to occur within the mentee. Similar to adult-youth mentoring, cross-age peer mentoring creates a hierarchical relationship between the mentor and mentee. The mentor, by circumstances of age and experience, assumes a leadership and/or position of responsibility within this relationship. Many of the same outcome goals, including developing a strong interpersonal relationship between mentor and mentee, are still present, but the underlying age difference is diminished.

Cross-Age peer mentoring activities.

Cross-age mentoring programs' curricula have not been thoroughly detailed in the majority of studies, and quite often it can only be inferred by looking at program goals and/or the findings. What has been reported includes the use of various ice-breaking games, academic foci, physical/recreation activities, board games, and general talking about the mentors and mentees likes and dislikes, and any other current topics that are of interest to both parties (Barton-Arwood, Jolivette, & Massey, 2000; Burrell, Wood, Pikes, & Holliday, 2001; Karcher 2007; O'Donnell & Michalak, 1997; Pyatt, 2002). Curricula that have been mentioned have been based on peer programs such as Karcher's (2008) CAMP program which promotes connectedness to self, peers, parents, school, and society. There is a need for more in-depth curriculum

descriptions, especially for successful cross-age peer mentoring programs. This study attempts to add to this knowledge base, by looking comprehensively at the curriculum used by the YESS Institute.

Cross-Age peer mentoring findings.

Cross-age peer mentoring is a relatively new field of research with few analyses of its processes to date. Peer reviewed findings using pre and post randomized experimental designs with equivalent comparison groups have indicated increased academic achievement (Karcher, 2005; Karcher, 2008; Karcher, 2009) and decreases in violence and aggressive behaviors (Sheehan, DiCara, LeBaily, and Christoffel, 1999). Peer-reviewed findings without a randomized experimental design or comparison group have indicated gains in confidence and self-esteem (Dearden, 1998). Non-peer reviewed findings have demonstrated increases in connectedness to school, the future, and parents (Karcher, Davis & Powell, 2002) and increases in responsible school behaviors and decreases in problem behaviors (Noll, 1997). Overall research findings indicate that cross-age peer mentoring is beneficial in developing school accepted behaviors and to provide guidance, social support, and academic assistance to the mentees (Karcher, 2008).

Summary

Adult-Youth mentoring programs have shown mixed results. For most studies the positive effects from participation are small and in some cases negative. Current research highlights the importance of a quality mentoring relationship for programs to show positive effects. Cross-age mentoring programs represent a field of youth mentoring that is relatively new in terms of empirical studies. However, the research to date has shown the potential for positive effects for these types of mentoring programs.

CHAPTER V

Methods

The methods detailed in this section were designed to help answer the three research questions. In the following sections, I describe the research site, provide a brief overview of the YESS (Youth Empowerment Student Services) Institute's mentoring program, discuss the role of the researcher, and describe the study participants. I conclude this section with a description of the data collection procedures and my data analysis approach.

Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. How does the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program seek to promote protective factor(s)?
 - Through its curriculum?
 - Through its intended relationships between the mentor and mentee?
 - Through its official connections to the school (e.g., attendance policies, working with the school advocate, parent support)?
2. What are the characteristics of the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring relationships?
 - What relationship features develop between the mentors and mentees?
 - What features are found within the mentoring relationships?
 - How does the mentoring pair and/or mentoring relationship act/not act as a socialization source and/or peer cluster?
3. How do the mentees change over the course of the year?

- Are there changes in the mentees' school performance as indicated by grade point average, frequency/severity of behavior referrals, and/or attendance?
- Are there changes in the mentees' school-connectedness and/or pro-school behaviors?
- Are there changes in the mentees' level of emotional intelligence (comparison of pre- and post- measures)?
- Are there changes in the mentees' gang involvement attitudes (comparison of pre- and post- measures)?
- What school practices did mentees learn from their mentors and/or from the mentoring program?

Research Setting

The setting for this dissertation study is Abraham Lincoln High School, which is located in Denver, Colorado. The Denver Public Schools for the 2010-2011 school-year had a total enrollment of 79,423 students of which 58.4% were of Hispanic descent, 19.8% White, 14.6% Black, 3.3% Asian, 3.1% other, and 0.7% American Indian (DPS, 2011). Other important demographic information to note includes: 72.49% of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch, 34% were English language learners, and 38% students were Spanish speakers.

Abraham Lincoln High School is located in Southwest Denver. The total enrollment for the 2010-2011 school-year was 1,930 students of which 86.47% were of Hispanic descent, 96.1% students were on free or reduced lunch, and 34.7% were English language learners (DPS, 2011). The cross-age peer mentoring program studied occurred after school twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for 45 minutes. The Tuesday sessions were designed for academic

tutoring and the Thursday session focused on developing the mentee's socio-emotional intelligence.

Overview of the mentoring program.

The YESS Institute, a Denver non-profit, oversaw the mentoring program under study. The mentoring program used a socio-emotional curriculum that addressed the personal and social competencies needed to be successful in school and life such as: self-confidence, goal setting, achievement, caring about others, and identifying/understanding support systems and barriers. The YESS Institute targeted students who lived in high-poverty situation, middle/high-school-aged students identified as at-risk for dropping out of school, youth with chronic attendance problems, youth who engaged in risky behavior and/or were considering gang membership, and/or youth who were failing multiple classes in school during their freshman year. The mentoring programs used by the YESS Institute focused on school-based cross-age peer mentoring because they believed that this form of mentoring allowed the relationship between mentor-mentee to develop faster than an adult-youth model.

The socio-emotional curriculum was designed to strengthen individual protective factors by increasing the individual's ability to respond to stressful situations by positively identifying and reacting to their emotions (See Appendices J and K for a timeline and description of the curriculum activities). Components of the curriculum were designed to increase the individual's self-esteem, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, and to successfully implement goal-planning strategies. Activities were designed for the mentor and mentee to work together on specific socio-emotional

concepts; with the mentor sharing previous experiences to inform the mentee how they handled similar situations the mentees were facing.

The YESS Institute's mentoring program started in Abraham Lincoln High School during the 2006-2007 school year. Throughout this time, the high school has been receptive to the mentoring program. This most notably occurs through the support it provides the program. This included: providing the space for the mentoring program, access to the students' school performance data, and allowing a school staff member to assist with the coordination of the program. The program also had a positive reputation within the high school as being effective with lower performing students. Grisela, a peer mentor, commented on this, "...the teachers I've talked to, they feel that overall it helps the student[s]. It gives them [mentees] more motivation to go after school and get help, things like that...that's something teachers love to see."

Study Participants

The mentors, high school juniors and seniors, were matched with freshman and sophomore students for one-on-one mentoring sessions. The 2010-2011 had a total of 17 mentors and 24 mentees. 11 of the mentees left the mentoring program over the course of the program year. Nine of these mentees transferred to an alternative high school located within the same building, and two transferred to alternative programs outside of the building. The high number of mentees leaving the program resulted in only six mentoring pairs that meet consistently throughout the program year. I invited three mentoring pairs from the six consistent pairs to be included as case studies. The mentees invited to participate in this study were Ivan, Jorge, and Sam. The mentors invited were Darcy, Beth, and Ernie.

Mentees.

The mentees were students who have been identified by the school liaison, YESS program staff, and school counselors as students at risk of dropping out of school and/or joining a gang. The school liaison used a combination of five different criteria to identify these students. These included: students who repeated the ninth grade, student attendance review board evaluations from feeder middle schools, negative behavioral/academic transcripts from another middle or high school, students who missed 25% or more classes during the first school quarter, and students who had a high rate of behavioral referrals in the first school quarter (Kriekels⁶, 2008).

The mentees that remained for the duration of the program consisted of six freshmen, seven sophomores for a total of thirteen students. Eleven were males and two were females. All seven of the sophomores began the year without enough credits to qualify as sophomores, but at the end of the year all qualified as sophomores. All mentees were of Latino/Hispanic descent and qualified for free or reduced lunch. Additionally, all the mentees entered the program with lower than 70% school attendance and a GPA that ranged from 0.25 to 1.0. At the end of the 2010-2011 school-year all mentees had a school attendance rate of 75% or above. Mentees who attended 75% of the program sessions had a GPA of 1.4 and a school attendance rate of 92%.

Mentors.

The mentors were juniors and/or seniors within the same high school who were identified as students who could be potentially good role models. They were identified based on the following criteria: a 2.4 GPA or higher, lack of behavior referrals, and 80% attendance rate or

⁶ Chris Kriekels is the founder of the YESS Institute and the developer of the mentoring program and its curriculum.

higher. The YESS program coordinator interviewed each potential mentor to determine if the students were committed to helping others, were willing to learn leadership skills, wanted to apply learned leadership skills, understood the commitment to the mentoring program and his or her mentee, and were a positive role model (Kriekels, 2008). This process aimed to ensure that the mentors became positive role models to the mentees and would regularly attend the twice a week sessions.

The YESS Institute mentoring program participants consisted of 17 mentors: four sophomores, five juniors, and eight seniors. There were five males and 12 females. The mentors were all of Latino/Hispanic descent and qualified for free or reduced lunch. All of the seniors in the program were admitted to college the following year. The GPA of the group was 3.1 with the lowest being 2.4 and the highest at 4.2. The mentors had a 96% school attendance rate and an 85% program attendance rate.

Program staff.

The program staff consisted of a program founder, program coordinator, and school liaison. Chris, the program's founder, was responsible for the overall design of the program including the peer mentoring model, the program curriculum, and the mentor training. The program coordinator, Lisa, was responsible for the daily operations of the mentoring program, such as developing the curriculum, leading the mentoring sessions, keeping attendance, and matching mentor and mentee. The school liaison, Dennis, provided support to the program coordinator through his connections to the school (as an employee) and with the students (working with freshmen who are at-risk of failing and/or dropping out of school). The program

coordinator and school liaison were responsible for the operations of the mentoring program and are included in this study.

Consent of Participants

The participants for this study were high school students and were 18 years old and younger. To obtain the participant's assent and the parent's consent, I spoke with each potential participant and contacted their parents detailing the goal of this research project, his or her potential involvement in the study, and the data I would be collecting. This involvement did not only include the data collected, but also the possible invasion of privacy and potential embarrassment and/or discomfort. Potential participants and parents were informed that participation is voluntary, and of the participant's right to withdraw at any time. The purpose of the dissertation was discussed with the participants along with the procedures for data collection. Participants and parents were made aware of any potential risks, discomforts, and benefits from participation. Consent forms were made available in both English and Spanish versions. If needed the principal researcher and program staff were available to help parents understand both the English and Spanish consent forms. Informed consent from parents and participants was obtained before any data was collected. This included observations, audio recordings, interviews, and surveys.

Ethics.

Each participant was made aware that participation in this project was voluntary, he or she may withdraw from the study at any time, and he or she may chose not to be audio recorded at any time during their involvement in the study. The participants were informed of the University of Colorado at Boulder Internal Review Board policies to the procedures of audio

recording and sensitive information that might be obtained through this process. Exceptions to promise of confidentiality appeared in parent permission form. The participants were made aware that of the use of pseudonyms, every effort will be made to protect their anonymity, and all data collected is stored securely.

It was possible that conversations could⁷ include topics concerning but not limited to gang violence, the sale and use of drugs, violence, and physical/emotional abuse. Each participant was informed prior to their involvement and again before each interview that this was not the focus of the study. If the participant needed to speak to someone he or she was directed to the appropriate school staff personal. Participants were notified that if these topics and/or similar topics were discussed that this information may have to be released to the proper authorities. If these topics were discussed during the interview process and/or during the mentoring sessions the participant was immediately informed that this is not the focus of the study, the participant was asked if they needed to speak to the appropriate school personal, and the audio recording and/or interview was stopped if necessary.

Researcher Role

I have served as a research assistant for the YESS Institute for the last five years. During this time, I evaluated previous mentoring programs at this site, developed curriculum for the YESS Institute's mentoring programs⁸, and volunteered as a mentor. My role as researcher in this project was that of a nonparticipant observer. That is, I limited myself to observing the mentoring program, conducting interviews and surveys, and collecting school performance data.

⁷ The audio recorded conversations did not include any reference to these topics.

⁸ I have not assisted with the development of this program's curriculum.

Data Collection

Five methods of data collection were used in this study. The data collection strategies included (1) observing the mentoring program; (2) interviewing both mentors and mentees; (3) surveying both mentors and mentees; (4) gathering school performance data including attendance, grades, and behavioral referrals for the current school year; and (5) collecting artifacts such as the socio-emotional curriculum and completed work from the mentoring program.

Observation of the mentoring program.

The mentoring program was observed during each of the mentoring sessions. The program activities included academic and socio-emotional activities. I analyzed the curriculum activities to determine the purpose of these activities, how students' engage with the activities, how the curriculum activities promote protective factors, supported the development of the mentoring relationship, and created change within the mentees. The curriculum activities were included into the narrative to better describe the mentoring process.

Field notes documented the verbal and non-verbal internal and external indicators noted earlier (See Appendices E and F for a description of the internal and external indicators). Positive and negative examples of each indicator were documented. For example: mentor and mentee engagement and non-engagement in mentoring activities, sharing/lack of sharing, structured and non-structured activities, and effective/non-effective levels of program supervision.

The mentoring pairs were audio recorded to capture the language used during the mentoring sessions. The device was placed in a nearby location to record each of the three mentoring pairs separately. The audio recordings were analyzed for internal and external

indicators. These recordings provided coverage for the conversations that were missed, due to both limited coverage from only one researcher (myself) and in the difficulty in accurately recording the participants' conversations. The room in which the mentoring program took place was often loud, and it was difficult to fully hear and/or understand the participants.

The audio recordings did not capture any conversations that were illegal and/or violent in nature. All information gained from the audio recordings is confidential and pseudonyms were used. Recordings are kept in a locked drawer at the home of the primary researcher.

Together, the field notes and audio recordings were analyzed for internal and external indicators mentioned previously. Close attention was used to determine how the relationship developed over time and to any changes in use of internal and external indicators. As themes and patterns emerged in the data, additional codes were developed.

Interviews with mentors and mentees.

Mentees and mentors were invited to take part in three interviews to discuss their experiences with the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program. The interviews occurred at the start, halfway point, and at the conclusion of the program. The interview items were developed to reflect the three research questions, and to allow the participants to describe their experiences, whether positive, negative, and neutral, as mentor or mentee in the mentoring program. The questions were open ended to allow the interviewees to fully express their experiences. Open-ended questions allowed for the exploration of themes as they developed within the interview. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed for accuracy. Examples of research prompts included:

- How has your mentor provided support to you in the mentoring program?

- How/Do you feel cared for by your mentor?
- How has the program curriculum helped you within the classroom and/or other situations?

Survey data collection.

Two surveys were used to supplement the examination of the mentoring program and the participants' mentoring relationships. Mentees took pre and post surveys to measure both emotional intelligence and gang involvement attitudes. These surveys were compared and used in connection with the other collected data to provide a more elaborate description of the case study participants with emphasis on developed connections with protective factors.

The emotional intelligence survey used was BarOn's Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version. The survey measured the current level of emotional and social functioning in children and adolescents. It is designed to measure five dimensions of emotional intelligence: intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and total EQ (See Appendix H for a description of the BarOn survey scales).

The intrapersonal scale is designed to measure the individuals' ability to understand their own emotions (BarOn & Parker, 2000). Adolescents who possess this trait are able express and communicate their feelings and needs effectively with others. The interpersonal scale measured the individual's ability to understand other people's emotions. This trait corresponded with the ability to be a good listener and to be able to understand and appreciate the feelings of others.

The adaptability dimension measured the individual's ability to handle change in the environment. Adolescents with this trait tend to be characterized as flexible, realistic, and effective in managing change. The stress management scale measured how the individual

handles stressful or complicated situations. This trait measures the adolescent's ability to handle stressful situations in a calm manner, and their ability to work well under pressure. Total EQ measured the individual's total score from all the scales. This score corresponds with the individual's ability to effectively deal with life's daily demands, and higher scores corresponded to generally happy individuals.

I developed the gang involvement survey (Smith, 2007) to measure the individual's current attitude towards gang involvement. It was designed to measure the individual's identity, deviance level, and social commitment to gangs. Both surveys were designed to measure the individual's current emotional intelligence and gang involvement levels to provide a more accurate picture of the individual's current belief system.

School data collection.

I collected 2010-2011 school performance data for the mentees. The school performance data consisted of the participants' grade point average, attendance, and number behavior referrals.

Artifact data collection.

I collected the lesson plans from each of the mentoring sessions, training materials, and any rules/guidelines that were provided to the mentor and/or mentee. The program curriculum was not completely developed before the beginning of 2010-2011 program year. Therefore, I collected the specific curriculum activities as they occurred within the program year and not prior to the start of the program (See Appendices J and K for the curriculum timeline and a description of each activity).

Other lesson plans or curriculum materials were collected as relevant to the research questions. The lesson plans assisted in developing a narrative of the structured activities that occurred within the mentoring program. The attendance log was also collected for both mentors and mentees.

Approach to Data Analysis

I developed three case studies to illuminate the characteristics of cross-age peer mentoring relationships, to describe the quality level⁹ of these relationships, to describe the differences in quality levels of the three mentoring relationships, and to determine what/if any changes occurred within the participants. Case studies allowed for a deeper examination of the mentoring process than other methodical approaches. Through this methodology, I was able to investigate and document how mentoring occurs, what different forms it takes, how it evolves over the course of the program year, and provide recommendations on how to improve the mentoring process. The collection of data from multiple sources combined with the case study approach allowed for a systematic analysis of the cross-age peer mentoring process.

The three case study mentoring relationships were: Darcy and Ivan (high quality relationship), Beth and Jorge (medium quality relationship), and Ernie and Sam (low quality relationship). The three mentoring pairs were observed, and their meetings were audio recorded. This was the foundation of the data collected for the study. The participants were also interviewed to gain their perspective of the mentoring program and their mentoring relationship. These two data sources assisted in determining the quality level of the mentoring relationship.

⁹ How I will determine the quality level of the mentoring relationship is explained in the section, *Developing a Case Study*

Observational and interview data was compared to the emotional intelligence survey, gang involvement survey, school performance data, and collected artifacts to determine what (if any) changes occurred within the participants. This approach allowed the data to be triangulated from several different sources to answer the research questions in greater detail, providing a fuller description of the mentoring process, and the potential impact it has on the mentee.

Two techniques, pattern-matching and chronological sequencing, were used to develop the narrative of the three case studies (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Pattern matching allowed empirical based patterns to be compared with predicted patterns. The predicted pattern¹⁰ was a quality mentoring relationship was needed to create positive change in the mentee and to increase the mentee's relationship with protective factors. A similar pattern between the empirical pattern and predicted pattern strengthened this hypothesis. If the empirical pattern did not match the predicted pattern the initial hypothesis was questioned.

A different empirical pattern was developed for each of the three case studies. The observation and interview data was used to develop a narrative of the mentoring pairs' relationships, and how the relationship quality level supported or did not support positive change within the mentee and his or her relationship with protective factors. Once the narrative was developed it was compared to the predicted pattern to draw conclusions on the importance of the quality level of the mentoring relationship.

The second technique, chronological sequencing, describes how I initially analyzed the findings. I developed a narrative that described how the mentoring relationship changed over the

¹⁰ The other two hypotheses based on the quality of mentoring relationship are: A medium quality mentoring relationship will produce little to no change within the mentee and his or her relationship with protective factors. A low quality mentoring relationship will produce no change and could potentially result in negative change; the mentee will not increase his or her relationship with protective factors.

course of the program year. The design of this study allowed for a close examination at three time points (beginning, middle, and end of the program) in the evolution of the program using different data sources (observations, interviews, surveys¹¹, and school performance data). During each of these time points the collected data was analyzed to describe the current mentoring relationship, noting how it developed from the start of the program to the particular time point.

Developing a case study.

Participants were selected from the mentoring program's pool of mentees and mentors for each of the three mentoring quality levels¹² to comprise the three case studies. The first few mentoring sessions were observed and, along with the school liaison and program coordinator¹³, possible mentoring pairs were identified that were found to enact a high, medium, or low quality mentoring relationship. I used observations and interviews to determine the presence of the internal and external indicators described in the *Quality Mentoring Section*. The presence or absence of these indicators determined the quality level of the mentoring relationships. Initial observations occurred during the first four weeks¹⁴ of the program. I focused on determining which mentoring pairs demonstrated positive and negative examples of internal and external indicators in the categories of mentor/mentee engagement in program activities, mentor/mentee feelings of closeness, mentor/mentee intimacy, mentor/mentee support, and the frequency and intensity of the mentoring meetings.

¹¹ The survey data will only be collected at the start and the conclusion of the program.

¹² The mentoring relationships quality levels resembled a continuum and not fixed categories.

¹³ The school liaison and program coordinator received a description of the internal and external indicators and how to identify the presence or lack of presence of these indicators within the mentoring relationships.

¹⁴ This was a short amount of time to identify these participants, but I did not want to spend too much time and miss the initial development of the mentoring relationship.

The first indicator, engagement, describes how mentors and mentees participated in the program curriculum. Closeness, intimacy, and support describe the developed attitudes and beliefs of the mentors and/or mentees in their mentoring relationship. Frequency/intensity describes the frequency of attendance and length of duration of the mentoring meetings. The mentoring relationships were compared to one another and to the other mentoring relationships in the YESS Institute's mentoring program to determine the relationship quality level. Higher frequencies of positive internal and external indicators corresponded to a higher quality mentoring relationship category. For example, the high quality mentoring relationships were characterized by higher levels of engagement in program activities. This consisted of active dialogue between mentor and mentee during the duration of the program activity. The talk between mentor and mentee was program related, the frequency of off-topic conversations was low to nonexistent, and both mentor and mentee showed a desire to participate in the mentoring relationship throughout the duration of the activity.

Closeness, intimacy, and support in the high quality category coincided with the mentor and/or mentee demonstrating feelings of caring, sharing life experiences, and goal setting. Mentors supported the growth of the mentee through conversation and program activities, and mentors discussed behaviors that lead to success within the school. The appearances of these behaviors occurred at a higher level than the other quality levels and were present multiple times throughout the program activity. Also, the reverse of these behaviors were not witnessed during the program activity for the high quality mentoring category. This was particularly true of mentor's behaviors, who did not demonstrate behaviors that were uncaring, unauthentic, or did not support his or her mentee's growth. The frequency and intensity category for the high quality

mentoring relationship consisted of mentors and mentees arriving on time, staying for the duration of the activity and not leaving early, and attending the majority of the mentoring sessions.

The medium quality mentoring relationships were characterized by having qualities of the high quality category, but not at the same depth or frequency. The engagement category was characterized by participation in the program activity, but with limited discussion. Also, the discussion did not reach the personal significance or depth as the high level category. There were also more off-task behaviors and conversations.

This quality category did not develop the same level of closeness, intimacy, or support as the high category. Some aspects may have been equal to the high category, but overall the relationship did not develop to the same level. Examples included: less feelings and/or demonstrations of being cared for, less examples of sharing life experiences and/or reciprocal sharing, less overall mentor support, and less discussion of behaviors that lead to success within the school and/or the mentee's personal life. Negative examples from these categories were present more often than in the high quality mentoring relationships. Examples included: mentor and/or mentee feelings of disinterest in the relationship and lack of discussion of important topics. The frequency and intensity category was very similar to the high quality category with the only difference being the mentor and/or mentee not staying for the duration of the activity.

The low quality mentoring relationships demonstrated more negative examples from each of the categories than the previous two quality levels. This quality level at times did provide positive examples, but these types of examples occurred less frequently. The engagement category was characterized but high levels of non-participation, off-task behavior, and off-task

conversations by both mentor and mentee. Instances of closeness, intimacy, and support were lacking in this quality level with conversations between mentor and mentee rarely conveying a sense of caring, belonging, or sharing of personal experiences. The mentors did provide examples of support, but it was often fleeting and without follow through. Both mentors and mentees demonstrated negative examples in the frequency and intensity category by arriving late, not stay for the duration of the sessions, and frequently missing sessions.

The mentoring pairs that demonstrated the highest frequency of positive internal and external indicators were initially labeled as high quality mentoring relationships, and the mentoring pairs with the highest frequency of negative internal indicators were be labeled as low quality. Mentoring pairs that demonstrated a mixture of positive and negative internal and external indicators were labeled as medium quality. The mentoring pairs were interviewed to supplement the initial observational data and to assess the internal indicators that were harder to observe, such as perceived support from the mentor's and mentee's sense of closeness within the relationship. From this one mentoring pair for each of the three mentoring quality levels were selected that best represented a high¹⁵, medium, and low quality mentoring relationship. The program staff, along with the observation and interview data, were used to determine which mentoring pairs were most likely to fit these categories. Data was collected until a decision on the quality level of the mentoring relationship was determined.

¹⁵ I invited two other mentoring pairs to represent the high quality mentoring relationship before inviting Darcy and Ivan. Both mentoring pairs declined. These two mentoring relationships did not last for the entire program year due to the mentees transferring out of the high school.

I systemically searched the different data sources for disconfirming evidence to challenge the mentoring relationship's initial quality¹⁶ level. This included looking for examples of negative internal indicators for the high quality relationships, greater frequency of one but not both positive or negative internal indicators in the medium quality relationship, and examples of positive internal indicators in the low quality mentoring relationship. Specific disconfirming internal indicators I looked for in high quality mentoring relationship included: off-task engagement, missed program sessions, negative behaviors toward mentor or mentee, lack of discussion and/or sharing during program activities. I searched for disconfirming evidence such as frequent engagement in program activities, lack of distractions by mentor or mentee, sharing of personal information, low number of missed sessions, and arriving on-time for program activities in the low quality mentoring relationships.

The in-depth nature of a case study methodology along with the three different quality levels of the mentoring relationship was designed to demonstrate how the mentoring relationship developed over time, affected the use of protective factors, and if positive changes occurred within the mentee. Vignettes were developed for each case study to highlight the most salient characteristics of the mentoring relationship. It was the study's hypothesis, based on prior research from Dubois et al. (2002) and Rhodes (2008), that a quality mentoring relationship was needed to create positive change in the mentee's school performance data and promote the mentee's connection with protective factors. Analysis of these three types of mentoring relationships allowed for the description of the differences in the relationship features, and how these relationship features affected the answers to my research questions.

¹⁶ The quality level of the mentoring relationship was on a continuum and not a fixed category. I therefore expected instances of disconfirming evidence. What I sought from the disconfirming evidence was enough instances to where I would need to re-classify the mentoring relationship's quality level.

Observational data.

The observation data collected included field notes and audio recordings of the participants. The initial internal and external codes were developed to represent the previous research on developing quality mentoring relationships and best practices for program design features (Dubois & et al., 2002; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Karcher, 2007; Nakkula & Harris, 2005). The observations and audio recordings were coded based on these internal and external indicators using both positive and negative examples to develop a narrative of the mentoring relationships, how the relationships developed over time, and the YESS Institute's program design features that supported or hindered the development of the mentoring relationship. The program design features focused on best practices for program design and the unique peer mentoring model as described in the cross-age peer mentoring section.

Each observation was coded based on the internal and external indicators and any themes and/or codes that developed during this study. The text segments that represented these codes and/or themes during the initial field note review were identified and placed in categories based on these codes. The categories used developed a narrative of each mentoring pair describing the development of the mentoring relationships, the role of protective factors in the program, and any changes that occurred in the mentee from participation. With the audio recordings and interviews, the language of the participants was used in telling the story of their mentoring relationship.

An open coding strategy was implemented during the initial observations so as to not limit the coding on the internal and external indicators. As new codes and/or themes developed,

they were included in future observations while also referring back to previous observations and audio recordings to determine if these codes/themes were present.

The field notes and the initial coding were transcribed immediately following the observations. NVivo was used to organize the codes and themes. Using NVivo greatly assisted in comparing and/or contrasting the mentoring relationships engagement in program activities, conversations between mentor and mentee, and to compare the presence or absence of internal indicators between the three mentoring relationships.

Interviews.

The interviews were designed to provide the opportunity for both the mentors and mentees to describe their mentoring relationship and experience within the mentoring program. The interview questions' text was analyzed for both internal and external indicators and other codes/themes as they developed. This text represented internal and external indicators from the participant's point of view and helped further describe the developing relationship between mentor and mentee, experience with the enacted program and its protective factors, and the changes (if any) the program created within the mentee. The interview data was triangulated with the observational data, school performance data, and the pre and post survey data to further develop the case studies.

Surveys.

The curriculum of the mentoring program was designed to target the emotional intelligence areas that are linked to gang involvement in an effort to increase their levels, assuming that lower levels of emotional intelligence are linked with higher levels of gang involvement. The two surveys were analyzed to determine if there were changes from the pre to

post survey administration. The surveys were compared to the observational, interview, and school performance data to examine if the quality level of the mentoring relationship, the relationship with protective factors, and (potential) changes in school performance data corresponded to changes from pre to post measures.

School performance data.

The school performance data collected included grade point average, attendance, and behavioral reports. The school performance data was compared to the other data sources including the observational and interview data to inform the narrative of the quality of the mentoring relationship and the relationship with protective factors with any changes in school performance data.

Artifact review.

The lesson plans for the academic and socio-emotional activities were collected and reviewed with their potential to support the mentee's connection with protective factors in mind. Lesson plans were triangulated with the observation notes, audio recordings, and interview responses to support internal and external indicator codes. Specifically, how the lesson plans supported and/or hindered the use of protective factors, development of the mentoring relationship, and changes in youth through participation. The artifact review assisted in the description of the activity of mentoring, what happened during the mentoring sessions, and how this affected the development of the mentoring relationships. The description of the lesson plans were included in the narrative and the resulting observational field notes and audio recorded mentoring sessions to provide examples on how the participants engaged/didn't engage with the curriculum to develop their mentoring relationship and the use of protective factors.

Validity

To try and limit threats to validity, I kept a journal in which biases that may have developed were written down. A central concern that discussed in this journal was contributing undue positive change in the mentor and/or mentee to the mentoring program. To combat this, a log of positive findings was kept with other plausible explanations that were not program related. Comments on findings for the lower quality mentoring relationships¹⁷ were included in an effort to not dismiss potential positive findings that may contradict the labeling of the mentoring relationship as low quality.

I performed member checks with the program staff, mentors, and mentees to validate my interpretations of the observational data. During these sessions, I showed the participant a section of text that I had previously coded and asked for his or her interpretation and/or explanation of the event. Afterwards, I compared my interpretation to the participant's to determine the level of congruence. If my interpretation was inaccurate with the participant's, I recoded the event paying closer attention to the remarks of the participant and my own initial coding.

A complementary methods approach was used to systematically compare and/or contrast multiple sources of data. Through this approach I was able to confirm any positive effects that resulted from participation through several different data sources. Simply observing or collecting quantitative data could be misleading in determining the success of a program. Similarly, only using interview data would severely limit the narrative of the developing mentoring relationships. By only interviewing the participants, threats to validity by the respondents answering interview questions in a way they think the researcher and/or program staff would

¹⁷ This was particularly true for the mentee in the medium quality relationship. His behavior appeared to originally indicate a lower quality relationship. I reviewed the observational data and compared it to the other data sources to gain a better understanding of his perspective. His perspective will be discussed in greater detail in the Chapter 7.

benefit could develop. By triangulating the interview data with observational data and quantitative data, this study provides a better description of the mentoring relationships and answered the research questions in greater detail. This also allowed the data to be cross-referenced to determine its accuracy as a descriptive tool.

Summary

The research design for this dissertation project was intended to answer three research questions. I investigated YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program to determine how protective factors were promoted, the characteristics/features of the mentoring relationships found within the program, and to examine the potential changes that result from participation in the program. Three case studies consisting of one high, one medium, and one low quality mentoring relationship were created to answer these research questions. The following chapters describe the YESS Institute's program design and its impact on the mentoring relationships, the characteristics of the mentoring relationships, and how these relationships affect the mentee's connection with protective factors and improvements in school performance data.

CHAPTER VI

The YESS Institute Mentoring Program

The YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program matches peer mentors to act as role models to students that are currently struggling academically. Mentors are trained to model the beliefs, values, and behaviors aligned with school expectations. The working assumption is that the mentee will appropriate the attitudes and values of the mentor if their relationship is strong. I draw upon primary socialization theory (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998) and risk factor approaches (Thornberry et al., 2003) to examine the nuanced nature of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Primary socialization theory illuminates our understanding of the mentee's motivation in participating in a mentoring relationship. As described more fully in Chapter 2, the strength of the bond between the individual and the primary socialization, or in this case the mentor-mentee relationship, determines the effectiveness of the mentee's growth. Thus, a strong bond between mentor and mentee is thought to be a more effective mentoring relationship than a relationship with a weaker mentoring bond. Therefore, in considering the potential of a mentee's growth, consideration must be given to the strength of the mentoring relationship.

The risk factor perspective takes into account multiple and overlapping levels of risk factors in an individual's life that can increase the chances of an individual's vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes (Thornberry et al., 2003). Risk factors are any factors in an individual's life that can lead to negative development outcomes. Risk factors are present in multiple ecological domains. Conversely, protective factors in these same domains can serve as moderators or buffers against the exposure to risk and/or involvement in risk behaviors (Jessor,

1992). Protective factors such as involvement in school or, in the case of this study, participation in a mentoring program may lessen the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors as well as their adverse outcomes.

In this chapter, I discuss how the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program aimed to promote protective factors and develop the peer mentoring relationships through its program design. I will draw upon both primary socialization theory and the risk factor approach to understanding these complex social relationships. In the first section, I will describe the design features of the intended mentoring program. In the second section, I examine how the enacted program facilitated bonds between the mentor and mentee and the mentee's connection with protective factors. I conclude with a discussion on the tensions I found between the intended and enacted program.

The Intended/Ideal YESS Program Model

The YESS Program aims to prevent high school freshman from dropping out of school. Risk factors for dropping out of school include: low academic performance and/or expectations, a high-risk peer group, and non-involvement in extracurricular activities (Jessor, 1992). These risk factors can be mitigated through participation in a peer mentoring program that addresses these issues directly. The program introduces the mentee to a peer mentor who can use his or her personal relationship with the mentee to introduce attitudes toward school that could serve as protective factors for the mentee and promote school aligned behaviors. Examples of the type of the school protective factors that can be fostered include: valuing achievement, attending class, completing school work, and joining other school clubs and organizations. As per the design of

the YESS Institute, the development of a mentee's bond with school is intended to be facilitated by a YESS peer mentor.

Following from the tenets of a risk factor approach, the YESS Institute model could lessen the individual's chances of experiencing negative developmental outcomes because of their access and connection to protective factors in several domains (Thornberry et al., 2003). The negative developmental outcomes most relevant to this study and the YESS Institute are exposure to adolescent gangs and dropping and/or failing out of school. The primary focus of the program is to foster and strengthen the mentor-mentee personal relationship and through this relationship increase the mentee's connection to protective factors.

I identified several internal and external indicators in the YESS Institute's program design that aimed to promote protective factors (See Appendices E and F for a list and description of the internal and external indicators used in this study). Internal indicators describe what is happening within the mentoring relationships. Examples include: mentor/mentee engagement in program activities and mentor/mentee sharing of personal and/or past experiences. External indicators describe program design features that support the development of the mentoring relationship. Examples of this type of indicator include: staff supervision, mentor training, and use of a program curriculum. The peer mentoring model, the method of training mentors, and the program curriculum were all program design features that helped the mentee connect with protective factors. In the following sections I will discuss how these features aimed to strengthen the mentoring relationships and increase the mentees' access to and development of protective factors.

YESS Institute's peer mentoring model.

The peer mentoring model intended to develop a strong connection between the mentor and mentee. The use of a peer instead of an adult allowed the mentor to potentially act as a peer cluster. During adolescence, peer clusters, along with family and the school, are the most influential socialization sources. This influence is the result of the individual developing a strong relationship and/or bond with socialization source. And in turn, it is this bond that allows the socialization source, a same-age peer in this case, to communicate his/her norms to the individual.

The mentees in this study appeared to have weak relationships and/or bonds with the school. This claim is based on the mentee's academic and behavioral performance. A weak bond, from the view of primary socialization theory, limits the influence a socialization source can have and in turn allows the other socialization sources to have a greater impact. In this study, I focused on protective factors in the individual, peer, and school domain and did not examine family relationships that the mentee might have. According to primary socialization theory, peer relationships have been found to be the most important during adolescence for learning behaviors when the individual's bond with the school and/or family is weak. As such, I focused my efforts on peer relationships.

The mentoring program's peer model offers a potential peer cluster to the mentee. The program also provides the space and activities that allow the mentor to communicate his or her behaviors and social norms. These norms assist the mentees' connection to protective factors. For example, during an academic session the mentor may share a story on how he or she was successful in a class with a difficult teacher. The mentor can then share his or her strategies

(norms) for dealing with a difficult teacher. The mentee may incorporate aspects of these strategies in the future when experiencing conflict with a teacher. This could potentially assist the mentee in conversing more effectively than if he or she had not discussed the strategies used by his or her mentor. Other examples of topics through which a mentor might communicate a pro-school attitude include: indicating the value of achieving in school, how to handle negative peer pressure, and how to plan for the future.

For this model to work, the mentor and mentee must develop a strong bond for the mentor to become a peer cluster. The YESS Institute's founder believes this peer model facilitates the mentoring relationship more efficiently than the more typical adult-youth model. He believes that the shared experiences and closer age range between mentor and mentee results in more effective and efficient relationship development. Gertrude, the peer leader and a former peer mentor, elaborated on the strength of this peer mentoring model:

Excerpt 1 – 5/3/11 Gertrude's Second Interview

- 1 That it's between people of the same age instead of as to an adult. You know
- 2 who's like ten years older mentoring a freshman. It's easier to relate to a mentor
- 3 that's around your age. Just because they're from the same generation. They come
- 4 from the same neighborhoods, listen to the same music. They've had the same
- 5 teachers, you know so forth. They grew up in the same environment it makes it so
- 6 much easier to relate to them, if you can do I can do it too. I had that teacher, yeah
- 7 she gave me trouble too so that means you can do it too.

A peer mentor might be able to develop a strong bond with a mentee based on the characteristics Gertrude highlighted in her quote. A peer mentor is closer in age and may likely, depending on

how the pairs are created, share similar school experiences and have more in common with a mentee than an adult mentor. These factors all help in the creation of a strong bond between the mentor and mentee.

Mentor training.

The YESS program required training for all mentors. The training occurred during the fourth period of the school day four weeks prior to the start of the program. This training consisted of discussing the qualities and steps required to become a successful mentor. Conversations centered on how to build trust between mentor and mentee, the importance of being a role model, and different scenarios the mentors might face. The trainings were specifically designed to develop strong mentoring relationships. Additional trainings occurred after the start of the program. These trainings provided the program coordinator an opportunity to talk with the mentors about their emerging mentoring relationships focusing on successes and challenges they were facing.

Mentors were required to sign a contract during the training sessions. It required mentors to commit to a full year of participation, be on time, and sit next to his or her mentee during sessions. These behaviors corresponded with best practices for mentor behaviors and relationship development as indicated in the literature. These practices, it has been reported, can lead to a quicker and more fully developed mentoring relationship (Karcher, 2005; Rhodes, 2008). This in turn can assist in creating positive changes (e.g., increases in school performance data and/or improved interactions and relationships with others) in the mentees' actions and attitudes through the mentoring relationship.

Mentors were also provided with information and coaching as to how to assist mentees during the academic sessions and the socio-emotional activities. The mentee could use his or her time more effectively during the program sessions to complete academic work and/or engage in the socio-emotional activities through better mentor assistance. In addition, expectations for mentor's attitudes, and what was called leadership attitude, were discussed with the mentors. The leadership attitudes promoted included: being present, maintaining full attention on the mentee, taking initiative, and being positive. Leadership attitudes were meant to help the mentor focus on the mentee and limit any negative and/or distracting attitudes. The emphasis on positive leadership attitudes corresponds to best practices for youth mentoring relationship development (Rhodes, 2005).

In summary, the training sessions intended to help the mentors create a successful mentoring relationship with his or her mentee. When viewed through primary socialization theory, the trainings potentially increased the mentor's ability to act as peer cluster and/or socialization source to his or her mentee. The mentor, in order to become a socialization source, needed to develop a strong bond with his or her mentee. The practices promoted in the trainings aligned with the literature on developing youth mentoring relationships and prepared the mentors for future challenges he or she may face in the relationship. The underlying theme in most activities focused on how to develop trust within the relationship, and how to facilitate the development of the mentoring relationship. Overall, the training touched on several areas, as indicated above, that aligned with practices that researchers have found are most helpful for developing mentoring relationships.

Program curriculum.

The program curriculum was meant to extend over the course of the program year. The activities to be included in the curriculum were not predetermined before the start of the program year. The program coordinator selected activities on the following criteria, “I basically determined what I thought the students would enjoy first off. Then secondly...what I would feel comfortable facilitating.” The program coordinator’s ongoing selection of program activities prevented a review of the curriculum prior to the start of the program year. Therefore I include the specific curriculum activities in the *Enacted Program* section as the curriculum developed over the course of the program year. In this section, I describe the curriculum with focus on primary socialization theory, the risk factor approach, and the overall goals for the academic and socio-emotional sessions.

The YESS program curriculum aligns with perspectives on the impact of risk and protective factors and socialization theories in developing connections between peers. When analyzed through a primary socialization lens, the program curriculum assisted in creating a strong enough bond to allow norm transmission from mentor to mentee. This primarily occurred through relationship development activities. These activities introduced mentor to mentee and created opportunities for both to learn about one another and share personal information. These activities were the first steps in creating a bond between mentor and mentee. The activities that followed built upon these initial activities in an attempt to strengthen the developing mentoring relationship.

Viewed through a risk factor approach, the socio-emotional activities developed the mentees’ connection with protection factors aimed at lessening the impact of risk factors. The

activities introduced concepts that required the mentor and mentee to identify potential risk and protective factors in the mentee's life. Examples include: a mentee identifying negative peer pressure as a potential risk factor to accomplishing a long term goal. A protective factor example included: the mentor helping the mentee understand the importance of graduating from high school to achieve the mentee's desired career path.

The central activity in the socio-emotional curriculum was an overarching activity called the *Road to Success*. This was a multi-step activity intended to be completed during the program year. With the *Road to Success* curriculum program leaders sought¹⁸ to improve the mentees' self-awareness and understanding of internal and external obstacles. The curriculum also attempted to improve the mentee's connection with protective factors within the individual, peer, and school domains. The program activities asked mentees to identify a long-term goal, identify and discuss his or her strengths, milestones to accomplishing this goal, barriers and support systems that can either assist or hinder achieving this goal, and finally to design a poster board that represented his or her long-term goal (See Appendices J and K for the curriculum timeline and descriptions of the program activities).

The academic activities focused on helping mentees achieve better in school. The academic sessions required mentees to work with their mentors on homework and/or missing assignments. This functioned not only as a chance for the mentee to complete missing coursework, but also to promote connections with protective factors in the school domain by reengaging the mentees in school work. For example, Sam¹⁹ reported that these sessions helped, "Cause I was doing my homework in this the program...passing every class." These sessions

¹⁸ This is based on the review of the curriculum and interviews with the program staff.

¹⁹ The impact of these sessions on the three mentees will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

also provided an opportunity for the mentee to talk to his or her mentor about school related issues including the importance of attending and behavioral expectations within the classroom.

Program Design Viewed Through Primary Socialization and Risk Factor Approaches

This study is unique in that it explores how the mentoring bond and program activities can promote the mentee's connection with protective factors. Primary socialization theory can provide insight into how and/or why a mentee who participated in this mentoring program would begin to adopt practices encouraged by his or her mentor and the program. According to this theory, a strong bond is needed between the socialization source (i.e. the mentor) and the individual (i.e. the mentee) for norm transmission to occur. The YESS Institute sought to strengthen the mentoring relationships through several facets including: the peer mentoring model, mentor training, and curriculum activities.

The YESS mentoring program's peer mentoring model relies upon the shared experiences between the mentor and mentee in order for a strong relationship to be built. The working assumption is that similar background characteristics between mentor and mentee - such as their age, school, and/or community - would allow them to draw upon shared experiences. The program curriculum's structure allows the mentor and mentee to define and discuss the program concepts as they related to the mentee and/or the mentor's experiences. The intended goal of these conversations is for the mentee to identify potential connections with protective and/or risk factors in the curriculum activities, and based on these identifications learn how to use and/or avoid these factors. The peer mentoring model provides the mentee with a positive socialization source to teach behaviors that are aligned with school expectations.

A tenet of primary socialization theory is that the strength of the bond between mentor and mentee indicates whether the mentee will learn and/or use the behaviors of the mentor. The YESS program model facilitates this by engaging at-risk mentees with peers who have a similar breadth of experiences, but who have found ways to overcome them. This model is in contrast to adult-youth mentoring models in which an increased effort has to be placed on creating shared experiences, rather than on natural ones.

The risk factor approach can help one understand how the mentoring program uses its design features to help the mentee create change within his or her life. According to this perspective, cumulative risk or risk found in several different life domains increases the individual's chances that he or she will experience negative developmental outcomes (e.g., dropping out of school, illegal drug use, and/or committing a crime). One way to lessen the effects of risk is to increase the individual's connection with protective factors, and connecting the individual to protective factors in multiple life domains creates a stronger buffer against risk. Based on this, a program that can connect the individual to multiple protective factors in several different life domains can better potentially safeguard against negative developmental outcomes.

The YESS program intended to develop the individual's connection to protective factor across several different life domains. Most notably the socio-emotional curriculum intended to strengthen connections with protective factors in the individual, peer, and school domains. Protective factor concepts²⁰ found within the program curriculum included: self-management and self-awareness (an individual protective factor), personal assets (an individual protective factor), identifying support systems (individual, school, and peer protective factors), identifying potential

²⁰ The domain of the protective factor is in parenthesis.

barriers, (individual, school, and peer protective factors), and improving school related behaviors (individual and school protective factors).

Self-esteem and self-awareness act as protective factors by increasing the mentee's ability to use and understand his or her emotions and how his or her emotions affect relationships with other people. Protective factors focused on an individual's personal assets promote understanding of the mentee's abilities and how he or she can use these strengths in different and/or difficult situations. By identifying support systems and barriers, mentees can better recognize and/or locate resources to help in difficult situations or the cause of the difficulties he or she is facing. Improving school behavior acts as a protective factor by reconnecting the mentee to the school through improving school related behaviors. Examples of these behaviors include: valuing achievement, developing educational goals, attending class, and respecting teachers.

As described above, the YESS Institute's mentoring program employed several program features to develop their peer mentoring relationships. The program features are focused on creating a strong bond between the mentor and mentee – which has the biggest impact on the assimilation of a mentee (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). This strong bond is used by the program curriculum to teach the mentee the impact of risk factors on his or her life and how protective factors could lessen the impact of these risk factors.

The Enacted Program

The enacted program differed from the intended program design in several key areas. First, the program started later than originally planned²¹. This resulted in the removal of several

²¹ The program started later than normal due to confusion between the program coordinator and school liaison on their roles concerning the recruitment of mentors and mentees for the program.

curriculum activities due to the shortened program length. There were also differences between the intended mentor training and how mentors were actually trained. These differences, in my analysis, had a negative impact on the development of the mentoring relationships. On the other hand, the program introduced a peer leader to the program staff, which appeared to help develop mentor commitment to the program. In this section, I present my analysis of the YESS Institute's 2010-2011 program in order to consider how differences between design and enactment affected the development of the mentoring relationships.

A late start for developing relationships.

The usual start date of the program is mid-October however the 2010-2011 program was pushed back till late November. This late start had several effects. The late start pushed back the matching of the mentoring pairs resulting in fewer meetings before the winter break. The program coordinator noted that the mentoring pairs began to pick up momentum near the end of the first semester, but much of that momentum was lost over the winter break. The late start date also pushed back the start of the socio-emotional curriculum until the second semester resulting in the removal of several activities that were typically found in the curriculum.

The removal of program activities affected the mentee's connection to protective factors in two ways. The first was a decreased amount of time spent in the mentoring relationship and as a result, less time for the mentor to develop a strong bond with his or her mentee. Without a strong bond, it is less likely for mentoring relationship to be a successful intervention for the mentee (Darling, 2005). The second consequence was the mentee spent less time engaging in program activities designed to promote protective factors. The missed sessions resulted in lost

opportunities for mentees to develop his or her understanding of these concepts and how they were present or not present in his or her life.

Limited training for mentors created feelings of unpreparedness for engaging mentees.

The case study mentors reported mixed feelings on the training they received. Beth and Ernie, new mentors for the year, found the training to be largely ineffective and wanted more practical examples and scenarios on how to deal with difficult mentees. Beth stated the following based on what she would like to see in future trainings: “More practicing.....have different scenarios of like what could happen and how to deal with those situations.” Ernie reported a similar feeling, “I want it to be like this is how you do this, and this is how you do that. More ways of maintaining his (Sam’s) attention because he (Sam) gets easily distracted.”

Darcy and Gertrude, who had both been mentors in the program the year before, found the training helpful, and they believed it prepared them for the future curriculum activities. Darcy stated, “The training was just going over the things we would go over with the mentees but in our little groups. So we knew what to do with them.” Gertrude echoed a similar sentiment, “We did...kind of acting skills as in what we would do in certain scenarios and leadership skills and character building.” The activities described by Darcy and Gertrude align with best practices for mentor training (Nakkula & Harris, 2005; Weinberger; 2005). Notable topics discussed in the trainings included: strategies for engaging mentees, personal boundaries, and maintaining appropriate behavior within the relationship.

It is important to note that Darcy and Gertrude both had prior experience in the program. Darcy was previously a mentee, and Gertrude was a mentor the prior program year. This

additional experience most likely prepared Darcy and Gertrude for their upcoming mentoring relationships and expectations of the program.

Using a peer program leader to facilitate mentor-mentee relationships.

A unique feature of this program compared to past years was the addition of a peer leader to the program staff. Gertrude began the year as a mentor but after two unsuccessful matches²² was asked to be a peer leader. Gertrude was a mentor the previous year and was considered one of the strongest mentors in last year's program due to her commitment, leadership, and skill at developing relationships. After the two unsuccessful matches, Gertrude asked if she could assist other mentors with their mentees, and this eventually led to Gertrude facilitating the socio-emotional sessions. Gertrude described her new role in the mentoring program:

Excerpt 2 – 5/3/11 Gertrude Second Interview

8 My role in the program now is to basically mentor the mentors and mentor anyone
 9 who doesn't have a mentor; basically a leader for them. And to help them in
 10 anything they need and not just in mentoring. You know classes, advice, high
 11 school.

The added feature of the peer leader created a unique version of the peer mentoring model: a peer leading peer mentors.

In this role, Gertrude became responsible for introducing topics, explaining activities, and providing support and guidance to the mentoring pairs. The program coordinator remained present in the activities, but her role changed from the primary facilitator to providing support

²² The first mentee missed a significant amount of school after the first two mentoring meetings and dropped out of the program. The second mentee transferred to another school after two mentoring sessions. In both cases, I observed Grisela using best mentoring practices that aligned with high quality internal indicators.

and answering follow-up questions when and if needed. Gertrude's new role allowed the program coordinator to step back and rejoin the conversation when needed.

Gertrude's role was created to aid in the development of the mentoring relationships through strengthening the mentor's commitment to his or her mentoring relationship. She used her personal relationships to hold mentors accountable for their performance. Darcy describes Gertrude's role as to, "...make sure everyone's on task and doing good." If a mentor was struggling to interact with his or her mentee or not engaged with tasks, Gertrude would discuss with the mentor the program's expectations in an attempt to improve his or her performance. Thus possibly strengthening the mentoring relationship. A strengthened mentoring relationship potentially increased the norm transmission from mentor to mentee and increase the mentee's connection with protective factors in the peer, school, and individual domains.

Enacted curriculum.

Few studies to date have analyzed a cross-age mentoring program's curriculum and how it affects a mentoring relationship (Karcher, 2007; Karcher, 2008; O'Donnell & Michalak, 1997). This section details what I found observing the socio-emotional curriculum activities. As I mentioned previously, the curriculum was not fully developed prior to the start of the program year. This section describes the included activities and how these activities attempted to develop the mentoring relationships and/or the mentee's connection with protective factors. When possible I include the participant's perspective and/or excerpts that illustrate the enacted the program activity and/or what the mentees learned from participating.

Relationship development activities.

The first weeks of the YESS Institute's curriculum focused on developing the mentoring relationships and building a community among the participants. The *ROPES*, *Signatures*, *Interview*, and *Stand-Up* activities introduced the participants to one another, set behavioral and communication guidelines, and highlighted the individual and shared characteristics among the mentors and mentees. The outcomes of these activities corresponded to the initial developmental stages for youth mentoring relationships as described by Keller (2005). These activities helped facilitate a shared understanding between mentor and mentee that accelerated the development of the mentoring relationship allowing for deeper levels of conversation in the upcoming *Road to Success* curriculum.

Road to success curriculum.

The *Road to Success* asked mentees to identify a long-term goal. Through this curriculum, the mentee, with assistance from his or her mentor and the activity goals, identified protective and risk factors in the individual, peer, and school domains. The activities asked the mentee to identify and discuss his or her personal assets, potential milestones, and potential support systems and roadblocks to accomplishing his or her long-term goal. Next, I share how the curriculum activities promoted protective factors in the individual, peer, and school domains through the *Road to Success* curriculum activities.

Individual protective factors.

The *Road to Success* curriculum promoted individual protective factors in all of its activities. The activities instructed mentees to “examine his or her life” with help from a mentor. The activities facilitated understanding of the external and internal support systems and barriers

available for accomplishing or hindering a long-term goal. The long-term goal for most participants, including all three case-study mentees, was to graduate high school.

The first activity in the curriculum, *Assets*, highlighted this. The activity helped mentees realize the multitude of positive qualities they themselves have. The activity identified four categories of positive qualities individuals may have; those located in their hands, their head, their heart, and in their human relationships. The mentee worked with his or her mentor in identifying assets or strengths related to each of these four categories. For example, in regards to one's heart the mentee may identify he or she is able to empathize with others effectively. This was the first step in the curriculum to help mentees realize the strengths they possessed, and to increase individual protective factors such as self-esteem and the value of his or her own life. It also was an attempt to view the mentee positively and not from a deficit-perspective.

The activities that followed continued to help mentors and mentees identify strengths in the mentee's personal life, but also began to associate these strengths with the long-term goal of graduating high school. As part of the next activity, *What is Success?*, mentors and mentees needed defined success within four areas: the school, at home, with his or her friends, and in the future. The mentee examined his or her life within these domains to determine his or her level of desired success and the steps he or she needed to take to achieve this. Examples of success discussed by the three case study mentoring relationships included: get good grades, don't ditch classes, live in a nice house, have a family, get a good job, respect others, and be honest and trustworthy.

The next activity expanded on this by asking the mentee to identify three milestones he or she would need to accomplish to achieve his or her long-term goal. The milestone activity was

meant to help scaffold the mentee as he or she tried to accomplish this long-term goal. The activity asked the mentee to analyze his or her own life to determine what steps he or she needed to take to achieve a personal goal. The activity was an attempt to view the mentee positively and not in a deficit-perspective. An excerpt from Darcy and Ivan’s conversation helps to illustrate this:

Excerpt 3 – 3/24/11 *Milestone Activity*

- 12 D: What’s your success that you want to do in high school?
- 13 I: Getting A’s.
- 14 D: Ok, so what’s the first step that you could do to start that process?
- 15 I: Be focused...Get most work done, come to all classes.
- 16 D: What else can you do to get straight A’s?
- 17 I: For me...is get most work done, go to all classes, and...
- 18 D: What can you do to get most of your work done?
- 19 I: Come to program all the time. Do my work at home. And get help from others.

In this conversation Darcy helped Ivan to identify all the steps he could do to reach his defined success in school. Ivan indicated during the interview process that Darcy helped him realize that he needs to, “...come more often (to school). I need to get to all my classes and get most of my work done because if I don’t then I won’t pass.” In the audio recordings of the other two mentoring pairs I found similar conversations on behaviors that potentially would lead to school success.

The *Support Systems and Barriers* activity instructed the mentee to identify people who could assist or hinder the achievement of his or her stated long-term goal. The activity asked the

mentee to identify both supportive and non-supportive factors in his or her life and how these factors could affect his or her long-term goal. The activity started with the mentee identifying barriers such as a lazy attitude toward school work or negative peer influence, and then identifying support systems that could assist in overcoming these stated barriers. Through this activity mentees identified individual risk and protective actors that could assist or hinder his or her achievement of the program goal.

The final activity in the *Road to Success* curriculum asked the mentoring pairs to create a poster that combined the previous activities and mapped out, as the title of the curriculum suggests, a road to the mentee's stated goal. Gertrude described the importance of this activity during our second interview:

Excerpt 4 – 5/3/11 Gertrude Second Interview

20 The *Road to Success* (was meant) to show the mentee of what they need to do to
 21 reach their goal. Basically the road they have to take, the hurdles they have to go
 22 through, the hills. Like a metaphor of what they need to do. So they can actually
 23 see for themselves. I mean it's one thing saying I need to do this, I need to do that
 24 but to really see it. Oh dang. There's a lot for me to do. It's different seeing it than
 25 hearing it.

The activity summed up the individual plan for the mentee on how he or she planned to accomplish his or her long-term goal. The poster also included the steps needed to achieve the goal and the support systems and barriers he or she may face along this road.

The mentees reported mixed findings on the effectiveness of the program curriculum to improve their connections with individual protective factors. Only Ivan reported direct

improvements in this domain. He stated the activities helped develop his confidence in meeting new people. All three mentees indicated however that the curriculum activities helped them think and plan for their future. Jorge reported the activities, “...makes me think about my future. That I’m going to finish school and go off to college.” Sam stated that he didn’t think he learned anything new about himself, but it appeared he realized how his short-term actions could affect him. Most notably how the actions of not doing his homework and his behavior within the classroom affected his family’s behavior towards him.

Peer protective factors.

The program’s recruitment procedures ensured the peer mentor placed a value on his or her education and was succeeding within the school. Thus the peer mentors’ behaviors aligned with school expectations. These behaviors included placing a high importance on academic achievements, attending class, and graduating from high school. Through the mentoring relationships and the curriculum activities, I observed mentors encouraging these types of behaviors. Two activities, *What is Success?* and *Support Systems and Barriers*, were the most notable.

The *What is Success?* activity asked mentees to define success in the peer domain. The mentee first defined what success looked like in this domain, and then discussed how it related to his or her long-term goal. Mentors and mentees, in the *Support Systems and Barriers* activity, identified peer support systems and/or peer barriers within this domain. For example, Ivan and Sam both identified their current peer groups as potential barriers to graduating high school. Jorge stated that, “I need to pick better friends...friends that won’t get me into trouble.”

These two activities asked the mentees to identify the influence of their peer group through identifying how their peer groups support and/or hinder aspects of their lives and his or her long-term goal. I overheard conversations centering how peers can negatively influence school performance, the importance of having supportive friends, and keeping friends away from drugs. One example of this type of conversation occurred between Ernie and Sam during the *Support Systems and Barriers* activity. Ernie asked Sam what was preventing him from becoming who he wanted to be, and he identified his current peer group. The conversation continued with Ernie and Sam discussing the pressure Sam's friends put on him to drink beer and "party" and the resulting trouble he got into because of this of his behavior with his friends.

This conversation was not unique as the recorded conversations of the other two mentoring pairs contained similar conversations on the influence, both negative and positive, of the mentee's peer group. Darcy and Ivan discussed the pressure Ivan's peer group puts on him to "ditch class" and "smoke." They also discussed the negative influence Ivan's friends can have on his behavior within the classroom. This conversation occurred during the *Support Systems and Barriers* activity, but similar conversations occurred during other socio-emotional activities and two academic sessions.

Beth and Jorge's discussion during the *What is Success?* activity focused on the influence of Jorge's peers. He identified, "No drugs. Don't do drugs. Don't do drugs. And be honest with them," as his success within the peer domain. Other discussions between Beth and Jorge focused on the positive impact and the qualities he wanted from his peer group. Jorge identified honesty, trustworthiness, and respect for others as traits he wanted within his peer group. He also told Beth that needed to pick friends who "won't get me into trouble."

School protective factors.

The *Road to Success* curriculum asked students to identify a long-term goal, and the program coordinator encouraged the mentoring pairs to select a goal that was school related. As a result, all three case study mentees selected graduating from high school as their program goal. In the curriculum activities, mentees identified how their strengths could be used to achieve the long-term goal, determined the steps needed to accomplish their long-term goal, and located support system and barriers that could either help or hinder the accomplishment of this goal.

The activities promoted conversations between the mentor and mentee on the importance of being successful within the school. Through the activities, mentors described how to be successful within the school and how to avoid negative peer pressure that could hinder school achievement. The audio recorded conversations from program activities captured mentors describing to mentees how to behave in the classroom, how to avoid conflicts with teachers or other students, tips on how to study for exams, and the importance of not ditching class with friends. What follows is an example from an academic session in which Darcy explains the consequences of ditching class to Ivan:

Excerpt 5 – 4/26/11 Academic Session

26 D: How was school?

27 I: Pretty good.

28 D: How were all your classes?

29 I: Pretty good.

30 D: Did you go to your ninth?

31 I: No.

- 32 D: You gotta start going if you want all your credits. Because you're going to be
33 taking credit recovery next year. And you're not going to want to go to that
34 because it's all on computers.

This conversation was not unique to this mentoring pair. Jorge reported that through the mentoring program he learned that, "School's important...and I need school to get a good job." Several other conversations from all three case study mentoring pairs echoed this theme.

Mentees' experiences with the enacted Road to Success curriculum.

The *Road to Success* curriculum helped all three mentees realize the importance of school and to think about the future. Jorge identified graduating from high school as his *Road to Success* goal. He stated that the curriculum helped him, "...think about my future. That I'm going to finish school and go off to college." Jorge also indicated that without participating in this curriculum he most likely would not have thought this carefully and explicitly about his future plans. Through participating in the curriculum, Jorge engaged in an activity that helped him set goals for his future potentially increasing his connection to individual (self-esteem/socio-emotional development) and school (strong bond to school/high education aspirations) protective factors.

Ivan had similar experiences with the *Road to Success* curriculum as Jorge. He also identified graduating from high school as his program goal. Ivan recounted that the curriculum helped him understand the short-term reward versus the long-term consequences of dropping out of high school, "Oh so what if I drop out. I'm going to wish I was coming back to school. So like I just come to school all the time." He also realized the he could, "...could achieve goals that you

probably haven't achieved yet." Overall, Ivan indicated that he now puts more emphasis on his academic career and understands the value of graduating high school.

Sam too reported the activities helped him think about his future, "What are you going to like in the future. Like go to college." He said he realized he needs to, "...go to class and pass every class to go to college." Sam now plans to attend a career-focused high school to prepare for the future. He appeared to place greater importance on his education over the course of the program year.

Between Intentions and Enactments – The Identification of Program Tensions

A comparison between the intended and enacted program is often lacking in the research on mentoring programs. Most studies limit their findings to a description of the enacted program and the changes that occurred for the mentee. In this study, I wanted to understand more fully the program's design and how it actually developed over time in order to appreciate how this affected mentoring relationships. At times the intended program design and the enacted program differed greatly, potentially limiting the effectiveness of the mentoring program and/or the mentoring relationships. The most glaring of these examples included: the lack of mentor training, the spotty attendance of the mentees, and mentees' sometimes lack of engagement in program activities. In these three areas the original program design was not enacted in accord with the program's idealized purpose. These tensions, the differences from the intended to the enacted program, could potentially afford and/or constrain the development of the mentoring relationships.

From a sociocultural perspective, Sawyer (2006) describes a learning environment as, "...a complex environment – a human created environment filled with tools and machines, but

also a deeply social environment with collaborators and partners” (p.9). A mentoring program, viewed through this perspective, is a socially and culturally mediated environment. Within this environment, the participant brings, among other things, his or her expectations and history of learned and valued ways of participating in school. The participants’ interactions within this environment, whether it is with other participants, the program staff, the program features, or the timing of the delivery of the curriculum can create tensions. Tensions can occur between the participants, but also in their engagement with the socially created tools and artifacts.

That is not to say all tensions are negative or detrimental to the mentoring relationships. Reflection on tensions can and often lead to the improvement of practices. As Cole and Engeström (1993) describe, “...equilibrium is an exception and tensions, disturbances, and local innovations are the rule and the engine of change” (p. 8). Through tensions, mentoring programs can learn what is effective and what needs improvement, and through this improve their program practices. This could include a redesign of certain program features to different expectations for program staff and mentors. Noting the tensions helps to understand the process of mentoring, and how certain program features affect relationship development.

Tensions with mentor preparedness and support.

As I previously mentioned in the *Mentor Training* section, Beth and Jorge felt the mentor training needed improvement. Both would have liked more training on how to effectively handle different scenarios with their mentees, and more support from the program staff during difficult situations. This created a tension between the program goals of creating a prepared mentor and the mentors’ own feelings of preparedness.

The mentor training started during the fourth period of the school day four weeks prior to the start of the program. However, it was rescheduled to occur after the socio-emotional program activities when the program coordinator discovered that several mentors were missing classes during the fourth period training time. The new time was based on recommendations from the mentors. The program coordinator realized that students, after completing a school day and a program session, were often “checked out.” She recounted that she had to walk a thin line between pushing her mentors too hard and holding them accountable to the qualities needed to be an effective mentor.

The after-program training sessions focused on “checking-in” on the mentoring relationships, upcoming activities, and plans for volunteering opportunities and field trips. The mentoring check-in was valuable as other mentors suggested tips for mentors struggling with their mentoring relationships. The program coordinator also addressed those relationships that she found struggling with low engagement in program activities and/or mentee/mentor attendance.

Observations suggested the after program mentor training was helpful, but the full potential of the training was not reached because the check-in recommendations were often not implemented and the mentors who struggled continued to struggle afterwards. Beth and Ernie, in particular, received suggestions on how to better engage their mentees in program activities and how to improve their mentoring relationships. Suggestions included moving their mentee from potential distractions and changing his or her mentoring style. Neither of these suggestions were

immediately incorporated by Beth or Ernie, though Ernie did change his mentoring style²³ several weeks afterwards.

There was also little to no further “training” during these sessions to assist the development of best mentoring practices found in the mentor contract. Both Beth and Jose indicated they would like further training on how to successfully manage their mentoring relationships. Jorge commented on the type of training he would like during our second interview, “I want to be like this is how you do this, this is how you do that....more ways of maintaining his attention because he gets easily distracted.” Further training that promoted these practices had the potential to improve the mentoring relationship through preparing the mentor for the different scenarios he or she may face. In the case of Beth, if she was better prepared she could have potentially handled Sam’s outbursts more effectively, and thus not needed to switch mentees.

Mentees’ school behavioral issues appearing within the program.

Locating the mentoring program within the school meant school issues were likely to shape engagement within the program. All of recruited mentees had poor academic performance as evidence by a low grade point average, poor attendance, or behavior referrals. Many of the problems academic struggles the mentees faced carried over into the mentoring program including: low program attendance and behavioral issues.

The average program attendance for mentees who completed the program year was 66%. The missed program activities hindered the development of the mentoring relationships as mentees missed relationship development and socio-emotional activities. This also negatively

²³ This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

affected the attitude and self-esteem of the mentors as observed during the mentor training sessions. Mentors began to express frustrations toward low or non-attending mentees.

Many of the mentees brought the same attitudes and behaviors, both positive and negative, they displayed within the classroom into the program. At times these behaviors were not aligned with program expectations as I observed mentees arriving late to program activities, missing program sessions, not engaging in program activities, and/or becoming distracted by others within the program. This often created tension between the mentee and his or her mentor.

Mentor-Mentee relationship tensions.

Not all mentoring relations are successful, and at times tensions can develop within the relationship. A school-based program, for the most part, ends slightly before the end of the school year. This limits the number of meetings between mentor-mentee when compared to community-based mentoring programs. There is a premium for school-based programs to quickly match mentors-mentees to increase the number of mentoring meetings. This can lead to mentoring pairs that are not a good fit.

An example of this occurred in Beth and Sam's mentoring relationship. Beth was originally Sam's mentor, but due to his lack of engagement in program activities and poor attitude she became unhappy in the mentoring relationship and wanted to switch mentees. Beth commented during our second interview on her mentoring relationship with Sam:

Excerpt 6 – 2/23/11 Beth's Second Interview

35 It was alright. He had his days. He had his good days and he had his bad days.

36 When he has a bad day he usually took it out on me...by not listening. He would

37 cuss at me a lot and at other people.

Sam frequently became distracted by others within the program, personal issues, and/or by talking on the phone. Beth was very task-oriented and placed a high importance on completing the day's activity. Sam was too distracted for Beth's comfort level, and Beth was too task-oriented for Sam's creating a tension between the two. This tension resulted in both becoming negative and highly critical of one another.

After a particular difficult mentoring session that occurred during the third month of mentoring program, Beth and Ernie offered to switch mentees. Beth on the reason for the mentoring switch, "He (Ernie) thought he could just be better with somebody else than with his own. And Ernie's mentee, Jorge, didn't like him." Ernie had a slightly different perspective on the reason for the mentoring switch:

Excerpt 7 – 2/23/11 Ernie's Second Interview

38 Well she said he was being really difficult and I was like no he's not. He just

39 doesn't listen to you because you are always so rude and nagging him. She was

40 like let's trade next week. And so we switched and she wanted to say with him.

What was clear was that both Beth and Ernie were having difficulties in their mentoring relationships, and both mentoring pairs seemed to reach critical frustration points. This appeared like a good idea to switch mentees because Beth and Ernie's mentoring style seemed like a better fit for each other's mentee.

A problem arose due to the mentoring switch. The new mentoring pairs missed many of the relationship developmental activities and did not have time to build trust or a bond in their mentoring relationship before the *Road to Success* curriculum. The program design purposely began the curriculum with the relationship development activities to build trust between mentor and mentee before the *Road to Success* curriculum began. This design was implemented so that the mentee felt comfortable sharing personal information with his or her mentor during the *Road to Success* activities.

Jorge and Sam indicated in interviews that they were happy with the mentoring switch, and their new mentors matched better with their own personalities and learning preferences. However, the conversations between mentor and mentee in these relationships did not contain much personal information, and the mentees often refused to provide more in-depth responses when asked. This seems to indicate that the new mentoring relationships did not have an opportunity to build trust, and Sam or Ernie may not have been comfortable sharing personal information with their new mentors. When interviewed both said they could share with their new mentors, but their actions did not support this view.

The mentoring switch resulted in two new mentoring relationships that had to develop a relationship during activities that were not designed specifically for this. That is not to say that the development of a strong mentoring relationship was impossible, but the timing of the mentoring switch resulted in missing the relationship development activities. As primary socialization posits, a strong bond between the socialization source and the individual is needed for the individual to adopt the norms of the socialization source. The activities the new mentoring pairs first engaged in, by program design, expected a bond to exist between mentor

and mentee. Without a strong bond, Sam and Ernie were less likely to use the behaviors and school attitudes the program curriculum and their mentors were advocating.

Summary

It is important to examine a mentoring program's intended design to determine the features and/or practices that are promoted through the design. The intended program design can change during their enactment. If this is the case, accomplishing the program goals can be challenging to impossible. The purpose of this chapter was to examine the alignment of the intended and the enacted programs.

The YESS Institute's intended program design sought to create strong peer mentoring relationships to reconnect mentees with the school. Program design features that supported this intended goal included: the peer mentoring model, the method of training mentors, and the program curriculum. At times the intended design features differed from the enacted program. This was most evident in the program's late start, a change in the scheduling and format of the mentor training, the addition of a peer leader to the program staff, and the enacted curriculum.

The differences between the intended and enacted program created tensions. It is important to examine these tensions to determine whether these differences assisted or obstructed the program's goal of creating strong mentoring relationships. This examination also provided an opportunity to suggest changes to the program's practice based on how the design features affected the development the mentoring relationships. For example, the mentee switch that occurred during the third month of the program year was a unique way to handle two unsuccessful relationships. Future studies on how to address tensions that occur within a

mentoring program would add to the best practice mentoring literature and help find potential solutions to difficult situations.

CHAPTER VII

Case Studies

Primary socialization theory states that in order for norm transmission to be initiated, a strong bond is needed between the socialization source and the individual. The YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program used a peer mentor as a potential socialization source for their mentees. In order to gain a more in depth understanding of the mentor-mentee relationship dynamics, I developed three case study analyses of mentoring relationships. Case studies allow for a deeper level of analysis of the processes of mentoring within an enacted environment when compared to other methods (Yin, 2006). The use of this methodological approach is also meant to add to the research literature, which currently is lacking case studies on this type of mentoring relationship.

I selected mentor-mentee pairs as case study foci based on the quality level of the mentoring relationship. I use the term "quality" as an assessment tool to describe the features of a mentoring relationship. The three case studies are shared in order of quality level with the highest first to illustrate how a high quality relationship differs from a medium and low one. Each case study begins with a vignette, to which I refer throughout the case to demonstrate the difference in relationships with different quality levels as they engage in program activities.

For each case study, I will describe the findings as they relate to my three research questions. I will first discuss how the mentoring relationship developed, noting the characteristics of the mentor, mentee, and their relationship. I next describe how the mentoring pair engaged in both the academic and socio-emotional activities. I conclude each case study

with a discussion how the mentee changed over the course of the program year with emphasis on connection to protective factors in the school, individual, and peer domains.

Quality Level of Mentoring Relationships

In order to examine the quality of the mentoring relationship, I used the internal indicators developed by Nakkula and Harris (2005) to examine the relationship features of the mentoring relationships. These indicators provided a framework through which to analyze the characteristics and/or features of the mentoring relationship. I first used the indicators to determine what features were present within the relationship and then to describe how these features were enacted. I used the frequency of appearance along with the description of the indicator to determine the mentoring relationship's quality level. A higher frequency and fuller use of several internal indicators corresponded with a higher quality level.

The internal indicators used to determine the quality of the mentoring relationships were: mentor/mentee engagement in program activities, mentor/mentee feelings of closeness, mentor/mentee intimacy, mentor/mentee support, and the frequency and intensity of the mentoring meetings (See Appendices E and F for a description of the internal and external indicators). These indicators describe how the mentoring pair engaged in the program activities, what happened within the mentoring relationship, and/or how the mentor and/or mentee perceived their mentoring relationships. I use these indicators, along with my interpretations of the discourse practices used in the mentoring relationships, to provide a rich description of the individual's perception of his or her mentoring.

Darcy & Ivan: A High Quality Relationship

Darcy is a well-connected mentor. She was previously a mentee, and she knows the majority of the other mentors through her connections in school and the softball team, and to top it all off her father is program liaison for the YESS Institute. Darcy often uses her previous experiences as a mentee and her connections with the other mentors to help develop her mentoring relationship.

Darcy and Ivan often sit together and talk away from the majority of the group, and today is no different. Darcy is asking her mentee, Ivan, what he plans on doing after school today. Ivan says he is either going to play NBA 2010 or Fight Night Round – two popular video games.

The school liaison placed Ivan, a 9th grader, in the program because of the high number of unexcused absences he has accrued this semester, along with his current low academic performance, and a high frequency of behavioral referrals including verbal confrontations with his teachers. Ivan's two older brothers had similar difficulties in school and did not graduate, which by Ivan's own admission devalued the importance he placed on graduating high school. The mentoring program is a last attempt to prevent him from being expelled from this school.

Today's activity, "What is Success?," asks the mentoring pairs to define success in several areas of the mentee's life. The goal of the activity is for the mentee to identify protective factors in different life domains such as the school, family, and their peer group. Darcy starts the day's activity by making sure Ivan is prepared with a pen or pencil. Once she confirms that Ivan is ready, she begins the activity by asking Ivan what success in high school means to him. He eagerly responds with getting A's and she has him write that down as the central goal for this activity.

Darcy uses this as a starting point and from here she asks Ivan, "What's the first step that you could do to start the process? There are your three steps that you're going to do." Ivan responds with, "Be focused." Darcy pushes Ivan to expand on his answer. She asks him if he is going to follow these goals. Ivan tells Darcy he is going to, "Get most work done. Come to all classes." Darcy, either unsatisfied with this answer or simply wanting more from Ivan, asks if that's all he can do. Ivan reiterates that he needs to get more work done and to go to his classes to get all A's. Darcy, still probing, asks Ivan what he can do to get most of his work done. Ivan begins to expand on his original answer this time. He states, "Come to program all the time. Do my work at home. And get help from others." This exchange continues with Darcy asking three more follow-up questions. The tone in this exchange from both Darcy and Ivan is pleasant. The questioning does not seem to upset Ivan and he is more than willing to expand on his original thinking.

Darcy and Ivan continue to work together on this activity. They both sit close to one another and are continually smiling. They appear as an ideal mentoring pair. Darcy asks Ivan what barriers prevent him from getting straight A's. After some discussion between Darcy and Ivan on the differences between internal and external barriers, Ivan is still having a hard time understanding the concept. Darcy, without providing an answer for Ivan, breaks down the question into an easier format. She first asks Ivan what stands in the way of him getting straight A's. Ivan is still unsure. Darcy patiently asks Ivan, "How come you don't have straight A's right now?" Ivan responds with, "not working". Darcy uses this information and says, "Being lazy. You could work." To which Ivan confirms. Darcy then says, "But you just chose not to. So that's one of your problems, internal problem that you have."

Ivan begins to realize what is meant by internal barriers and what internal barriers he may have. Darcy asks for one more barrier. Ivan comes up with, not doing homework when he is home. Darcy and Ivan continue this communication pattern with external barriers. Darcy explains what external barriers are and Ivan provides an answer, friends. They talk more on external barriers, working together, trying to find out what else may prevent Ivan from achieving straight A's.

Relationship development.

Darcy and Ivan's mentoring relationship consisted of high levels of on-task engagement, conversations that shared personal information and life experiences, and a high degree of mentor facilitation for greater explanation and/or understanding during program activities. They engaged in program activities for the duration of the program and were rarely distracted by others. Darcy pushed Ivan during program activities to ensure his participation and to increase the depth of his initial responses.

Darcy's qualities as a mentor.

Darcy was placed in the mentoring program by her father, the school liaison, for extra academic support during her freshman year. As a former mentee, she placed an importance on doing well in school. At the time of the study, she was taking classes in nursing through a local high school with plans on eventually pursuing a medical degree. Darcy indicated through interviews that school was her "job" and she believed academic success would lead to a better life where she could take care of her family.

Darcy was task-oriented. She placed value on completing the assignment and on the discussion on the activity topics. Darcy seemed to believe that learning for Ivan occurred through

participation and discussion in the program activities. A unique quality of Darcy's mentoring approach was how often she pushed Ivan to expand on his original idea as described in the opening vignette.

Darcy used program activities to facilitate the development of her mentoring relationship with Ivan. According to Darcy, "First when we first met it was just...just about the program, just about his homework. But as time went we just joke around with each other and we just became friends, I guess." Ivan echoed these sentiments:

Excerpt 8 – 4/21/11 Ivan Third Interview

41 It's like in the beginning I didn't feel like talking. And I was like...as the
42 relationship kept on building up and building up and we kept on talking more. I
43 felt comfortable hanging out, hanging around her and talking to her. And when I
44 first went there I felt all embarrassed because I didn't want to answer questions
45 that I didn't know. It made me felt stupid but now since I like...like how she
46 knows how I am and I know how she is, it makes me more comfortable hanging
47 around her.

As true with most mentoring relationships, it took time to develop trust and a strong bond.

Observations indicated that Darcy and Ivan used the program activities, specifically, the homework sessions to develop their relationship. These activities provided shared endeavors for the mentoring pairs that assisted them with finding commonalities between mentor and mentee.

Ivan's qualities as a mentee.

Ivan struggled in the classroom which was common for all mentees. At the beginning of the mentoring program Ivan often argued with his teachers, ditched classes, and was failing the

majority of his classes. His behavior in school eventually led to suspensions which resulted in him missing several mentoring sessions.

Despite this, Ivan eagerly attended the mentoring sessions and like the other mentees, Ivan became a leader. He often volunteered to lead activities and to share his work with the group. Ivan was light-hearted in his relationship - often joking and poking fun at and with Darcy. But he was also very protective of this relationship and indicated during interviews that he felt bad when he missed sessions and/or let Darcy down by his actions.

Despite the “high quality” characterization of the mentoring relationship, Ivan’s attendance during program activities was very low. The program coordinator commented on Ivan’s poor attendance and its effects:

Excerpt 9 – 4/28/11 Program Coordinator Second Interview

48 When Ivan was coming to school and to the mentoring program I think it was
49 what you think of when you think of a mentoring relationship. So very strong
50 because Darcy gets it. They had this connection and he really looked up to her.
51 And I think she really enjoyed working with him. And I think they talked about a
52 lot of deeper concepts, things that were going on, and I think it was a pretty
53 dynamic relationship. The problem was he kind of went through that phase, he
54 started off real strong and then he kind of disappeared for a couple weeks.

Ivan attended 53% of the program sessions and missed several activities in the *Road to Success* curriculum. In spite of his low mentoring program attendance, Ivan increased his school attendance from 69% in the first semester to 80% in the second semester and he increased his grade point average from 0.25 to 0.6.

Mentoring relationship characteristics.

A unique feature of Darcy and Ivan's mentoring relationship was the level of personal information shared between the two. Interviews with Darcy and Ivan indicated both had numerous conversations on personal topics even meeting after program sessions in the school liaison's office to continue their conversations. Ivan shared legal troubles he faced, problems he had with his family, and his difficulties in school. Darcy shared her previous experience as a low performing freshman and the importance she placed on school and family. Below is an excerpt from a conversation between Darcy and Ivan concerning his family's reaction when they found out about his low grades and skipped classes:

Excerpt 10 – 2/28/11 Academic Session

55 D: When did your dad find out?

56 I: That my grades were down? Yesterday.

57 D: Was he mad?

58 I: Yeah. He was like...he said you need to get your grades up Bubba. He said I
59 don't want...he said I want one of my goals to pass college. He said at least pass
60 to the 12th grade. I went home because I didn't go to school yesterday, and I
61 came home and my mom was like Ivan sit your ass down! What happened? She
62 was like, You didn't go to school today. Yeah I did. You're lying cause they
63 called your grandpa. I was like what. So I didn't know what to say but my dad
64 was like...he says if you guys don't want to graduate and go to college then you
65 guys can work at McDonald's if you guys want to.
66 D: It's true.

Ivan often shared his personal struggles to go to school, to get along with his teachers, and ultimately his future plans for himself.

Based on my observations, I found Darcy to be very honest and direct with Ivan in these instances. In the example above, Darcy reaffirmed his parents' belief that if he does not do well in school he will be relegated to working at McDonald's. One way of interpreting this exchange is that Darcy took a realistic and honest approach to behaviors she believed limited Ivan's future options and shared her opinions on the type of behaviors Ivan should or should not be committing.

A unique characteristic of this relationship was Darcy's level of commitment to the mentoring program and to her relationship with Ivan. Darcy described her responsibilities as a mentor below:

Excerpt 11 – 4/21/11 Darcy Third Interview

67 It's hard work pretty much. You got to check their grades constantly. You got to
68 make sure; cause if they're not doing good that makes you look like you're not
69 doing good. You're not doing your job. So you constantly got to be on them.

In the excerpt above, it seems that Darcy took her role as a mentor quite seriously, and her identity was tied to how she was viewed as mentor. I often overheard Darcy explain to Ivan how his confrontations with teachers and his poor program attendance reflected negatively on her as a mentor.

Through interviews and observations, I found that Darcy checked in with Ivan's school progress during every academic session. She also took time during the school day to check with his teachers, especially his 9th period, which Ivan frequently ditched and was failing during the

beginning of the mentoring program. These checks served three purposes in my view. First, it kept Darcy abreast on Ivan's school performance and what schoolwork he needed to bring for the academic sessions. Furthermore, it demonstrated to Ivan that Darcy "cared" about him and his performance in school. Ivan mentioned during our interview that these actions by Darcy made him feel that she cared for him. It showed Ivan that Darcy would take time out of her day to help him. Finally, Darcy's was motivated to be an effective mentor to protect her identity within the program. She did not want to be labeled as someone who was not fulfilling her role as a mentor.

Mentor expectations.

Interview data suggested that Darcy held Ivan responsible for his performance as a student in the high school and as a mentee in the program. Here Ivan explains the "talks" Darcy gives him after he missed a mentoring session:

Excerpt 12 – 4/21/11 Ivan Third Interview

70 Because sometimes I don't come and then Darcy want me to have a talk. And I'll
 71 tell her about it but I just got to keep myself focused and make myself come all
 72 the time. So I can just get my grades up and pass on. Like she'll talk to me and
 73 she was like how come you didn't come. And I'll tell her like cause I didn't want
 74 to, or I didn't feel good or I didn't feel like coming. And she'll be like well if you
 75 don't feel like coming then you should get signed off the thing right now so I
 76 don't have to waste my time. And I was no, I'll going to be coming and just talks
 77 to me like saying that if I don't wanna come just don't come don't waste her time.

One way to interpret this excerpt is that Darcy is positioning Ivan with ownership of the relationship suggesting that if he truly didn't want to attend the program sessions they could both

quit. This might seem like an uncaring gesture on Darcy's part, but it may have empowered Ivan as mentee. Instead of viewing the mentoring program as something that he had to do, he may now view the mentoring program and Darcy as privileges that he could lose if he did not improve his attendance. This could have served to motivate Ivan to come to the program sessions and participate in order to support and have access to his relationship with Darcy.

Throughout the mentoring relationship Darcy stressed the importance of developing behaviors and attitudes that could lead to school success as evidenced not only by her checking in on Ivan and his school progress but in the conversations they had during the program activities. Topics included: the importance of attending and passing classes, completing school work, making the right choices, not following negative family trends, and developing appropriate behaviors for the classroom. Darcy used her developed mentoring relationship to promote the use of these behaviors. She did this through "checking-in" with Ivan, and then critiquing his behaviors that she believed would not lead to school success. The mentoring relationship potentially motivated Ivan to align his behavior with Darcy's expected behavior.

Academic engagement.

Through my participation in the mentoring sessions, I found that Darcy and Ivan worked effectively during the Tuesday academic sessions. Ivan reliably brought his work to these sessions, and Darcy initiated the activity within the first few minutes of the activity after they had a chance to catch up. The academic sessions provided a chance for Darcy and Ivan to discuss how Ivan was performing in his classes, how he was behaving in the classroom, and how well he was getting along with his teachers, in particular his 9th period teacher. Ivan and his 9th

period teacher had several behavioral confrontations within the classroom, and on one occasion Ivan received a behavioral referral for his negative and loud behavior.

Ivan often brought math assignments to these sessions and Darcy, by her own admissions, struggled with this subject. Darcy, in order to help Ivan with his math homework, called on her friends in the program to assist Ivan. Darcy, by having friends in the program, used her resources to help Ivan. She still engaged in the activity in a supervisory position maintaining a presence and making sure Ivan stayed on-task.

Socio-Emotional curriculum engagement.

As I described in the vignette and based on observational data, Darcy and Ivan engaged productively throughout the socio-emotional mentoring sessions. The engagement often composed of discussion concerning the program activity and Darcy encouraging Ivan to expand on his original answer.

The vignette points to Darcy pushing Ivan's thinking past his initial goal of getting straight A's with follow up questions. She encouraged Ivan to think about how to reach the goal that he set for himself and then once he identified a step, get most of my work done, Darcy asked another follow-up question to help Ivan define what he meant by getting his work done. Ivan responded to this with three more steps that could assist him in getting his work done. I found, through observation data, Darcy to use follow-up questions in high frequency during the socio-emotional program activities to expand on Ivan's initial response.

Connections to protective factors.

The YESS Institute mentoring program sought to increase the mentee's connection to protective factors through the peer mentoring relationship and the program curriculum. The program specifically targeted the school, individual, and peer domains. Ivan appeared to increase his connection to protective factors in the school and peer domains but not the individual domain. In this section I discuss Ivan's connection with protective factors in these domains and how they did or did not change over the course of the program year.

School protective factors.

Ivan had slight improvement in his school performance data (See Table 1 for school performance data for the 1st and 2nd semesters of the 2010-2011 school year), but based on my field notes he did improve his connections with school protective factors. Most notably was Ivan's school attitude which improved from the start of the program to the conclusion. Darcy commented on Ivan's changed attitude toward school:

Excerpt 13 – 4/21/11 Darcy Third Interview

78 I think school's important. That's what he realized. Cause I think before with
 79 seeing his brothers and stuff, they didn't graduate. And it just sets the influence
 80 that maybe he won't graduate, but if he's in this [program] and he sees how much
 81 like school's important. And all the activities we did. I think that realized for him
 82 like maybe school is important. I should finish.

At the start of the program Ivan rarely attended his classes and when he did he often had

confrontations with his teachers. Over the course of the program year, it appeared from conversations he had with Darcy that Ivan came to understand the importance of school and strived to achieve academically.

Table 1

Ivan's School Performance Data for First and Second 2010-2011 Semesters

Mentee	Attendance		Grade Point Average		Number of Behavioral Referrals	
	First	Second	First	Second	First	Second
Ivan	69%	80%	0.25	0.6	2	2

Individual protective factors.

Ivan attributed the mentoring program in helping him gain confidence, to meet new people, it refocused his energy in school, and helped create a desire to create a better academic future for himself. He indicated during interviews that he entered the program very self-reliant but came to understand how others, including mentors and program staff, could help him achieve his goals. He also realized how to avoid and overcome the problems of his brothers. This evidence points to increased connections with protective factors in the individual and school domains.

The possible range for each scale in the BarOn Emotional Intelligence survey was 0-130, where higher scores indicated higher levels of emotional intelligence ($N = 946$, $M = 100$, $SD = 15$). The small sample size ($N = 3$) and the lack of a control group in this study prevented making definite claims based on the results from this survey. In order to look for confirming or disconfirming evidence in the survey data, it was important to establish a threshold for practical significance. In other words, what change might represent a substantial change in a student's

score from pre to posttest. For example, does a difference of one or two points represent a significant difference or might it just be due to error. Because of the small sample size, traditional methods of calculating standard error were not feasible. Therefore I relied on other methods. I pooled the pre and post test data to calculate an overall standard deviation for each scale (Table 2 contains the combined pre and post standard deviations for each survey scale). I then chose a threshold of one standard deviation as the cutoff for practical significance. To put it differently - I determined that a student's change in score by a standard deviation from pretest to posttest to be a significant difference.

Table 2

Combined Pre and Posttest BarOn Emotional Intelligence Survey Scales

	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Stress Management	Adaptability	Total EQ
<i>SD</i>	13.22	9.39	7.58	5.10	8.71
<i>SD Threshold</i>	14	10	8	6	9

Note. Sample size = 6.

Ivan scored one standard deviation or lower on the posttest in the intrapersonal, adaptability, and total EQ scales (See Table 3 for Ivan's BarOn Survey results). Ivan did score one standard deviation higher in the stress management scale. This posttest score rated as average corresponding to an adequate ability in this domain. Overall, three out of the five scales decreased significantly from pretest to posttest.

Table 3

Ivan's BarOn Emotional Intelligence Survey Scales

Mentee	Test	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Stress Management	Adaptability	Total EQ
Ivan	Pretest	108	80	81	108	95
	Posttest	84	77	92	96	84

Ivan's pretest and posttest scores were deemed low²⁴ to very low for interpersonal skills which equates to an underdeveloped domain. According to BarOn and Parker (2000), "Scores of one standard deviation or more below the mean ($M = 100$) indicate a significant lack of the specific skill being measured" (p. 19). This seems to fit with his behavior in the classroom, but does not agree with his observed behavior in the mentoring program as he developed strong relationships with his mentor and the program staff.

Ivan's intrapersonal and total EQ scale both rated low indicating an underdeveloped domain. These scores decreased from an average category in the pretest which does not agree with what I observed during the mentoring sessions. I found Ivan's behavior that aligned with these scales to improve over the course of the program year. Ivan appeared to better understand his own emotions and how his emotions affected his relationship with others especially his teachers and family members. Ivan commented on his improved behavior, "My behavior was bad. I always got kicked out of my class and my grades were like very low. But now....my grades are going up. I haven't disrespected a teacher or anything like that for a long time."

His adaptability score amounted to an average score for both pretest and posttest. This score translates to an adequate capacity for the domain. All of Ivan's posttest scores indicated

²⁴ The range for each scale as developed by BarOn and Parker (2000) are: markedly low (0-70), very low (70-79), low (80-89), average (90-109), high (110-119), very high (120-129), and markedly high (130).

room for improvement. Ivan's frequent missed sessions may have contributed to his unimpressive scores as his performance in the program activities appeared to equate to a mentee who would have scored higher.

Peer protective factors.

Interviews with Darcy and Ivan suggest a significant area of improvement in Ivan's developed connections with protective factors occurred in the peer domain. Ivan's gang attitude scores did decrease from pretest to posttest demonstrating less acceptance towards pro-gang attitudes (See Table 4 for Ivan's Gang Attitude Survey results) He indicated that he had become more aware of the peer pressure his friends exerted on him. Darcy facilitated this process as Ivan described below:

Excerpt 14 – 4/21/11 Ivan Third Interview

83 She just told me that just to pick better friends and not people that are oh come on
84 let's go ditch fool. Come on lets go do this. Lets go, I don't know but she just
85 helped me pick right friends that I can hang out with not ditch or do nothing
86 stupid.

I observed Darcy being direct with Ivan concerning the negative influence of his friends. This potentially helped Ivan realize this negative influence. The program activities also introduced Ivan to a group of students that he had little to no interaction with previously who he became friends with outside of the program.

Table 4

Ivan's Gang Attitude Survey

Mentee	Pretest	Posttest
Ivan	51	38

Darcy and Ivan case study summary.

Darcy and Ivan's relationship was characterized by high levels of on-task engagement, back and forth dialogue, and personal sharing. Through these relationship features it appeared that Ivan was able to increase his connection with protective factors in the school and peer domains. However, despite this relationship's high mentoring quality level, Ivan's demonstrated small improvements in his school performance data. I attribute this to two factors. First, Ivan missed several sessions during the second and third month of the program year, but he did improve his program attendance during the last two months. The missed sessions may have limited the program's potential affect on Ivan's school performance data and survey scores. Furthermore, the program concluded two weeks before the end of the second semester. This limited Ivan's opportunities to use behaviors learned in the program within the classroom. Future research is needed to more fully understand the impact of participating in the mentoring program on Ivan's school performance.

Beth & Jorge: A Medium Quality Relationship

Beth, an 11th grade mentor, arrives for the program and heads to her normal seat and finds Jorge silently waiting for her. She, in a bubbly tone, asks how Jorge is doing in school and he responds sullenly with "I don't know." Beth attempts to find out how Jorge is and when this fails she changes the topic to a less personal subject - a fundraising project she is participating

in for disaster relief in Japan. This continues, as Beth persists in trying to engage Jorge in a conversation to the point where Jorge asked Beth if she, “Can you please not talk a lot? I have a major headache.”

Before the activity Beth tries again to find out how Jorge is doing by asking him how his weekend was to which he responds by changing the subject. Beth continues. First, she asks if there is anything she can do for his headache, then she demands an apology from Jorge when she believes he is being mean for not wanting her help with his headache, and finally she asks Jorge if he has any major class assignments this week. Jorge’s responses, when he provides them, are all short and often start and end with “No.”

The program coordinator introduces the day’s activity, “Support Systems and Barriers.” This activity asks the mentoring pairs to identify three milestones the mentee must accomplish to reach his or her long-term goal and three barriers that may get in the way. The focus of this activity is for the mentee to identify small steps in order to reach his or her long-term program goal.

After the activity introduction, Beth immediately asks Jorge if he is ready to start. Jorge is somewhat confused and asks, “What do I have to do?” Beth breaks the activity into smaller steps and tells him he needs to think of three milestones to achieve his goal. Jorge immediately responds with, “Get a job.” He writes this down and then asks if he has to do another one. Beth says yes.

Jorge is focused on the activity and writes down two more milestones without talking to Beth. There is often little dialogue between Beth and Jorge during program activities. The silence is interrupted by Beth questioning one of Jorge’s answers as it appears to be similar to the

previous answer. Jorge simply says, "Watch," and continues to complete the worksheet without talking to Beth. The three milestones he identifies are to graduate high school and go to college, get a high paying job, and to have a family. His only discussion with Beth during this first section is telling her his first milestone is to get a job.

Once done with the first section, Beth and Jorge identify potential barriers that could prevent him from reaching his the three milestones. Beth begins the section by describing what an internal barrier is and how it can potentially prevent someone from accomplishing a goal. In her descriptions she uses an example of not finishing high school because, "...you don't have any self-motivation or something."

Jorge tells Beth, "I don't get what you're saying." Beth begins to give an example about herself, but before she can begin Jorge says, "Well, I don't get this." Beth, now sounding frustrated, asks Jorge if he understood the milestone section. Jorge confirms that he did, and Beth then begins to explain the barriers section of the activity.

Similarly to how she started the milestone section, Beth breaks this section into smaller more manageable steps by first asking what an internal barrier would be to finishing high school and going to college. Jorge responds with fear, Beth follows up with, "Fear of what?" Jorge responds with, "Low self-esteem." Beth does not ask Jorge to explain more on what he means but instead instructs him to write down self-esteem. Beth attempts to move on to the next milestone, but Jorge has figured out this section and begins to identify barriers for his milestones. Without conversation he writes down low self-esteem, fear of messing up, fear of taking big steps, not having money to pay, not having the transportation, fear of not finding the right one. Again he has completed a section without discussion with his mentor.

Relationship development.

Beth and Jorge's mentoring relationship started strongly with both actively engaged in program activities. As described in the vignette, the mentoring relationship was characterized by engagement in program activities and positive indicators for frequency and intensity of mentoring meetings. However, there was a lack of discussion and sharing of personal information during the mentoring sessions and over time the relationship seemed to deteriorate as evidenced by hostile and negative attitudes by both Beth and Jorge.

Beth's qualities as a mentor.

Beth was an enthusiastic student, upbeat and friendly to everyone. She participated in various extracurricular activities and learned about the YESS Institute's mentoring through a teammate on the high school softball team. Beth believed that mentoring would be a great way to give back to her high school.

As with most mentors, Beth was eager to help. Her approach to mentoring consisted of going over the activity in small steps and brainstorming possible solutions. Beth tried to focus the activity on Jorge's experiences as it seemed she believed that he would learn through comparing his current behavior to the behaviors they discussed during the program activities.

Beth appeared to believe Jorge had the motivation to align his behavior into more school related behaviors. This was primarily based on her conversations with Jorge in which she advocated the importance of doing well in school and behaving in a way that would not create confrontations with his teachers. Jorge expressed a desire to achieve or "do better" which supported Beth's views on Jorge's motivation to participate in program activities.

Beth attempted to develop her mentoring relationship with Jorge through conversation. She peppered Jorge with questions ranging from how his day was, to how he was doing in school, and what his favorite band was. She actively, some including Jorge may say relentlessly, attempted to engage her mentee in conversation. During these interactions her tone was pleasant often giggling throughout the sessions. Her temperament was positive for the majority of the sessions, but she did become frustrated when she felt disrespected or ignored. With Jorge, these negative feelings occurred more frequently as the mentoring relationship progressed.

Jorge's qualities as a mentee.

Jorge's behavior was unique when compared to the majority of the mentees. He was a quiet student by nature and rarely talked during the program sessions. He often sat, waited, and answered Beth's questions with short answers. When it became time to work on either the homework activities or socio-emotional activities he remained quiet, only discussing the assignment when he needed clarification. He seemed to value the access to someone who could help when needed but did not place much importance on the ongoing conversations that Beth valued.

To only critique this mentoring relationship on the conversations between Beth and Jorge regardless of the quality of work would be unfair. Jorge, though he did not discuss his answers or share personal information with his mentor, did produce answers that were consistent with the activities and related to his long-term goal of graduating high school. The lack of conversation and/or quiet demeanor did not indicate a lack of effort or motivation in completing activities. Jorge, as a mentee, may benefit more from listening and observing than through direct conversations. My data sources seemed to indicate he preferred this approach.

Despite his reserved demeanor, Jorge without observed provocations could at times be rude and aggressive with his language telling Ernie, his former mentor, to “...calm the shit down” and calling him a “sissy.” The brunt of this negative behavior was directed towards Ernie but at times towards Beth too, especially when she was asking Jorge several questions in a row. His observed behaviors appeared to be at polar opposites either quiet and reserved or loud and profane. There were times when he seemed content, but these instances were rare and overshadowed.

Through his discussions with the school liaison, I learned that Jorge had gotten into “trouble” over the summer, and his mother wanted him to attend the YESS Institute’s mentoring program for a second consecutive year. To compound matters, during the beginning of the semester Jorge frequently missed classes, talked back to teachers, did not turn in his work, and was failing the majority of his classes. According to the school liaison, Jorge regressed from the progress he made last year. Because of this behavior, Jorge’s mother placed him in the mentoring program a second consecutive year and by Jorge’s own admission, he was not looking forward to attending.

Relationship deterioration.

Beth and Jorge’s mentoring relationship started strongly with both actively engaged in program activities. As I showed in the vignette, the mentoring relationship was characterized by engagement in program activities and positive internal indicators for frequency and intensity of mentoring meetings. However, there was a lack of discussion and sharing of personal information during the mentoring sessions and over time the relationship seemed to deteriorate.

This lack of discussion and/or sharing was especially unique considering both were engaged in the program activities.

The reason for the deterioration in the relationship was unclear but based on field notes, the relationship lacked a mentoring bond between Beth and Jorge. My data sources revealed little communication between Beth and Jorge inside and outside of the program. During program activities Beth often talked, but Jorge's lack of communication resulted in limited dialogue between the two.

This is how Beth described her relationship with Jorge:

Excerpt 15 – 4/28/11 Beth Third Interview

87 It's not as well or not as good as I would have hoped it was, but it's not bad.

88 It's...outside of the program we don't really talk. Inside (of the program)

89 depending on how he's feeling, we talk but we don't. It's not like we're friends or

90 anything.

Beth and Jorge attended most mentoring sessions, stayed on task, and completed the program activities but did not engage in dialogue and reciprocal sharing on the importance of the activity. Their relationship did not seem to fully develop the trust and/or a strong bond needed for Jorge to share more personal information.

Jorge's behavior during program activities.

An issue that possibly limited the development of the mentoring relationship was Jorge's behavior during some of mentoring sessions. During these sessions, Jorge's observed behavior and attitude towards Beth was negative and he limited his communication. Beth referred to these instances in her description of Jorge:

Excerpt 16 – 4/28/11 Beth Third Interview

- 91 He has his days when he decides he wants to talk and then there's the days when
 92 he just doesn't say a thing. And then he's...how do I say it?
 93 He acts like he really doesn't care very much about anything.

During these mentoring sessions days, Jorge often refused to do homework during the academic sessions and provided little to no discussion during the socio-emotional sessions. Below is an example of Jorge's behavior during one of these sessions:

Excerpt 17 - 3/15/11 Academic Session

- 94 J: Cause I don't want to talk today.
 95 B: You don't want to talk today or you just don't want to talk to me?
 96 J: I don't want to talk.
 97 B: To me or at all?
 98 J: At all.
 99 B: Why are you upset?
 100 J: Nope.
 101 B: What's wrong?
 102 J: I want to go home and sleep.
 103 B: Are you done being mean? No. It's such a boring day today. Isn't it? Is that
 104 [Chinese homework] easy? Can I help?
 105 J: Nope.
 106 B: Want me to draw something for you?
 107 J: Nope.

- 108 B: So you're just going to do by yourself?
- 109 J: Yup.
- 110 B: Are you sure? I don't want you to strain yourself.
- 111 J: Not going to strain myself.
- 112 B: Can I do that one?
- 113 J: No.
- 114 B: Do you still want to go home?
- 115 J: Yeah.
- 116 B: Why?
- 117 J: Cause I want to go home.

Jorge's behavior in this example was short and said with a hostile tone. He continued this behavior for the remainder of the program session refusing to talk and/or ignoring Beth. Beth continued to try to engage Jorge in conversations as evidenced by her asking Jorge about his homework, how he was doing in his classes, and by sharing her views on the day.

Jorge became very negative and critical of the program activities and at times toward Beth. This behavior continued throughout the activity limiting the potential for discussions with Beth and I would argue, the effectiveness of the program session. This type of behavior occurred more frequently as the mentoring relationship progressed. Out of the eight sessions I observed this mentoring relationship, Jorge demonstrated this behavior four times.

One reason for Jorge's negative attitude at times may have been his placement in the program by his mother for a second consecutive year. Typically mentees are only enrolled in the program for one school year and Jorge was not looking forward to attending for a second year.

His not wanting to attend possibly created this attitude and possibly hindered the development of his mentoring relationship.

A second possible interpretation for this behavior was that Beth was Jorge's second mentor. He started with Ernie but did not get along with Ernie. In fact, he displayed many of the same behaviors toward Ernie that he did toward Beth. Jorge often used aggressive and profane language toward Ernie and on a few occasions threatened Ernie telling him, "...I'll sock you in the face," and saying, "Fuck Ernie." The reasons for this behavior were unclear as I did not observe Ernie instigating this behavior. When interviewed, Jorge reported that Ernie got on his nerves.

Beth and Jorge missed all relationship building activities because of the switch in mentoring partners. This may have slowed the development of the mentoring relationship. Instead of having several activities during which to build trust, Beth and Jorge's first activity asked for Jorge to share personal information on his definition of success within different life domains. Jorge, when interviewed, did state that the mentoring switch was good for him and that he felt cared for by Beth, but his behavior suggested otherwise.

Another possible interpretation is the position of Beth and Ernie as mentors with a voice of authority possibly contributed to Jorge's behavior. The mentoring program, through its participant structure, gave Beth and Ernie more authority in their relationships with Jorge (Philips, 1972). Beth's authority or power in the relationship may have positioned Jorge in a way that he either felt controlled and/or his perspectives devalued.

Academic engagement.

The academic sessions sought to improve the mentee's school performance and connection to school protective factors. These sessions provided an opportunity for Beth and Jorge to discuss any issues he had within the classroom, to complete his academic work, and for Beth to demonstrate and/or discuss school accepted behaviors to Jorge. Positive internal indicators found in the observational data indicated Beth and Jorge successfully engaged in the academic sessions. Jorge consistently brought homework to the meetings, and Beth engaged Jorge with the homework activities. This is how Beth described their homework sessions, "Homework. We do that pretty well. He doesn't, you know, fight it, say's he doesn't want to do it. He just does it." There were instances of off task behaviors and distractions from others in the program, but for the majority of the session Beth and Jorge worked together to complete his homework.

Beth used mentoring strategies aligned with positive internal indicators during these sessions. I often observed Beth finding a location away from others to prevent potential distractions, orienting herself and Jorge to the curriculum activity, and she persistently engaged Jorge in his academic work. Beth often made sure Jorge brought his homework, and on the few occasions that Jorge told Beth he did not have homework, Beth would check his school bag for assignments. She also had Jorge tell her what he was currently doing in each of his classes, and if needed, go to his class to collect assignments. All of these behaviors appeared to help Jorge reconnect with school, complete his academic work, and were aligned with best practices for mentoring.

Socio-Emotional curriculum engagement.

The socio-emotional curriculum aimed to improve the mentee's connection to protective factors in the individual, peer, and school domains. The potential to improve the mentee's connection to protective factors appeared to be tied to his or her engagement in program activities. Higher levels of engagement seemed to create stronger connections to protective factors. Beth and Jorge's engagement in program activities was often limited though they did complete all the assignments. Their main limitation was a lack of dialogue during the program activities.

Observational data indicated that Beth was on-task for the socio-emotion sessions and initiated these activities promptly after the activity introduction. She began the activities by explaining the directions and asking Jorge for examples on how the day's topic related to his life. Jorge, during the first few mentoring sessions, participated but only with a brief answer that satisfied the answer and allowed the activity to progress. Beth initially asked follow-up questions to expand on Jorge initial answer, but after several failed attempts she stopped and at times become visibly frustrated. Beth commented on why she stopped asking follow-up questions during an interview, "...he usually looks at me with a blank stare and then he goes back to what he was doing. "She described his participation in these activities as:

Excerpt 18 – 4/28/11 Beth Third Interview

118 Yeah, like I would ask him the question. He would say it and write it down. Then
119 if I ask him a question, he would look at me and then he'd go back down and then
120 I've have to ask him another question from the paper.

I observed this behavior from Jorge at the start of their mentoring relationship. His behavior worsened over time eventually becoming less vocal and at times rude to Beth.

Below is an excerpt from a conversation between Beth and Jorge on the barriers that may prevent school success for Jorge:

Excerpt 19 – 3/24/11 *Support Systems and Barriers* Activity

121 B: Ok. So what helps you overcome the barriers in high school? Support system,
 122 a formal or informal network of people, services, relationships, and organizations
 123 that exist to sustain a person throughout their growth and their life. Ok. So this
 124 one... We think stuff that's going to help you. What helps you in school and what
 125 helps you remain sane and stuff? I've learned through experience, mindset,
 126 personality traits.

127 J: I don't know.

128 B: Ok, lets see. What...are you...confident in yourself? That's one.

129 J:

130 B: Ok. Do you...think critically or...I don't know. Um...do you have high
 131 self-esteem?

132 J: What's self-esteem?

133 B: Self-esteem is like what you think about yourself.

134 J: Yeah.

135 B: Ok. Then put self-esteem.

The activity asked the mentees to define success and set a goal for the future in attempt to develop potential connections to protective factors as they relate to the mentee's long-term goal.

As a mentor, Beth displayed positive internal indicators in this example. She was on-task, provided instruction, and attempted to engage Jorge in the activity several times. But after two unsuccessful attempts, frustration led to a less collaborative approach. Beth provided an answer that satisfied the answer and checked with Jorge to determine its accuracy. After she defined self-esteem, they both agreed to use self-esteem as an example for an internal support system. There was little conversation on what self-esteem meant, what kind of self-esteem Jorge possessed, or why it could be an important individual support system.

This is not to say there wasn't value in completing the activity without extensive conversation. Simply completing the activity may have promoted Jorge's thinking about the program concept. When interviewed, Jorge reported the socio-emotional activities helped him think, "...about not going the wrong way. Drugs. Out on the street. That stuff." Jorge remarked that the socio-emotional activities helped him think about his future more, and he now wanted to go to college and become a mechanic. Overall though, it seems his level of participation in the program activities limited their potential for connecting Jorge to protective factors.

Connections to protective factors.

Beth and Jorge's mentoring relationship displayed both positive and negative indicators. I observed Beth using positive internal indicators such as engaging in the curriculum and staying on task, but she was unable to develop a strong mentoring relationship with Jorge. The negative indicators I observed included: limited dialogue between Beth and Jorge, little discussion of the importance of the activity, and disrespectful behavior from both Beth and Jorge. Though Jorge did not display increased connections with protective factors in the individual domain, there were mixed findings in the school and peer domains.

Individual protective factors.

Jorge's connections with the individual domain protective factors were hard to determine through the methodology of this study. Jorge had little to no improved connections based on the data I collected. Jorge rarely communicated individual or personal information with Beth during the program sessions or during the interview process. There was not conclusive evidence that he did develop connections though he did participate in the program activities and provided answers that suggested he was placing a value on achievement and his future.

Jorge's emotional intelligence scores decreased from the pretest to the posttest with the exception of stress management (See Table 5 for Jorge's BarOn Emotional Intelligence scores). This scale remained the same. The stress management scale rated as an average score corresponding to an adequately developed level of emotional and social capacity. The drop in scores in adaptability and total EQ's were over one standard deviation, but remained in the same category, average, from the pretest to posttest.

The intrapersonal score dropped from a high category, representing a well-developed trait, to an average category. This decrease did change the category of the scale but was within one standard deviation. It did seem that Jorge understood his emotions but had trouble expressing them to others. This was most evident in how he completed the socio-emotional activities. His answers reflected a certain amount of thought and/or introspection, but he had difficulty or lacked the desire to communicate his feelings and/or needs with either of his mentors.

Table 5

Jorge's BarOn Emotional Intelligence Survey Scales

Mentee	Test	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Stress Management	Adaptability	Total EQ
Jorge	Pretest	116	92	99	102	109
	Posttest	105	71	99	93	94

The largest decrease from pretest to posttest occurred in the interpersonal scale, which decreased by over one standard deviation. The pretest score rated as an average quality score, and it dropped to the very low category in the posttest. This very low score corresponded with an underdeveloped ability to develop relationships and understand the emotions of others. This category was consistent with Jorge's behavior towards both of his mentors during the program activities. It appeared Jorge had a hard time developing a relationship and/or understanding the feelings of Beth and Ernie.

Peer protective factors.

Jorge's gang attitude survey results displayed a remarkably low pretest and posttest scores (See Table 6 for Jorge's Gang Attitude scores). Conversations with the program staff indicated Jorge was at-risk for gang involvement. The low scores seemed artificially low due to his admittance on the negative influence his friends held over him and with the school liaison's knowledge of Jorge's background.

Table 6

Jorge's Gang Attitude Survey

Mentee	Pretest	Posttest
Jorge	8	15

Jorge's gang attitude survey score along with his interview data suggested that he understood the impact his friends could have on his behavior. Jorge recounted during our final interview that the program helped him learn, "That I need to pick better friends...so some friends won't get me into trouble." His gang attitude score could reflect an understanding of the negative influence friends in gangs could have on him as the previous quote suggests. Later in the same interview, Jorge stated that program did not help him with negative peer pressure, but it helped him to, "...telling my friends to do good." If his friends did "do good" or improve their behavior, this would increase his connections to protective factors within this domain.

School protective factors.

There were mixed results on school protective factors (See Table 7 for Jorge's school performance data for the 1st and 2nd semesters of the 2010-2011 school year). Jorge's grade point average, attendance, and number of behavioral referrals remained consistent from the first semester to the second semester. However, there was evidence that the program was effective in promoting school related behaviors.

Table 7

Jorge's School Performance Data for First and Second 2010-2011 Semesters

Mentee	Attendance		Grade Point Average		Number of Behavioral Referrals	
	First	Second	First	Second	First	Second
Jorge	91%	94%	1.5	1.3	0	0

The program activities place an emphasis on the importance of education and through discussions with Beth, however limited they were, Jorge potentially gained insights on how to successfully participate within the school. Jorge noted through interviews that he learned the importance of not talking back to his teachers, and he learned what was expected of him. Jorge

reported that he used Beth's advice on completing his schoolwork on time. His comments included, "Like she tried to help me out on a project that I had. And I took her advice and I got it done on time. And I turned it in and I got a good grade."

I observed Beth using her experience as a student to convey the importance of respecting teachers, to talk back less, and insights on other behaviors that would lead to success in school. Beth believed that Jorge, "...learned that he wants to get, he has to get good grades." Jorge's conveyed to me in our last interview that it was important for him to do well in school and to graduate. Jorge said that he now wants to graduate high school.

Beth and Jorge case study summary.

Beth and Jorge displayed many positive internal indicators, but they lacked the discussion and personal sharing during program activities to be considered a high quality mentoring relationship. Also, at times it appeared they simply didn't get along with one another, and thus were unable to develop a strong mentoring bond. Despite this, Jorge provided quality answers during the program activities and seemed to increase connection with protective factors in the school and peer domains. He reported that he learned the importance of doing well in school, turning in his homework, graduating high school, and having friends that "do good."

Ernie & Sam: A Low Quality Relationship

Ernie, an 11th grade mentor, and Sam, his mentee, are struggling with their engagement in program activities. Both are often distracted by other mentors and mentees in the program, and Sam is exceptional at changing the conversation away from program activities. Today, Ernie is sitting alone in the cafeteria waiting for Sam to arrive. The program officially started several minutes ago, but it has become a common practice for Sam to arrive late. After ten minutes Sam

arrives, and he makes his presence known by loudly talking to those around him as he casually strolls through the room. He is often distracted by others in the program and today is no different as he stops to talk to everyone it seems except for Ernie.

The program coordinator begins the “Support Systems and Barriers” activity before Sam is finished talking to a group of mentees. Sam ends up sitting next to the group of mentees across the room from Ernie during the introduction to the activity. After the introduction is over, Ernie yells for Sam to come over but he replies with “Nah fool!” Today it takes the program staff interceding to finally get Sam to sit next to Ernie.

Once together Ernie attempts to engage Sam in the program activity, but Sam begins a conversation with his best friend, Frank, who is also a mentee in the program. This mentee eventually transferred to another school because of his poor school performance. The conversation is in Spanish which Ernie does not understand and thus prevents him from joining. Ernie, frustrated comments, “You’re so happy I don’t know what you’re saying.” This has no effect on Sam who continues his conversation in Spanish.

The program coordinator comes by the table to check in and asks if Sam and Ernie would like to move to a more isolated table away from distractions. Sam says, “Nah I’m cool.” Both Ernie and the program coordinator try to convince Sam to move but to no avail. After the program coordinator leaves, Sam becomes more hostile in his tone and flatly refuses to move. Ernie becomes frustrated and says, “I’m going to have to be harder on you.” This ends the conversation of moving, and Ernie again attempts to engage Sam in the activity.

Today’s activity asks Ernie and Sam to identify milestones and barriers that could either help or hinder achieving Sam’s long term goal. The activity was designed for the mentee to

become aware of potential protective factors and risk factors that relate to his or her long-term goal. Sam is often distracted during this process first by a phone call and then by others around him.

After a few attempts by Ernie to determine what barriers may prevent him from reaching his goal, Sam answers with “More life.” He explains, “Like when I die.” Ernie laughs and asks Sam what may stop him from passing his classes. Sam, with little thought says, “I don’t know.” Ernie responds by suggesting talking in class as a barrier. With no response from Sam, Ernie writes down talking in class and moves on to the next question.

Fast-forward to one month later. Sam’s friend, Frank, has transferred to another school, and Sam’s behavior has seemed to shift. Sam arrives to program on time, smiling, and heads directly toward Ernie. Ernie is sitting away from the other program participants possibly taking a proactive step in preventing distractions. Ernie asks Sam if he has any homework. Sam indicates that he does, but he left it in his classroom. Without any disagreements or distractions they both head to Sam’s classroom and collect his assignment. Once back they work together and complete the activity. During the activity, neither Ernie nor Sam are distracted and their conversations are centered on the assignment. This change in behavior continued for the rest of the program year. What a difference a month makes.

Relationship development.

Prior to Sam’s change in behavior²⁵, I characterized Ernie and Sam’s mentoring relationship as low quality due to negative internal engagement indicators displayed by both mentor and mentee. Evidence from observational data indicated Ernie was not task-driven during

²⁵ I characterized Ernie and Sam’s mentoring relationship as low quality based on the majority of the observed sessions and not the final two weeks which coincided with Sam’s change in behavior. I observed this behavior, the low quality relationship behavior, for the first 3 1/2 months of the four month relationship.

the program activities. He was often distracted and was slow to initiate the program activities. These problems engaging in the curriculum were exacerbated by a core group of friends that Ernie and Sam sat next to during program activities. When asked, Ernie admitted that his and Sam's work ethic was their greatest weakness. Ernie's attendance also was an issue and it decreased significantly during the last month of the program. Overall he attended 78% of the sessions.

Ernie's qualities as a mentor.

Ernie and Beth were friends at school, and Beth recruited Ernie to become a mentor. Ernie, by his own account, was not a great student. He attended and was friendly with the school staff but was not a high achieving student. He participated in school activities including the track team and the drama club. Through discussions with Ernie, he informed me that he wanted to give back to students who were struggling in school.

Ernie was very sociable. He seemed to know everyone in the mentoring program; always upbeat, friendly, and willing to talk - very willing to talk. His gestures, both verbal and physical were animated. He added a certain level of excitement to every conversation. This seemed to be a great characteristic for developing a mentoring relationship, but he struggled with his two mentees: first with Jorge, and then with Sam. This section will focus on his relationship with Sam who he was paired with for the majority of the mentoring program year.

Ernie, as a mentor, appeared to be motivated by the inherent responsibilities of a mentor, and his mentoring style reflected this. He tried to remain engaged in the program activities, but Sam's frequent distractions often resulted in him becoming distracted. When focused, Ernie used the worksheet as a guide to facilitate conversations on the program concepts. He placed an

importance on completing the worksheet even when Sam refused, and I often observed Ernie providing the answers to questions without discussion and/or participation from Sam. His identity as a mentor appeared to be tied to the completion of the worksheet.

He seemed to believe that learning from the program activities occurred through discussion, when he could engage Sam, but also from providing Sam with examples. These examples were a mixture of Ernie's own experiences and what he thought would relate to Sam's personal experiences. Sam did, although it was rare at the beginning of the relationship, share experiences he was facing as a student, and Ernie incorporated these experiences into the program activities

Ernie's behavior seem to be evidence of his belief that Sam's presence in the mentoring program signified an internal motivation to align his behavior with school related behaviors. I gleaned this from conversations with Ernie. He suggested that Sam wanted to improve and he, Sam, knew the mentoring program was one of the steps he could take.

Ernie, despite being distracted very easily, was extremely positive towards Sam's accomplishments within and outside of the program. This, along with his patience during Sam's off-task behaviors, was his greatest strength. Sam, as a mentee, was very challenging and would often use disrespectful behavior and ignore Ernie. Ernie, for the most part, maintained his composure during these challenging times. When opportunities became present, and when Ernie wasn't distracted, he attempted to reengage Sam back into the activity.

Sam's qualities as a mentee.

Conversations with the program staff indicated that Sam did not have a strong male presence at home. The new pairing with Ernie was in one part to provide Sam with a positive

male role model. Sam also indicated to me that he thought the mentoring switch was, "...more cool," cause Ernie "...he's a boy." Sam felt he could, "...talk about all things," and he believed his had a better relationship with Ernie than Beth.

The school liaison's comments on Sam described him as a difficult student, and at the time of his enrollment in the program Sam was close to being expelled from the high school. He frequently ditched classes. When he did attend class, he was verbally aggressive with his teachers often yelling and using profanities. At the start of the program he was failing most of his classes.

As the vignette above illustrated, Sam often arrived late. When I asked Sam why he was often late he said because he was, "... chilling with my homegirls....my homeboys outside." When he did arrive he often talked to a group of 3-4 other mentees before Ernie. I was not positioned to hear all the conversations, but the conversations I overheard focused on the school day, events happening in their lives, and on girls they were dating. Sam's first language is Spanish, and I often overheard him conversing in Spanish with the other mentees.

When he did sit with Ernie, Sam was often distracted. He frequently changed the subject of the conversation away from program activities and talked to others in Spanish. Sam told me that his first language is Spanish and it's, "more better for me to speak in Spanish." When speaking English he mumbled frequently and spoke slower and less fluid than when speaking in Spanish. Sam indicated to me during our second interview that he understood English but, "...I'm confused when I talk."

At times he refused to do work and needed multiple efforts from his mentor to begin an activity. Ernie recounted his frustrations with Sam, "...he doesn't listen. Is always he's hardest

thing. Because he's very awesome. Just how he doesn't listen is just always the hardest part." As this quote indicated, Sam could be very challenging, but he used his charm to relieve tensions in his mentoring relationship. Ernie described Sam as, "really funny. He's very outgoing." Sam's personality served in mending any wounds his lack of engagement in program activities caused.

A roadblock to the relationship.

A possible roadblock to the development of Ernie and Sam's mentoring relation was a communication issue. Sam's first language was Spanish, and he seemed to have problems conversing in English. Sam expressed to me that, "Every time I talk [it's] in Spanish. When I'm talking in English, this is with my teachers." He appeared more comfortably conversing in Spanish as he was more fluid and lively with this language. Ernie did not speak Spanish and was unable to communicate with Sam in his first language. Below is Ernie's take on the language difficulties:

Excerpt 20 – 4/26/11 Ernie Third Interview

136 It does bother me. I feel a little left out like a third wheelish kind of person.

137 Where I could help him...like him and (another mentor) and Gertrude how they

138 can all talk to each other in Spanish. He understands it quicker. That's the part

139 where I am like uh....that sucks for me. So I'm not able to help him to his full

140 potential.

The language gap hindered Sam and Ernie's ability to communicate with one another and possibly slowed the development of the mentoring relationship.

Academic engagement.

These sessions intended to provide an opportunity for Sam to complete any missing academic work and through this process connect with protective factors in the school domain. Ernie and Sam needed to engage effectively in academic work for these sessions to be successful in achieving their intended goal. The opening vignette illustrated the negative internal indicators for engagement from both Ernie and Sam. These negative internal indicators included: Ernie's inability to maintain Sam's attention, lack of persistence in engaging Sam in the program activities, and Ernie not moving Sam away from the distraction.

My field notes revealed that Ernie and Sam consistently struggled with their engagement during the academic sessions. Sam often came unprepared to these sessions and would arrive late. When Ernie asked Sam if he brought his homework, Sam used excuses, talked to others, or played on his phone to distract Ernie from the task. Sam's behavior often led to Ernie becoming frustrated and giving up on getting Sam to do homework.

In one example that occurred near the end of the fifth month of the program, Sam arrived to the program session late, unprepared, and began talking to other students before speaking or sitting with Ernie.

Excerpt 21 – 3/22/11 Academic Session

141 E: Why don't you have homework today?

142 S: Huh?

143 E: What don't you have homework today?

144 S: Cause I wasn't here.

145 E: No you were here. I saw you this morning.

146 S: No, the other days.

147 E: Oh the other days. Why didn't you get it today?

Ernie, after a several minutes of off-task talk, brought the conversation back to Sam and his missed classes. He asked Sam why he wasn't at school, and Sam responded that he was ditching. The conversation continued with Ernie reprimanding Sam for ditching class but ultimately the conversation never returned to Sam's academic homework. Both students were distracted by others around them, and Ernie's inability to speak Spanish limited him from joining Sam's conversations.

This academic session was not unique and highlighted a persistent theme in this relationship; Sam's avoidance and use of others for a distraction from participating in the day's activity. I observed this regardless if the activity was academic work or the socio-emotional curriculum. Sam expressed to me during our second interview his preference was to talk to others while working:

Excerpt 22 – 3/17/11 Sam Second Interview

148 Cause I'm talking with my homeboys like 20 or 25 [minutes] and I'm using like

149 20 [minutes] for working. I was talking with my homeboy like five [minutes]

150 and working and talk[ing] you know. I was right here, and my homeboy was

151 right there talk[ing] and working. And I think I'm working more.

Sam seemed to believe that working and talking with his friends was not only acceptable but an effective way to participate in the program activities. What he didn't realize was that he often came unprepared and when he did talk to other students he did not work on the program activities.

A change in Sam's behavior.

A significant change in Ernie and Sam's mentoring relationship occurred during the last two weeks of the program. As described in the opening vignette, Sam arrived on time for the last academic session of the program year and went directly to Ernie. Ernie asked Sam if he had homework, and Sam admitted that he did but he left in his class. They both went back to his classroom to retrieve the work, and once back they began working on it immediately. During this homework session, Ernie assisted Sam with any problems he had and offered congratulatory remarks on all finished problems, and before the session was over they completed the assignment. Afterwards, during our third interview Sam told me, "I don't play anymore you know. Cause I need to pass every class you know. I have like 75 credits. You need 123 [to be a] Junior." It appeared Sam realized how the program could help him earn enough credits to become a Junior, and this resulted in him changing his behavior.

Socio-Emotional curriculum engagement.

The effectiveness of socio-emotional curriculum ability to improve the mentee's connection to protective factors depended on the mentee's engagement in curriculum activities and his or her mentoring relationship. A stronger bond with his or her mentor and quality engagement in the activities seemed to improve the chances the mentee would find value in the activities. I found similar difficulties Ernie and Sam faced in the academic sessions in the socio-emotional sessions thus limiting the potential of the sessions. Sam was often late, he talked to others, and he demonstrated low engagement in the program activities. Ernie described Sam as, "difficult," during these sessions. Ernie continued, "Sam lacks motivation...getting him started is

the hard part. But doing it and finishing it is the easy part.” I found that Sam did have a hard time starting activities but also staying on task and finishing the activity.

This section’s vignette highlighted Ernie and Sam’s limited conversations during the socio-emotional activities. Sam’s responses often either shifted the discussion away from the activity or he said that he did not know or understand the question. The *What is Success?* activity asked Ernie and Sam to define success in different areas of the Sam’s life. Ernie began the activity by asking Sam to define what success was at home. Their conversation follows:

Excerpt 23 – 2/17/11 *What is Success?* Activity

152 E: Well what is success at home for you?

153 S: This?

154 E: Yeah. So when you’re at home but what do you need to do?

155 S: Fuck.

156 E: That’s not, no you’re not going to be become a... awe you can become a pimp

157 but that’s something different. So to get...at a house...what would you...

158 S: Watching TV.

159 E: ... need for success.

160 S: Watch TV.

161 E: Watch TV?

162 S: Yeah.

163 E: Do you think TV is success?

164 S: MTV.

165 E: No not MTV.

- 166 S: It's like. Porn.
- 167 E: It's educational....oh my gosh. Educational channels?
- 168 S: I don't like this.
- 169 E: You don't what?
- 170 S: I don't wanna to watch this.
- 171 E: I don't know when it is.
- 172 S: How does it work education TV? It's so gay.
- 173 E: You don't watch animal planet?
- 174 S: Yeah sometimes you know.
- 175 E: See that's educational.
- 176 S: No.
- 177 E: Yes.

Ernie seemed persistent; unfortunately Sam did not appear to take this activity seriously. After this conversation Sam became distracted by others around him and refused to participate. Ernie tried to bargain with Sam saying, "Ok, the faster we get through this the faster we can get done." And later, "Ok Sam, when we get done you can do whatever the heck you want." Eventually Sam agreed on educational TV as an answer for success at home. His answers to the other questions were "teachers" for success at school and "listen" for success with friends. This conversation was an answer reply format without discussion of the importance or reason behind Sam's answers.

The final question asked the mentee to define success in life. What follows is Ernie and Sam's conversation:

Excerpt 24 – 2/17/11 *What is Success?* Activity

178 E: What do you need to succeed in life Sam?

179 S: Um...cars.

180 E: Ok, you don't need cars. What do you need to get the cars?

181 S: Money.

182 E: What do you need to get the money?

183 S: Job.

184 E: A job, see?

There was more discussion for this answer but there was little discussion behind the meaning of Sam's answers. It seems this conversation missed an opportunity to discuss how a job related to success in Sam's life. I observed this type of conversation, brief and without discussion, throughout the socio-emotional sessions. In many activities Ernie provided the answers with little input from Sam. When Sam did respond to Ernie it was often with, "I don't know" as illustrated in the vignette.

In response to Sam's limited responses, Ernie attempted to go through the worksheet and provide answers when Sam refused. I interpreted this as Ernie placing value in going through the worksheet even with limited participation from Sam. Ernie appeared to believe that going over the worksheet could contribute to Sam learning the concepts from the program activities.

A change in mentoring strategy.

It became apparent through my observational data that Ernie developed a new mentoring strategy to increase Sam's engagement in program activities. He explained this strategy below:

Excerpt 25 – 4/26/11 Ernie Third Interview

185 We just do it where...we break it down. Then we go through it. I told him the
186 faster he does it, the faster he works the more time he'll have not to do work at all.
187 And so we use that kind of tactic.

This new approach came with moderate success. Sam was still distracted, still answered questions with I don't know, and Ernie still provided most of the answers, but Ernie and Sam seemed to enjoy their time together. I observed more laughing and the sharing of personal information after Ernie's new approach. Sam also began to arrive on time and going directly to Ernie. This changed strategy occurred during the last two weeks of the mentoring program.

Connections to protective factors.

I did not expect to see dramatic changes in Sam's connection to protective based on the quality level of his mentoring relationship. But the change in Sam's behavior during the last two weeks of the program year seemed to improve his connections with protective factors. Sam appeared to increase his connections with school and individual protective factors though not with peer protective factors.

School protective factors.

Sam reported the mentoring program helped him think about his future, specifically his plans for college. He also noted that the program helped him complete his homework on time, eased family problems concerning his homework, and helped him learn to use more appropriate behaviors within in classroom. His school performance reflected this with increases in his attendance, grade point average, and decreases in the number of behavioral referrals (See Table 8 for Sam's school performance data for the 1st and 2nd semesters of the 2010-2011 school year).

Table 8

Sam's School Performance Data for First and Second 2010-2011 Semesters

Mentee	Attendance		Grade Point Average		Number of Behavioral Referrals	
	First	Second	First	Second	First	Second
Sam	94%	99%	1.09	1.4	1	0

Sam's attitude towards school appeared to change as well. Interview data indicated Sam was placing a great deal of importance on passing his classes. Sam realized he needed to, "...go to every class," with the goal of, "...pass my classes. Every class." Sam's quotes suggest that he placed a greater value on achieving in school which indicate an increased connection with school protective factors.

Individual protective factors.

The program coordinator noticed a change in Sam's connection with individual protective factors over the course of the program year. She described this below:

Excerpt 26 – 4/28/11 Program Coordinator Second Interview

188 I think he's a pretty classic mentee. Acts like he doesn't want to be there. He acts
 189 like he doesn't want help or anything like that, but he's just screaming for
 190 attention. You know the minute you move away he's screaming for attention.
 191 Especially in the beginning. By the end you could tell he was a lot more calm and
 192 comfortable with himself. Which was really nice. He's definitely very influenced
 193 by his peers and peer pressure. His posse would be out that front door telling him
 194 to leave the meetings a lot of days. I think Sam's a follower. I think whatever
 195 crew's he's in I think he was following them a lot. And toward the end I saw a lot

196 more growth in terms of him doing his own thing. Because I think he started to
 197 realize that school was important.

This behavior that Sam exhibited was not unique in the program. I often observed mentees acting out for attention when they first entered the program. What was unique for Sam was this behavior persisted over the course of the program. Most mentees seemed to “settle-down” as they continued their participation in the program. Sam eventually “settled-down” during the last two weeks of the program as described in his vignette, but his change in behavior took longer than all other mentees who remained in the program for the duration of the school year.

Sam’s emotional intelligence scores increased by over one standard deviation in all scales except for adaptability which decreased slightly (See Table 9 for Sam’s BarOn survey results).

The change still placed his adaptability score in the average category which represents an adequately developed emotional and social capacity for this trait. His intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management and total EQ all improved from low, indicating a poorly developed emotional or social capacity, to average. Sam took the posttest after the conclusion of the mentoring program and after his change in behavior during the program activities. His change in behavior would correspond with higher emotional intelligence scores as indicated by his posttest. Based on this, it does seem likely that Sam increased his connection to individual protective factors; namely his ability to understand and use his own emotions effectively.

Table 9

Sam’s BarOn Emotional Intelligence Survey Scales

Mentee	Test	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Stress Management	Adaptability	Total EQ
Sam	Pretest	80	77	85	105	83
	Posttest	107	98	101	102	97

Peer protective factors.

The influence Sam's peers held over him was evident in the mentoring program. This influence manifested itself in his tardiness to the program, asking to leave early, and low engagement in program activities. I often observed Sam ignoring his mentor in favor of his best friend or the other mentees in the program.

Again, his change in behavior did lessen his original behavioral traits, but Sam still did not appear to develop strong connections with peer protective factors. When interviewed both Sam and Ernie concluded that Sam did not increase his connections in this domain or became more aware of the negative impact Sam's friends had on his behavior. His gang attitude supported this as his score increased from pretest to posttest indicating that he still had favorable attitudes toward gang involvement and friends involved with gangs (See Table 10 for Sam's Gang Attitude Survey scores).

Table 10

Sam's Gang Attitude Survey

Mentee	Pretest	Posttest
Sam	42	57

Ernie and Sam case study summary.

This relationship began with the lowest frequency of positive internal indicators but slowly developed over time. At first, and for the majority of the program year, both Ernie and Sam displayed high frequencies of off-task engagement, lack of back and forth dialogue, and limited personal sharing. But a change occurred during the last two weeks that corresponded with increased positive internal indicators by both Ernie and Sam. I attributed this to two factors.

First, Ernie and Sam may have needed this much time to develop their mentoring relationship. Secondly, it appeared that Sam realized and/or wanted to achieve more academically, and he believed the mentoring program could assist him with this goal. Unfortunately this change occurred during the last two weeks of the program possibly limiting the potential benefits of this new behavior. Sam, however, did report increased connections in the individual and school domains.

Summary

Across all the mentoring pairs it appears that the time spent in the mentoring relationship provided an opportunity to discuss aspects of the mentee's connection with protective factors. This could be through relating it directly to his or her personal experience as demonstrated in Ivan and Darcy's relationship. It could occur more subtly through the completion of homework, and through the consistent mentor presence as observed in Beth and Jorge's relationship. Or it could occur through a slowly developing relationship as witness with Ernie and Sam's. There were struggles in these relationships, and at times mentees appeared disinterested and not engaged in program activities. But all three mentees reported increases in their connections to protective factors which was confirmed through observational, interview, and program artifact data.

Also important to note is the difference in engagement styles used by the three mentoring pairs. I will not argue for a "correct" way for a mentor to engage his or her mentee in program activities, but certain types of conversational elements did appear more effective than others. Conversations there were highlighted by back and forth dialogue and frequent sharing of personal information appeared to create more discussion on how protective factors related to the

mentee. These conversations discussed the mentee's personal information more frequently and in greater detail than the other types of conversations. These types of conversations also coincide with the internal indicators developed by Nakkula and Harris (2005). The other engagement styles consisted of little back and forth dialogue and higher frequencies of off-task behaviors.

I originally expected to find a clear difference between the quality level of the relationship and the mentees' connections with protective factors and increases in school performance data. What I found was small improvements in school performance and increases to all three mentees' connections with protective factors. It appears the program was successful in creating change in the mentee's connection and/or awareness of protective factors, but more time is needed to determine the any long-lasting changes in the mentee's school performance data. This is in part due to timing of curriculum activities, which occurred during the second semester. I believe there was not enough time between the mentee's engagement in the program curriculum and the end of the semester to expect significant changes to the mentee's school performance data.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

Each of the three case studies presented a different engagement approach to the program curriculum. The vignette focused on Darcy and Ivan's mentoring relationship highlighted Darcy's persistence, and the higher level of personal sharing between mentor-mentee than I found in the other two mentoring relationships. During the discussion of Beth and Jorge, I highlighted their effectiveness in completing the program activities, but their lack of communication. Ernie and Sam were unique compared to the other mentoring pairs in that their behavior changed significantly from the start to the end of the program year. For the majority of the sessions both seemed disengaged with the activities and each other, but a change occurred during the last two weeks as Sam significantly altered his behavior during the program sessions.

The case study approach highlights the importance of understanding the nature of mentoring relationships. Each relationship had strengths and weaknesses that affected its quality level. This would not have been made visible had I used a less process-oriented methodology. Attending only to changes in quantitative data in the mentees' school performance data or survey scores would have missed Darcy's effective mentoring techniques, the difficulties Beth and Jorge had communicating, or Sam's change in behavior over the course of his relationship with Ernie. The case methodology allowed for a greater description of how the mentor-mentee relationship developed over time and interacted with the program design features.

Previous studies have focused on a describing the changes or lack of changes that occur within a mentee. Often these studies cite the outcomes of participation in the mentoring program without discussing the unique processes found within a program and/or the mentoring

relationships. This study called attention to two important aspects that are often overlooked. First, in Chapter 6 I discussed the intended versus enacted program to give the reader an understanding of how the program attempted to facilitate change in the mentee. During this investigation it became clear that the enacted program differed from the intended program creating tensions in the program. Tensions can be opportunities for mentoring programs to improve their practice, and ultimately create stronger mentoring relationships. Second, in Chapter 7 I provided three in-depth case studies on different quality levels of mentoring relationships. This approach was used to highlight the different communication and engagement strategies used by the mentoring pairs, and then to compare these differences to connections with protective factors and the mentee's school performance data. Practitioners can use this information to promote behaviors that have been found to support the development of the mentee.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present and discuss the answers to my research questions. I will then discuss the theoretical, methodological, and practical significance of this study. I conclude with a discussion future lines of research inquiry that build directly out of this study.

Research Questions

I will now take a closer look at my three research questions to analyze how the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program promoted change within the mentee. The first research question, *How does the YESS's cross-age peer mentoring program promote protective factor(s)*, required a review of the program artifacts, interviews with program staff and participants, and observations of the enacted program. The second question, *What are the*

characteristics of the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring relationships, was answered through observation and interviews with the mentors, mentee, and program staff. The third research question, *How do the mentees change over the course of the year*, was addressed through school performance data and interviews with the participants and staff. What follows is a description of the findings along with my interpretations.

How does the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring program promote protective factor(s)?

The YESS Institute's mentoring program attempted to promote protective factors in the individual, school, and peer domains through its curriculum, peer mentoring model, and increased connections to the school; each of these will be described more fully in the sections below.

Curriculum design.

The curriculum design sought to increase socio-emotional competencies within the mentee through an over-arching activity, *The Road to Success*. This activity asked mentees to identify a long-term goal. The activities within the curriculum sought to strengthen protective factors in the all three of the above mention domains. Protective factor concepts²⁶ found within the program curriculum included: self-esteem and self-awareness (individual protective factors), personal assets (individual protective factors), identifying support systems (individual, school, and peer protective factors), identifying potential barriers, (individual, school, and peer protective factors), and improving school related behaviors (individual and school protective factors).

²⁶ The type of protective factors is in parenthesis.

The design of the activities placed an emphasis on conversations between mentor and mentee. Each activity began with a whole group discussion, and it was up to the mentor to relate the activity concept to the mentee during their one-on-one mentoring session. Thus the impact of the activity on promoting protective factors seemed tied to the mentoring relationship's quality level.

Darcy and Ivan's relationship had many higher quality characteristics when compared to the other mentoring relationships in this study. Darcy worked to help engage Ivan in the activities by relating the concepts to his personal life. Darcy often pushed Ivan's thinking beyond his initial response, which appeared to help him develop a greater understanding of how his actions could become more aligned with behaviors promoted by the program activities. By the end of the program, Ivan was able to articulate his connection to protective factors to a higher degree in the program activities and the interviews than the other two mentees.

There was far less discussion between the mentor and the mentee in the other two mentoring relationships during the program activities. Jorge, the mentee in the medium level relationship, did complete the activities but without discussion with his mentor. Therefore it was hard to determine the impact of the activities on his connection with protective factors. The low quality mentoring relationship's off-task behavior appeared to prevent any significant connections with protective factors. Sam did however report increased connections with school and individual protective factors, which may have been due to his improved behavior during the last two program weeks. Overall, these two relationships lacked the high level of discussion and engagement in program activities found in the high quality mentoring relationship.

Peer mentoring model.

The program also attempted to strengthen the mentee's connection to protective factors through its peer mentoring model. The program staff believed this model assisted in developing the mentoring relationship due to shared experiences between mentor and mentee. Through this relationship the mentor could demonstrate his or her norms to a mentee. Again, the significance of this as a protective factor appeared to be tied to the quality level of the mentoring relationship. Darcy, the mentor in the high quality relationship, was able to relate her personal experiences to Ivan. She also used her influence to persuade Ivan to attend class and the program sessions. This level of influence was not found in the other two relationships.

Connections to school.

The program sought to increase the mentees' connections to school most notably in two ways. The first was through the academic sessions during which the mentee brought school work to complete with his or her mentee. This also provided time for the mentor to discuss behavioral expectations within the classroom and to promote the value of graduating from high school. The potential of these sessions to increase the mentees' connection with school again appeared tied to his or her mentoring relationship. The stronger the bond the more effective these sessions were for the mentee to complete his or her homework and for the mentor to teach attitudes and behaviors aligned with school expectations.

Darcy and Ivan spent the greatest amount of time discussing Ivan's school performance and behavior while also completing his academic work. Beth and Jorge did participate effectively in these sessions. I often observed them working together on the academic activities, but this relationship lacked the level of discussion on classroom behaviors as found in Darcy and

Ivan's relationship. As with the socio-emotional activities, Ernie and Sam were distracted throughout these sessions often not engaging in Sam's academic work.

The second program aspect designed to increase mentees' connections to school was an increased connection with the school liaison, Dennis. He often checked in with mentees on their school performance, using the school record system to keep apprized on attendance, class grades and missing assignments, and behavioral referrals. Dennis contacted parents and/or guardians if the mentee missed mentoring sessions or school classes. This increased school support by a staff member ultimately created a new school support system for the mentees. All three mentees in the case study reported they felt cared for by Dennis and felt his efforts helped their school performance.

Summary.

In summary, it appears the effectiveness of the three features found in the program depended on the quality level of the relationship. Potential protective factors were present, but without a strong mentoring relationship the mentee's use was limited. This finding is aligned with primary socialization theory. Based on my observations, it appeared Jorge and Sam slightly improved their connections with protective factors, but during the interview process they both reported greater connections than I observed.

I attribute Jorge's reported increased connection to protective factors to his completed work despite lack of dialogue with his mentor. His connection to protective factors may have occurred internally during his participation in the activities, and thus was not captured by the observational data. Sam's increased connections to protective factors appeared tied to his change in behavior. The new behavior was more aligned with the characteristics of a high quality

mentoring relationship. This change corresponded with the third and final interview. During this interview Sam indicated that he learned how to better behave within the classroom, and he placed a greater importance on his education. Ultimately his change in behavior had the potential to increase his connections with protective factors.

What are the characteristics of the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring relationships?

The quality level of the mentoring relationship resulted in different relationship features between the mentor and mentee. I will briefly highlight the most salient features of the three mentoring relationships and discuss the mentors' potential to act as a socialization source. This discussion will center on how the mentor and mentee engaged in the curriculum and the type of conversational elements found in this engagement. It is my view that a mentor's ability to act as a socialization source is dependent on the bond between mentor and mentee. The most effective method to determine this bond is through the observed interaction between mentor and mentee during program activities. During these activities, I documented each mentoring pair's engagement and conversation to determine the frequency and quality level of internal indicators found in the relationship.

The higher quality mentoring relationship, when compared to the medium and low mentoring relationships, had the highest frequency of positive internal indicators. Darcy and Ivan shared more personal information, related the activity to the Ivan's personal life in greater detail, and had a higher frequency of on-task engagement during program activities. Darcy also uniquely used follow-up questions to Ivan's initial response to push his thinking into deeper and

more meaningful aspects. This discourse pattern was not found in the other mentoring relationships.

Darcy, through her conversation with Ivan, appeared to develop into a socialization source for Ivan. She frequently discussed behaviors that would lead to greater success within school and ways to stay out of trouble with his friends. Darcy also used her influence with Ivan to scold him when he skipped classes, got in arguments with his teachers, or missed program sessions. Ivan appeared to take these feelings to heart and reported that he felt bad when he disappointed Darcy. He also conveyed during interviews that Darcy taught him how to better behave within the classroom, the importance of succeeding within school, and the negative influence of his friends. These elements all point to Darcy becoming a valuable socialization source to Ivan.

The medium quality mentoring relationship seemed to be engaged in program activities, but they lacked the discourse features found in the high quality relationship. Beth and Jorge completed both academic and the socio-emotional activities, but their process lacked the personal sharing found in Darcy and Ivan's relationship. Beth attempted to engage Jorge in conversations, but his preferred method appeared to consist of less dialogue and more action. He completed the majority of the program activities without conversation unless he needed assistance. His written answers indicated desired responses to the curriculum activities and, interestingly, he often related his answers to his personal life.

The lack of discussion seemed to affect the potential of Beth to serve as a socialization source. There was little personal sharing between Beth and Jorge, and therefore limited opportunities for Beth to discuss her norms, how to avoid or mitigate risk factors, or how to

develop connections with protective factors. Jorge indicated that Beth helped him with his school behaviors, but she did not affect his attitudes towards protective and risk factors in the individual and peer domains. Overall it seems Beth had limited influence as a socialization source due to the lack of a strong bond and limited personal conversations with Jorge.

The low quality mentoring relationships struggled to effectively engage in curriculum activities. Ernie and Sam's relationship was characterized by infrequent personal sharing or discussion during program activities and high levels of off-task behaviors. Sam often engaged with others instead of Ernie. He often arrived late, sat with other participants, refused to participate in program activities, and/or changed the subject to avoid participation. Ernie often tried to reengage Sam but he too was easily distracted and seemed to give up easily. Once they did engage in program activities Sam often refused to answer questions that were program related, but when he did it was often with "I don't know."

Sam's behavior changed during the last two weeks of the program. This change resulted in behavior becoming more aligned with program expectations. He began to arrive on time, participate in program activities, and did not get distracted by others around him. I attributed Sam's change in behavior to two potential factors. The first was that mentoring relationships take time to develop. Sam and Ernie may have needed this much time to develop their mentoring relationship due to the mentoring switch. The second factor occurred when Sam's best friend in the program transferred to another school due to his low academic performance. This may have "awoken" Sam to the possibility that if he did not take the mentoring program more seriously he too would have to transfer to another school.

Ernie's potential as a socialization source was limited due to the lack of conversations during program activities and his off task behavior. Ernie and Sam did not appear to develop a strong enough bond for Ernie's norms to influence Sam. That is not to say that Sam did not improve his connections with protective factors, but the motivation or the connection did not appear to be due his relationship with Ernie. I believe, based on observation and interview data, that any increased connection with protective factors was due to multiple factors including internal motivations and his best friend's withdrawal from the program.

Mentoring program as socialization source.

There is evidence that the mentoring program developed into a peer cluster for the mentees. Ivan reported that he met new people within the program, and they possibly had the potential to influence his behavior. Beth also reported that the mentoring program influenced Jorge to participate in the activities. While this may not indicate a peer cluster in the strictest sense, the influence of the group to participate in the activities could possibly contribute to Jorge's understanding of program concepts thus influencing his behavior.

Sam's behavior with other mentees in the group also indicated the group's potential as a peer cluster, but in this instance a peer cluster that was not aligned with program expectations. I often observed Sam engaging in off-task behaviors with other mentees. My data collection procedures limited the amount of information I gained from these conversations. Thus I am unable to determine the influence of these conversations on Sam's behavior, but the conversations I did capture were not program related.

How do the mentees change over the course of the year?

I expected greater changes in the higher quality mentoring relationship when compared to the medium and low relationships, but this was not evident in the school performance data, emotional intelligence survey, or the gang attitude survey. Ivan improved his school attendance from the first semester to the second semester, but his second semester attendance rate was still lower than both the medium and low quality mentees. GPA increases were most substantial for the high and low quality mentees, but Jorge's grade point decreased from the first to second semester. Ivan's number of behavioral referrals stayed the same, two, for each semester, and Jorge did not receive a referral in either semesters. Sam decreased his behavioral referrals from one in the first semester to zero in the second semester.

Sam was the only mentee to improve his emotional intelligence survey from the pretest to the posttest. Ivan and Jorge's scores both decreased in all but one of the scales. Ivan's gang attitude survey results decreased from the pretest to the posttest indicating a decrease in positive attitudes toward gang related behaviors. Both Jorge's and Sam's gang attitude survey scores increased.

This information seems contradictory to my original hypothesis, particularly when Sam's data is considered. Ivan's and Jorge's scores better align with my original expectations. Ivan improved in two out of the three measures: school performance data and the gang attitude survey. I believe the reason for his small improvements was due to his poor attendance in school. Despite a strong bond with his mentor, Ivan's school attendance was still at 80% for the second semester, and he only attended 53% of program sessions²⁷. I believe his low but improving

²⁷ Ivan attended 40% of the first semester program sessions and 65% of the second semester program sessions. Ivan's attendance in both the school and program increased from the first semester to second semester.

attendance rates along with possibly needing more time to demonstrate any learned behaviors were possible reasons for Ivan not demonstrating greater improvements.

I originally expected the medium quality mentoring quality mentee to demonstrate mixed results, and Jorge's data appears to demonstrate this. His school performance remained relatively consistent and his emotional intelligence scores improved, while his pro-gang attitude scores increased. Jorge seemed to learn behaviors that he could use in the future, but with the limited dialogue during program activities it was difficult to capture his thinking. I believe Jorge's lack of connection with Beth resulted in his limited discussion during program activities and his mixed results.

Sam's scores are the most puzzling. I expected to see limited to no improvements based on the quality of his mentoring relationship. However, Sam improved in his school performance data and his emotional intelligence scores. Sam behavior during the majority of the mentoring sessions was quite challenging, but it improved during the last two weeks of the program. This coincided with the last academic month of the second semester and the emotional intelligence survey posttest. This may have resulted in the increased performance data, specifically the increases in GPA and his emotional intelligence scores.

Learned school practices.

The learning of norms and/or school practices aligned more consistently with my original hypothesis. All three mentees reported improvement and/or learned school practices from their mentors, but Ivan appeared to learn more concrete behaviors and study habits than the other two mentees. He reported that he placed an increased value on achieving in class, graduating from high school, and he learned how to better behave in class. This last one was of special

importance as he had at least one teacher with whom he had multiple confrontations. Jorge and Sam's improvement appeared to be tied to placing a greater importance on graduating high school and completing homework.

Implications of this Research

Through the analysis of the case study data several implications became clear as they related to the different relationship quality levels. In this section I discuss the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this study. I will also discuss the limitations of this study and suggest recommendations for future research and practice within the three different implication sections.

Theoretical implications.

Although previous studies have analyzed the result of participation in a mentoring relationship, there is a lack of research on the processes involved in the enactment of mentoring relationships. This study attempted not only to capture the inner workings of mentoring relationships, but also to understand how these relationship features could potentially facilitate change within a mentee. I used primary socialization theory to describe how a mentoring program could create change within a mentee. From this perspective, a strong bond is needed between the individual (mentee) and a socialization source (mentor) for the individual to learn and use the behaviors of the socialization source. I then used the internal indicators developed by Nakkula and Harris (2005) to determine which relationship features were more likely to create a strong bond between mentor and mentee. This approach provided an understanding of why change in a mentee could occur along with the relationship features that would most likely support this change.

This theoretical orientation provided an outline of what to look for in mentoring relationships. In other words, how to determine which relationships would be potentially successful in creating change within the mentee, and which mentoring relationships would need extra program support. Primary socialization theory highlights the need to understand the strength of the relationship to determine the effectiveness of creating change within the mentee.

Using this theoretical lens, I highlighted the different engagement and discourse features found in three different mentoring relationship quality levels. Certain relationship features, such as mentor-mentee personal sharing and/or high frequency of program engagement, appeared to create a stronger bond within the relationship. The justification for three different quality levels was to determine if a similar level of mentee change was possible in lower quality levels as in higher quality levels. If this were true, my argument for studying the relationship bond would be irrelevant.

I observed Darcy and Ivan, who had a high quality mentoring relationship, discussing and potentially connecting to protective factors in a stronger and more frequent manner than the other two relationships. This mentoring pair often related program activities back to the mentee's personal experiences, and he reported a greater understanding of the protective and risk factors in his life. Despite the inclusive improvements in Ivan's school performance data, I would argue that he did show the greatest increased connections to school norms, and he reported using more behaviors learned from his mentor than the other two mentees.

I would argue that understanding the relationship bond between mentor and mentee, based on this theoretical framework, can be of significant value for future mentoring programs. Design features that incorporate the relationship features found in the high quality mentoring

relationship could potentially increase the likelihood that a strong bond develops between mentor and mentee. Conversely, the relationship and design features that were found not to support the development of a strong bond should be reviewed and ultimately improved. The most glaring features in this study included: ineffective program support and training for new mentors and off-task engagement by mentors and/or mentees.

Limitations and future research.

A potential theoretical limitation of this study is not including a social and cultural perspective that analyzes the features that developed within this program and how the program developed over the course of the program year. Future work that applies sociocultural theories to cross-age peer mentoring relationships would greatly benefit this field of research. A sociocultural perspective involves viewing learning as a collaborative endeavor that occurs in a “complex social environment” (Sawyer, 2006). Examining how the mentee interacts with his or her mentor and the program design features to “learn” program concepts, appropriate these concepts, and then potentially use and/or transform these concepts in other settings would add to the field’s understanding of how mentoring works and its practical applications.

Several interesting aspects to study in this perspective include: how do mentees understand and appropriate the social practices learned in the mentoring program in other settings, examining how a peer mentoring program develops a particular kind of culture within the program and through the mentoring relationships, and comparing this culture to those developed in other mentoring programs. I would also examine how discourse practices are developed, negotiated, and transformed within a mentoring relationship and/or program, how a mentee begins to identify (or not) with aspects of the mentoring program, and if these forms of

identification are productive when used in other social settings. It is also relevant to ask whether and/or how mentees leverage the cultural practices associated with the mentoring program to gain fuller membership within the school culture. This last question is of significant importance as it aligns with many outcome goals of school-based mentoring programs, and this could assist mentees reconnecting with the school.

Mentoring programs are socially created environments that not only include the mentor-mentee but all of the participants in the program. Using a sociocultural perspective can help the field understand how a program develops in this perspective and help guide the design of best practices. It will also help our understanding of how a mentor and/or mentee make sense out of this social setting.

Methodological implications.

The use of a case study methodology allowed for a deeper examination of the process of enacting a mentoring relationship than other methods. Using this methodology I was able to capture the conversations, forms of engagement, and interactions that otherwise would have been missed with a less process-oriented analytic method. Previous studies have focused on a description of the mentoring program and/or changes in the participants with limited discussion on the quality of the relationships. When the quality of the mentoring relationship is described it is often in terms of relationship length and/or the participant's perspective. This tells us little on how the relationship engaged in the program activities, and which design features were more successful in achieving program goals. Future studies could incorporate this methodology to explore how other programs design features affect the development of the mentoring relationships.

A future line of research sparked by this study could include other locations aside from where the mentoring “happens.” For example, including the classroom to determine if mentees are using behaviors learned in the program within this setting. If changes are evident the features in the relationship and/or program activities that corresponded with the change could be analyzed and supplemented with interview data to determine if this change was program related. This cross-setting study could provide insight on how and/or if concepts learned in a mentoring program are used in other social settings including the classroom.

Limitations and future research.

A limitation of this study was not including observations of the school classroom. I attempted to capture this through interviews with the participants and the program staff, but I did not observe the classroom itself. This limited the information I could gather on the mentee’s use of program concepts within this social setting. Mentees reported that they learned behaviors that would lead to greater success within the classroom, but my analytic approach prevented capturing these behaviors in action. I would recommend future studies observe the mentee within the classroom to determine if and/or how he or she uses the concepts discussed in the mentoring relationship within the classroom.

Other potential improvements to the methodology of this study include: the use of video tape to capture micro-interactions, longitudinal data extending over the mentee’s high school career, and including data sources designed to capture parent and neighborhood/community influences on the mentees. Video has the potential to capture the “activity” more fully than audio data. It can provide information on the posture, gestures, facial expressions, and other

nonlinguistic data. This nonlinguistic data could inform us on the internal and external indicators present in the mentoring relationships but were missed in the audio recordings.

It would also greatly assist in capturing whole group activity especially concerning how program staff and other mentor-mentees interact with selected case studies.

The addition of longitudinal data for the duration of the participant's high school career could support an analysis of any short-term or long-term changes made by the mentee. Previous studies have stated the changes made by the mentees are often short-lived often lasting six months, but these studies, for the most part, focused on adult-youth relationships (Dubois et al., 2002; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Cross-age peer mentoring is a relatively new form of youth mentoring, and any changes made by mentees should be investigated to determine their duration. This would also enhance our understanding on how different participation/engagement styles affect long-term changes in the mentees.

The addition of parent(s) and neighborhood/community factors into future studies would encompass the five domains found in the risk factor approach. The parent domain is of special importance as it is connected to both theories used in this study. This domain was not included in this study due to time constraints. Future studies could add participant and/or parent interviews to determine if the mentoring relationship and/or program activities improved connections in this domain. The neighborhood domain could be investigated to determine if mentees are able to develop connections with protective factors in this domain through participation in a mentoring program. Specifically, if mentees are able to use skills learned in the program in this setting.

Practical implications.

Several interesting phenomena occurred within this mentoring program over the course of the study that have practical implications to this field. These included: program messages sent to the mentoring relationships, mentor-mentee expectations, different mentoring styles, and the mentoring switch. These aspects developed during the program year and contributed both negatively and positively to the strength of the mentoring relationships. In this section, I will discuss how these features can be incorporated into the best practices literature and future research.

I inspected the messages sent from the program to both mentor and mentee. This is of practical importance as the messages being sent can and do affect the development of the mentoring relationships and how the mentoring pairs engage in program activities. A central message sent by program staff and the mentors was the importance of graduating from high school. This message was reflected as the central goal in the majority of the program activities.

This message had practical implications in how the mentor and mentee interacted with one another. The program allowed the mentoring pair freedom to engage in the activity as evidenced by the three different engagement styles discussed in Chapter 7. However, the program did stress the importance of “discussing” the program concept, relating this concept to the mentee, and finishing the activity. The high quality mentoring relationship did not seem to have issue with engaging in the activity and following this script. The medium and low quality relationships struggled more when conflicts arose in either discussing the program concepts or finishing the activity. This was most evident in Beth and Jorge’s relationship. Beth appeared to be discouraged by Jorge’s limited discussion during program activities. She mentioned during our last interview that she felt her relationship was, “...not as good as I would have hoped. It’s not

like we're friends or anything." Beth's expectations on what a mentoring relationship should "look like," developed from program messages or elsewhere, appeared to conflict with what occurred within her mentoring relationship. This may be due to Jorge not acting according to a "script" she had originally envisioned.

Program's should note the message being sent to mentors and/or mentees, but also the expectations being brought into their programs as both of these could create conflicts within the relationship. Mentors and mentees entered the program with different expectations on what mentoring consists of, how his or her mentor or mentee would act, and the characteristics of his or her mentoring relationship. The mentors appeared to expect higher quality mentoring relationships than what I observed, and at times it seemed they were unprepared for difficult relationships. This was especially true of the first year mentors. Trainings that allow mentors to discuss their expectations, provide examples of different types of mentees, and suggestions on how to build rapport with mentees has the potential to prepare the mentor for the varying situations he or she may face in a mentoring relationship. I would also recommend a similar opportunity for mentees to discuss his or her mentoring expectations, preferred type of learning and/or communicating, and a description of the different types of activities found in the mentoring program. This could prepare the mentee by setting expectations and creating a better awareness of the activities he or she will participate in with his or her mentor.

It became apparent that each of the mentors brought a unique mentoring style to the relationship. The different styles both aligned and conflicted with the mentee's preferred approach. Mentoring programs can face obstacles when the preferred communication and/or learning style of the mentee differs from either the mentor's or the program's approach. This was most evident with Jorge and Sam. Jorge appeared to prefer listening and observing to the

communication style of his mentor. Sam's first language was Spanish, and he may have benefited from being matched with a mentor who spoke Spanish fluently. This may have increased his participation in the program activities and lessened his off-task behaviors (Valdés, 1998). Future matchings should take into account the preferred discourse style and language use of the mentee in an attempt to create stronger mentoring relationships.

Limitations and future research.

Two of the more significant practical limitations of this study include the lack of an all-female mentoring relationship and including only one site. The additions of these two features would add to the study's understanding of how mentoring relationships develop and engage in program activities. I originally intended to include a mentoring relationship that consisted of a female mentor and mentee, but on two occasions the female mentee dropped out of the program. It is possible that an all-female mentoring relationship would develop and engage in program activities differently than the mentoring relationships found in this study. Future studies of cross-age peer mentoring relationships should make an effort to include different types of mentoring relationships including all-female mentoring pairs.

The inclusion of additional sites could further our understanding of mentoring in different contexts. The participants in other sites have the potential to exhibit different participation and/or engagement styles in program activities. This could be due to different participant backgrounds, program design features, and/or the culture of the school and/or mentoring program. A comparison between different sites could also assist in determining which program features are more effective or non-effective in creating a strong bond between mentor and mentee.

Additionally, two other practical implications developed over the course of this study that could benefit from future research. This includes better mentor-mentee matching techniques and contingency plans for unsuccessful mentoring relationships. The mentoring literature often cites that many mentoring relationships are unsuccessful and are unable to create the program desired change within a mentee (Dubois et al., 2002; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). One possible reason is a conflict between the mentor's style and a mentee's preferred approach. Better matching techniques should be developed to create more compatible relationships. I would recommend either a survey or interview approach depending on time constraints²⁸. A current weakness in this field is the mentor-matching techniques. Often matching is based on race/ethnicity, gender, and/or a likes/dislikes questionnaire (Portwood & Ayers, 2005; Weinberger, 2005). I suggest that these matching could also take into account salient features that affect the development of a mentoring relationship. I would include items that evaluate preferred learning style, socio-emotional competencies, and conflict resolution techniques.

The unsuccessful matches of Beth and Sam and Ernie and Jorge highlighted an interesting dilemma for school-based mentoring programs. These types of mentoring programs often only last for the duration of the school-year limiting the number of mentoring sessions. If a mentoring relationship is unsuccessful a change might be needed, but due to the limited duration of the program this decision must be made quickly. In this study, the program acted quickly deciding to switch mentors and create two new relationships. This was not without consequences.

²⁸ It may be too time consuming to interview all the mentees and mentors prior to placing them in mentoring relationship.

The two new mentoring pairs missed the relationship developmental activities and started with the socio-emotional curriculum. A contingency for this situation was not developed prior to the program year or before the mentoring switch. I would recommend school-based programs develop protocol for unsuccessful matches. This could include the timeframe for changing mentoring relationships, how to account for missed activities, and how to attempt to strengthen the mentoring bond in struggling relationships. This would add to the best practices literature on how to create successful relationships out of unsuccessful ones.

Significance of Work

A central aim of this study was to provide a better understanding of the processes of a cross-age peer mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationships were audio recorded to capture how the participants developed their mentoring relationships and engaged in program activities. Few studies to date have used this technique to examine mentoring relationships over the course of a program year. This methodology allowed for comparison between three different quality levels to determine different engagement styles, communication patterns, and relationship features.

The three different quality relationships highlighted certain relationship features that appeared more effective than others. These features included: on-task engagement, sharing of personal information, and expanding on the mentee's original idea. These practices should be fostered during mentor trainings to promote the development of the mentoring relationships and the mentee's engagement in program activities.

The strength of this study rests in this in-depth examination of three mentoring relationships. A better understanding of what occurs within a relationship became clear through

this methodology. I observed mentors struggling with their expectations versus the reality of their mentoring relationship, unsuccessful mentoring relationships, and various forms of off-task behaviors. What I observed can be used by practitioners to create safeguards and/or responses to these events.

Another interesting facet of this study was the comparison of intended versus enacted program. This comparison called to attention the difficulties and changes that occur between the intended and enacted program. Even with the best intentions and initial planning, programs need to be flexible to deal with a host of issues. In this study this included: a late program start, mentor preparedness and support in difficult mentoring relationships, and mentor-mentee relationship tensions.

This project is the initial step in understanding the potential of cross-age peer mentoring. This form of mentoring has several advantages including: lower costs, same site recruitment of mentors and mentees, and shared cultural backgrounds between mentors and mentees. This study took the first steps to understand the processes of these types of mentoring relationships. Based on this research, I recommend that future studies track longitudinal data for the duration of the mentees' high school careers, analyze how/if mentees use program concepts in other settings, and improve the methodology by incorporating video of the participants. These steps would provide a richer description of the mentoring process and its possible implications.

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Appendix A

Risk and Protective Factor Domains

Domain	Risk Factors	Protective Factors
Community	Social Disorganization Underclass Communities Presence of Gangs and Drugs Lack of Social Capital Feeling unsafe in neighborhood High Crime	Social Networks/Support Systems Opportunities for Participation in Community Decreasing Substance Accessibility Neighborhood Resources
Family	Family Disorganization (Broken Home and Parent Drug/Alcohol Abuse Family Violence Family Members in Gangs Lack of Parental/Adult Role Models Low Socioeconomic Status	Family Bonding High Parental Expectations Two Parent Home Healthy Beliefs/Clear Standards for Behavior
School	Academic Failure Low Educational Aspirations Negative Labeling Behavioral Problems Poor Attendance Educational Frustrations Low Commitment to School Poor Attitude and Performance	High Commitment to School Academic Success Quality Schools Caring/Support from Teachers/Staff
Peer Group	High Commitment to Delinquent Peers Low Commitment to Positive Peers Street Socialization Friends with Gang Members, Drug Users/ Distributors Interaction with Delinquent Peers	High Commitment to Positive Peers High Commitment to School/ Church
Individual	Prior Delinquency Deviant Attitudes Problem Behaviors History of Violence/Aggression Defiant/Individualist Character Street Smartness Higher Levels of Normlessness in the Context of Family, Peer Group, and School Illegal Gun Ownership Early/Precocious Sexual Activity Alcohol/Drug Use Drug Trafficking Desire for Group Rewards Victimization Low Self-Esteem	Positive Sense of Self Healthy Beliefs High Intelligence Church Attendance Involvement in Schools/Voluntary Clubs Value Achievement Value Health High Controls against Deviant Behavior

Appendix A summarizes the risk and protective factors in the five ecological domains found in the work of Howell (2000), Jessor (1991), and Shader, (2003).

Appendix B

Research Question 1

Research Question	Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Data Analysis
<p>How does the YESS institute's cross-age peer mentoring program seek to promote protective factors?</p> <p>Areas of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through its curriculum? • Through its intended relationships between the mentor and mentee? • Through its official connections to the school (e.g., attendance policies, working with the school advocate, and parent support). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collection of observational data during mentoring program Tuesday and Thursday sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recording of mentoring activities • Non-Participant observer field notes 2. Interview data from participants of the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiotape mentees, mentors, school liaison, and YESS staff during one-on-one interviews • Interviews to happen during the beginning, middle, and at the conclusion of the program • See attached interview protocol 3. Artifact review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring program curriculum • Mentor and mentee program attendance records 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code mentoring program sessions based on internal and external indicators. Possible codes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of intended emotional intelligence curriculum • Description of intended mentoring relationships • Description on the types of school connections found within the program 2. Code interview data based on internal and external indicators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include interview questions to address areas of interest 3. Analysis of artifacts to determine features of the program and its curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and analyze program curriculum/ materials • Review attendance procedures for program and school

Appendix C

Research Question 2

Research Question	Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Data Analysis
<p>What are the characteristics of the YESS Institute's cross-age peer mentoring relationships?</p> <p>Areas of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What relationship features develop between the mentors and mentees? • What features are found within the mentoring relationships? • How does the mentoring pair and/or mentoring relationship act/not act as a socialization source and/or peer cluster? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collection of observational data during mentoring program Tuesday and Thursday sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recording of mentoring activities • Non-Participant observer field notes 2. Interview data from participants of the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiotape mentees, mentors, school liaison, and YESS staff during one-on-one interviews • Interviews to happen during the beginning, middle, and at the conclusion of the program • See attached interview protocol 3. Artifact review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring program curriculum • Mentor and mentee program attendance records 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code mentoring program sessions to determine the features of the enacted program. Possible codes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features of emotional intelligence curriculum • Characteristics of mentoring pairs • Connections developed between mentees and the school 2. Code interview data to determine participants experience internal and external indicators. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include interview questions to address areas of interest 3. Analysis of artifacts to determine effectiveness of curriculum (EI curriculum, mentoring relationship, and connections with school) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine rate of program attendance for both mentor and mentee • Review completed activity worksheets

Appendix D

Research Question 3

Research Question	Methods of Data Collection	Methods of Data Analysis
<p>How do the mentors and mentees change over the course of the year?</p> <p>Areas of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there changes in the mentees' school performance as indicated by grade point average, frequency/severity of behavioral referrals, and/or attendance? • Are there changes in the mentees' school-connectedness and/or pro-school behaviors? • Are there changes in the mentees' level of emotional intelligence (comparison of pre and post measures)? • Are there changes in the mentees' gang involvement attitudes (comparison of pre and post measures)? • What norms on school practices did mentees learn from their mentors and/or from the mentoring program? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collection of survey data from participants and comparison group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BarOn's Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version • Gang involvement (GI) Survey 2. Collection of school performance data from participants and comparison group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade point average • Attendance • Behavioral referrals 3. Interview data from participants in the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiotape mentees and mentors during one-on-one interviews • Interviews to happen during the beginning, middle, and at the conclusion of the program • See attached interview protocol. 4. Collection of observational data during mentoring program Tuesday and Thursday sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recording of mentoring activities • Non-Participant observer field notes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare survey results from start to end of program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine differences in EI levels in participants from start to end of program • Determine differences of GI levels in participants from start to end of program • Compare levels of EI and GI in participants from start to end of program 2. Compare school performance data to observational and interview data. 3. Code interview and observational data to determine if and/or what changes occurred <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code data for both positive and negative internal and external indicators. • Compared coded data to individual's survey, school performance, and mentoring program attendance record

Appendix E

Internal Indicators Scales

Code	Definition	Positive Example	Negative Example
Mentor/Mentee Engagement	Youth are activity participating in their relationship and/or the program activity.	Youth work together on academic work. Youth work together on EI curriculum activity. Youth are talking to one another. Talk concerns program activity or past experiences that relates to the development of the relationship, common interests, and/or the growth of the mentee. Mentor/mentee show/ have a desire to participate in the relationship.	Youths do not participate in mentoring activities. Only one youth participates in the mentoring activity. Mentor and/or mentee does not activity engage in the relationship. Mentor/Mentee seems distant, uninterested, distracted, and/or bored. Mentor and mentee engage with others at the cost of their relationship. Mentor/mentee's behavior interferes with engagement.
Closeness	Mentor/mentee feels connected and/or cares for one another.	Mentor/mentee feel connected to one another, feel cared for, and feel a sense of belonging. The other member in the relationship shares similar feelings of being cared for and caring for the other person. Mentor/mentee checks on one another outside of the program.	Mentor/mentee are disinterested in the relationship, do not feel a sense of belonging. One member of the relationship does not share similar feelings of closeness. Mentor/mentee does not check on one another outside of the program.
Intimacy	Meaningful reciprocal sharing between mentor and mentee.	Mentor/mentee share life experiences, goal setting, discuss important/personal topics, share experiences during program activities. Mentor/mentee engages in meaningful reciprocal sharing.	Mentor/mentee does not share life experiences, goal setting, or discuss important/personal topics. Mentor/mentee does not share experiences during program activities. Youths do not engage in meaningful reciprocal sharing.
Frequency/Intensity	Current and historic meeting frequency and intensity (length of meeting).	Mentor/mentee arrives on time for session and stay for the duration of the session. Mentor/mentee arrives for each session.	Mentor/mentee arrives late and/or leaves early for session. Mentor/mentee miss sessions.
Mentor and Mentee Orientation	Mentor/mentee provides supportive role aligned behaviors.	Mentors are seen/act as role models, support mentee goals/growth, validate achievements. Mentors discuss pro-social behaviors in difficult situations, encourage on task behavior in program, and has positive attitude. Mentees seek support from mentor and initiates mentoring activities with desire to improve.	Mentors are not seen/act as role models, do not support mentee's goals/growth, and does not validate achievements. Mentors demonstrate poor attitudes, do not follow directions, and do not participate in activities. Mentees do not seek support or initiate mentoring activities with a desire for self improvement.

Appendix F

External Indicators Scales

Code	Definition	Positive Examples	Negative Examples
Supervision	Program is supervised by a staff member during the mentoring sessions.	Staff is actively engaged in monitoring the mentoring relationships, the participants' use of appropriate behavior, and engagement with the activity. Staff supports, provides guidance, and answers questions from mentors and mentees.	Staff does not supervise mentoring program. Staff allows inappropriate behaviors in mentoring program. Staff does not support mentors, provide guidance, or answer questions. Staff does not actively engage participants.
Training	Youth are provided training for the role as a mentor.	Program trains potential mentors and provides ongoing training as needed. Training provides approaches to mentoring and communication strategies.	Program does not provide training and/or ongoing training. Training does not provide or provides poor information on how to be an effective mentor.
Structured Activities	Activities are designed by the program staff that have an educational or EI specific outcome.	Activities are structured to fulfill the duration of the mentoring sessions, are engaging, help the development of the mentor and mentee, and represent program goals. Staff introduces topic for the activity, provides directions in written and/or oral form, and explains the goal of the activity. Activities support the development of the mentoring relationship, academic improvement, and/or EI competence. Activity is clear, precise, and understandable to the participants, with clear directions and its importance.	Activities do not fulfill the duration of the mentoring session, are not engaging, do not help the development of the participants, and do not represent program goals. Staff provides no introduction, examples, or explains the importance of the activity. Activities do not support the development of the participants, mentoring relationship, academic improvement, and/or EI competence. Activity is not clear, precise, and understandable to the participants, without clear directions and its importance.
Parent(s) Support	Parent(s) are aware of their child's involvement and are provided updates of their child's involvement in the program and their performance in school.	Parents are made aware of their child's involvement, of the program goals, reasons for child's involvement, and opportunities to support program. Mentee and/or mentor feels supported by his or her parent(s) for involvement in the program.	Parents are not made aware of their child's involvement, of the program goals, reasons for child's involvement, and opportunities to support program. Mentee and/or mentor does not feel supported by his or her parent(s) for involvement in the program.

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

The interviews are designed to provide the opportunity for both the mentors and mentees to describe, in their own words, what was successful and unsuccessful. Simply observing or collecting quantitative data could be misleading in determining the success of a program. Similarly, only using interview data would severely limit the understanding of what occurs in a mentoring program and could lead those interviewed to answer in a way they think the researchers want and threaten the validity of the study. By combining the interview data with observational data and quantitative data, I hope to provide a better description of the program and to answer my research questions in better detail.

The interviews will occur during the beginning, middle, and at the conclusion of the mentoring program. The interviews are structured to allow the participants to share their views of the mentoring program. The interview protocol will focus on the individual's experience within the program. Questions will be designed to address the internal and external indicators. Examples include: perceived support from the mentor to the mentee, mentor/mentee engagement in the mentoring activities and relationship, mentor/mentee genuine conversation/sharing of curriculum, successful of academic sessions; successfulness of mentoring relationships, program supervision, mentor training and support, and structured activities. I will also refer to observational notes to determine if other themes are emerging and add interview questions if necessary. Each interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for accuracy.

The interviews will occur at Abraham Lincoln high school during school hours or during the mentoring program. The interviews are schedule for 30 minutes with time allowed for 60 minutes. What follows is the Interview Protocol.

Project: YESS Institute Mentoring Program Study

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Purpose: I am studying the YESS Institute's mentoring program to determine its effectiveness in creating change in its participants. The change I am looking for is better school performance, increases in emotional intelligence, and decreased in gang involvement attitudes. I believe that the mentoring relationship, program curriculum, and staff are possible reasons for this change. I will be the only person will access to this data. I will keep your responses confidential and change the names of the participants when reporting this data. The interview should take 30 minutes. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering or do not want to answer. Do you have any questions?

Questions:

- What were your expectations going into the program?
- How have(not) you developed your mentoring relationship?
- How has your mentor provided support to you in the mentoring program?
- How/Do you feel cared for by your mentor?
- How has the EI curriculum helped you within the classroom and/or other situations?
- How has your mentor provided support to you in the mentoring program?
- Do you feel cared for by your mentor?
- Please describe an experience where you and your mentor/mentee shared a meaningful conversation.
- Describe the activities do you participate in.
- How do you and your mentor/mentee engage in the program activities?
- Describe the Tuesday (academic sessions).
- What have you learned from these sessions?
- Describe your mentoring relationship.
- Describe your mentor/mentee?
- What have you learned from your mentor/mentee?
- What has been the worst part of the program?
- Have your attitudes about the school changed? Explain.

Thank you for participating.

Appendix H

BarOn Emotional Intelligence Survey Scales Constructs

Construct	Description
Intrapersonal	The intrapersonal scale is designed to measure the individuals' ability to understand their own emotions. Adolescents who possess this trait are able express and communicate their feelings and needs effectively with others.
Interpersonal	The interpersonal scale measures the individual's ability to understand other people's emotions. This trait corresponds with the ability to be good listeners and to be able to understand and appreciate the feelings of others.
Adaptability	The adaptability dimension measures the individual's ability to handle change in the environment. Adolescents with this trait tend to be characterized as flexible, realistic, and effective in managing change.
Stress Management	Stress management measures how the individual handles stressful or complicated situations. This trait measures the adolescent's ability to handle stressful situations in a calm manner, and their ability to work well under pressure.
Total EQ	Total EQ measure the individual's total score from all the scales. This score corresponds with the individual's ability to effectively deal with life's daily demands, and higher scores correspond with generally happy individuals.

Appendix I

Gang Involvement Scale Constructs

Involvement Level	Identity Commitment	Social Commitment	Deviance Commitment
High Involvement	Uses the group to reaffirm their own identity. This would indicate high levels of emotional invest in the group. Gang is primary emotional support group over non-gang friends & family members and conventional society institutions.	Majority or all of friends and social activities are centered on gang activities. Very little time if any is spent with non-gang friends & family and conventional society events.	Willing to commit felonies for the gang.
Medium Involvement	Individuals find significant support from gangs and non-gang institutions. The individual does not find one primary avenue significantly stronger when reaffirming their identity than another. Individual is able to balance both worlds.	Has a large network of gang friends and non-gang friends. Time spent with gang friends and non-gang friends is evenly distributed. Individual is able to balance both worlds.	Willing to commit misdemeanors for the gang.
Low Involvement	Gang does provide a small amount of emotional support, but the individual finds most of their emotional support through non-gang friends & family and conventional society.	Spends majority of time with non-gang friends. But does spend a small amount of time with gang friends. The gang does not occupy a significant source of social activities or friends.	Willing to commit non-punishable crimes for the gang.
No Involvement	Not strongly emotionally invested in the gang. Finds emotional support from non-gang friends & family and conventional society.	Spends very little time if any with gang members. Social activities are with non-gang friends & family members and conventional society activities.	Not willing to commit any crimes or illegal activities for a gang or gang friends.

Appendix J

Timeline of Socio-Emotional Activities

Date	Activity
11/18/2010	ROPES
11/25/2010	No Activity. Fall Break
12/2/2010	Stand-Up
12/9/2010	No Activity. Prep for final exams
1/14/2011	Signatures
1/20/2011	Interviews
1/27/2011	Human Knot
2/3/2011	Assets
2/10/2011	Valentines Card
2/17/2011	What is Success?
2/24/2011	Visual Aid for Success
3/3/2011	No Program. CSAP Testing
3/10/2011	Milestones
3/17/2011	Off-Campus Bowling
3/24/2011	Support Systems and Barriers
3/31/2011	Spring Break
4/7/2011	Marshmallow Tower
4/14/2011	Road to Success Poster Board
4/21/2011	Road to Success Poster Board

Appendix K

Socio-Emotional Activity Descriptions

ROPES

ROPES set the guidelines for the behavioral expectations for the program. Mentors and mentees, in pairs, developed rules under the acronym *ROPES* to create a stated “welcoming and safe” space. Once the mentoring pairs had time to brainstorm a rule and/or guideline for each letter in *ROPES*, the group came back together and shared their acronym. This first activity created a shared expectation for the program and offered a low-risk first activity for the newly designated mentoring pair.

Stand-Up

For the next activity, *Stand-Up*, Lisa read aloud statements and students stood when that statement was true of them. These statements began with very low personal risk such as: I am a junior in high school, and developed into higher personal risk statements such as: I was adopted and I have been a victim of racial discrimination. This activity asked students to reveal personal information and it slowly increased the level of personal risk involved with each statement. The goal of the activity was to help students realize shared experiences and to build empathy.

Signatures

The next activity, *Signatures*, involved the group getting to know one another on a more individual basis. *Signatures* asked the program participants to gather signatures from students who shared a specific characteristic on the handout. For example, speaks more than one language. The goal of this activity was for students to interact with more than just his or her mentor or mentee and to share a little bit of themselves to the members of the program.

Interviews

The next activity in curriculum was the first one-on-one activity between mentor and mentee in the designated matches. The activity asked both mentor and mentee to “interview” one another. The questions started off with basic information gathering on one another and evolved into more personal information and goal sharing. The activity ended with both mentor and mentee sharing with the group three interesting facts they learned about one another. The goal of the activity was for both mentor and mentee to learn about one another and for the pair to share goals that they have for themselves. This was the first opportunity for mentor and mentee to discuss their interests and goals in life.

Human Knot

Mentors and mentees were split into two groups. Each group interlocked arms across their body with each hand connected to a different person. This formed a “human knot.” Participants then had to untangle themselves without letting go of the other participant’s hand. The goal was to create community within the program. Afterwards participants were given free time to spend outside.

Assets

The design of the activity helped mentees realize the multitude of qualities they have within themselves. The activity identifies four different parts areas of a human: the hands, head, heart, and human relationships. The mentee worked with his or her mentor in identifying assets or strengths related to each of these four categories. Next, the mentee and mentor identify which assets they share and do not share as they relate to these four categories. the conclusion of the activity Lisa asked various mentoring pairs to share their responses.

Valentines Card Activity

Mentors and mentees created Valentines Day cards for someone they appreciated in his or her life, and someone they appreciated within the school. The goal of the activity was to identify and communicate with important people in the lives of the mentees with emphasis on someone within the school.

<i>What is Success?</i>	<i>What is Success?</i> activity asked mentors and mentees to first define success and then to describe what success looks like within the school, at home, with his or her friends, and in the future. Review of the YESS Institute program materials indicated that this activity's enacted purpose was for the mentee to examine his or her life in terms of how they defined success, and to begin to understand how his or her current relationships in the above mentioned categories either mirrored or contradicted with his or her definition of success.
<i>Visual Aid</i>	This activity was a continuation from the <i>What is Success?</i> activity. Mentors and mentees cut out pictures from magazines that represented success in these four areas from the previous week. These pictures were then used in the <i>Road to Success Poster Board</i> activity.
<i>Milestones</i>	This activity asked the mentee to identify three milestones he or she would need to accomplish to achieve his or her long-term goal. The design of the activity asked the mentee to analyze his or her own life to determine what steps he or she needed to take to achieve a personal goal. Examples from this activity included stop ditching class and finish homework on time.
<i>Support System and Barriers</i>	The <i>Support System and Barrier</i> activity instructed mentees to identify people who could assist or hinder the achievement of the stated long-term goal. The enacted purpose asked mentees to identify both protective and risk factors in his or her life, and how these protective or risk factors could affect his or her long-term goal. The activity started with the mentee identifying barriers such as a lazy attitude toward school work or negative peer influence and then identifying support systems that could assist mentees in overcoming these stated barriers. Lisa indicated the goal for this activity was to help mentees better understand what potential obstacles could arise and what support systems could assist them in overcoming these obstacles. Through this activity mentees again identified individual factors that could both assist or hinder his or her achievement of the program goal.

Marshmallow Tower

The *Marshmallow Tower* activity was held before the poster board activity. Teams of two mentoring pairs worked together in a competition to design the tallest free standing marshmallow structure. The materials for this contest were limited to marshmallows and toothpicks.

Road to Success Poster Board

The final activity in the *Road to Success* curriculum asked the mentoring pairs to create a poster board that combined the previous activities and mapped out, as the title of the curriculum suggests, a road to the mentee's stated goal. The activity summed up the individual plan for the mentee on how he or she planned to accomplish his or her long-term goal. The poster also included the steps needed to achieve the goal and the support systems and barriers he or she may face along this road.
