



Study of Mentoring in the
SMILE
Learning Environment

Mentoring the mentors—Who, why, and how to do it

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Developmental (Morrow & Styles, 1995) : “building emotional well-being, developing social skills, or gaining straightforward exposure to a range of recreational and cultural activities.... Furthermore, these volunteers intentionally incorporated youth into decision-making about the relationship, allowing them to help choose activities and have a voice in determining whether and when the adult would provide advice and guidance....“after relatively extended and pacific periods primarily devoted to relationship-building—that is, to establishing trust and partnership, and enjoying activities—the majority of youth in developmental relationships began to demonstrate a pattern of independent help-seeking in which they voluntarily divulged such difficulties as poor grades or family strife” (p. 19, in *Building relationships with youth in program settings: A study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia, PA: PPV.

Instrumental (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2005) “the mentors who seemed best able to overcome the frustrations of their task were those who combined the aims of developing competence and developing character” (1992, p. 548). Hamiltons suggest that mentoring for high-school-aged youth is more appealing to youth and more effective when “it occurs when it occurs in the context of joint goal-directed (instrumental) activity” and when “the relationship develops around shared goals and actions more than purely social interaction.” (p. 352-353). Hamilton, M.A., & Hamilton, Work and Service-Learning. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of youth mentoring*. (pp. 348-363). Sage.

To understand this better Karcher and Nakkula encourage programs to help mentors think about:

Focus—how directive they are being (developmental is less, instrumental is more directive)

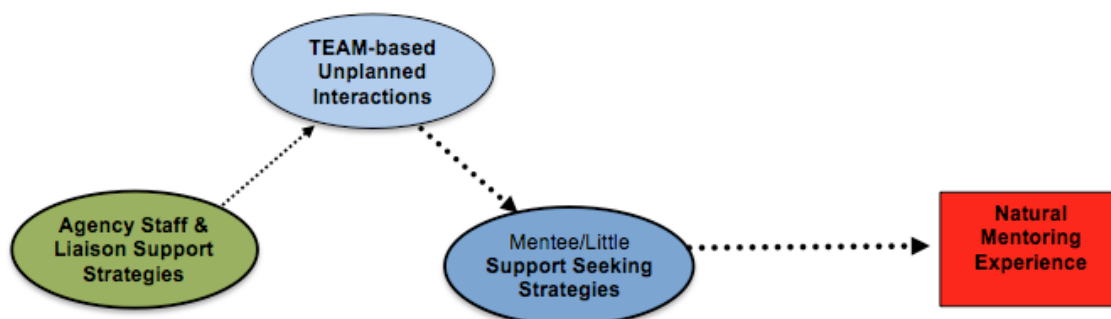
Purpose—adult, conventional, future-oriented goals or playful, fun, youth-oriented goals

Authorship—who selects the activity and conversation topics and how? The Theoretically

TEAM Framework: A Typology of Mentoring Relationship Interaction Focus, Purpose and Authorship

| Purpose | Mentor or Adult Purpose Focus | Collaborative or “We” focus | Mentee or Youth Purpose Focus | Purpose |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Serves conventional (adult) purpose | (Adult-centric) | | (Youth-centric) | Serves playful (or youthful) purpose |
| Adult-led spontaneous (non-relational) | | Focus: Minimally goal-directed/structured and/or (highly relational) | | Youth-led spontaneous (non-relational) |
| Adult-oriented preventive and developmental activities or discussions (relational focus) | | Mentoring | | Youth-oriented preventive and activities or discussions (relational) |
| Related to adult/societal goals, interests, or beliefs about what the mentee needs | | Mentoring | | Related to the youths’ goals, interests, or emphasizes outcomes |
| Remedial/ Intervention-oriented: Serves adults’ goals or purpose | | Focus: Highly structured and goal-directed (minimally relational) | | Remedial/ Intervention-oriented: Serves youths’ goals or purpose |

| TALKING | | PLAYING |
|---|--|---|
| Behavior (Discussed youth's behaviors that were related to problems with peers, teachers, adults, specifically misbehavior: Here attention is paid to relationships but largely the mentor's view) (Preacher/Principal) | Casual conversation (Discussed sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, fun things to do in the community, neighborhood. Not about personal matters but did afford reciprocal learning) (Peer) | Banter (engage in joke telling, silly play, goofy unstructured games, or other non-relational (impersonal) but light, funny, or entertaining <i>interactions or conversations</i>) (Comedian) |
| Conversation on social issues (Mentor discusses news, poverty, local events, religious or cultural issues that relate to the youth; Mentor tries to foster attitudes that will help the youth; May use prevention activities to reach goals) (Relational PYD Program Staff or Counselor) | Listening & learning (Discusses mentee's hobbies, interests, feelings; Mentee shares personal and important information while mentor listens, is empathic, affirms, and sometimes volunteers own similar personal experiences.) (Developmental Mentor) | Creative activities (activity) (Engages in conversation while doing youth-suggested or approved tasks like drawing, arts and crafts, reading and writing for fun, photography, etc.) (Playmate) |
| Academics (Discussed grades, school, testing, etc. or engaged in pre-planned academic support activities like reading or tutoring on a topic not proposed by mentee) (Goal-directed PYD Program Staff or Teacher or Tutor) | Future-Focus (Youth initiated discussion about College, careers, jobs, goals, dreams, etc., or shared problem solving that may include mentor advocating for youth outside immediate match) (Instrumental Mentor) | Indoor and outdoor games (activity) (Played board games, cards, chess, Uno, checkers, computer games, puzzles, inside or catch, b-ball, soccer, outside) (Teammate) |
| Attendance and "stay-in-school" discussion (Mentor-initiated conversations about topics of concern to adults more than youth) (Vice Principal) | Learning School or Job Skills (activity) (Future-oriented, youth-initiated activities taught by and practiced with mentor: Helped with homework or reading/writing/job skills) (Master journeyperson) | Sports, athletic, or outdoor game (activity) (Mentor taught or coached basketball, soccer, tennis, etc.) (Coach) |
| LEARNING | | DOING |



Youth centeredness

1. My mentor almost always asks me what I want to do.
2. My mentor is always interested in what I want to do.
3. My mentor and I like to do a lot of the same things.
4. My mentor thinks of fun and interesting things to do.
5. My mentor and I do things I really want to do.

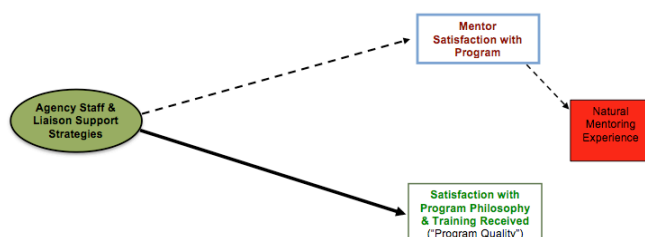
Growth/goal focus

6. My mentor and I spend time working on how I can improve as a person.
7. My mentor helps me to set and reach goals.
8. My mentor and I work on projects together.
9. My mentor and I accomplish a lot of things together.
10. My mentor and I talk together about how to solve problems.

*r (between-factor correlation)***Natural Mentoring Experience**

(Mentor Reported Relationship Quality Assessment, Karcher et al., 2013)

1. I think this youth sees me as someone special in his/her life.
2. I bet my Little feels his/her life is better because I am in it.
3. My Little probably thinks, "My Big could be here today, gone tomorrow."
4. I feel like I am just another adult in my Little's life.
5. I feel like there is something special and important about our relationship.
6. I feel close to my Little.
7. My Little seems to enjoy our time together.
8. I know I am making a difference in my Little's life.
9. I wish our relationship had more direction or purpose.

**Youth Centeredness and Growth-Goal-**

Focused Mentoring Style Scales (created by DuBois, and reported in Sass, D. A., & Karcher, M. J. (2013a). Appendix E: Development and validation of mentoring relationship quality scales. In Herrera, DuBois & Grossman (Eds.), *The role of risk mentoring experiences and outcomes for youth with varying risk profiles* (pp. 113-116). New York, NY: MDRC.

Natural Mentoring Relationship Scale

Karcher, M.J. (2013). Natural Mentoring Relationship Scale, In Karcher, M.J. McClatchy, K., Wong, M., Zholu, Y., & Avera, J. (2013). *InspireU Program Formative Evaluation: Final Report for the Office of the Mayor of San Antonio*. Unpublished report, The Group for the Study of Interpersonal Development, University of Texas at San Antonio.

Mentor Rated Support from Program Staff

"Rate the following four statements on a 1 to 5 scale, "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree":

1. Program staff seem willing to help me.
2. Program staff have shared important information with me about my mentee.
3. Program staff have given suggestions on what I can do with my mentee.
4. Program staff seem truly concerned about how well our match is going.

(From Karcher, M. J. (2004) W. T. Grant-Funded UTSA Study of Mentoring in the Learning Environment (SMILE): Year 1 Results. San Antonio: University of Texas at San Antonio.)

Agency Director rating of Staff Rating

(Directors rated: "Staff member has..." from "unsatisfactory" [1], "improvement needed" [2], "met expectations" [3], "exceeded expectations" [4], "outstanding" [5]

- 1...effectively implemented feedback from her/his supervisor,"
- 2...actively sought feedback from her/his supervisor"
- 3...positively and effectively engaged with team members"
- 4...worked to facilitate growth or improvement in areas where youth were in particular need of support"
- 5...documentation (for example, case notes) effectively represented/ captured each conversation with a match party (that is, mentor, youth, parent)."

(From Herrera, C., DuBois, D. L. & J. Grossman, J. B. (2013) *The role of risk mentoring experiences and outcomes for youth with varying risk profiles* (p. 121). New York, NY: PPV but distributed by MDRC.