

Bringing Out Their Best: A Competence Approach to Mentoring Youth

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The Young Women Leaders Program

Key Figures & Funders

Our Team

- Jaronda Miller-Bryant, Co-Director
- Melissa Levy, Co-Director
- Sarah Jenkins, Mentoring Coordinator
- Nancy Deutsch, Director of Research
- Mike Lyons, Assoc. Director of Research
- Amazing graduate students
- College women mentors
- Middle school girls!

Sources of Funding

- U.Va.'s Curry School and Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center
- US Department of Justice
- US Department of Education
- W.T. Grant Foundation
- Alcoa Foundation
- University of Virginia



Map

1. **What:** What is a competence approach in mentoring?
2. **How:** How do you integrate a competence approach with leadership development activities?
3. **Context:** What program structure & format works?
4. **Specifics:** What are some leadership development activities?
5. **Questions**

What is a competence approach to mentoring?



“When the tool of change is a close relationship, everyone involved should proceed with caution.”

Rhodes, 2002



YWLP curriculum is built on Self-Determination Theory (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Waters & Lawrence, 1993)

- Competence
- Connection (Related)
- Autonomy

The Need to Feel Competent

The need to experience oneself as capable of making the best use of one's talents & abilities.
(Waters & Lawrence, 1993)

Striving for mastery





Distinguishing healthy intentions from unhealthy behavior



Be open to seeing the competence of another



In YWLP, a mentee's competence can be enhanced by supporting her mastery

1. **At school**

- Setting academic goals (e.g., grades, study habits, attendance, attitude)

2. **With her sparks**

- Developing her passions, things she cares about

3. **As a leader**

- With family, friends, romantic relationships
- During service projects

We get things done!

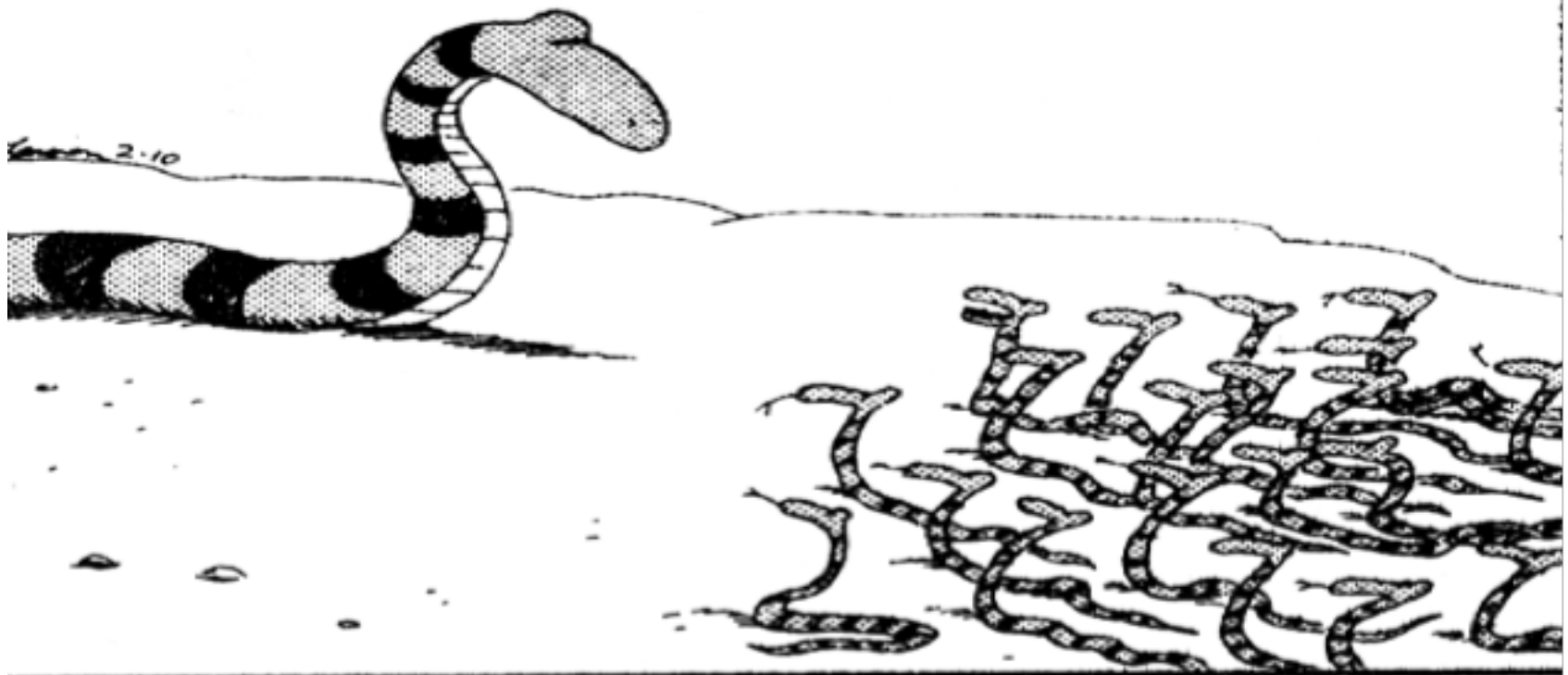
The Need to Feel Connected

The need to experience oneself as securely and meaningfully interrelated with close others (Miller, 1991).



The urge for belonging is a strength, not a deficit

(Stone Center)



“No, really, Mom — who do you like best?”

NOBODY CAN MAKE ME
GO INSIDE! I'VE GOT
200 SNOWBALLS THAT
SAY I'M STAYING **OUT!**
NO ONE'S GONNA MAKE
ME COME IN THE HOUSE!



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DOESN'T ANYBODY
MISS ME.??



In YWLP, a mentee's connection can be enhanced by

1. Developing mindfulness
2. Practicing appreciation
3. Exploring alternative stories

We care about others!

The Need to Feel Autonomous

The need to experience oneself as having the power to choose, maintain, and regulate one's actions.

(Connell & Wellborn, 1991)



Autonomy = Investment



In YWLP, a mentee's **autonomy** can be enhanced by:

1. Developing her problem-solving skills (frontal lobe)
2. Negotiating “Hot Topics”
3. Practicing being a leader

We think for ourselves!

What about the mentors?

- Advantages and concerns about using college students as mentors



Advantages

- Well-suited to mentor
 - Proximity in age
 - Similar issues
 - Available
- Popular option
 - Over 4,500 programs



Concerns from mentoring field

- Different race and social class than mentees (Deutsch et.al., 2013)
- Not tied to community (Tierney & Branch, 1992)
- Inconsistent and insensitive mentoring can have negative effect on mentees (Rhodes, 2002; Spencer, 2007)



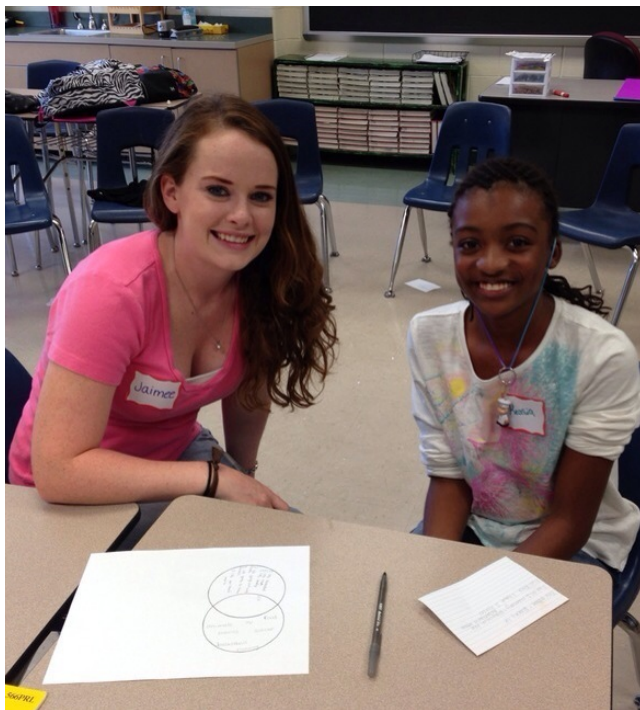
Additional Concerns



- College student mentors may have a vision of “saving” their mentee
- Evidence that mentees are *less* satisfied with mentors who are high in autonomy

Leyton-Armakan, et al., 2012

How does a competence and leadership development focus bring out their best?



5 Components of Leadership Development

1. Develop a clear vision for yourself
2. Share that vision with others so that they can support you
3. Obtain information, knowledge and skills needed to realize your vision
4. Coordinate and balance conflicting interests
5. Showcase your leadership

Adapted from: <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/leadership.html#ixzz>



How We Infuse This Leadership Focus in Mentoring

1. Language
2. Opportunities



Young Women Leaders Program (YWLP)



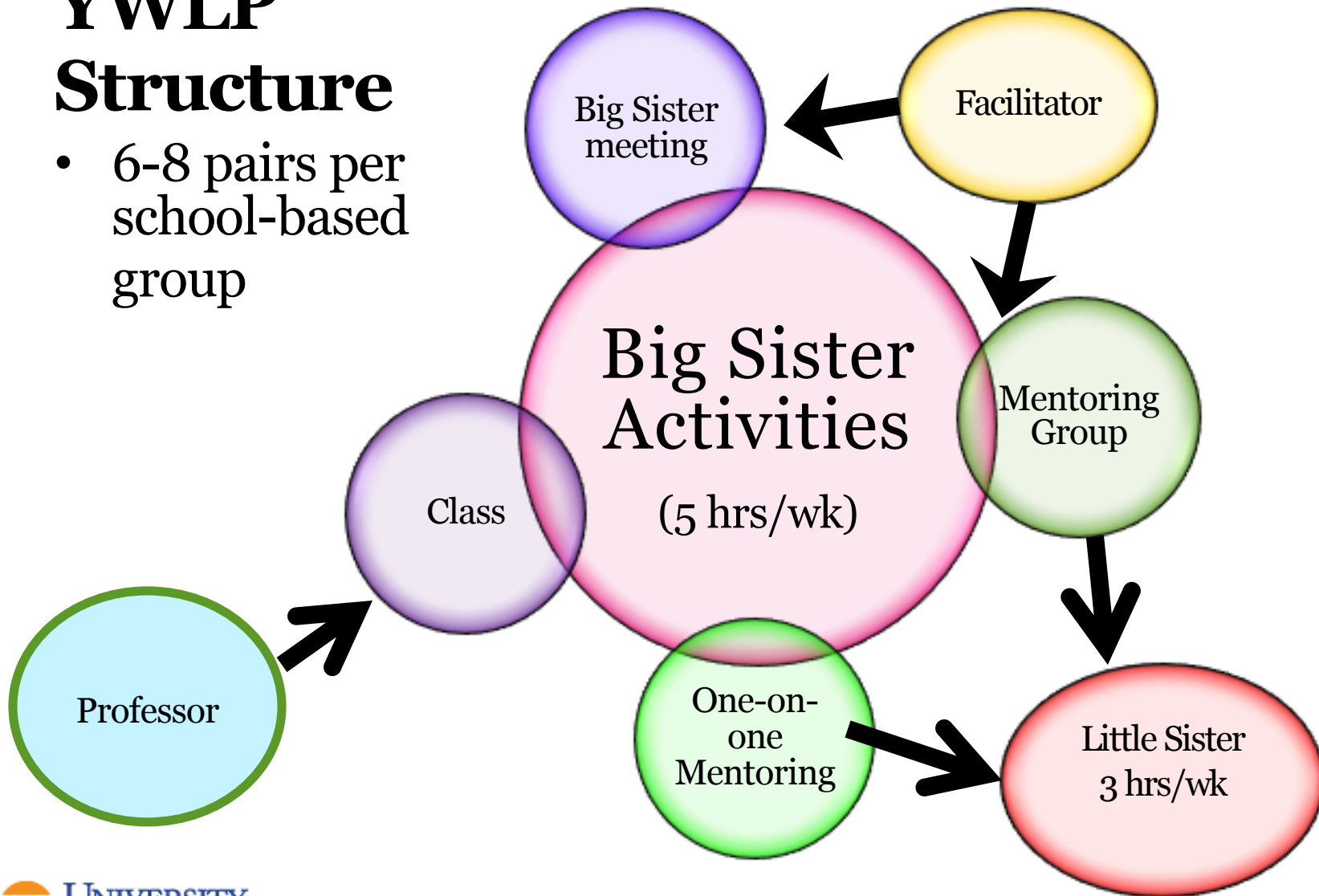
- After-school combined group and one-on-one mentoring
- Vulnerable youth
 - “Emerging leaders”
- Established in 1997
- 10 “sister sites” nationally

And four international sister sites in Cameroon, Mozambique, Nicaragua & Nigeria



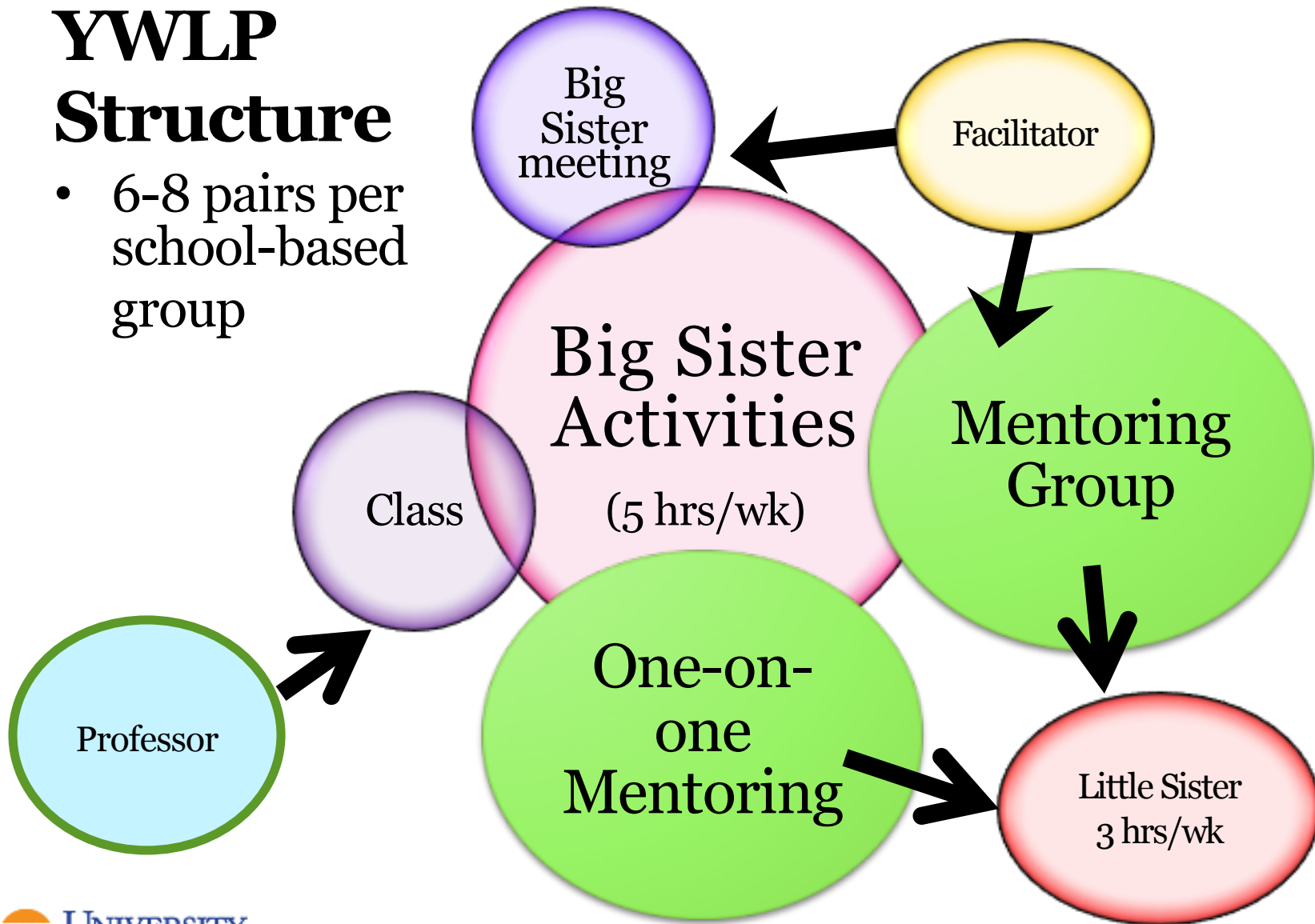
YWLP Structure

- 6-8 pairs per school-based group



YWLP Structure

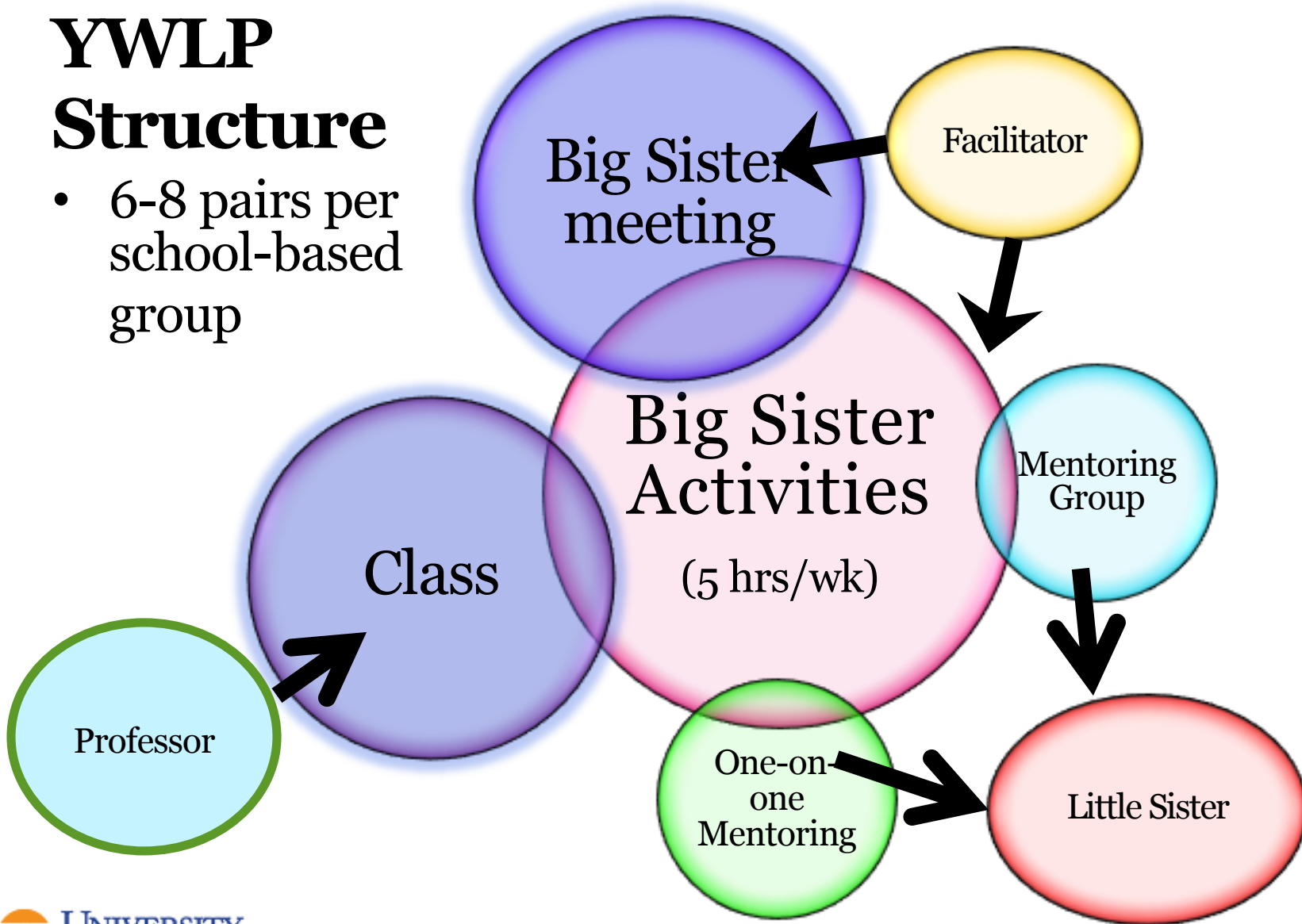
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YWLP

Structure

- 6-8 pairs per school-based group



Leadership Language: Leadership Secrets

1. Set Goals
2. Appreciate Others
3. Are Mindful
4. Help Others
5. Respect Differences
6. Create Support Teams
7. Keep Their Cool
8. Respect Themselves
9. Celebrate Success



Leaders Set Goals

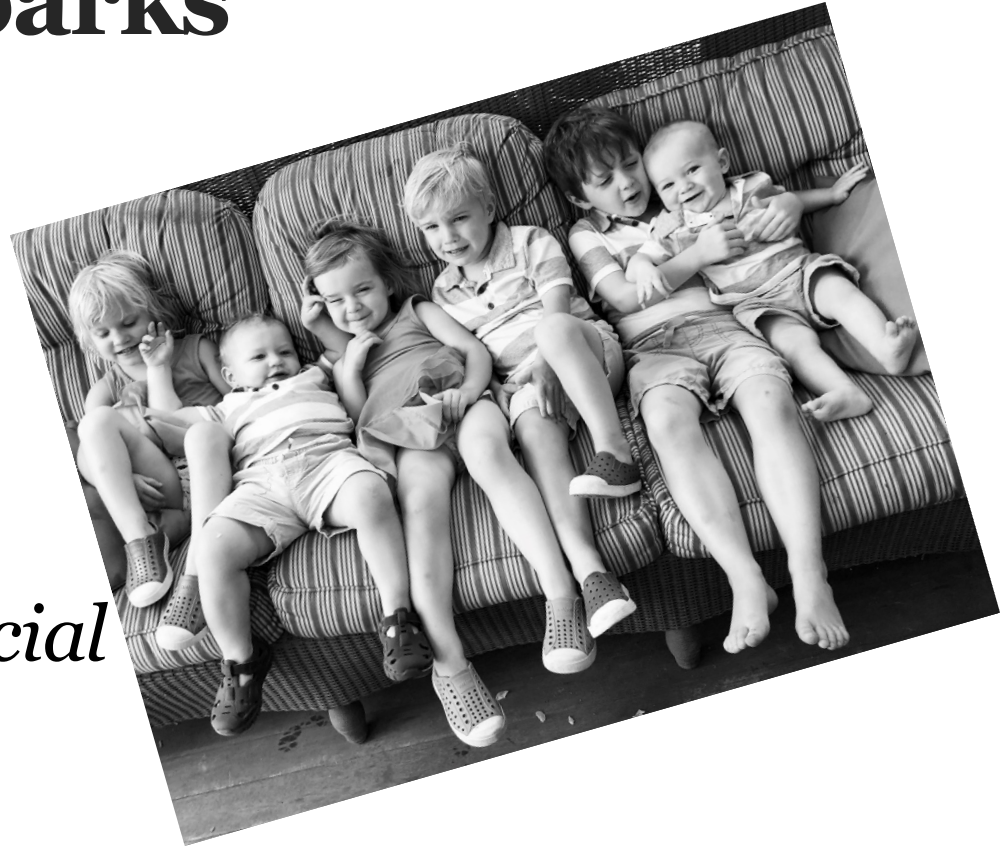
Develops clear vision for herself
Shares that vision with others



- Goal Setting for Thriving
 - Academic
 - Practicing Kindness
- Sparks (Benson, 2008)
 - “Youth are fires to be lit.”

Sparks

1. What gives her purpose, hope, direction?
 1. Skill or talent (*creative arts*)
 2. Commitment (*social justice, environment*)
 3. Quality (*empathizer, helper, volunteer*)



Leaders Appreciate Others

*Coordinates and balances conflicting interests
Showcases her leadership*



1. Certificate of Appreciation
2. Appreciation Dinner



Leaders Respect Themselves

Information, knowledge and skills needed to realize her vision

Coordinates and balances conflicting interests



- Mindful Romance
 - Dating Interview
 - What I Deserve
- Step into the Circle
 - Appreciating Difference



Leaders are Mindful

*Information, knowledge and skills needed to realize
her vision*

Coordinates and balances conflicting interests



- Mindful Breathing
- ABCs of Problem Solving



Leadership Opportunities

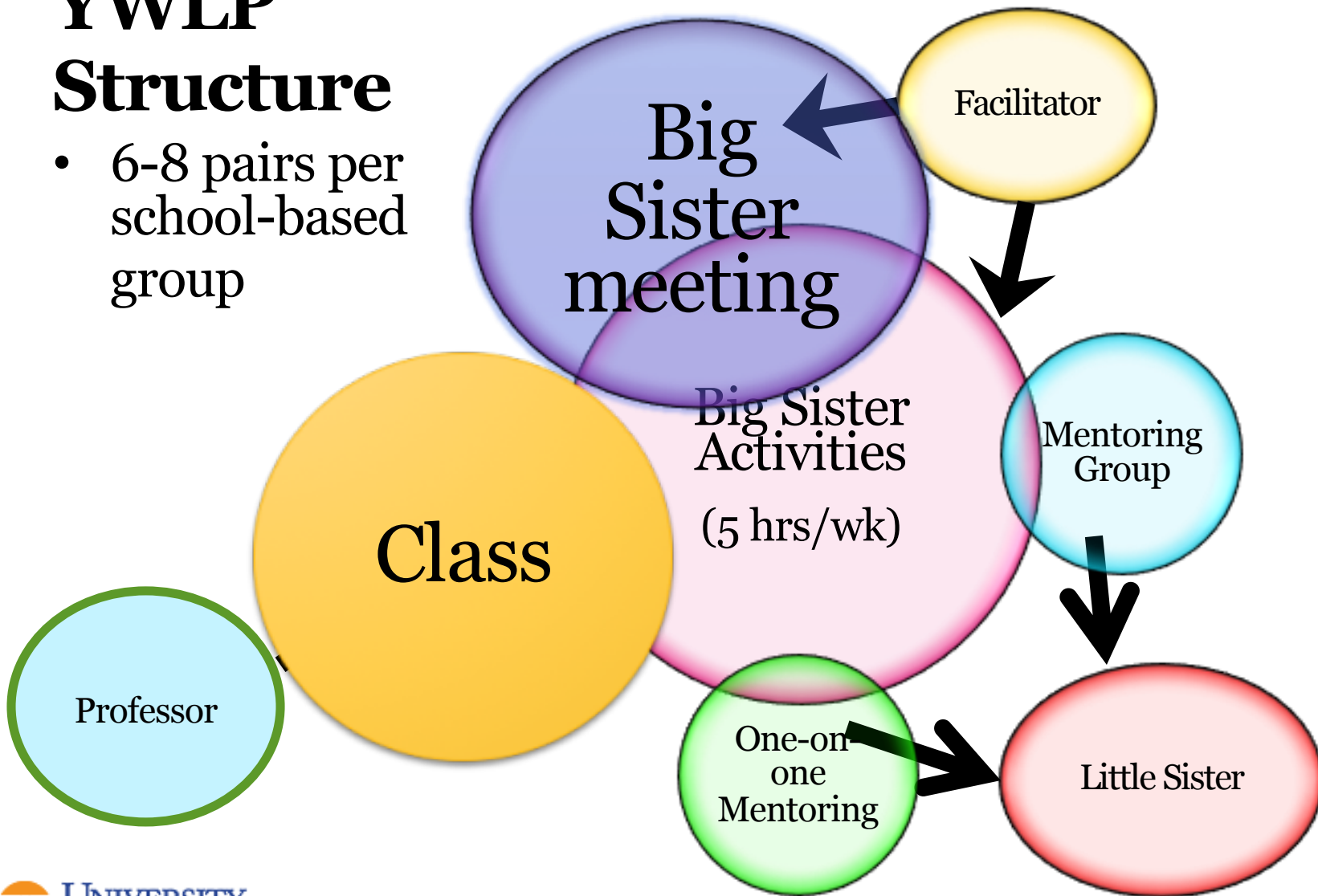
Showcases her leadership

- Food Drive
- Star Time
- Global Problem Solving Challenges



YWLP Structure

- 6-8 pairs per school-based group



Mentors: Leadership Language

1. Growth v. fixed mindset

- Clarifying expectations (Spenser)
- Guide from the side (“Tell me more.”)

2. Mentoring Competencies



YWLP Mentoring Competencies

Focus of mentoring is on learning vs.
accomplishments

- 1. Positive Attitude (*Zest*)**
- 2. Collaboration (*Teamwork*)**
- 3. Empathy and Attunement (*Heart*)**
- 4. Initiative and Perseverance (*Grit*)**
- 5. Mentoring Knowledge (*Brains*)**

Leadership Opportunities

1. Leading the Curriculum
2. Problem Solving
 - Sticky Situation
3. Creating Curriculum
4. Advanced Leadership



Does It Work?

Retention

2008-09 cohort (n = 67)

Middle School Girls

- 87% remained in YWLP for the full academic year
- 52% participated in YWLP for a second year (n = 33)

College Women

- 96% served as a mentor for the full academic year
- 33% participated in YWLP for a second year (n= 22)



Do They Like It?

- “Being in YWLP improved the way I...”
 - Relationships
 - Attitude
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Tolerating difference
 - Thinking about self/future



YWLP helped me improve the way I... % Yes

Deal with problems	82%
Listen to people with different views from mine	74%
Think about my future	76%
Get involved in school as a leader	71%
Talk with other kids at school	75%
Support my friends	74%

Current Evaluations

- Mixed-methods RC longitudinal study (n = 163)
 - Lower levels of delinquency & higher levels of peer self-esteem at five year data collection
- Study of the addition of mindfulness training for mentors and mentees



Conclusions

YWLP's structure and focus may be a useful model for:

- Adolescents: Using a **combined group and one-on-one format** that addresses their complex changes with a competence and leadership development focus.
- College student mentors: Providing supervision and support to become mentoring leaders through **an academic class** with a competence and leadership development focus

The Young Women Leaders Program wants to help college women AND adolescent girls feel competent,



connected,



and autonomous.



Our mission is to help *mentors* and *mentees* create “a belief in self far greater than anyone’s disbelief.”

(August Wilson as quoted by Robinson, 1996)



Questions

