INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI®
MENTORING AND 'OTHERS':
THE MENTORING EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN A
PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Robin Vann Lynch, B. A., M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
2000

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Beverly M. Gordon, Adviser
Dr. Douglas H. Macbeth
Dr. Charles R. Hancock

Approved by
Beverly M. Gordon
Adviser
College of Education
Copyright by
Robin Vann Lynch
2000
ABSTRACT

Mentoring has become a discourse that within the last three decades, has informally and formally permeated corporate and educational arenas as a means of integrating particularly women and people of color, into environments that had heretofore been inaccessible to them. The academy has adapted the corporate model of mentoring in order to enhance the academic, personal and professional success of African American and other students of color, particularly those enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs). The institutionalization of formal or assigned mentoring practices in PWIs has sought to positively influence the undergraduate experiences (e.g., retention; degree completion; and satisfaction with college life) of African American and other students of color.

This study examined the mentoring experiences of African American students involved in a formal mentoring program in place for students of color at a large research university in the Midwestern region of the United States. Qualitative research methods and a combined theoretical frame of academic and social integration and theories of race and racism in education were utilized to shape the research study. The study sample was represented by mentees, assigned peer mentors (i.e. upper class students) and professional mentors (i.e. faculty, staff and graduate students) who participated in the
formal mentoring program during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98 and 1998-99 academic years. A cross-case analysis was applied to the research data and emergent themes were generated in the context of mentoring and African American student experiences in a PWI. Findings were grouped under the following major categories: 1) the mentoring process; 2) mentoring and academic integration; 3) mentoring and social integration; 4) race and racism in education and 5) mentoring and African American student experiences. Emergent themes and corresponding subcategories were discussed and illuminated through the voices of the study’s participants.

The study’s major findings confirmed that formal mentoring significantly benefits African American students enrolled in a PWI. Both professional and peer mentors were influential in the academic and social integration of the African American student/mentee participants. Challenges as they related to cross-race and cross-gender mentoring relationships and the salience of race and racism in the everyday lives of African American students in a PWI rounded out the study’s major findings and were examined in conjunction with the literature and the major implications of the study.
Dedicated to our soon-to-be born Tyler or Thomas who enabled me to find the strength, solace and spirit to persevere.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Anyone who undergoes and completes this process knows that they do not do it alone. My journey is no different. These few pages express my humble gratitude to all of those who have in some way or another been a part of this physical, mental and spiritual journey. I must first acknowledge the Almighty Spirit for giving me the courage and strength each day to pursue this project. Thank you for sending your angels to watch over and heal my mother, so that she could physically share in this accomplishment.

Thank you to all of the student and mentor participants who so willingly shared their time and their stories with me so that this research study could materialize. I express my sincerest gratitude to my adviser, Dr. Beverly Gordon who has provided unconditional support and mentorship throughout my doctoral studies. I must also thank the other members of my dissertation committee Drs. Douglas H. Macbeth and Charles R. Hancock whose insight and constructive feedback regarding my work proved invaluable.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the faculty in the Schools of Educational Policy and Leadership and Teaching and Learning. For their encouragement and assistance I especially want to acknowledge especially acknowledge the support of Drs. Patti Lather, Mary Leach; Tyrone Howard and Donna Ford. Thank you also to the
faculty in the Department of African American and African Studies who through the help
of such faculty members as Drs. James Upton, Paulette Pierce and William Nelson, the
pursuit of the doctorate became less elusive. Thank you to the staff at OSU’s classical
station for providing with cognitive stimulation at precisely the right moments and to the
faculty and staff at Saint Joseph’s University, especially Dr. Barry Kanpol for seeing my
potential and welcoming me as a new faculty member.

I am blessed that mentoring networks surrounded me during this process and
throughout my graduate student career. They have made all the difference in my success.
I am grateful for my relationships with Drs. Cynthia Tyson and Frances James-Brown for
being instrumental in helping me realize true mentoring and providing with the “sistah
girl” support that enabled me to keep pushing toward my goals.

Without the support of my family, both biological and extended this
accomplishment would not have been possible. I thank my mother for her consistently
stern but gentle: “Have you finished that paper yet?” which resonated with me all the
way to the final printing of these pages. I thank my sister Adrienne, although miles away
never once doubted my ability to complete this project. I am also grateful to the rest of
my and my husband’s family who have supported me throughout my academic, personal
and professional endeavors. Grandma, I know you are smiling down on me.

My extended family list of acknowledgments is extensive however cannot be
overlooked. Thanks to all of my friends back East, whose words of encouragement always came at just the right time. To all of my sorors both near and far, I thank you for your continued sisterhood, love and support in Delta. I especially thank those sorors who shared in scholarly struggle with me. I thank the Black Graduate and Professional Student Caucus for providing friendship, encouragement and a necessary outlet during my time in graduate school. I especially want to thank the Caucus advisor, Mr. Larry Williamson who helped me to grow as both a scholar and leader while here at Ohio State.

Thank you to the staff in the Office of Minority Affairs and the Department of Retention Services, especially Dr. Tamra Minor who assisted me in the early stages of this research process and the many students whose experiences of triumph and challenge were the impetus for this research.

I must thank our little Yorkie Harlem, who never complained about his broken sleep during untimely dissertation “bright lights.” Thank you to my wonderfully supportive and loving partner through life’s journey, Thomas. This is truly our accomplishment and a testimony of what it means to provide unconditional love and support. You are a blessing. Finally, if there is anyone reading these pages whose role in this process has gone unrecorded, please charge it to my head and not my heart.
VITA

February 12, 1968...........................................Born - Norfolk, Virginia

1990....................................................................B.A. Afro-American Studies,
University of Virginia.

1996....................................................................M.A. African American and
African Studies,
The Ohio State University.

1996-1999.......................................................Graduate Administrative Associate,
Office of Minority Affairs,
The Ohio State University

1998....................................................................M.A. Education,
The Ohio State University.

1998-1999.......................................................Graduate Teaching Associate,
Department of African American and
African Studies,
The Ohio State University

1999-2000.......................................................Graduate Research Associate,
School of Educational Policy and
Leadership,
The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Specialization In: Curriculum Studies
Research Methods
African American Studies
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Profiles of study participants</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Overview of the study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Context of the problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Purpose of the study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Significance of the study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Definition of terms</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review of related literature</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Mentor and mentoring: Conceptual origins</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Mentoring: Definitions, functions and characteristics</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Theoretical constructs of the mentoring process: The corporate sector</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Corporate theories of mentoring</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Types of mentoring relationships: Informal, formal and network</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Issues of race and gender in mentoring relationships</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Mentoring configurations in higher education</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Faculty to student mentoring</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10 Student to student mentoring</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11 Formal mentoring and undergraduate students</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12 Theoretical examinations of mentoring in higher education</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13 Academic and social integration theory and African American students: A critique</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>Student/faculty interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>Study skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>Academic assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>Academic integration and race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Category 3: Mentoring and social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>Student/student interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>Social isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>Category 4: Mentoring, race and racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>Race and mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>Category 5: Mentoring and African American student experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>Academic dissonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>Social dissonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>Cultural dissonance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>Satisfaction with college experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Limitations, summary of findings, conclusions, implications and recommendations for further research | 177 |
| 5.1 | Limitations of the study | 177 |
| 5.2 | Summary of findings | 179 |
| 5.3 | Discussion of research questions and emergent themes | 182 |
| 5.4 | Summary and conclusions | 191 |
| 5.5 | Implications | 193 |
| 5.6 | Recommendations for further research | 195 |

6. Epilogue | 199 |

7. Appendices | 202 |
| 7.1 | Appendix A: Oral/Electronic mail solicitation – Mentees/Protégés | 203 |
| 7.2 | Appendix B: Oral/Electronic mail solicitation – Mentors | 205 |
| 7.3 | Appendix C: Consent for participation in behavioral research | 207 |
| 7.4 | Appendix D: General mentee/protégé interview and focus group guide | 209 |
| 7.5 | Appendix E: General mentor interview and focus group guide | 217 |

8. List of references | 224 |

xii
CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Context of the Problem

How does it feel to be a problem? they say...I answer seldom a word. And yet, being a problem is a strange experience for one who has never been anything else. ...Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from others; or like, in mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. (DuBois, 1903, pp. 213-214)

I am waiting for them to stop talking about the “Other,” to stop even describing how important it is to be able to speak about difference. ...Often this speech about the “Other” is also a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking, if there were silence, if we were there. This “we” is that “us” in the margins, that “we” who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. (hooks, 1990, pp. 151-152)
African American students who attend Predominantly White Institutions also referred to as PWIs are confronted with a formidable task. That is, they are expected to enter many of these colleges and universities, historically closed to their foremothers and forefathers less than fifty years ago, academically and socially integrate (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) into the mainstream fabric of these institutions, matriculate in a timely fashion and be prepared to enter graduate and professional schools or embark upon careers in corporate arenas.

Both DuBois and hooks metaphorically speak of the ways in which Predominantly White Institutions regard the racially different, particularly African American students as “a problem” or “the ‘other,’” as a result of often being shut out and alienated by these institutions. To be regarded as “a problem” or “the ‘other’” notwithstanding, the task of any college student can be a difficult one, wrought with some of the same issues as those that African American students face. As young adults, college students progress through various stages of identity and the process of higher education significantly impacts their identity development. These stages include: competence; emotions; autonomy; interpersonal relationships; purpose; identity; and integrity (Chickering, 1969).

Although mainstream models that address college student experiences (Astin, 1975, 1993; Tinto, 1975, 1993) have been influenced by research on student identity models such as Chickering’s (1969), they have limitations with regard to their relevance to the experiences of African American college students. The identity development of many African American college students is directly correlated with being selected or
chosen by individuals who assist them with making a smooth transition from high school to college (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Blackwell, 1987a; Griffin, 1992). These individuals, labeled as mentors serve in a capacity to assist African American students matriculate successfully through the higher educational system. The presence of mentors is often paramount in African American student success in college and beyond, particularly for those attending in predominantly White colleges and universities (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Blackwell, 1987a; Fleming, 1984; Epps, 1972; Griffin, 1992; Nettles, 1988).

Scholars agree that the process of mentoring assists individuals during their early adult lives in making major life transitions and developing positive identities (Blackwell, 1987a; Levinson et al., 1978; Ugbah and Williams, 1989). The institutionalization of mentoring as a formal or assigned programmatic initiative is one means higher education, particularly Predominantly White Institutions, has sought to positively influence the undergraduate experiences (e.g., retention; degree completion; and satisfaction with college life) of African American and other students of color (Allen, 1988; Allen, Epps and Haniff, 1991a; Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987; Ugbah and Williams, 1989). This research focused on the formal mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education.

Since the 1970’s mentoring has received considerable attention in both public and private sectors and has recently been placed on a national agenda with President Clinton’s appointment of Colin Powell as director of America’s Promise: The Alliance for Youth. Founded in 1998, the goal of America’s Promise is to serve as “a national crusade to help millions of children at risk become children of promise,” many of whom
are African American (Powell, 1999, p. 45). The organization has identified mentoring as one of five fundamental resources needed by America’s young people.

Literature examining mentoring and African American students, specifically those enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions reports that African American students in Predominantly White Institutions who are guided or sponsored by faculty, administrative staff and/or upper class peers are more likely to become academically and socially integrated at PWIs and are more likely to persist through graduation (Blackwell, 1987a; Wunsch, 1994). The mentoring process for African American students enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) as compared to African American students enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) is reported as more frequent and informal (Allen, 1985, 1988, 1992; Blackwell, 1987b). Mentoring at HBCUs and PBIs Allen (1985, 1988, 1992) contends is an integral component of the process of socializing young African American males and females into future academic and professional roles.

By contrast, Allen (1985, 1988, 1992), Blackwell (1987a), Feagin (1992) and others suggest that such an informal mentoring process does not occur as frequently at PWIs for African American students. These findings corroborate the research literature which suggests that race and gender directly influence who is selected as a protégé and ultimately who participates in the mentoring process (Blackwell, 1987a, 1987b; Griffin, 1992; Wilson, 1994). Moreover, the literature argues that mentors themselves typically initiate mentoring relationships. Mentors may see potential in a younger person and become committed to that individual’s academic, personal and professional success.
The literature suggests further that the most prevalent form of mentoring in higher education occurs between a faculty member and a student. Faculty to student mentoring, when successful, enables students to become academically integrated into the particular college or university he or she attends (Astin, 1975, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tillman, 1995; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

In one of the first comprehensive and systematic studies to research the mentoring phenomenon, Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee's *Seasons of a Man's Life* (1978), examined the mentoring process as it pertained the lives of primarily adult White males progressing from early to middle adulthood. They delineated various stages of development that would be best supported by participating in a mentoring relationship. They found that a mentor served the function of an older, presumably wiser, confidant that served to socialize the protégé in a particular occupation (Gordon, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978; Tillman, 1995). Building upon the central tenets of the Levinson et al. study (1978), Ugbah & Williams (1989) define a mentor as someone who sponsors a young person by advocating and using “his [or her] influence to promote the young [person’s] entry and advancement” into a particular field (p. 30). They state further that the mentor may serve as a “host or a guide” (p. 30). The term mentor is attached to a person, usually one who is older and helps to facilitate the growth and development of a younger more inexperienced individual (Blackwell, 1987b; Carden, 1990; Gordon, 1983; Jacobi, 1991; Levinson et al., 1978; Noe, 1988; Tillman, 1995; Wunsch, 1994). Mentoring has come to be “characterized as one of the most important relationships a person can have in early
adulthood.” (Ugbah & Williams, 1989, p. 30).

The Levinson et al. (1978) study laid a foundation for what has become a discourse that within the last three decades, has informally and formally permeated corporate and educational arenas as a means of integrating, particularly women and people of color, into environments which had heretofore been inaccessible to them (Blackwell, 1987a; Taylor, 1999; Thomas, 1989; Wunsch, 1994). The academy has adapted the corporate model of mentoring as a means by which to enhance the academic and personal success of African American and other students of color (Lomotey, 1990) particularly those enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions.

African American students on predominantly White college and university campuses are often the target group of various outreach initiatives such as mentoring, since it has has been shown that these students’ experiences continue to be racialized or contextualized by the significance of race in American society (Allen, 1988, 1992; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Lang, 1992). Racialized and racist experiences, scholars argue, directly affect the achievement and psychosocial development of African American students in general and African American students in predominantly White campus environments in particular (Allen, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Lomotey, 1990). Moreover, because of feelings of isolation in PWIs, a disproportionate number of African American students lag behind their White counterparts in areas such as academic achievement, persistence, and post-graduate study (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1975, 1982; Blackwell, 1987; Fleming, 1984; Griffin, 1992; Lomotey, 1990; Tinto, 1987, 1993).
Despite the extensive support mentoring has received even on a national level, because of its context-specific nature, programmatic and funding demands (Bey and Holmes, 1992), institutionalizing the practice particularly for underrepresented groups presents a challenge for colleges and universities committed to the success of its entire population of students. Both the concept and the process of mentoring, although extensively researched, remain elusive phenomena, in which “no universally accepted definition” exists (Wunsch, 1994, p. 2). However, the mentoring process continues to be an institutional practice in the academy, not only to integrate women and people of color, but also to facilitate the academic and social integration of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions (Griffin, 1992; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1993).

This study examined the formal mentoring experiences of African American students enrolled in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education. The mentoring experiences of these students as told by the students themselves and their mentors are examined in part through the theoretical lens of academic and social integration, a model that has had a significant impact on higher education retention research (Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). The concept of academic and social integration was first introduced by Vincent Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) in his seminal quantitative research study on college student attrition. Primarily utilizing White college students as his study population, Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) found that sufficient levels of academic and social integration must occur if undergraduate students are to matriculate successfully through graduation.
Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defines academic integration as the degree to which students identify with the institution’s academic requirements and effectively utilize tutorial and other programs that provide academic assistance. Among aspects of academic integration are: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills and 3) academic assistance (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defines social integration as the degree to which students identify with the social characteristics of the institution. Peer interaction, social adjustment and interaction within the university are the primary tenets associated with social integration. Factors that influence student social integration include: 1) student/student interaction; 2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support and 5) self-esteem (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

To the extent that undergraduate students meet the criteria associated with academic and social integration, Tinto and others such as Griffin, 1992, Kraemer, 1997; and Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980 argue that students will likely persist through graduation. Tinto’s (1993) academic and social integration model and its corresponding tenets were applied to the formal mentoring experiences of the African American student participants in this research in an effort to examine its applicability for this particular cohort of undergraduate students.

In addition to African American student academic and social integration, many colleges and universities have established formal mentoring programs in an effort to counter alienating or racist experiences of African American students on predominantly White college campuses (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996).
Some researchers argue however, that formal mentoring programs are simply band-aid approaches to more systemic problems of racism in predominantly White campus environments (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Philip, 1993). In response to this apprehension, many formal mentoring programs have at their core, an acknowledgment of the experiences of African American students at PWIs, particularly with regard to the significance of race (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera & Imani, 1996).

A plethora of studies (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1996; Fleming, 1984) address the experiences of African American students enrolled in Predominantly White Institutions. However, there is a paucity of theoretical research that examines the mentoring experiences of diverse students, specifically African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (Blackwell, 1987a, 1987b; Philip, 1993; Ugbah and Williams, 1989; Wilson, 1994). On predominantly White campuses, it seems imperative to examine the mentoring experiences of African American students, who may be mentored by non-Black or White and other faculty and staff of color, and the myriad issues that may exist in the context of cross-race mentoring (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995). Higher education statistics report that on predominantly White campuses, only thirteen percent of the faculty is of color, with African American faculty representing approximately five percent of total faculty of color teaching in colleges and universities in the United States. However, the majority of African American faculty teaches in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), where less than one fourth of the African American college student population is enrolled (Blackwell, 1987a, 1987b; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995).
Since few studies provide a theoretical examination of the mentoring process or mentoring relationships (Carden, 1990; Gordon, 1982; Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988; Wunsch, 1994), the primary focus of this study was to examine the mentoring experiences of African American students and their mentors through a twofold theoretical frame. First, the mentoring experiences of these students were examined utilizing Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) model of academic and social integration. Second, the mentoring experiences of these students were examined through combined theories of race and racism in education, particularly higher education. Those that take a critical approach to examining race and racism and the ways in which it manifests itself in the life experiences of African American and other people of color were drawn upon in this context (DuBois, 1903; Fanon, 1967; Gordon, 1983; Gordon, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1997, 1999; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Parker, 1997; Taylor, 1999; Woodson, 1933; Wynter, 1990). Mentoring experiences as reported by the students and their assigned mentors themselves inform not only the mentoring discourse as it relates to African American students in Predominantly White Institutions, but they also provide a new perspective on theories of academic and social integration in the context of African American student experiences at PWIs and the relevance of race.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to examine the mentoring experiences of a cohort of African American students involved in a formal undergraduate mentoring program for students of color at a large Midwestern research university in the United States. The mentoring experiences as told by the students and their assigned mentors were examined
in the context of their academic and social integration (Tinto 1975, 1987, 1993) at a large Predominantly White Institution (PWI). The sample of study participants consisted of fourteen mentees and their eleven assigned mentors (two peer and nine professional) for a total of twenty-five participants. Specifically, the study sample was represented by mentees, assigned peer mentors (i.e., upper class students) and professional mentors (i.e., faculty, staff and graduate students) during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98; 1998-99 academic years.\footnote{See Table 3.1. Also see section entitled, “Introduction to study participants: Mentees and assigned mentors” found in Chapter 4.}

Research data was analyzed utilizing qualitative research methods relying primarily on semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions. Participant observation and document analysis methods were utilized less extensively, but represented a means of further triangulating the data collection process for the study. Cross-case methods of data analysis were used to identify common themes and research categories that emerged from the interview and focus-group data and as well address the context-specific nature (Bey and Holmes, 1992; Kram, 1983; Tillman, 1995) of the mentoring experiences for this select group of participants.

Research questions for this study were shaped by the study’s focus on the students’ mentoring experiences and their experiences as African American students enrolled in a Predominantly White Institution. For the purpose of constructing emerging themes around the mentoring experiences of African American students in this particular PWI, the voices of mentees and mentors define their experience. The main questions that guided the research inquiry at the outset of the study were:
• How do students and their assigned mentors conceptualize/define mentoring?
• How do students and their assigned mentors characterize/describe their mentoring relationships?
• To what extent do students’ mentoring experiences influence their academic integration into the university?
• To what extent do students mentoring experiences influence their social integration into the university?
• What are the experiences of these African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education?
• In what ways do issues of race affect the mentoring relationship?
• In what ways do issues of gender affect the mentoring relationship?

Significance of the study

This study was exploratory in many ways and represented an initial step in moving beyond the mentoring victory narrative so prevalent in the mentoring literature, which primarily emphasizes the positive aspects of engaging in the mentoring process (James, 1999; Noller, 1988; Wilson, 1994; Wunsch, 1994; Sipe, 1996; Stanley, 1994). Mentees or protégés as they are termed in the research literature, and mentors were asked to share their narratives of both triumph and challenge with regard to developing a sustained mentoring relationship. The mentoring experiences of these students were examined in part through the theoretical lens of academic and social integration, an important model in the literature addressing college student retention. Academic and social integration of students, particularly African American students is often a goal of
institutions of higher learning, offices or departments of formal mentoring programs particularly for students of color (Allen, 1985, 1988; Griffin, 1992; Lang, 1988).

Aspects of academic and social integration are addressed in the literature from a broad college student retention focus, usually with a White college student population as the primary benchmark (Allen, 1988; Astin, 1975; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). In this regard, there seems to be little connection between the way in which the mentoring process manifests itself in the lives of African American students in PWIs, particularly with regard to their academic and social integration as students of color on these campuses. To this end, this study invited voices of both students and their assigned mentors. Participant voices provide a broad perspective of the mentoring experience in concert with African American student academic and social integration at a Predominantly White Institution. They also illuminate the ways in which issues of race and racism impact these students’ experiences at a PWI. Few studies examine mentoring from the perspective of both the mentor and the mentored, a limitation of the mentoring research literature (Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988).

Further, because much of the literature on mentoring is practice-oriented, few studies suggest approaches for mentoring diverse students, grounded in theoretical research (Allen, 1988, 1992; Feagin, 1992; Jacobi, 1991; Wilson, 1994). In this regard, this study examined cross-race and to a lesser extent cross-gender mentoring relationships, as it is these relationships that often provide African American and other students of color the comfort and confidence they need to succeed in a Predominantly White college or university setting, despite feelings of alienation (Allen, 1992; Blackwell,
Moreover, cross-race and cross-gender mentoring is critical, since there are relatively few African American faculty on predominantly White college campuses to serve in this capacity on behalf of African American students (Blackwell, 1983, 1987; National Center for Education Statistics, 1995; Ugbah and Williams, 1989). These types of mentoring relationships increase the number of resources and probability of success for African American students in PWIs and also suggest ways in which White faculty and staff can become a part of the mentoring process for African American and other students of color (Haring, 1997).

Definition of terms

The following key terms are used throughout this research study. Because the research suggests that no universally accepted definition of mentoring exists, the terms of this study are operationalized as follows.

Academic integration. The degree to which students identify with the institution’s academic requirements and effectively utilize tutorial and other programs that provide academic assistance. Academic integration includes: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills; and 3) academic assistance (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).


Cross-gender mentoring. Mentoring relationship in which a male and female are matched as mentee and mentor.
Cross-race mentoring. African American student matched with a non-African American mentor.

Formal mentoring. Also referred to as assigned or facilitated mentoring (Murray, 1991). Formal mentoring is based on the particular goals and objectives of a program. Formal mentoring in the context of this study occurs in an established program whereby student and mentor participants are matched as mentoring teams with peer or professional mentors. The academic and career interests of the mentee and the academic and/or professional experience of the mentor are the basis for the mentoring match.

Informal mentoring. Also referred to as classical mentoring (Levinson et al., 1978). The mentoring relationship is dependent heavily on choice and mutual selection. This is considered the most common form of mentoring.

Mentee. African American student participant in the formal mentoring program during his/her freshman year at the university. Mentee is used as a descriptor for students in the formal mentoring program to remain consistent with the language of the program and its participants.

---

2 Mentee is used to describe student participants not only because it is consistent with the terminology used in the program in which they are affiliated, but it is also the way in which they refer to themselves throughout the study. Although, the term protégé is used frequently in the literature to describe mentoring relationships (Kram, 1983, Philips-Jones, 1982; Levinson, et al., 1978) whether in the classical Levinsonian sense or by more formal means, it is grounded in the informal process in which an older person takes an interest in a younger person. Informal mentoring involves the critical component of mentor or protégé choice or selection in the initiation phase of the relationship. This is not to suggest that formal mentoring relationships in general or mentoring relationships in this study in particular never reach mentor-protégé status. Rather, the terms mentee and mentor, more accurately describe formal mentoring relationships, particularly during the early stages.
**Mentor.** An older more experienced individual who engages in the functions listed in the term mentoring. A faculty, staff member or graduate student, referred to as a professional mentor or an upper-class student, referred to as a peer mentor.

**Protégé.** Synonymous with mentee. An individual who entrusts a more experienced individual with his or her growth and development in a particular academic or occupational field.

**Mentoring.** A process by which a more experienced individual helps to facilitate the psychosocial and career development of a less experienced individual. Mentoring involves serving as a sponsor, guide and/or host and in some cases protecting the protégé or mentee. (Blackwell, 1989; Tillman, 1995, Ugbah and Williams, 1989; Wunsch, 1994).

**Peer mentor.** An upper-class student classified as a sophomore, junior or senior and a participant in the formal mentoring program. Peer mentors are assigned mentees based on similar academic interests, same race and gender.

**Predominantly White Institution (PWI).** A four-year institution of higher education in which less than ten percent of the student population is African American. By in large, African American students constitute less than ten percent of the total student population with the White student population representing over seventy percent. The remaining student population consists of International, Hispanic, Asian and Native American students (NCES, 1995).

**Professional mentor.** Faculty, staff or graduate student participant in the formal mentoring program. Professional mentors are assigned mentees based on their academic and/or professional experience and its parallel to the mentee’s academic and career
interests.

Social integration. The degree to which students identify with the social characteristics of the institution. Peer interaction, social adjustment and interaction within the university are the primary tenets associated with social integration. Factors that most affect the social integration of students include: 1) student/student interaction; 2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support and 5) self-esteem (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

Trust. Trust was defined by the study’s participants as they referenced various conversations and activities which enabled them to develop a sense of understanding and comfort with one another and progress from the initiation to the cultivation phase of the relationship. The concept of trust is critical in the development of mentoring relationships and was important in the development of the formal mentoring relationships to the study.

Conclusion

This chapter presented some of the various reasons research should examine the mentoring process in the context of African American students in a PWI. The purpose, significance and definition of the study’s terms were also presented. Chapter 2 reviews the related literature and discusses the study’s theoretical frame. Chapter 3 discusses the methodological aspects of the study. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes the study’s data. Chapter 5 discusses study limitations, summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for further research. Chapter 6 concludes the study with an epilogue.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of related literature for this research brings together two large bodies of scholarship, literature that addresses mentoring and literature that addresses African American student experiences in higher education, specifically literature examining African American student experiences in predominantly White college and university environments. The goal of this literature review is to build significant connections between these bodies of literature as each relates to the formal mentoring experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions of higher education. To this end, the review addresses literature relative to the specificity of this research, as there are few published studies that bring these two important discourses together. Because many of the studies on mentoring are practice-oriented (Bey and Holmes, 1992; James, 1999; Jacobi, 1991; Noller, 1982; Wilson, 1994), there are few theoretical approaches available that allow the mentoring process to be examined and subsequently operationalized (Carden, 1990; Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1998).
The review begins with a historical examination of the concept of mentoring highlighting various definitions in the literature on mentoring. Second, the institutionalization of mentoring in both the corporate and academic arenas is discussed through social learning and developmental theories, illuminating models that fall under the same rubric. Third, types and characteristics of the mentoring relationship are examined, followed by a discussion of issues of race and gender in mentoring relationships, particularly the way in which race and gender influence who is selected as a protégé (Blackwell, 1987; Griffin, 1992; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Wilson, 1994). The review shifts focus to a discussion of how mentoring functions in higher education, particularly as it relates to student development and retention. The section concludes with a detailed examination of Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) theory of academic and social integration proceeded by a critique, particularly as it relates to the experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions.

An examination of the experiences of African American students in higher education, specifically the experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) begins the next section. The review follows with an examination of the mentoring literature and African American students in higher education in relation to Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) theory of academic and social integration. The review of the literature concludes with an examination of issues of race and racism in higher education and the way in which the historical significance of each both informs and constructs in part the theoretical frame utilized in this research.
Mentor and mentoring: Conceptual origins

The literature describes mentoring as a tangible process that can be replicated (Baird, 1993; Kram, 1988; Pullins, Fine and Warren, 1995), likening its origin to the Greek myth, Homer's *Odyssey*, where the King of Ithaca entrusted Mentor to look after the growth and development of his son Telemachus. Mentor was to act as a surrogate parent in the King's absence (Gordon, 1983; Kridel, Bullough, Jr. & Shaker, 1996; Tillman, 1995; Ugbah & Williams, 1989; Zelditch, 1997). Ugbah & Williams (1989) further contend that Mentor had such a tremendous influence on Telemachus through his guidance and tutoring, that it is through Greek mythology that we attach the term mentor to a process or an older person that helps to facilitate the growth and development of a younger more inexperienced individual (Blackwell, 1987b; Gordon, 1983; Tillman, 1995; Wunsch, 1994).

Carruthers (1993) continues in his description of Homer's epic tale, stating that Mentor had to serve a parental role for young Telemachus. Mentor's parental role was both maternal and paternal, with Mentor sometimes appearing as Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom. Mentor's function was as “a teacher, a role model, and approachable counselor, a trusted advisor, a challenger, an encourager, among other things” (p. 9). Carruthers (1993) suggests that although the term mentor has its origin in Greek mythology, that there were mentoring pairs before Mentor and Telemachus, and that these dyadic relationships can be traced as far back as the Hebrew Bible.

Likewise, the mentoring concept is not unique to Greek mythology or unfamiliar to different cultures. The Ghanaian proverb "Each one teach one," speaks directly to the goal of developing mentoring relationships. Cultures in which group versus individual
success like African, African American (Asante, 1988; Jewell, 1988; Karenga, 1993) and Hispanic (Knouse, 1982) are those that seem to culturally have an inherent sense of mentoring. Regardless of its etymology, mentoring has come to be “characterized as one of the most important relationships a person can have in early adulthood” (Ugbah & Williams, 1989, p. 30).

**Mentoring: Definitions, functions and characteristics**

Definitions of mentoring differ across the literature. The corporate model of mentoring has been consistently adapted to other fields, particularly higher education. However, the literature concurs that no one definition suffices in its conceptualization of the mentoring process. Because of its context-specificity (Bey and Holmes, 1992), mentoring takes on a multitude of definitions, and although common themes exist as they relate to the mentoring process, they are nonetheless distinct (Carden, 1990; Healy, 1997; Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1983; Merriam, 1983; Noe, 1988; Wunsch, 1994). Merriam (1983) argues that not only do definitions of mentoring vary throughout the literature, but also research findings, vary with some reporting the benefits of mentoring to career or academic success and others reporting little or no impact. This section of the literature review highlights various some definitions of mentoring and then addresses more closely theories that have been mobilized consistently throughout the research literature as theoretical constructs by which to examine the mentoring process. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on research literature that examines mentoring within corporate and higher educational settings.

As one of the first comprehensive and systematic examinations of the mentoring process, Levinson et al. (1978) define mentoring “not in terms of formal roles but in
terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves” (p. 98). Speaking strictly of male mentors and protégés, Levinson et al. (1978) further contend that the mentor helps the protégé realize the “Dream,” defined as “a vague sense of self-in-adult-world...[which] has the quality of a vision, an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality” (p. 91). Once the early adult male or novice as termed by Levinson et al. (1978) realizes the dream, the need for a mentor and the development of a mentoring relationship is crucial. Levinson et al. (1978) argue that mentors are critical in terms of the functions they perform in the psychosocial and career development of the protégé.

To this end, the mentor serves as a:

- teacher to enhance the young man’s skills and intellectual development...[or] as sponsor...to facilitate the young man’s entry and advancement. He may be a host and guide, welcoming the initiate into a new occupational and social world and acquainting him with its values, customs, resources and cast of characters.

Through his own virtues, achievement and way of living the mentor may be an exemplar [authors’ italics] that the protégé can admire and seek to emulate. He may provide counsel [authors’ italics] and moral support. (Levinson et al., 1978, p. 98)

The mentor’s most important function however is to support the transitional phases of a young man from early to middle adulthood, while enabling him to realize the “Dream” (Levinson et al., 1978).

The idea of true mentoring as described by Levinson et al. (1978) has also been broadened by James Blackwell (1987a) in his research on the mentoring experiences of
African American students in graduate and professional schools. He argues that in order for mentors to be beneficial to protégés’ psychosocial and career development, the mentoring process must be a multifocal one that is differentiated between individuals who serve in a single capacity of sponsor, advisor, guide or role model. In this multifocal process, mentors function in a myriad of ways through:

...training and advice, emotional support and advocacy, perform[e] developmental roles, socializ[e] the protégé into the profession’s expectations, and assis[t] the protégé [with] obtain[ing] positions or facilitating the protégé’s upward mobility in the professional world. (Blackwell, 1987b, p. 147)

Blackwell (1987b) further contends that:

Due to the enormity of role requirements and mentor expectations, it is difficult to characterize many persons as true mentors. True mentoring may be rare; instead, individuals perform functions that are oriented toward that end but that are, in fact, substantially less intense than true mentoring. (p. 147)

Lester and Johnson (1981) echo the idea of true mentoring in the context of educational institutions arguing that they serve:

as a one-to-one learning relationship between an older person and a younger person that is based on modeling behavior and extended dialogue between them. ...The relationship has formal and informal aspects. ...What seems to confirm a mentoring relationship is its informal dimensions, which give greater significance to the contact between persons involved. The student must have respect for the mentor as a professional and as a human being who is living a life worthy of respect. The mentor must care enough about the student to take time to teach, to
show, to challenge, and to support. In some elusive fashion, the mentor must embody values, aspirations, wisdom, and strength that the student respects and perhaps wishes to attain as well. (p. 13)

Brown and DeCoste (1982) suggest that:

the role of mentoring includes both facilitative and prescriptive functions [and] involves dealing with individuals in terms of their total personality in order to advise, counsel and or guide them. (p. 13)

Jacobi’s (1991) synthesis of several definitions of mentoring is useful for this discussion. She argues that:

Mentoring relationships are helping relationships usually focused on achievement. The primary dynamic of the relationship is assistance and support provided to the protégé by the mentor. This support can take many forms but is always intended to help the protégé succeed in school or work. …[M]entoring includes any or all of three broad components: (a) emotional and psychosocial support, (b) direct assistance with career or professional development, and (c) role modeling.

Mentoring relationships are reciprocal. The mentor as well as the protégé benefits from the relationship, and these benefits may be either emotional or tangible in nature. Mentoring relationships are personal [and] require direct interaction between the mentor and the protégé. Relative to their protégés, mentors show greater experience, influence and achievement within a particular organization or environment. (p. 513)
In a similar context, Daloz (1986, 1999) develops the concept of a teaching mentor. He contends that like teachers, mentors are instrumental in the development of identity for young adults. He uses the metaphor of a journey to describe mentors stating:

...mentors are guides. They lead us along the journey of our lives. We trust them because they have been there before. They embody our hopes, cast light on the way ahead, interpret archane signs, warn us of lurking danger and point out unexpected delights along the way...[T]hey often pose as magicians in tales of transformation[.] (p. 18)

Theoretical constructs of the mentoring process: The corporate sector

The metaphor of mentoring as a journey as eloquently described by Daloz (1986, 1999) lends itself to the premise of this review regarding the infinite number of ways mentoring can be defined. However, it seems that the research literature in its preoccupation to systematically define mentoring may detract from acknowledging mentoring as an inherently interpersonal and fluid rather than static process (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Wunsch, 1994). Extensive theoretical examinations of the mentoring process have come from the corporate sector. Corporations have attempted to reproduce the employee productivity and corporate profitability that have resulted in the construction and maintenance of informal mentoring relationships commonly referred to as “old boy” networks (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Tillman, 1995). These old boy networks sometimes reproduce the corporate culture in which they are constructed, however those who are not White, male and middle to upper class are not afforded entry into or participation in these implicitly closed networking systems. Despite their exclusivity, corporations have realized the potential value of such networks and have
attempted to institutionalize the process. Formal mentoring relationships have been the result.

Although scholars of mentoring fail to universally agree on a definition (Wunsch, 1994), the process can however be traced broadly to the disciplines of psychology and sociology, and more specifically to theories that address various stages of adult development. Mentoring as a component of adult development and a process that facilitates periods or stages of early to middle adulthood as Levinson et al. (1978) suggest, speaks to the convergence of the psychosocial as well as career benefits individuals receive as a result of being involved in mentoring relationships. The development of self identity through the educational and career process is in part aided by the presence of a mentor and the complex interactions, growth and development that arise from participating in it.

Corporate theories of mentoring

Theories of mentoring have emerged primarily as a result of research examining the mentoring process as it unfolds in the corporate sector. Various theories have been generated and utilized to explain the mentoring phenomena. This section of the review introduces two theories used to explain the complex interactions involved in the mentoring process, social learning and developmental theory. To this end, the major tenets of social learning and developmental theory will be delineated and discussed as they relate to the mentoring process, with an emphasis on developmental theory since it combines aspects of psychology, sociology, organizational behavior and student development to examine the dynamics of the mentoring relationship (Carden, 1990; Erkut and Mokros, 1984; Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978).
Thomas, Murrell and Chickering (1982) discuss social learning theory, as it relates to the educational mentoring process. First introduced by Bandura (1971), Thomas, Murrell and Chickering (1982) contend that social learning theory functions as a modeling behavior within the mentoring relationship. They argue that the mentor functions as an exemplar and protects the protégé from making unnecessary mistakes (Thomas, Murrell and Chickering, 1982). Citing Bandura (1971) they further contend that social learning theory assumes "that modeling influences operate principally through their informative function" (Thomas, Murrell and Chickering, 1982, p. 16). That is, the mentoring process functions through a form of modeling the multiple roles assumed by the mentor. Noe (1988) frames his research study of assigned mentoring as it relates to success in the career development of educators with social learning theory. He argues that through "direct and observational learning [protégés can] acquire behavioral patterns and strengthen expectations regarding the ability to perform tasks successfully" (Noe, 1988, p. 457). Noe (1988) contends that the idea of modeling has generated interest in mentoring as a process to facilitate the psychosocial, career growth and development of those in early to middle stages of their careers.

Although, Bandura's (1971) theory of social learning and role of modeling is relevant to the development of mentoring relationships, it is not utilized extensively throughout the research literature. Jacobi (1991) argues that Bandura's (1971) social learning theory does not take into account the complex functioning and distinct phases of the mentoring process (Kram, 1983; Philips, 1978; Philips-Jones, 1982) and is therefore theoretically limited. Instead Jacobi (1991) and others (Carden, 1990; Daloz, 1986, 1999; Kram, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978; Philips, 1978; Philips-Jones, 1982) suggest
developmental theory as a more comprehensive means of theoretically examining and explaining what occurs in the development of mentor-protégé relationships.

Developmental theory has been used to explain in part the way in which mentor-protégé relationships function. Developmental or stage theory broadly defined, is theory that attempts to explain experiences of growth and the development of individuals as they interact with the world (Carden, 1990; Daloz, 1986, 1999; Jacobi, 1991). Drawing on the seminal study of Levinson et al. (1978), Daloz (1986, 1999) argues that developmental theory represents a map in which to examine the role mentors play through the phases of adult development. Daloz (1986, 1999) continues that developmental theory:

- asserts that growth involves more than becoming a well-adjusted member of society. ...It also means coming to see one’s own culture from a critical stance and establishing loyalties that go beyond one’s immediate community” (p. 47).

Scholars who study mentoring have either built upon the Levinson et al. (1978) study in order to illustrate phases of the mentoring relationship (Kram, 1983; Philips, 1978; Philips-Jones, 1982) or used it in some way to explain the mentoring phenomena (Carden, 1990; Daloz, 1986, 1999; Jacobi, 1991). This section of the review discusses studies of mentoring and various models that ascribe to developmental theory as a conceptual framework beginning with a detailed discussion of the seminal Levinson et. al. (1978) study.

In a Season’s of a man’s life, Levinson et al. (1978) researched the adult lives of males between the ages of 35 and 45 to discern what developmental stages men move through from early to middle and late adult stages. Their sample consisted of 40 American men, each employed in various occupational fields. Levinson et al. (1978)
discovered that the research participants moved through distinct stages or life cycles of
development. These stages include the novice phase of early adulthood; the settling
down period; the mid-life transition; and middle adulthood. Based on their findings,
Levinson et al. (1978) argue that mentoring relationships are critical in the development
of adult men, particularly during the transition from the novice phase of early adulthood
to the settling down period. They argue that mentoring relationships function to enable
males moving through these stages to realize the “Dream.”

Levinson et al. (1978) stress that mentoring is a complex function that is best
understood as a type of love relationship:

... which lasts perhaps two or three years on average eight to ten years at
most... sometimes com[ing] to a natural end after a cooling off period. ...[With]
much of its value realized, ...[it terminates]. (p. 100-101)

Since the Levinson et al. (1978) study, researchers have built upon and modified
the stages of development for conceptual clarity as well as to include women, a major
limitation of the Levinson et al. (1978) study. Carden (1990) describes two models
framed in developmental theory “that have achieved the greatest conceptual clarity and
research support,” the Philips-Jones (1982) and the Kram (1983) models (p. 286). In her
study based on the mentoring experiences of female corporate managers and executives,
(Philips, 1978) identifies five developmental phases of the mentor-protégé relationship.
She names them initiation; mutual admiration; development; disillusionment; and
transformation. The initiation phase is represented by the start of the relationship by
either the mentor or the protégé. Admiration, Philips-Jones (1982) argues is a phase that
functions similar to a love relationship. Development is the most critical phase of the relationship in which the mentor-protégé relationship becomes mutually beneficial for the mentor and protégé. Disillusionment involves the limitations and abilities of the mentoring pair sometimes resulting in contention. Finally transformation is the redefining phase of the relationship through separation, either through “residual bitterness or... peer-like friendship” (p. 100).

Although, Philips-Jones (1978) was one of the first researchers to name the phases of mentoring relationships, particularly for females in the corporate sector, Kram’s (1983) research on the phases of mentoring relationships has received considerably more attention in the research literature, particularly since her study included both male and female participants (Carden, 1990; Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988). Kram (1983) researched 18 mentoring pairs of managers that were self-identified as participating in various phases of mentor-protégé relationships. Kram (1983) names the phases initiation; cultivation; separation; and redefinition. The initiation of the relationship is identical to Philip-Jones’ (1978), suggesting the start of the relationship. The cultivation phase Kram (1983) argues is the most critical and involves the mentor sharing valuable information and performing an array of functions to benefit the protégé (Kram, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978; Otto, 1994). The separation phase usually occurs after 2 to 3 years (Levinson et al., 1978) of the initiation of the relationship with “structural changes in the organizational context and/or the psychological changes within one or both individuals” (Kram, 1983, p. 614). Finally, the mentoring relationship enters a redefinition phase or terminates altogether, as Levinson et al. (1978) report. The mentoring relationship Kram (1983) argues takes on a new form, distinct from the
original mentor-protégé relationship, with the pair redefining the relationship as colleagues or experiencing challenges of redefinition often hindering a smooth transition and sometimes terminating altogether.

Kram's (1983) study is significant to the examination of the mentoring experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) for three reasons. First, it provides a theoretical frame through which the development of mentoring relationships can be examined, and has more recently been modified in the context of undergraduate student mentoring experiences (Otto, 1994). Second, it includes an analysis of the role of mentors in the developmental process of the managers in her study, through interviews with both mentors and protégés. Finally Kram's (1983) research was the first to systematically examine the benefits to the mentor, addressing the phenomena of why individuals choose to mentor. The benefits associated with serving in the capacity of a mentor was first introduced as Erikson's (1963) generativity theory. Erikson (1963) describes generativity as a time in a person's life when they assume some responsibility for developing the next generation (Allen, Poteet, Burroughs, 1997; Erikson, 1963; Jacobi, 1991; Levinson et al., 1978).

Definitions and theories attempt to explain the multiple aspects of the mentoring process. Mentoring relationships like human interaction, function and are characterized in distinct ways. The next section of the review examines types of mentoring relationships, including informal or classical as Levinson et al. (1978) describe; formal or assigned; and networking mentoring (Blackwell, 1983; Haring, 1997).
Types of mentoring relationships: Informal, formal and network

Mentoring relationships as discussed in the research literature are represented in informal and formal contexts. In her review of mentoring literature in the context of undergraduate academic success, Jacobi (1991) argues that the extent of informal mentoring in educational settings is unknown. Studies such as Levinson et al. (1978), Philips-Jones (1982) and Kram (1983), have each examined the prevalence of mentoring in a classical sense. Informal or classical mentoring, Levinson et al. (1978) contend, is based on mutual attraction between the mentor and protégé. They argue that this attraction leads to the development of the relationship, whereby the mentor takes genuine interest in the protégé’s growth and development. Blackwell (1983) terms this type of mentoring true mentoring, which he says can only occur when mentors willingly assume multiple functions and roles in the interest of the protégé’s academic and subsequent career development of protégés. Critical aspects of choice and selection are inherent in the development of informal or classical Levinsonian mentoring relationship (Daloz, 1986, 1999; Tillman, 1995).

By contrast, formal or assigned mentoring relationships are based upon the goal of a particular program (Murray, 1991). In colleges and universities, the goal may be retention of students of color and mentors might be assigned in to part help facilitate that process. By definition, formal or:

[facilitated mentoring is a structure or series of processes designed to create effective mentoring relationships, guide the desired behavior change of those involved; and evaluate the results for the protégés, the mentors and the organization. (Murray, 1991 quoted in Tillman, 1995, p. 12)
Carden (1990) describes formal mentoring as an environmental intervention that has been utilized in both corporate and academic settings. She identifies several corporations, colleges and universities across the United States that have established formal mentoring programs, sometimes in response to affirmative action mandates and also as a means of providing a measure of equal access and opportunity to resources for people of color and women. Formal mentoring is not without its problems however. Because of the nature of relationships and human interaction that ultimately become mentor-protégé relationships, assigning or matching by third party program administrators may cause more harm than good for both mentor and protégé (Alleman, 1989; Carden, 1990; Hunt and Michael, 1984; Noe, 1988; Philips-Jones, 1983; Zey, 1984, 1989). Despite this caution, proponents of formal mentoring stress the benefits of such a process particularly for people of color and women who are often on the periphery of corporate and academic environments (Chao, Walz and Gardener, 1992). Formal mentoring, they contend, is one means of assuring the development of diverse talent which may otherwise go uncultivated resulting in negative consequences not only for the individual but also for the institution and society at large (Carden, 1990; Dreher and Cox, 1996; Kanter, 1977; Noe, 1988; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995)

Whether formally or informally structured, Kanter (1977) argues that mentor-protégé relationships function as sponsorship relationships on behalf of the protégé by the mentor. He identifies three functions of mentoring/sponsorship interaction. They include fighting for the protégé when necessary; providing opportunities for the protégé to successfully negotiate corporate bureaucracy; serving as a reflection of power that the
protégé now intrinsically possesses as a result of the mentoring process (Carden, 1990; Kanter, 1977).

Reconfiguring formal and informal mentoring constructions, Haring (1997), along with Hill and Kamprath (1991), suggest networking mentoring as a process which involves less intensity than informal or classical mentoring, but functions similarly as a means of enabling people of color and women in particular to successfully navigate corporate and academic systems that may not informally help them reach their potential (Haring, 1997). Moreover, Haring (1997) argues that networking mentoring maximizes protégé potential because “there need be no search for the perfect mentor who can offer all psychosocial and vocational assistance” (p. 68). Instead, to illustrate her point in the context of mentoring in higher education she suggests peers of underrepresented students as potential networking mentoring resources. She argues that by pooling available resources such as faculty, staff, and other peers students empower themselves to negotiate college and university systems and realize benefits from the multiple functions of a networking mentoring process.

**Issues of race and gender in mentoring relationships**

Haring’s (1997) concept of networking mentoring speaks to the ways in which the mentoring process must be modified to meet the psychosocial and vocational needs of people of color and women. Revisiting the issue of choice and selection, people of color and women protégés the literature suggests, are often not the “chosen ones,” since mentors tend to select protégés most like themselves, particularly with regard to racial and gender makeup. In this context, not being chosen has a direct impact on the academic and professional careers of people of color and women which can be
sometimes stagnated or negatively impacted in the absence of a mentor, particularly one who performs multiple functions in the protégés' interest (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995).

Literature on the experiences of White females in corporate settings and their mentoring experiences has been most prevalent and suggests that women's mobility in professional environments is directly influenced by participating in a mentor-protégé relationship (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Philips-Jones, 1983; Tillman, 1995). The literature argues that women have a difficult time integrating into male dominated professions and as such, sometimes need their integration facilitated by a mentor (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Noe, 1988; Sagaria, 1988; Tillman, 1995). Cross-gender mentoring is sometimes a contentious practice in corporations. Corporate cultures often stereotype male-female interaction as sexual rather than professional in nature (Noe, 1988; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995). Although women may experience psychosocial and vocational or even tangible financial benefits (Dreher and Cox, 1996), the relationship may not develop to the necessary level such that the full benefits of the relationship may be realized by the protégé.

A significant literature base exists on the mentoring experiences of women, particularly those in corporate settings (Kram, 1983; Noe, 1988; Philips, 1978; Philips-Jones, 1982). In a study on cross-gender mentoring relationships, McCormick (1991) argues that levels of discomfort exist with regard to interacting professionally for males and females, with each having to justify their interactions as professional to the corporate culture in general and colleagues in particular.
Both cross-race and cross-gender relationships are subject to what Thomas (1989) terms taboos. Thomas (1989) addresses the issue of taboos as it relates to male-female interaction, particularly in the development of mentoring relationships. Dynamics of power in male-female relationships in large measure, determine the ways in which cross-gender relationships can be developed. Tillman (1995) argues that there are "unwritten rules prohibiting social interaction, such as being alone with a male mentor" that stagnate if not altogether cease the development of a potential mentoring relationship between males and females.

Findings from a number of these research studies indicate that although White women have experienced some difficulty integrating into mainstream organizational environments, it has been more difficult for those who are racially different (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995). Further, because men, White men in particular, have been the beneficiaries of informal or classical mentoring, many as a result have been successful in their careers (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Levinson et al., 1978). Moreover, White male mentors it is argued, have the most impact on the career growth of protégés, regardless of the protégés' race or gender, enabling them to move faster up the corporate ladder as well as earn higher salaries (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Noe, 1988; Thomas, 1989; Tillman, 1995). In their study of male and female business school graduates, Dreher and Cox (1996) found that those who developed a relationship with a White male mentor earned almost $17,000 more in salary than those employed with mentors possessing other demographic profiles.

Returning to the issue of who is chosen in the mentoring process, few studies have examined the dynamics of cross-race mentoring (Dreher and Cox, 1996; Mertz,
Thomas (1989) argues that race directly affects not only who is chosen to participate in the mentor-protégé relationship, but also the degree to which the relationship develops. Similar to some of the challenges that exist in cross-gender mentoring relationships, Thomas (1989) argues that cross-race mentoring evokes a history of racial taboos that precludes most often African American protégés and White male mentors from getting beyond stereotyped perceptions of each other.

The complication becomes more pronounced he argues, when White men mentor African American women. Because of historical discourses of sexual promiscuity and desire that underlie the ways in which African American women are perceived, their interaction with White men complicate the development of mentoring relationships. Potential mentors and protégés as well as those in the professional culture sometimes scrutinize the interaction. Thomas (1989) states:

...[M]odern day corporate relationships reproduce the feelings associated with the primitive dynamics of race relations. White men appropriate black women, black women can rise up by going along with this, and black men are angry and suspicious. (p. 282)

Thomas (1989) further contends that the White male and female mentors he interviewed rarely addressed the issue of race and the way in which it impacted the mentoring relationship or the potential mobility of their protégé. Instead, participants made no reference to the historical legacy of racial tension between African American and Whites that might prohibit them from getting along in general (Thomas, 1989).

Mertz (1989) also studied cross-race and cross-gender mentoring relationships and discovered findings similar to those of Thomas (1989). She argues that African
American and other protégés of color in relationships with White males or females were considered to be developmentally below the level of Whites in their mentors’ descriptions of their abilities in the respective corporate setting. In her analysis of data from an African American protégé with a White male mentor, Mertz (1989) argues that African American protégés often recognize that Whites in corporations or other professional environments will never see them as equal. That combined with a history of institutional racism inhibits the professional development of African Americans in professional settings.

The findings of both Thomas (1989) and Mertz (1989) concur with regard to the lack of awareness of racialized experiences for African American protégés in the corporate environments that they studied. They each found a sense of denial of the often negative experiences of the protégés as it related to issues of race (Mertz, 1989; Thomas, 1989). They conclude that neither individuals nor corporations will experience the full benefits of mentoring as long as issues of race are not addressed and dealt with openly and honestly.

Similar to the ways in which mentoring functions in the corporate sector, higher education has adapted the practice to aid student, faculty and staff growth and development. Mentoring in its classical form in higher education, the literature argues, occurs most often between faculty members and students who develop relationships that facilitate the undergraduate or graduate experience of the student, specifically academic, personal and professional experiences (Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988; Wunsch, 1994). This section of the review focuses heavily on undergraduate student mentoring experiences,
since it is the focus of the research study. To this end, mentoring experiences in other contexts will be only briefly reviewed.

Mentoring configurations in higher education

Mentoring assumes multiple configurations in higher education (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983). The most prevalent form of faculty to student mentoring occurs between a faculty member and a graduate student, usually the advisee of the professor (Tillman, 1995). Research examining graduate student experiences suggests that faculty student interaction directly impacts the successful academic and professional socialization of both students and faculty who participate in the mentoring process (Brown and DeCoster, 1982; Merriam, 1983; Tillman, 1995). Research studies on faculty to undergraduate student mentoring are less prevalent, although the process functions in a similar context. Faculty to undergraduate student mentoring occurs when a faculty member develops a relationship with a student, helping them develop academically, personally and professionally during their undergraduate career. Peer mentoring is characterized by the relationship between freshman students and upper class students who guide freshman in some of the logistical aspects of negotiating university and college settings.

Faculty to student mentoring

Faculty mentors are reported as common in academic settings (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987; Tillman, 1995). In the same context that supervisors serve as mentors to subordinates in corporate settings, seasoned faculty often serve as mentors to less experienced junior faculty members (Tillman, 1995). Although, faculty to faculty is one that way mentoring occurs in the academy, it does not
adequately explain the phenomena of faculty to student mentoring (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987). Faculty to student mentoring occurs on a number of different levels. Faculty to graduate student mentoring is reported as one of the most common forms of mentoring found in higher education (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987). Graduate students assigned a faculty member as a major advisor, particularly graduate students pursuing doctoral degrees, often develop mentoring relationships with their major advisors, as a result of the close contact between the faculty member and the student during progression toward the doctoral degree (Jacobi, 1991; Merriam, 1983; Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987).

Merriam, Thomas and Zeph (1987) in their review of twenty-six studies on mentoring in higher education, cite a number of studies that examine mentoring in the context of faculty to student mentoring. Cameron (1978) researched the mentoring experiences of graduate students and faculty advisors and found that the advisor impacted the protégés' negotiation not only of the academic process, but also of the profession, by providing access to obtaining careers in the particular field (Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987). Cameron (1978) also found that protégés pursued similar career paths as their mentors with "stature and prestige of the mentor [being] important to the academic productivity and advancement of the protégé" (Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987, p. 200).

In a study of skills learned from mentors in graduate settings, Bova and Phillips (1984) argue graduate students acquire important skills from participating in mentor-protégé relationships which can be grouped into four categories: risk-taking behavior; communication skills; political skills; and skills specific to the student's chosen behavior.
(Merriam, Thomas and Zeph, 1987). They further contend that the function of the mentor was critical to the development of the protégé.

Merriam, Thomas and Zeph (1987) discuss mentoring research that addresses faculty to undergraduate student formal mentoring. They suggest that relationships in formal contexts do not function in the same way as those that develop informally or classically (Levinson et al., 1978). They reviewed several studies that examined program benefits to the student, the mentor and ultimately the initiating institution. Although, protégé participants were not found to experience the same benefits as those discussed in classical mentoring relationships, they nonetheless benefited from increased access to resources provided by assigned mentors. Arguing that few studies since their review examined faculty to student mentoring, Merriam, Thomas and Zeph (1987) contend that research in the area of mentoring must begin to study mentoring relationships as they occur in the academy in both formal and informal contexts. Jacobi (1991) argues in a similar vein in her review of mentoring literature and undergraduate academic success stating that a number of studies have few common theoretical strands and as such, make it difficult to generalize beyond a single study.

**Student to student mentoring**

Student to student or peer mentoring is a neglected area in the research literature on mentoring in higher education. Haring’s (1997) discussion of networking mentoring is one of the most relevant study in this regard. Haring (1997) argues that particularly for underrepresented students, the reality of developing mentoring relationships that will meet their myriad psychosocial and vocational needs may be rare. Instead, she calls for students to pool their resources, which includes themselves and build networks that
function similar to mentoring relationships. These networks she argues provide necessary resources to enable students to effectively transition into and successfully negotiate university systems (Haring, 1997).

Haring (1997) discusses networking mentoring programs at Purdue University in the area of engineering for students of color, students with disabilities and women. The mentoring programs implemented in Purdue’s School of Engineering utilize various aspects of the networking mentoring process that Haring (1997) discusses. These programs utilized both formal and informal activities to promote interaction among mentors and mentees. As a result of group gatherings, many students not only utilized the mentor as an academic and professional resource, but they also utilized one another as resources. Haring (1997) argues that program facilitators must take a gentle approach to molding a program to facilitate networking mentoring objectives, as underrepresented students may not willingly participate or benefit from a program that assumes a dictatorial approach to student needs. In this regard, students and mentors are provided guidance in developing networks that facilitate a different type of mentoring process. Rather than becoming clones of mentors, mentees are given access to resources and taught the process of selectively choosing from mentors, other students, faculty and staff what resources at a particular time will assist them with moving through a particular institution of higher education.

Formal mentoring and undergraduate students

Formal mentoring programs developed as a means of undergraduate student academic and social integration represent one way that higher education is attempting to institutionalize the implicit and explicit benefits gained from classical mentoring
relationships. Jacobi (1991) argues that formal mentoring programs have begun to permeate universities and colleges as large scale university-wide programs or smaller scale discipline-specific programs and have become a tremendous practice in higher education. She argues that formal mentoring programs have been utilized in higher education to address an array of issues related to student development such as career and leadership development; retention or academic success among students at risk for failure or attrition; community building among peers in the university community (Jacobi, 1991). Although the practice of mentoring continues at a rapid pace in the academy, little systematic study of the mentoring process exists to assess its impact on participants or the institution at large (Jacobi, 1991; Noe, 1988).

Cosgrove’s (1986) evaluation of a mentoring-transcript program is an important study of formal mentoring and its impact on the academic success of undergraduates. Cosgrove (1986) found that students who participated in the mentoring program had a higher level of satisfaction and development than those that did not participate. Jacobi (1991) contends that the Cosgrove (1986) is by far one of the “strongest methodological efforts to systematically assess the effects of a formal mentoring program” (p. 517). Noe (1988) also studied the psychosocial and career benefits of formal mentoring of upper level administrators assigned to teachers or lower level administrators. Of the 139 protégés and 43 mentors, Noe (1988) found that protégés reported significant psychosocial benefits as a result of participating in the relationship. However, protégés did not report a significant level of vocational benefits (Jacobi, 1991). Jacobi (1991) argues that although Noe’s (1988) study does not directly examine mentoring in the
context of undergraduate student experiences, it nonetheless provides a systematic examination of the process of mentoring as told by program participants.

Jacobi (1991) argues that because of the diversity in formal mentoring programs as they relate the interaction between the mentor and protégé; goals and objectives of initiating office or institution; voluntary or involuntary participation among mentors and protégés; monetary incentives for the mentor, it is difficult to systematically study the outcomes of the process on behalf of the participants. Similarly, Bey and Holmes (1992) argue that the diversity of formal mentoring programs is in fact one of the ways in which the process can be effective, although it is difficult to capture the process systematically as Jacobi (1991) contends. They assert that formal mentoring initiatives must be context-specific lest they are doomed for failure. Institutions and initiating offices must take into consideration the population for whom the program is being initiated and recognize the specific goals and objectives necessary to meet the needs of this particular population and the ways in which mentoring can facilitate the process (Bey and Holmes, 1992; Noe, 1988).

Theoretical examinations of mentoring in higher education

Mentoring students in higher education has been framed in the context of student development theory. Jacobi (1991) discusses multiple theories that have been proposed in the examination of mentoring in higher education, particularly with regard to undergraduate mentoring relationships. She groups these models in the following categories: developmental and social support; involvement in learning and academic and social integration. Each of these areas she contends, has in some way influenced the way in which mentoring is practiced and researched in higher education (Jacobi, 1991).
Jacobi (1991) addresses theories of developmental support through the work of Perry (1970) and Chickering (1969) and social support using the work of House (1981). She discusses the developmental support aspect of mentoring theory in higher education using Perry’s (1970) nine stages of cognitive development and Chickering’s student identity formation as theoretical frames (Jacobi, 1991). In relation to mentoring, Perry (1970) addresses Erikson’s (1963) generativity theory and the role it plays in student development, particularly when the mentor has reached stage nine, in which he or she recognizes the impact of his/her lived experience and assists others, namely protégés in their own cognitive development (Jacobi, 1991; Perry, 1970). The most effective mentor Perry’s (1970) stages suggest is one who meets the protégé where he or she is and is “aware of and responsive to the [particular] developmental stage of the student” (Jacobi, 1991, p. 524).

Chickering’s (1969) work on identity formation is also relevant to a theoretical examination of mentoring in higher education (Jacobi, 1991). Chickering (1969) enumerates seven vectors that contribute to the identity formation of college students. They include competence, emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose, identity and integrity. Jacobi (1991) argues that most important in the context of mentoring, are intellectual competence, autonomy, purpose and integrity. She argues that each of these components of identity formation promotes positive student identity. In the context of mentoring and student development, both Chickering (1969) and Jacobi (1991) argue that faculty student interaction, particularly interaction that occurs outside of the classroom is the single most important aspect of positive identity formation for students in higher education. Chickering (1969) contends that relationships beyond the classroom
and faculty members most effective in serving in this capacity are those “characterized by accessibility, authenticity, knowledge and an ability to talk with student[s]” (Chickering in Jacobi, 1991, p. 526).

With regard to social support, student development and mentoring in higher education, Jacobi (1991) examines House’s (1981) theory of social support which lists four ways in which social support functions. Social support functions House (1981) argues through emotional appraisal, informational and instrumental types of support (Jacobi, 1991). House’s (1981) theory of social support is relevant to mentoring in higher education because as he contends, social support acts as a buffer to the various ways stress can hinder student academic, personal and professional development. Moreover, Jacobi (1991) suggests that social support theory is parallel to theories of mentoring, particularly those influenced by classical forms of mentoring that enhance the overall psychosocial and professional development of the protégé (Blackwell, 1987b; Levinson et al., 1978; Philips-Jones, 1982).

The involvement in learning theory as it relates to mentoring in higher education is influenced by the work of Astin (1975; 1993) whose research on student experiences in higher education argues that the more students are directly involved in their learning process “the greater will be their growth and achievement, their satisfaction with their educational experiences, and their persistence in college and the more likely they are to continue their learning” (Astin in Jacobi, 1991, p. 523). In this context, Jacobi (1991) argues that mentoring relationships particularly those between faculty members and students can serve as catalysts for the involvement of students in their own learning process. As catalysts, mentors “...encourage and motivate the student protégé to deepen
his or her involvement in learning and... provide opportunities for particular kinds of
learning involvement (e.g. research assistantships) (Jacobi, 1991, p. 523).

**Mentoring and academic and social integration theory**

Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) theory of academic and social integration builds on
Astin’s theory of involvement in learning. Jacobi (1991) includes Tinto’s (1975, 1987,
1993) theory as relevant to mentoring in higher education since it addresses multiple
aspects of student psychosocial development through the process of higher education and
the impact that it might have with regard to student attrition. Modifying Durkheim’s
theory of suicide, Vincent Tinto’s (1975) study of student attrition has resulted in a model
that has been empirically validated (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1977) to show levels of
student academic and social integration in addition to various pre-enrollment
characteristics, to directly correlate with the student’s commitment to the process of
higher education and the particular university he or she attends.

Specifically, Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defines academic integration as the degree
to which students identify with the institution’s academic requirements and effectively
utilize tutorial and other programs that provide academic assistance. Among aspects of
academic integration are: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills; and 3) academic
assistance (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). Tinto (1975,
1987, 1993) defines social integration as the degree to which students identify with the
social characteristics of the institution. Peer interaction, social adjustment and interaction
within the university are the primary tenets associated with social integration. Factors
that most affect the social integration of students include: 1) student/student interaction;
2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support; and 5) self-esteem
(Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). To the extent that undergraduate students meet the criteria associated with academic and social integration, Tinto and others such as Griffin, 1992, Kraemer, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980 argue that students will likely persist through graduation.

While academic integration, Tinto(1975, 1987, 1993) suggests is the degree to which students identify with the academic requirements, available academic assistance and overall expectations of the institution, social integration is directly influenced by social interaction with individuals in the college or university itself. He further contends that the informal and formal systems developed and maintained by the college or university directly impact the student’s level of academic or social integration into that particular environment (Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). He describes the academic environment as a formal structure in the college or university in place to formally educate students. The social structure acts as a component in the education of the student defined by the “daily life of the members of the institution” (Tinto, 1987, p. 106).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1978) sum Tinto’s model well asserting that it is a:...
conceptual model [that] asserts that the student brings certain input characteristics to college such as family background, personality attributes, academic aptitude, and goal and institutional commitments. These interact with the particular college or university environment and lead to a certain level of integration into the academic and social systems of the institution. Other things being equal, the higher the levels of academic and social integration the less likely the student is to voluntarily leave the institution. (pp. 540-541)
Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) further contends that the ways in which the academic and social components of student experience interact determine whether that student will voluntarily or involuntarily depart from the particular college or university. To this end, Tinto (1987) argues that we:

must distinguish between the differing types of individual departure (force and voluntary) but also between varying forms of intellectual and social (personal) integration with may occur in the academic and/or social system of the institution. (p. 106)

Moreover, the college or university he suggests, represents several communities and the degree to which students perceive themselves a part of one or more communities determines their academic and social determine as well as their overall identification and commitment to the institution. Student perception is critical in this regard, since being a part of a community evokes feelings of belonging and commitment. Tinto (1987) further states “regardless of available communities, not all individuals will perceive themselves as belonging to them” (p. 128).

The notion of belonging to a university community is critical in the examination of the mentoring experiences of African American students in a predominantly White university environment, as it suggests that there are ways in which race directly impacts the feeling of community in general, academic and social integration in particular. In this regard, Tinto calls for the development of formal mentoring programs that enable students of color in particular to:

become incorporated into the life of what may be seen as a foreign college community... provid[ing] minority students with role models, both student and
Jacobi (1991) argues that mentoring studies in the context of Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) theory of academic and social integration would examine the way in which mentoring impacts student academic progress and subsequent retention at the institution. She further contends that Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) theory allows researchers to cast a broad net as it relates to mentoring the academic and social integration of undergraduate students, connecting emotional support with academic success.

**Academic and social integration theory and African American students: A critique**

Although Tinto's model represents a viable frame to examine the process of mentoring in general and the mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution in particular, it is not without limitations. The tenets Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) delineates Davis (1995) argues do not account for the "affective dimensions of undergraduate socialization" that are particularly relevant for students of color (p. 9). These affective dimensions must be considered in order to further develop models that function on behalf of students of color, rather than attempt to fit them into existing, less adequate retention models. Martin and Williams-Dixon (1991) argue that it is necessary that African American students attending PWIs transcend the tenets Tinto (1987, 1993) displays in his model contending that:

academic and social integration implies a functioning of a process of interaction and socialization [in which]...a person has to become attached to academic [and] social systems, [facilitating] reciprocal interactive behaviors between the student and the environment. (p. 8)
Moreover, with regard to academic integration, the reliance on faculty to achieve this goal in the interest of African American students is often insufficient. African American students are often forced to seek out individuals who have their own interests in mind (Blackwell, 1987b). Mentoring for these students becomes a key component in their academic and social integration into the institutional environment. Further, social integration is often more difficult for African American as well as other students of color, since PWIs typically cater to their majority constituents (Griffin, 1992; Kraemer, 1997; Lomotey, 1990). Not only will African American students have fewer peers as they matriculate through PWIs, but also most university-sponsored social activities will not be designed with African American and other students of color in mind (Griffin, 1992; Lomotey, 1990). It is for these reasons, this study examines in part the peer mentoring experiences of African American students at a Predominantly White Institution who often seek out or in the case of this research are assigned peers with whom they identify with racially (Blackwell, 1987; Jacobi, 1991; Wilson, 1994).

Allen's study is relevant to this critique since it challenges the assumptions made by Tinto (1975, 1993) that academic and social integration operates presumably in the same context for White as well as African American students. Allen's study suggests that the experiences of African American students need to be examined as distinct, rather than as Tinto's (1975, 1993) model suggests, grouped as a smaller part of the whole, with regard to the majority of the White college student populations. Like Allen (1992), Griffin (1992) challenges the extent to which the experiences of African American students can be filtered through the same theoretical model as utilized for the undergraduate experience of White students. He utilizes the tenets of Tinto's (1975,
1993) model to suggest that the model is certainly relevant from a mainstream perspective. He argues however, that in relation to the experience of African American students, particularly those attending Predominantly White Institutions, Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) model has some limitations. Griffin (1992) contends that African American student experiences must be examined beyond the notion of academic and social integration and include the context of a history of oppression for people of African descent in this country.

Mentoring and the presence of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions

The mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education must be placed within proper historical context, particularly with regard to the presence of African American students in the American system of higher education. The next section of this review of the literature provides some historical context for those experiences. The "absent presence" (Spanos, 1993, p. 4) of African American students in PWIs in large numbers would occur for close to twenty years after the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas rendered the "separate but equal" doctrine, de facto in the North de jure in the South, unconstitutional and a violation of civil rights (Blackwell, 1987b). It would not be until 1973, nine years after the passing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, enacted as a direct result of student and community protest against segregation and Jim Crow laws in the South, that Adams v. Richardson would threaten to "terminate federal funds to those states that continued to violate" civil rights legislation and deliberately "channe[l] black students to historically
black colleges and universities and white students into historically white institutions” (Blackwell, 1987b, p. 23).

The Adams states of Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Virginia were under close watch by the Supreme Court. “With all deliberate speed” was no longer an acceptable doctrine, as it had been with the Brown v. Board rendering (Blackwell, 1987b, p. 23). The courts scrutinized the plans for desegregation in colleges and universities, particularly those plans submitted by the Adams states. Further, this scrutiny could be equally applied to all higher education institutions across the United States receiving any form of federal funding (Blackwell, 1987).

It is with this historical backdrop that there exists an absent presence of African American students in PWIs and more specifically an African American college student population that as of 1995 represented seventy-six percent of the total number of African American college students enrolled in two or four-year PWIs (Southern Regional Education Board, 1995). What would follow intense civil rights legislation would be affirmative action policies that would presumably create access for African American and other students of color, that had heretofore been marginalized by these institutions, particularly those located in the Adams states (Blackwell, 1987). The struggle for social change during the Civil Rights Era of the 1960’s and 1970’s attempted to create space for African Americans and other people of color in a number of professional, political and educational realms, particularly the realm of higher education for African American students (Blackwell, 1987).
State and university policy initiatives such as Black/African American Studies Departments, as well as other Ethnic Studies Departments, along with Offices of Minority Affairs and Minority Student Services were put into place at the end of the Civil Rights Era in response to student protest and as well, to uphold legal mandates in the interest of access and opportunity for African American and other students of color (Blackwell, 1987; Gordon, 1995; Marable, 1995). Although access to PWIs for African American students became a reality, the quality of experience for these students in the often hostile climate of these institutions which had previously been legally denied their admittance, is another story altogether (Blackwell, 1987; Feagin, 1992).

In 1978 the Bakke case overturned the use of racial quotas to ensure a diverse student population in Colleges of Medicine, however this mandate Blackwell (1987b) argues had a “chilling effect on the admission and retention of Black students in graduate and professional schools” (p. 88). With the state of California often setting the trend for legal issues countrywide, Bakke would come to affect all public colleges and universities in the United States. More recently, issues of educational access and opportunity have been challenged for African American and other students of color. Like Bakke, cases such as the 1996 University of Texas at Austin case, which rendered race-based admissions unconstitutional, will too impede access and opportunity for minority students in PWIs.

In a more contemporary context, California’s overturning its affirmative action policies in 1997, with Proposition 209 also has serious implications for the state of minorities in general, African Americans in particular in higher education. Further, the neoconservatism of the 1990’s seeks to systematically roll back a number of the gains of
the Civil Rights Era. Although historical research has attempted to examine the experiences of African American students (Allen, 1985, 1988; 1992; Allen, Epps and Haniff, 1991a, 1991b; Feagin, 1992; Fleming, 1984) with the exception of Blackwell (1987), Nettles (1988) and a few others, it has not examined the experience of African American students in the context of university policy initiatives such as formal mentoring programs, specifically geared toward integrating African American students into the mainstream college student population.

Conservative backlash that supports dismantling affirmative action has been seen in legislation. Societal views remain polarized regarding the necessity of social policies that increase access and retention for African American students at PWIs. The 1978 Baake case, Blackwell (1987) contends, promoted perceptions of affirmative action policies being used to admit unqualified African American students to colleges and universities. Allan Baake sued the University of California Medical School at Davis for a violation of his civil rights, what has been termed as “reversed discrimination,” contending that of the 100 seats for admission 16 were “set aside” for “less qualified” minority students, qualifications based on objective or quantifiable criteria including Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) scores and undergraduate grade point average (GPA). The Bakke case sets up the critique for objective criteria, which Blackwell (1987b) asserts has served as a significant barrier to African American students’ pursuit of higher education. On average, African American students score lower than White students on standardized tests, and have somewhat lower GPA’s (Blackwell, 1987a). Without the consideration of subjective criteria such as personal interviews, work
experience, disadvantaged background and race, many African American students are not provided access into colleges and universities to pursue degrees (Blackwell, 1978a).

Allen (1992) quantitatively examines the experience of African American students attending four-year colleges and universities, both predominantly White and historically Black. Allen’s findings suggest that the experience of African American students attending predominantly White universities were those of academic and social alienation. He reports that African American students deal with issues of racism and discrimination as a part of their undergraduate experience and that experience is distinct from their African American counterparts at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who overwhelmingly reported a sense of academic and social satisfaction with the college or university that they attended.

Mentoring and African American students in Predominantly White Institutions:

The significance of race

Race continues to be a significant issue in the education of African Americans and other students of color. However, as the competition increases and African American students become more fairly represented Whites charge “reverse discrimination.” (Bowen and Bok, 1998; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997). The conservative political climate deems that cases such as these and others will continue, and unfortunately may be successful, at the expense of disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

Blackwell (1987) cites economic barriers that plague African American families seeking educational opportunities for their children. They include high rates of unemployment, low levels of income enabling support for higher education, low
occupational status, limited access to scholarships and fellowships, and fear of indebtedness resulting from student loan programs. In a similar context, Lang (1992) cites both social and economic barriers that African American students face when seeking higher education. Lang (1992) argues that the academic preparation of Black students for higher education, the availability of family resources and access to institutional financial-aid resources, and institutional barriers to access directly influence enrollment and retention of African American students at PWIs (Lang, 1992).

Braddock and McPartland (1988) contend that one of the larger risks taken by African American students attending PWIs is not persisting through degree completion, which becomes a factor when African American students are both socially and academically isolated in the university environment. They state further those student that do complete baccalaureate degrees at PWIs typically experience a delay in degree completion up to six years (Braddock and McPartland, 1988).

Feagin (1992) posits that the racial climate is a barrier that often affects the retention of African American students. Feagin (1992) studied 180 Black students across the country utilizing qualitative case studies. He found that African American students often feel stereotyped and perceived as unintelligent, unmotivated, and incapable of succeeding in the university environment. These perceptions Feagin (1992) found lead to social isolation and a miserable college experience for many African American students. Social isolation can keep Black students on the periphery of their educational experience. This alienation creates not only social difficulties for African American students, but academic difficulties as well. Feagin (1992) attributes hostile racial climate to a White college subculture that is ingrained with elements of discrimination and racism thus,
creating an uncomfortable and non-conducive living and learning environment for African American students on predominantly White campuses. He argues further that Black faculty members often experience similar barriers to Black students on predominantly white campuses (Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997).

The role of African American faculty

Like African American students on predominantly White campuses, aspects of recruitment, access, and retention, plague Black faculty as well (Benjamin, 1991; Blackwell, 1988; Feagin, 1992). Benjamin (1991) asserts that African American faculty at Predominantly White Institutions have gained some access to positions throughout academia as a result of affirmative action mandates. However they continue to be faced with barriers that hinder their professional mobility. Social isolation, role strain and conflict are but a few issues that African American faculty in PWIs face.

Because African American comprise only five percent of the total faculty population, Blackwell (1987b) argues that the hiring of African Americans for faculty and administrative positions in:

...traditionally white institutions should be a matter of highest priority ...the presence of black faculty is the most powerful predictor of enrollment and graduation of blacks from professional schools. (p. 359)

Blackwell's (1987a) findings can be partially generalized to African American undergraduates at PWIs, who need and seek African American mentors for academic success and social acclimation in these often alienating environments. African American faculty or advisors according to Fleming (1984) act as “buffers” for Black students at PWIs. The limited presence of Black faculty and advisors at these universities often

In Predominantly White Institutions, African American faculty are expected to serve as advisors and mentors often to several African American students, in addition to teaching a number of courses and meeting rigorous publishing objectives at research universities. Schexnider (1992) discusses the conflict experienced by African American faculty with regard to personal and professional expectations. He argues that African American faculty assist African American students in successfully matriculating through the university environment, but often go unrewarded for their efforts at promotion and tenure time (Schexnider, 1992). Blackwell (1987b) urges university administrators to recognize the impact African American faculty have on the success of African American students, since they are a primary resource in the enrollment and retention of African American students. African American faculty must be provided with adequate support systems and modification of goals and objectives from traditional expectations, since it is they who assume the insurmountable task of advising, mentoring and ultimately retaining African American students.

**Theoretical frame**

The theoretical frame that guides this study is one that is based on the ways in which race and racism impact the experiences of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions in particular, and African Americans in the larger society in general. Drawing upon historical and contemporary theories of race, particularly those that have been argued in the interest of people of African descent, this study applies those historical theories to construct theories around race and racism in...
higher education, in the context of the mentoring experiences of African American student mentoring in a Predominantly White Institution. In particular, the theoretical frame serves to connect racialized and racist experiences of people of African descent to the legacy of slavery and even more so, those that use the American system of education as the primary unit of analysis.

To this end, DuBois' (1903) notion of double consciousness and the way in which African American people operate as outsiders within American culture “ever feel[ing] his twoness [as] an American, a Negro” is relevant (p. 215). DuBois' prophetic notion of the Color Line as the symbolic separation between African American and White culture is also relevant as it speaks directly to the African American students attempt to negotiate their peculiar existence on predominantly White campuses. In a similar context, Carter G. Woodson’s (1933) theory of psychological oppression through the perpetuation of racial stereotypes and culturally denigrating or silencing curriculum helps to shape the theoretical frame for this study.

In constructing the theoretical frame for this research, I am interested in students' mentoring experiences as well as the ways in which they attempt to negotiate the system of higher education as one that is oppressive and serves as a cultural apparatus of the larger social structure. By this I mean, the system of higher education serves to reproduce and perpetuate the status quo, rather than reorganize existing social structures in the interest of all students. To this end, more contemporary analyses of race and other interdisciplinary approaches to examining race and racism were be used. This study argues that African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions often experience hostile racial climates, are invisible and misrecognized (Feagin, Vera,
Imani, 1997). Despite some of the positive effects of participating in mentoring relationships and the way in which the mentoring process serves as a buffer to counter negative experiences, these experiences occur nonetheless (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997; Fleming, 1984). In this context, the absent presence (Spanos, 1993) of African Americans in higher education are addressed, as well as the ways in which mentoring facilitates or complicates the negotiation of the higher education process for African American students in Predominantly White Institutions.

This theoretical frame also challenges modernist assumptions that African American student experiences at PWIs are not distinct. By this I mean, some theories of mentoring suggest that if African American students are guided by mentors then they will be successfully through graduation. On the contrary, literature that suggests regardless of positive mentoring experiences at PWIs, African American students, their mentors and the broader university must recognize the way in which race impacts not only their ways of being at the university, but also their ways of being in the world. Theories that foreground issues of race and racism in American society enable these voices to be validated, disputing myths of integration and assimilation that early race theorists have suggested (Omi and Winant, 1994; Stanfield, 1993). African American students in PWIs have racialized experiences and these experiences can only be illuminated and voiced through theories that recognize the significance of race. By having the data speak in the voice of the participants issues of race and the experiences of these students at a PWI in the context of their mentoring relationship becomes quite relevant to the discourse of higher education policies in the interest of African American and other students of color.
I turn now to an examination of the social construction of race and its relevance for this research. Omi and Winant (1994), utilize a sociological approach to examining what they term the concept of “race,” positing that “race will *always* [author’s italics] be at the center of the American experience” (p. 5). By acknowledging the significance of race to a Western and more specifically an American-born construct, as a contextual order of things, Omi & Winant (1994) implore a foregrounding of race to any contemporary discourse, including that higher education.

Omi and Winant (1994) argue further that the class and nation based paradigms challenge the ethnicity paradigm by rejecting the primary tenets which proposed that “racial minorities could be incorporated into American life in the same way that ethnic groups had been” (p. 12). The social movements of the 1960’s, both class and race fundamentally called into question theories of assimilationism, as well as cultural pluralism since America was both culturally and economically predicated upon a lower rung of the social order. Black nationalism and Marxism in particular raised different questions regarding the “assumption of a fundamental underlying commitment to equality and social justice for racial minorities” (Omi and Winant, 1994, p. 12). Moreover, Omi and Winant (1994) contend that the ethnicity paradigm has experienced a resurgence during the late 1970’s to the present, labeling it neoconservatism. They argue that race is grounded in both historical and political discourses and as such they proposed a race theory of social formations which:

- emphasizes the social nature of race, the absence of any racial characteristics, the historical flexibility of racial meanings and categories, the conflictual character of race at both “micro-” and “macro-social” levels, and the irreducible political
Race continues to be a value-laden and unique formation within the Western imaginary which reinscribes White privilege (Giroux, 1994; Wynter, 1990, 1992). Whiteness as a category has only recently been a topic under interrogation, particularly within mainstream scholarship (Delgado, 1995; Giroux, 1994; Gordon, 1995; Wing, 1997) and has called into question the taken for grantedness of White privilege, particularly in an institutional context. The institution of higher education is not removed from the discourse. The everyday experiences and life chances of the African American students in this research are altered, despite their successful academic and social integration or participation in an effective mentoring relationship. They are racially coded as Other and signified as Black (Gordon, 1995; King, 1992; Wynter, 1994, 1995). With a combined theoretical frame of academic and social integration and theories that speak to the ways in which race and racism manifests itself in the mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution, I undertake this research.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Historical and theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research

Building upon research practices in the areas of anthropology and ethnography, qualitative research developed in response to 1960's qualitative sociology in critical response to quantitative research methods of inquiry grounded in paradigmatic assumptions of prediction, objectivity, and neutrality (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Macbeth, 1998; Sparkes, 1992). The qualitative mode of inquiry seeks a holistic perspective that validates "the unifying nature of particular settings" and real life experiences (Patton, 1990, p. 49). In addition, contemporary qualitative research seeks to provide rich descriptions that substantiate the existence of multiple voices and epistemological bases, situating race, class, and gender issues as paramount, albeit hegemonic societal forces, in constructing social reality (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990). Contrary to quantitative inquiry, qualitative inquiry "implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined, or measured (if measured at all), in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency"; however, validation is sought through "how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 4).
Qualitative research is often described in terms of three primary paradigmatic constructs: the positivist, interpretive, and critical. Each mode of analysis is grounded in distinct epistemological bases and encompass the conceptual and theoretical frameworks undergirding qualitative research. The positivist or traditional paradigm parallels the theoretical constructs of quantitative research, maintaining the premise that theory is both universal and generalizable, and facts and knowledge are value-free (Sparkes, 1992). Moreover, in the positive or traditional paradigm a quantification of variables is paramount in establishing objectivity and validity (Patton, 1990; Sparkes, 1992). Ontologically, “positivism postulates that the social world external to individual cognition, is a real world made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable facts that can be observed, measured and known for what they really are” (Sparkes, 1992, p. 20). The positivist researcher assumes his/her role as neutral and acts “as a passive spectator, observing and documenting facts”, attempting to dissociate him/herself from social reality. (James-Brown, 1995, p. 55).

The interpretive or hermeneutic paradigm advanced as a critique of the positivist paradigm, attempts to understand and enter into the world of another, maintaining that research is neither neutral nor objective and does not take place within a “social vacuum” and that theory must emerge from guided a priori themes rather than predetermined hypotheses (Sparkes, 1992, p. 15). Both researchers and participants are complexly integrated in an environment that directly influences inquiry and response respectively, based fundamentally on “particular frames of reference,” personal perspectives, and world views (Sparkes, 1992, p. 15).
Sparkes (1992) posits that the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the world as it is, considering knowledge to be a "human construction" that is both "problematic and ever changing" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 26). Multiple realities are acknowledged and celebrated in the interpretive mode of inquiry.

Building on the primary tenets of the interpretive paradigm, the critical paradigm operates:

by critically assessing commonsense knowledge and assumptions; by showing how the theories implicit in commonsense thinking lead to undesirable or unintended results, or by showing how some alternative theory either has certain advantages over commonsense understanding or offers a more adequate explanation of reality. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 121)

In its augmentation of the tenets of the interpretive paradigm, the critical paradigm focuses on the "broad social and historical context in which phenomena are interrelated. It is concerned with revealing underlying social relations and showing how structural and ideological forms bear on them" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 39). The critical mode of analysis avows societal power imbalances. Participants are presented with information that enhances knowledge through the particular research inquiry which becomes the impetus for the participants' will and desire to counter hegemonic, oppressive forces through empowering and emancipatory means.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) further assert that:

...a critical social science will seek to offer individuals an awareness of how their aims and purposes may have become distorted or repressed and
to specify how these can be eradicated so that the rational pursuit of their real goals can be undertaken. (p. 137)

Critical research advances an understanding of the interpretive paradigm “advocating praxis-oriented actions” (James-Brown, 1995, p. 56). James-Brown (1995) cites Bredo and Fienberg who contend that “in critical theory, the theory of knowledge and the theory of society merge” (p. 57). Lather (1986) argues that Frierian “empowering” research is situated within the critical/postpositivist paradigm and seeks to transform both “social structure and methodological norms” (p. 258). Further, this “transformative agenda” has liberatory potential for individuals who maintain a marginalized status in society (Lather, 1986, p. 258).

Rationale for utilizing qualitative research

My interest in utilizing qualitative research was twofold. First, I saw potential in what qualitative research offered with regard to examining the mentoring phenomena from the perspective of the participants. Second, as a critical social scientist, I was able to offer analyses that both celebrated and challenged the mentoring practices of the cohort of African American student and mentor study participants (Marshall and Rossman, 1989). In an effort to articulate what the mentoring phenomena “looks like” as it unfolds for African American students and their mentors in a predominantly White university setting, qualitative research allowed a method to examine mentoring as a practical organization of everyday life. Further, because of the multiple paradigmatic strands of qualitative research, I was able to ask questions as they related to my combined

67
theoretical frame of academic and social integration and race and racism in higher education.

Research data were organized utilizing a cross-case method of analysis. Cross-case analysis allowed an examination of the thematic strands that were revealed through data analysis. In order to satisfy the rigorous triangulation process critical in undertaking a thorough qualitative research study, various data collection procedures were utilized. Among these were individual and focus group interviews, participant observation, document analysis and researcher journaling. However, individual and focus groups interviews represented the primary method of data collection and analysis in this study. Coded and categorized interview data and a presentation of voices of the students and their mentors provided a means for constructing grounded theory in the context of the participants’ experiences. Further, through the utilization of participant voices, qualitative research analysis enabled the data story to be told, while it maintained a sense of connectedness to both the participants and the data stories as they unfolded (Crichlow, 1993; Fine and Weis, 1996).

With individual interview and focus group data as the primary means of data collection and analysis, I was cautioned of relying solely on this means of data collection. Deutscher (1966) vehemently argues that researchers rely too heavily on participant’s “words” as an indication of what they do in reality. In this regard, he calls for additional means of data collection as well as in-depth analyses of interview data. He argues further that many researchers attempt to fit data into prescribed structures of what they expected to learn from the research prior to talking with participants. Deutscher (1966) suggests that researchers consider analytically and through other means of data collection “the

Deutscher’s (1966) discussion regarding the ways in which interview participants structure their responses to questions and context of the interview itself was relevant to the data collection process for this study. Because data collection methods included both individual and focus group interviews, of which two focus group interviews included both the mentee and mentor pair, the ways in which participants chose to respond to the questions and my additional probing, enabled me to better understand how I as a researcher was shaping the interview process. Additionally, during the data analysis stage of the research, the context of the interview as well as with whom I was speaking (e.g. mentee; mentor; mentee and mentor) was critical to the ways in which data was interpreted and subsequently coded and paralleled the aspects of research interview in which Deutscher (1966) spoke.

**Rationale for cross-case analysis method**

The findings for this research were analyzed utilizing the cross-case method of analysis. Cross-case analysis allowed an examination as well as the illumination of the thematic strands that were prevalent in the data. The myriad ways in which the mentoring process developed for African American students and their mentors was illuminated through the ways in which mentoring experiences paralleled or diverged in the data analysis.
This research focused on the mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education and the context in which these experiences occurred was critical to a thorough analysis of the data. Mentoring practices occur as context-specific events, with time, place and space as critical to the ways in which the process develops (Bey and Holmes, 1992). Moreover, since the stories of the students and their mentors were retrospectively reported, the context in which they occurred further enhanced data analysis.

**Study site and program history**

The study site for this research was a formal mentoring program for students of color at a large research university in the Midwestern region of the United States. Program participants included domestic ethnic minorities (e.g. African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American). The program was initiated in 1987 to address issues of retention for African American freshman and was expanded in 1991 to include all domestic ethnic minority students and to implement more academically focused programming.

As a graduate assistant from 1995 to 1999 for the African American mentoring component of the research study site, I assumed a wide array of responsibilities during my three-year tenure. Part of my responsibility was to identify incoming African American freshman, as well as peer and professional mentors to participate in the program. In order to facilitate this process, informational brochures and applications to incoming African American freshman, past and potential peer (upper-class students) and professional mentors (faculty and administrative staff) were mailed during the academic year, as well as during the summer months. In addition to mass mailings to generate
interest in the program, the staff participated in various welcoming activities and informational sessions.

During the past three years, the program has had approximately 600 participants. The program is open to all students who want to participate, however freshman domestic minority students are the targeted student population. Students must provide information regarding their academic and personal interests in order to facilitate the mentor identification and matching process. Students also give graduate student administrators and Directors written permission to monitor their academic progress on a quarterly basis. Peer and professional mentor volunteers provide general contact information and their specific academic and professional areas on program applications. Mentors commit to the program and their assigned student/mentee for at least one year, however many mentor participants remain in the program for subsequent years, continuing to develop their current mentoring relationship as well as working with other freshman students.

Once students/mentees, peer and professional mentors are identified for the program, mentoring teams are constructed. The African American mentoring component of the program matches African American freshman with African American peer mentors who are upper class students based on mentees and peers sharing the same gender and similar academic interests. Professional mentors are faculty, administrative staff and graduate students. They are matched with students based on academic area and/or undergraduate/post-graduate background. Both peer and professional mentors are asked to spend at least five to ten hours per quarter with their assigned mentee in order begin developing the mentoring relationship.
Although mentees and mentors are matched by office staff and many times are not acquainted with one another, sufficient latitude exists among mentoring teams to personalize the relationship by requesting a mentee or mentor. After mentoring teams are constructed, the academic progress of the students, both mentees and peers is monitored quarterly. The office monitors mentoring relationships, through phone evaluations and training workshops designed to help mentors with various strategies of how to mentor.

Pilot study

Between January and March of 1997, a pilot study was conducted on the formal mentoring program in which this research is set. During the program’s quarterly academic monitoring process for which I was partly responsible, I solicited permission from the Director to include a qualitative component to a departmental survey administered to program participants who were experiencing academic difficulty. Students who had below satisfactory academic progress (e.g. grade point averages below 2.0) during the previous quarter, were scheduled for academic consultation, at which time the survey was administered.

My rationale for conducting the pilot study was to begin to develop my interview and focus group questions as well as interview techniques with students. I was also interested in better understanding of some of the challenges that African American students face at a large Predominantly White Institution, particularly the nuances of negotiating a sometimes unfamiliar and alienating system of higher education. The pilot study allowed me to collect and analyze data in the context of my proposed area of research interest. Further, I was able to develop and modify interview questions and
researcher protocol forms in order to gain approval from the Human Subjects Research Board at the university in order to conduct the research study.

**Gaining entrée**

Formal permission was solicited from the program's Assistant Director as well as the Director of the department to conduct the current research with program participants. A formal letter of permission describing the purpose and proposed outcomes of the study were discussed at a formal meeting with the Director and other program administrators. Also, interview transcripts and informed consent forms were provided as part of the research protocol. Gaining entrée into this study site did not present a problem, since I am a former employee of the department. As an issue of ethics and reciprocity, I offered to share my data analysis and findings with the Director and program administrators to assist with future programming planning initiatives and to include with their annual departmental review reports.

**Sample and sample selection**

The selection of the sample is critical in qualitative research (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Who, what, and how to study become elements which undergird the very nature of inquiry (James-Brown, 1995). The purpose of this study was to examine the mentoring experiences of a cohort of African American students involved in a formal undergraduate mentoring program at a large Midwestern research university in the United States. The sample of study participants consisted of fourteen mentees and their eleven assigned mentors (two peer and nine professional) for a total of twenty-five participants.

Specifically, the study sample was represented by mentees, assigned peer mentors (i.e.,

---

1 Because of a potential breach in the confidentiality of the research study site, the formal letter of permission is not included as an appendix.
upper class students) and professional mentors (i.e., faculty, staff and graduate students) during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98; 1998-99 academic years. The number of mentors is less than mentees because three of the mentors were assigned two mentees represented in the study sample. During their participation in the mentoring program as mentees, all participants were classified as freshman. At the time of the study five of the students were classified as sophomores; three as juniors; five as seniors and one 1998 graduate.

"Purposeful sampling" and "snowball sampling" techniques were utilized to solicit participants for this study. According to Patton (1990) purposeful sampling allows the researcher to engage in "information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 169). Patton (1990) asserts that these "cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 169). The procedure used in identifying the sample population my interactions with program participants during my tenure with the formal program, as well as solicited referrals from program administrators.

During the winter and spring quarters of 1999, program participation rosters were reviewed. Based on my work with some of the program participants and the referrals of the program staff, potential participants were solicited via telephone and electronic mail regarding their interest in participating in a forthcoming research study. Participant solicitation was primarily based on mentee and mentor participation as mentoring teams at various department-sponsored events.

\[2 \text{ See Table 3.1. Also see section entitled, "Introduction to study participants: Mentees and assigned mentors" found in Chapter 4.}\]
Additionally, program rosters were reviewed for specific demographics of mentoring teams, particularly teams that were matched across race and gender, as this was an additional focus of the study. A list was compiled of potential program participants who met these criteria. Program participants during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98 and 1998-99 academic years were solicited via electronic mail and telephone. Electronic mail and telephone solicitation requested that mentees and peer and professional mentors who felt they developed a relationship to consider participating in the research. I was interested in having potential participants determine participation based on their assessment of relationship development, rather than rely on my or program administrators evaluations only.

Several responses were received from potential participants. Follow up contact was made with whomever contacted me regarding participation. Perspectives of both the mentee and mentor were critical to the study's focus and further as a means of data triangulation and subsequent increased validity in the study’s findings. Participants were contacted on four separate occasions, twice by electronic mail and twice via telephone. Participants who did not respond to electronic mail and telephone contacts were not included in the study sample. Additionally, some participants who indicated their interest in participating but whose assigned mentees or mentors did not respond to either form of contact were also not included in the final study sample.

Once confirmation for interview and focus group discussion participation was received from participants, a stratified purposeful sample was compiled (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). The sample consisted of fourteen mentees (n1=14 including nine female

---

3 See Appendix A for Oral/Electronic mail Solicitation - Mentees/Protégés and Appendix B for Oral/Electronic mail Solicitation - Mentors.
and five male, all African American), two peer mentors (n=2 including two female, both African American), and nine professional mentors (n=9 including three African American females; two African American males, two White females, and two White males). The complete sample consisted of twenty-five participants (n=25). A participant profile is provided in Table 3.1 on the proceeding page.

The rationale for the research sample was that all of the participants have been part of the program at least one year and had an opportunity to develop mentoring relationships. Moreover, because mentoring teams were interviewed one year following their assignment, this provided mentees and mentors with an opportunity to reflect on the relationship's relevance to the student's academic, personal and professional development at the university. Also, because the theoretical frame addressed students academic and social integration, it was important that the students interviewed had been at the university long enough to examine the ways in which their assigned mentors may or may not have contributed to this integration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentee Profile (n1)</th>
<th>Peer (n2) and Professional (n3) Mentor Profiles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name (Pseudonym)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender (M/F)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clint</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quincy</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonya</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vince</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Profiles of study participants

1 Mentee names listed in bold indicate the student was assigned both Peer and Professional Mentors. Mentor names listed in bold indicate the mentor is matched with two mentee/student participants. Total sample, n=25; Mentees, n1=14; Peer mentors, n2=2; Professional mentors, n3=9.
Sample bias

My sample selection may have been biased for a few reasons. First, the students and mentors that returned my e-mails or that I spoke to directly via telephone were those included in the sample. Additionally, the participants I solicited who were not available or did not contact me to follow up were not included as participants and may have proven rich data sources. Second, my criteria to for potential participants may have also created some bias. Potential participants were asked to determine whether or not they felt that they developed a mentoring relationship with their assigned mentee or mentor. For a number of the participants, it seemed that developed was interpreted as a “good” or “successful” mentoring relationship. To this end, a number of the mentoring relationships included my sample may have only discussed the positive aspects of mentoring. However, my hope was that through utilizing various interviewing techniques such as probing and re-interviewing, it would enable me to discern some of the challenges the mentee and/or the mentor faced as they participated in the relationship, despite it being labeled as “good” or “successful.”

Data collection

In-depth individual and focus group interviews were utilized as the primary methods for data collection. Interviews lasted between one hour and one and one-half hours, particularly if they were focus group interviews. Interview sessions were semi-structured to provide sufficient latitude for researcher probing. Interview questions were developed based on related literature on mentoring and the experiences of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions, as well as the previously discussed pilot study.
Also, as Kvale (1996) suggested, a number of participants were re-interviewed in order to clarify points from the initial interview and to aid in the accuracy interpretation of the data.

Patton (1990) contends that, “[q]ualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 278). He further contends that through the interviewing process, qualitative researchers “capture the perspectives of the program participants, staff and others associated with the program” (p. 279). Triangulation methods or multiple-data-collection were utilized “in order to increase confidence in research findings” (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 24).

One of the methods included participant observation. Two of the study’s mentoring teams were interviewed in focus group format (e.g., Asia and Bob and Andrea and Adrienne). Their interaction as mentoring teams was observed and recorded through researcher journaling and aided in data analysis. Mentees who shared the same mentor (e.g., Clint and Vince) were observed as we enjoyed lunch together following our focus group interview. Although, participant observation methods were not utilized extensively, they did add to the ways in which data was interpreted and presented for analysis. Additional, methods of data collection included individual and focus group interviewing, previously mentioned as the primary means of data collection, analysis of program documents (e.g., mission statement; program flyers and brochures, participant mailings). Collected data was subsequently organized through the use of audio taped transcripts of interview data, observation and interview field notes and researcher journaling.
Data Analysis

Methods of inductive data analysis were utilized to help "make sense of field data" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 203). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that inductively analyzing data entails analyzing "specific, raw units of information to subsuming categories of information in order to define working hypotheses or questions that can be followed up" (p. 203). Transcriptions of audio taped conversations among myself, mentees and mentors were sorted and coded for analysis, while various methods of telling the data story (Richardson, 1994; Lather, 1997) were considered. Processes of unitizing or the separation and identification of "information bearing units" as well as categorizing or the organization of data "into categories that provide descriptive or inferential information about the context or setting from which the units were derived," were employed to sufficiently analyze data gathered from interviews and audio taped transcriptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 203).

Four focus group (totaling eight participants) and seventeen individual interviews were conducted. Once corresponding audio tapes were transcribed, the data were hand coded as a means of identifying participant passages that addressed the study's a priori themes, the study's theoretical frame and various emergent themes that would shape the study's data presentation and analysis. These coding techniques included the separation of codes related directly to the mentoring literature, and codes derived from participant narratives. During this process, it was discovered that a number of consistent patterns and themes emerged from data coding. These patterns and themes later became research categories. Research categories and corresponding data were organized in separate files.
and subsequently sub coded during second and third analytical reviews of the interview data.

The hand coding, categorizing and transference of data into corresponding files proved an arduous task, but an extremely worthwhile process in the long run. Unitizing and separating the data enabled initial categories to be combined and developed into broad categories, while smaller seemingly insignificant sub codes often became categories themselves. Thoroughly reading, rereading and analyzing data enabled me to see beyond the data. That is, the methods of data analysis employed provided a means by which to begin constructing grounded theories with regard to the mentoring experiences of the student participants as reported by the students themselves and their assigned mentors.

During the proposal stages of this research, I decided to use a qualitative research software program QSR NUD*IST to assist me with the process of coding and categorizing interview and focus group data. Despite the promises of making this process less tedious for the qualitative researcher, QSR NUD*IST significantly slowed my process of data analysis and in many ways distanced me from my data. By this I mean, various techniques provided by the software program for identifying emergent themes and patterns, were often out of context and had little connection to the study’s focus. Although QSR NUD*IST has a number of attractive features, such as its qualitative data search capabilities, it simply hindered my data analysis process. For these reasons, I decided the manual method of qualitative data analysis making my way through nearly 1000 pages of interview and focus group transcripts.
Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness between researcher and participants must be developed. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) contend that “trustworthiness is likely to increase with time and the establishment of a trusting relationship with your respondent” (p. 90). Crichlow (1993) states that some of the challenges that face researchers who conduct research with their own ethnic populations. Despite shared ethnicity, Crichlow (1993) contends that native ethnographers must critically examine issues surrounding researching their own ethnic population group, especially the challenges that arise with establishing trustworthiness. Because of my work with program participants for three years prior to undertaking this research study, I had developed trust with many of the mentee and mentor participants, interacting with them on various occasions at department-sponsored events. As a means of increasing researcher trustworthiness, at the start of each interview I thoroughly explained the purpose of the research and allowed participants to question any aspect of the interview process (e.g., interview questions, probing techniques). My goal was to facilitate rather than dictate the interview process as a means of further establishing trustworthiness among participants.

Credibility

Patton (1990) contends that researcher credibility depends on the personal and professional attributes of the researcher. “The credibility of qualitative inquiry is especially dependent on the credibility of the researcher because the researcher is the instrument of data collection and the center of the analytic process” (p. 461). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest several activities to further researcher credibility. These include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, and
member checking. I utilized methods of triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking in this research study.

**Prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation**

Through prolonged engagement, Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintain that "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes: learning the "culture," testing for misinformation introduced by distortions of either the self or of the respondents, and building trust" (p. 301). Data collection, observations, individual and focus group interviews occurred over a six-month period between the months of August 1999 and January 2000. Once interview transcripts were reviewed, some participants were re-interviewed during January and February 2000 for clarity and further researcher interpretation.

Persistent observation, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) clearly identifies "those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on the detail" (p. 304). Participant observation with mentees and mentors enabled me to engage in the process of persistent observation. Methods of triangulation or multiple-data-collection were utilized "in order to increase confidence in research findings" (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992, p. 24). In my pilot study, I utilized methods including, interviewing, audio tapings and transcribing, coding, field notes, and researcher journaling for the purpose of increasing confidence (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). In addition to the aforementioned techniques, participant observation was utilized in this research study.
Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985) is “the process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit with the inquirer’s mind” (p. 308). James-Brown (1995) asserts that the major purpose of peer debriefing ‘is to help keep researchers “honest” by challenging the suppositions that lead to their interpretations’ (p. 83). I engaged two peer debriefers who were able to suggest different ways in which I could read participant data and subsequently challenged my initial analyses of the study data.

Member Checking

Member checking techniques were utilized in this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985), argue that member checking is “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). They contend that the member check allows data, analytic categories, and conclusions to be “tested with members of those stake holding groups from whom the data were originally collected” (p. 304). I re-interviewed as well as reviewed my field notes with a number of participants in order to satisfy this method of increasing trustworthiness.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue the following:

[It] is not the responsibility of qualitative researchers to specify external validity of an inquiry because they cannot; he or she can only provide the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (p. 91).
Although it is not qualitative researchers' "responsibility...to specify external validity," it is important for qualitative researchers to address the questions that the scholarly community will pose regarding specific research findings and their relevance to other comparable study populations. Once data were gathered and findings interpreted, peer debriefed and member checked, levels of transferability were considered based on study data and are discussed further in Chapter 5.

**Ethical Issues**

Participant confidentiality was maintained in order not to compromise the integrity of participants or the program in which they are affiliated. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) discuss ethical issues, including concealing the identity of the participants, soliciting permission to perform research, and reporting findings whether the researcher agrees with the findings or not. Collecting, reviewing, and analyzing the data personally maintained participant confidentiality. Participants were informed and agreed in writing to confidentiality protocols prior to the interview session.4

I considered telling the story an ethical issue. Fine and Weis (1996) contend that researchers must acknowledge the politics of representation, specifically how data will be perceived on the written page. Crichlow (1993) addresses the concept of ethics, arguing that researchers must be acutely aware of their own and others' epistemological and ideological foundations, as it is these that breath life into the human participants whose stories become data.

---

4 See Appendix C: Consent for participation in behavioral research
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction and organization of the chapter

This study examined the mentoring experiences of African American students participating in a formal undergraduate mentoring program for students of color at a large Midwestern research university in the United States. The sample of study participants consisted of fourteen mentees and their eleven assigned mentors (two peer and nine professional) for a total of twenty-five participants. Specifically, the study sample was represented by mentees, assigned peer mentors (i.e., upper class students) and professional mentors (i.e., faculty, staff and graduate students) during the 1995-96; 1996-97; 1997-98; 1998-99 academic years.¹

This chapter utilized a cross-case method of analysis to present the findings of the research on the mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) of higher education. Cross-case analysis allowed an examination of the thematic strands that were revealed through data analysis. The ways in which the mentoring process develops for African American students and their mentors is

¹ See Table 3.1. Also see section entitled, “Introduction to study participants: Mentees and assigned mentors” found in Chapter 4.
illuminated in examination of the emergent themes and commonalities during data analysis. In addition, in order to satisfy the rigorous triangulation process critical in undertaking a thorough qualitative research study, various data collection procedures were utilized. Among these were individual and focus group interviews, participant observation and researcher journaling. A process of coding small units of data generated common themes. However, individual and focus groups interviews represented the primary method of data collection and analysis in this study. Coded and categorized interview data and a presentation of voices of the students and their mentors provide a means for constructing grounded theory in the context of the participants’ experiences.

The chapter is organized and findings subsequently presented through the combined theoretical frame of academic and social integration and race and racism in education. Chapter 2 concluded with a detailed discussion of the theoretical frame utilized in this study, and its corresponding tenets and relevance. That chapter has described the theoretical base of the study and therefore, it will only be briefly reviewed as the data in the corresponding category is presented.

The first section of the chapter provides brief biographical sketches of student/mentee and mentor participants to enable the reader to follow data presentation to complement Table 3.1, Profiles of study participants. The second section of the chapter presents data and analyzes research findings through the following five broad categories
based on common themes that emerged during the data analysis process. They include:

1. **The mentoring process**
2. **Mentoring and academic integration**
3. **Mentoring and social integration**
4. **Race and racism in education**
5. **Mentoring and African American student experiences**

The ways in which each theme emerged as salient in the research, as well as corresponding subcategories are described and illuminated through the voices of the study's participants. Broad categories are introduced followed by a category and subcategory template. The next section provides biographical sketches of the study's participants.

**Introduction to study participants: Mentees and assigned mentors**

All mentees are African American and at time of mentoring matches were freshman students at the research study site. Below are brief biographical sketches of the mentoring teams interviewed for the purposes of this study.

**Mentoring team 1: Andrea/Mentee and Adrienne/Peer mentor**

Andrea is currently a sophomore Pre-Medical/Biology major. Andrea's Peer mentor is Adrienne, an African American female who is a senior Chemistry major. They have worked together for the past two academic years, since Autumn quarter 1998. Andrea and Adrienne are a same-race/same-gender mentoring match.
Mentoring team 2: Asia/Mentee and Bob/Professional mentor
Asia and Bob have worked together since Autumn 1998. Asia is a sophomore Nursing major and her mentor Bob is a White male faculty member in the Department of Psychology. Bob teaches courses and conducts research in the area of stereotypes and prejudice. Asia and Bob are a cross-race/cross-gender mentoring match.

Mentoring team 3: Clint/Mentee and Ray/Professional mentor
Clint is a sophomore Engineering major who has worked with his mentor Ray since Autumn 1998. Ray is an African American male doctoral student in Education. Clint and Ray are a same-race/same-gender mentoring match.

Mentoring team 4: Daphne/Mentee and Katrina/Professional mentor
Daphne is a Junior Political Science major. Her mentor Katrina is an African American female and a doctoral candidate in Political Science and a Visiting Professor at a large research university in the Southwest region of the United States. Daphne and Katrina worked together during the 1997-1998 academic year. Daphne and Katrina are a same-race/same-gender match.

Mentoring team 5: Eve/Mentee and Danielle/Professional mentor

Mentoring team 6: Eve/Mentee and Janice/Peer Mentor
Eve is a senior English major who transferred from the research study site to an Historically Black University in the Northeast region of the United States after her sophomore year. Eve worked with her professional mentor, Danielle an African American female and doctoral candidate in Education during the 1996-1997 academic year. During the same academic year Eve worked with a peer mentor.
Janice, who was a Junior Arts and Sciences major. The mentoring matches of Eve, Danielle and Janice are same-race/same-gender.

**Mentoring team 7: Michelle/Mentee and Robin/Professional mentor**

Michelle is a sophomore Microbiology major I worked with during the 1998-1999 academic year. I am a doctoral candidate in Education and the past Mentoring program Graduate Associate. Michelle and I are a same-race/same-gender match.

**Mentoring team 8: Quincy/Mentee and Bob/Professional mentor**

Quincy is a Senior Psychology major who has worked with Bob\(^2\) since the 1995-1996 academic year. Bob has taken a group approach to serving in the capacity of a mentor working with a number of students during the same academic years (e.g. Asia and Quincy). Quincy and Bob are a cross-race/same-gender mentoring match.

**Mentoring team 9: Ron/Mentee and Stuart/Professional mentor**

Rob is a Senior Business major who was matched with Stuart, a White male faculty member in the Business College during the 1997-1998 academic year. Stuart’s teaching and research is in the area of international business and markets. Ron and Stuart are a cross-race/same-gender mentoring match.

**Mentoring team 10: Sarah/Mentee and Sharon/Professional mentor**

Sarah is a senior Journalism major who worked with Sharon a White female who is an Associate Dean in the Business College beginning Autumn 1996. Part of Sharon’s responsibilities in the Business College are its diversity initiatives. Sarah and Sharon are a cross-race/same-gender mentoring match.

\(^2\) See description of Mentoring Team 2 for Bob’s biographical sketch.
Mentoring team 11: Stan/Mentee and Donald/Professional mentor

Stan is a graduate of the research study site who majored in Business and Political Science. Stan was matched with Donald an African American male staff member in the Business College during the 1996-1997 academic year. Stan and Donald are a same-race/same-gender mentoring match.

Mentoring team 12: Toni/Mentee and Robin/Professional mentor

Toni is another student I worked with during the 1997-1998 academic year. Toni is a Junior Family and Human Development major. Our mentoring match is same-race/same-gender.

Mentoring team 13: Tonya/Mentee and Lisa/Professional mentor

Tonya is a Senior majoring in Marketing who was matched with Lisa a White female faculty member in the Business College during the 1995-1996 academic year. Lisa’s teaching and research area is marketing. Tonya and Lisa are a cross-race/same-gender mentoring match.

Mentoring team 14: Tracy/Mentee and Katrina/Professional mentor

Tracy is a Junior Arts and Sciences/Pre-Medicine major who was matched with Katrina during the 1997-1998 academic year. Tracy and Katrina are a same-race/same-gender mentoring match.

Mentoring team 15: Vince/Mentee and Ray/Professional mentor

Vince is a sophomore Engineering major who was matched with Ray during the 1998-1999 academic year. Vince and Ray are a same-race/same-gender match.

---

3 See description of Mentoring Team 7 for Robin’s biographical sketch.
4 See description of Mentoring Team 4 for Katrina’s biographical sketch.
5 See description of Mentoring Team 3 for Ray’s biographical sketch.
Category 1: The mentoring process

The primary focus of this research was the mentoring experiences of African American students in a PWI and the context in which these experiences occurred. Examining the mentoring experiences of the student participants and the related context is critical to a thorough analysis of the data. Mentoring practices occur as context-specific events, with time, place and space as central to the way in which mentoring relationships develop (Bey and Holmes, 1992). Moreover, since the stories of the students and their mentors are shared retrospectively, the context was critical to data analysis.

As participants responded to interview and focus group questions,6 that addressed the study’s research questions, a number of subcategories emerged that identified the ways in which mentoring relationships unfolded for the mentee/mentor pairs. This section broadly categorized as “the mentoring process,” was organized and grouped with the following codes and categories:

Category 1: The mentoring process

- Conceptualization and characterization of the mentoring process
- Initiating the mentoring relationship

6 See Appendices VI and VII for detailed interview and focus group questions.
• Cultivating the mentoring relationship
  —“Mentoring the mentor”
  —Generativity
  —Gender concerns

• The function of the mentoring relationship
  —Advice, guidance and encouragement
  —Role model
  —Employment and networking opportunities

In addition to the subcategories of the mentoring process a number of categorical codes emerged that gave rise to the corresponding subcategory. Categorical codes are discussed as they illuminated the subcategory and the way in which they provide a better understanding of “the mentoring process.” For example, initiating the mentoring relationship is organized as a subsection of the larger category of the mentoring process and is based on the ways in which participants described the particular way in which the relationship began. The ways in which mentoring relationships developed was of particular interest, since those included in this study sample were involved in assigned relationships which may have been faced with greater obstacles than mentoring relationships that rely primarily upon mentor or protégé self-selection (Levinson et al., 1978; Ugbah and Williams, 1989).

Developing and the function of the mentoring relationship emerged as subsections of “the mentoring process.” As participants shared the various conversations, activities and events they engaged in as mentoring pairs, the specificity of what it means to develop a mentoring relationship unfolded. With regard to the function of the mentoring
relationship, mentor participants described the functions they served on behalf of their student mentees. Similarly, mentees spoke of mentors' functions, often in the context of benefits they received as a result of engaging in the mentoring relationship. The numerous ways in which these assigned mentoring relationships functioned was an important finding of this research, since the professional literature has limited information on how assigned mentoring relationships function in academia. In this regard, mentee and mentor participants were able to describe what they felt they gained or provided as a result of being a part of the relationship. The next section discusses the corresponding codes and subcategories of the broader category, "the mentoring process."

**Conceptualized and characterized**

This section of data presentation is organized first with a discussion of the participants' conceptualization or general definition of mentoring, followed by a discussion of participant characterization or description of their particular mentoring relationship. By this I mean, how do participants conceptualize/define and characterize/describe the mentoring process in their own words? The mentoring process represents the first category presented as part of the findings of this research. As discussed in Chapters One and Two, this research focused on participant experiences, particularly African American students and their assigned mentors and their own conceptualization and characterization of the mentoring process.

Both the conceptualization and the characterization of the mentoring relationship as perceived by the participants are addressed in two of the study's initial research questions: How do students and their assigned mentors conceptualize mentoring? How
do students and their assigned mentors characterize their mentoring relationship? Below participants conceptualize their mentoring relationships.

Ron (Mentee) conceptualized the mentoring process. He said a mentor is:

*Kind of like a guide, somebody to help me stay on the right track and help me. Someone who not only listens but offers advice in times of you know just down times. [They] might make it a little bit easier to get from point A to point B because they already know all the ins and outs of the university. [A mentor is] somebody you can count on.*

Sharon (Professional mentor) suggested further that a mentoring relationship provides:

*a sort of comfort in being with that person [the mentor]...and sort of an understanding. I’m thinking of somebody who I have an ongoing kind of relationship with. Who is perhaps, looking out for my career and how I’m developing.*

Eve (Mentee) described her mentoring relationship with Danielle:

*I consider her a friend. And not just a mentor anymore. When I started out I thought of her as a mentor...and actually it was a relationship I hadn’t had before. Where she’s not one of my teachers, she’s not a parent...but she’s like, not my friend yet either. So, I didn’t know where exactly she was. So that was what a mentor was to me. I mean, it was that person in between. And she was the in between person. And from where we were when we first started out, it like really developed into something greater to where now, I really consider her as a friend.*
Eve further conceptualized her idea of the mentoring process. She said:

*A mentor should be warm [and] definitely somebody who cares. And somebody who can express that they care. When the mentee goes to the mentor with a problem, or just with a concern, or just for some conversation, that person should be able to receive them warmly. It's really hard to be a mentor and be cold. Because you would turn a person off. A mentor should be someone who can understand where the mentee is coming from...not someone who wants to provide all the answers all the time. But someone who wants to listen and help that person. [And] just be the listener. They would definitely have to be knowledgeable about what they were mentoring.*

Sarah (Mentee) shared her conceptualization of a mentor:

*[A mentor should be] somebody who knows a little bit about what I'm going through...Somebody who's experienced the same thing I have. Somebody whose interests...are the same as mine and would have more experience in that area than me...Somebody who's easy to talk to...[and] open with their experiences. Somebody who I could talk to or go to for advice at any given time, whenever I might need it...I don't know just somebody who just watches over me [and] make[s] sure I succeed and be where they are one day.*

Lisa (Professional mentor) offered her conceptualization of a mentor:

*Well you have to be there that's one thing. I mean, you have to be present. You have to care whether or not the person succeeds. I think*
you have to believe if they succeed it's going to give something to you. I mean, Tonya's [Lisa's mentee] success just makes me so proud.

Lisa further conceptualized how she mentored Tonya:

*I try to figure out what the person needs...I try to let them talk, Let them tell me, try not to impose on them. I mean I basically feel that I'm the one with experience, you're not and for somethings I'm just going to tell you what to do...and you're going to have to trust me. So you know, maybe it's more dictatorial than a lot of other people think, but the point is, why let you take a chance and fail on something that I can help you to solve? So a lot of things with Tonya, it was just trust me, do it, trust me.*

Andrea (Mentee) and Adrienne (Peer mentor) conceptualized mentoring during one of the study's focus group discussions. Andrea stated that a mentor must be “understanding.” Adrienne stated that “confidentiality [is] very important” as well as developing “a feeling of trust.”

Participants suggested a range of definitions of mentoring. While mentees’ conceptualizations of mentoring were based on relationship building and the importance of developing trust, mentor conceptualizations were based on the ways in which they could assist students in a mentoring capacity. Mentees’ perceptions of the development of mentoring relationship are critical to mentees being open to the advice and guidance mentors seek to provide.

In addition to conceptualizing or defining the mentoring process, study participants were asked to characterize or describe their particular mentoring
relationships and asked to share specific examples of their characterization of the relationship. This section presents some of the participants’ related stories.

In characterizing her mentoring relationship with Sarah, Sharon stated, “I thought I’d [follow] my instinct and get my feedback from my mentee and let them guide it and certainly not let them flounder.”

Danielle (Professional mentor) further characterized her mentoring relationship with Eve:

> With my mentee, my program mentee specifically, I would say something significant was...well she’s a quiet person and we kind of started out a little oddly because I wasn’t sure if she was connecting or not. But just to hear her tell me the kind of...because I mean, we didn’t talk everyday or a whole lot, but I tried to at least keep up with her and what she was doing and I think she really appreciated that...I could have easily just been after the first few interactions been like, “Okay, I’ve done all I need to do” in terms of this mentor/mentee thing. But, you know, really caring about her and to have her acknowledge that she appreciates that and that it made a difference for her being at [the university], which she didn’t want to be at, for me to be supportive for her. And for me to be one of the few people who encouraged her when she wanted to leave [the university] and go to a Black school. For me to say, “You know what, maybe that’s what you should do.” And for her to go there and thrive, and for her to be happy about her decision, and to know that I wasn’t
trying to talk her out of going. I think that was significant in our relationship. And I think she appreciated that also.

Daphne (Mentee) characterized her mentoring relationship with Katrina (Professional mentor) and another unassigned mentor:

*No, matter what they had to do...they were always willing to help me when I had a problem. No matter what test or anything they had the next day, they would stop and have time for me.*

Katrina characterized their mentoring relationship:

*At least for me, it works out better when you’re not trying to tell them what to do all the time. Give them different ways of thinking about stuff...As far as their careers...They’re still kind of figuring it out.*

Katrina provided the following example:

*Daphne knew she wanted to go to law school from day one. And so I talked to her about that, different ways that she might approach going to law school, but then to keep herself open to other things.*

Ron characterized his relationship with both Stuart and another unassigned African American male mentor:

*Well I’ve been invited to both of their homes and spent time fellowshipping with others with them and other friends of theirs and just personal talks not always formal. You know what I mean?*

Each participant individually conceptualized and characterized their mentoring relationships. Common themes found in the data included listening and developing trust as important aspects of developing the mentoring relationship. Spending
time in informal rather than formal settings also made a difference, particularly in student participants’ characterization of their mentoring relationships. The next section, “initiating and developing the mentoring relationship” discusses the ways in which mentee and mentor participants began their relationships, as well as those aspects that contributed to the successful development of the relationship.

Initiating and cultivating the mentoring relationship

The strategies that mentor/mentee employed to initiate and further cultivate their mentoring relationships were critical to a clear understanding of the mentoring process for this cohort of participants. The initiation of the mentoring relationship is critical to determining its degree of development and subsequent success. In the case of the study’s participants, initiating the mentoring relationship often presented a challenge since formal mentoring pairs had a limited point of reference before being assigned a mentee or mentor. In this regard, Kram’s (1983) research on the phases of mentoring helps to explain the phenomena of initiating the mentoring relationship. Kram (1983) identified the phases of mentoring as: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. The initiation phase indicated the start of the relationship. The cultivation phase, regarded as the most critical involved the mentor sharing valuable information and performing an array of functions to benefit the protégé (Kram, 1983; Levinson et al., 1978; Otto, 1994). The separation phase usually occurs 2 to 3 years after the initiation of the relationship (Levinson et al., 1978). Separation is brought by “structural changes in the organizational context and/or the psychological changes within one or both individuals” (Kram, 1983, p. 614). Finally, the mentoring relationship enters a redefinition phase or terminates altogether, as Levinson et al. (1978) reported.
Kram's (1983) study was significant to the examination of the mentoring experiences of African American students in PWIs because her study provided a theoretical frame through which the development of mentoring relationships can be examined. Furthermore, within the past six years, her work has been modified in the context of undergraduate student mentoring experiences (Otto, 1994). In addition, it includes an analysis of the role of mentors in the developmental process of protégés. This section of data presentation illustrates some of the ways study participants initiated their respective mentoring relationships.

Danielle (Professional mentor):

starts out in a comfortable environment...a public type of place, like the Black Cultural Center, someplace where we can just sit and actually I guess, get to know each other...you know talking, joking, and I will share experiences about my life, that might help them know who I am and the kind of person that I am and try to probe a little to get that back from them...just to see...the kind of things their interested in...so I can get a feel for the kind of the kind of person they are. And so when they do come with a problem or a situation or something I can better know how to deal with it because I know a little bit about their personality. So, I think trying to get to know them on a personal level a little helps to be able to navigate through the rest of the stuff...it's not always that easy for me because I'm not really a big proponent of getting to know new people. So, it's always just as much as a struggle for me as it is for
them. And I think that helps them, to see that vulnerability...I don’t

know anymore than you do.

Danielle shared an example of how she initiated the mentoring relationship with Eve:

...with Eve I had to take a few deep breaths, walk around my house and
say, “Okay, what am I going to say when I call?” And make myself call
her. I had to force myself to call her the first few times...because I knew
that, I felt like the burden was on me, the responsibility to at least get
this going.

Danielle’s strategy for initiating the mentoring relationship was extensive,
although she seems to present it as second nature. Her concern for the level of comfort of
her mentee as well as her candidness regarding both, the vulnerability she felt and the
responsibility she accepted to “at least get [the relationship] going,” are important in the
initiation process for assigned mentoring relationships. This exchange shows an
important and sometimes elusive step in a mentor’s attempt to assist the mentee in
moving beyond the initiation to the cultivation phase of the relationship.

Daphne (Mentee) shared her recollection of the initiation phase of her mentoring
relationship:

Daphne: I met her in the Black Cultural Center. And she greeted
me with a big hug.

Interviewer: So, did you already know who each other...who you
were?
Daphne: We had spoken on the phone... I believe we might of gone out to dinner or something like that, but I'm really not sure. But I do remember her greeting me with a big hug.

Interestingly, both Danielle and Katrina utilized similar strategies in initiating mentoring relationships with their mentees. Both mentors used the Black Cultural Center as an initial meeting location. The intuitiveness of Danielle and Katrina as professional mentors in terms of meeting these students in their own culturally relevant and student-centered space seemed to make a positive contribution in both relationships.

Donald (Professional mentor) and Stan (Mentee) described how they spent time together as a means of initiating and further developing their mentoring relationship:

Donald: He had a family... I had children. I invited him to my place. He came over... we had pizza I think... with Stan though, he always came by the office... in between classes. He would come by and just talk about issues. And I have an open door policy. So if I'm in the office, I try to kind of - if I don't have a lot of time, at least [have] a few minutes to talk.

Stan: We have had dinner at each other's homes, and our children celebrate birthdays together... My visits with him are quite frequent now, but are never scheduled... Still there has never been a time when he has turned me away. No matter how long I wanted to talk, no matter how late I
Donald and Stan’s descriptions of initiating and cultivating their mentoring relationship addressed the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship. Donald’s initial invitation to Stan to have dinner at his home and Stan’s proactiveness at cultivating the relationship by stopping by Donald’s office “to just talk about issues” were important aspects of the success of their relationship.

Although there are some commonalities across the mentoring relationships described above, each relationship was unique. Formal or assigned mentoring relationships can develop into positive and unique friendships when mentors utilize culturally relevant and student-centered approaches in their initiation of the relationship and welcome their mentees into less formal aspects of their lives. As demonstrated by Danielle, Katrina and Donald spending time together and mentee proactiveness as it related to cultivating the relationships enabled them to transition smoothly from the initiation to the cultivation phase.

Cultivating the mentoring relationship

Similar to the ways in which participants initiated their particular mentoring relationships, cultivation was addressed extensively in the shared stories of participants about their mentoring experiences. The following data analysis addresses the development of mentoring relationships as well as illuminates emergent categories. Developing the mentoring relationship was a critical stage whereby once the relationship has been initiated, both mentors and mentees begin to work together toward establishing various relationship goals, many of which are in the best academic and professional
interests of the mentee. What will be discussed here is the relationship from the participants’ point of view.

*Eve* speaks of “calling and going by to see her [mentor] at work [and felt]...real comfortable just going around to see her at her job.”

As discussed in the previous section on initiating the mentoring relationship, the notion of reciprocity on the part of the mentee was an important component in cultivating a mentoring relationship. Adrienne described the development of her mentoring relationship with Andrea.

*For the most part I think we kind of hooked up when we could. A lot of times it [would] be social activities, so we would be like okay let’s meet up...you know, come over, we’ll do each other’s hair...get ready to go out, things like that or we’d drive somewhere. So we’d have conversations in the car...or we’d have conversations – call each other about something then the conversation leads to something else. So I don’t think it was so much like a scheduled activity thing. But like she said, we had so many different meetings and stuff together. So I might call [her] about a meeting and end up talking about something else.*

Developing trust was an important criterion about which many participants spoke. The term trust as reported by participants was critical with regard to how and with what degree of intensity the mentoring relationship developed. Moreover, both the initiation and cultivation phases of the mentoring relationship are predicated upon feelings of mutual trust between mentor and mentee (Kram, 1983 and others).
For example, mentoring teams Donald and Stan and Stuart and Ron shared how they developed trust:

**Donald:** Basically one time I convinced him that he really could call on me. And for him this experience was very unique. Those peers around him, many of them didn’t have the kind of administrative/faculty person that they could really call for personal things. So when I said, “Hey, I’ll do it, you let me know...if your family needs some help, you’re out of town on military training, whatever...you let me know, I’ll help.” I really had to remind his wife at times to let me know. And there was a prime opportunity for me to do it and he [Stan] said, “[Donald] you told me sometime ago that you would help me...and I need your help.” It just wasn’t automatic, you know.

**Stan:** On more than one occasion, Donald has gone above and beyond the call of duty of a university mentor. Not too long ago, I was out of town for [military] training. My wife and kids intended to attend my graduation from a leadership course. The only problem was that the train they were to take left the station at 3:30 a.m. Without hesitation, Donald volunteered to drive them to the station and wait with them until they boarded the train. He did
all this and then went to work. This is indicative of a great mentor and a great friend.

Stuart: I think Ron knows that I have some very close friendships with African Americans in Columbus. I’ve referred him to a couple of my close friends who have helped him in one way or another. We went to church where one of my really close friends goes to church over at Reymah Christian Church. It’s a rock and roll big ole fantastic mostly African American...not totally. There are some pretty interesting people, who are of European descent who are also members of the congregation. And we went to church there and after that we went out to dinner with the extended family of these friends of mine. I think that contributed to the trust that we built over time...I think early on the fact that he invited me into his living quarters and that I regularly visited him there and he felt comfortable and I felt comfortable after a period of time...And he’s visited my home several times. I think those are some of the pieces.

The fact that Stuart shared with his mentee Ron his life beyond that of a university faculty member by inviting Ron to attend church, particularly one that was somewhat representative of Ron’s culture, as well as Stuart’s extension of his network of
friends and his consistently visiting Ron “in his living quarters” all seemed to contribute
to the trust that Ron and Stuart built over time.

Ron characterizes his relationship with both Stuart and another unassigned
African American male mentor:

Ron: Well I’ve been invited to both of their homes and spent
time fellowshipping with others with them and other
friends of theirs and just personal talks not always
formal. You know what I mean?

Although trust was developed in different contexts for these mentoring teams, it
nonetheless was an important means of cultivating the relationship. What was interesting
was that in each mentoring teams recollection of their experiences cultivating the
relationship both mentees and mentors recalled similar events and activities that led to
their developing trust and the overall development of the mentoring relationship. Male
mentoring teams sharing how they came to trust one another and build a relationship
together provides a means to examine the mentoring process from a male perspective.

Toni and Michelle two young women, who I have mentored, spoke of the
importance of developing trust in a mentoring relationship:

Toni: I think when you become a mentor you have to have some
level of trust both ways...[We developed trust because]
we’re both open and outgoing ‘cause if you have
somebody who’s all in a shell, it’s not going to work.”

Michelle: I think it all goes back to trust. I know I can trust you
Robin. I know that I can come to you with any problem I
have and you’ll do the best you can to help me out. And I just feel that comfort with you. That, “Robin, I can talk to her, call her if I got problems.” You know that’s how I feel.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

“...Sometimes you have to mentor the mentor”

While there was a female mentoring team that contributed to the discussion on the subcategory “mentoring the mentor,” it interestingly was primarily a male dominated discussion. What male student participants felt they could teach their assigned mentors was important to the relationship’s development. During our interview, Ron encouraged me as I interviewed student participants to ask:

**Ron:** What they’ve added to the relationship. Were you all take or were you a little give? Yeah, were you willing to mentor the mentor to let them know what’s on your mind? You know...and that way you start to develop a relationship.

During a focus group discussion with Vince and Clint shared how they feel they mentored Ray and during another interview, Ray spoke on the same topic.

**Clint:** I think he learned that...you can’t categorize mentees in a certain stereotype, that you have to be open to each one.

**Vince:** Yeah we have our own characteristics. Some may be similar to others, some may be different, some you might enjoy, some you might not. It’s just something you have to deal with. I think with a mentor. So there’s going to be
some things you might not want to hear, but I’m going to
tell you anyway.

_ Clint:_ I agree.

_ Ray:_ Just letting Clint know that I’ve gone through [the things] you are going through. I’m still going through them. We have to encourage each other. Even though I’m formally the mentor. We mentor each other. We help each other. Certainly there are some lessons in every instance...in every circumstance...I think to be a good mentor is to really allow that person to feel like he or she is contributing something as well. No one wants to feel like I’m needy or this person is going out of his or her way to make things better for me...really trying to make the mentee, the students feel not only are you going benefit from this some but I am able to interact with people. I can learn something new. We can grow together.

The above exchange demonstrated the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship. Mentees were concerned as being in both capacities to teach and learn and as indicated by Ray, mentors acknowledged that their mentees had something to teach them as well. His statement, “We can mentor each other” rounded out this section well.

**Generativity**

The benefits associated with serving in the capacity of a mentor was first introduced as Erikson’s (1963) generativity theory. Erikson (1963) described
generativity as a time in a person’s life when they assume some responsibility for developing the next generation (Allen, Poteet, Burroughs, 1997; Erikson, 1963; Jacobi, 1991; Levinson et al., 1978). Kram’s (1983) research was the first to systematically examine the benefits to the mentor, addressing the phenomena of why individuals choose to mentor. Mentors spoke of the benefits they received personally as a result of engaging in mentoring relationships with student participants and how those benefits contributed to the overall development of the relationship. The stories mentors shared in the context of generativity or the benefits of serving in a mentoring capacity closely paralleled the findings of Erikson (1963) and Kram (1983).

Stuart: One of my former mentees has been coasting around Columbus from one job to another and I was up at the gym one day taking one of my Ph.D. students around and I showed him the basketball courts and I just saw this guy out there playing basketball and it was him. It was a pick up game. He just stopped, ran over and gave me a huge hug....The other guys said “Hey, hey, hey what are you doing?” And that was a mentoring relationship that I didn’t think went very well

Interviewer: But there was some impact.

Stuart: He dropped out. He left for a couple of years and then he came back with his daughter. And raising his daughter he finished. We got back in touch. I can’t remember how it happened.
Interviewer: Okay when you said you didn't think the relationship went very well was it the fact that the student left?

Stuart: He was at a point in his life where you couldn't just get him to focus on anything. He never returned my calls. The only way I ever found him was by persistently stopping by his dormitory at odd hours in the afternoon and the only thing he wanted to do was play ping pong. And we played ping pong and ping pong... You know we really didn't talk about much of anything.

Although he considered the relationship a failed one to some degree, this exchange demonstrated how Stuart benefited from working with this particular student. The student's acknowledgment of Stuart's presence in the gymnasium indicated that Stuart did have some impact on this student's college experience. Being greeted by an African American male student during a basketball game as a White male faculty member and mentor is significant, as it suggested the various ways in which mentors impact student's lives, even though mentors may not receive reassurance during the course of the relationship. Stuart's persistence in “playing ping pong and ping pong,” although at the time it may have seemed futile seemed to have implicit benefits for this young man.

In summary, generativity serves mentors by helping them develop linkages to and responsibilities for the next generation. Professional mentors Lisa and Danielle provided examples of their roles as mentors. Lisa experienced personal satisfaction from being Tonya's mentor.
Lisa: [Being a mentor has] real emotional and cognitive value for me. So I mean when I got into it with her my hope was that there would be value for me and that’s come to past.”

Danielle: ...It’s been cool having...somebody that I adopt ... who cares about you who looks up to you...like having my own little sister and brother, or my own younger siblings around me again. Somebody you benefit from just as much as they benefit from you...I mean, I’ve gotten a lot from the relationships also. Someone you’ve experienced more than, that you can feel that you can lend back by helping them by sharing what you’ve gone through...there are things they’re also about to go through or are going through...so, feeling like you gave back, I guess.

Gender concerns

Both student mentees and mentors addressed how they felt gender might impact the mentoring relationship. Their voices directly addressed one of the study’s research questions: In what ways do issues of gender affect the mentoring relationship? Participants’ analyses of the impact of gender on the mentoring relationship were described in ways such as the following examples:

Asia stated she and another of Bob’s mentees “are the only girls in the group.”
Asia: So, at first we would just say something...and then Bob would be like, “Okay what are you talking about?” And you know it could have been anything from womanly problems to man problems, whatever.

Bob: Bob’s butt is nosey.

Asia: And then after that point...it was okay to say these things in front of him. So now we’re just...are open about it. I think he pretty much understands. I don’t see Bob as being a chauvinist or anything. But he’s not you know, just because I think he’s educated as far as just not minority, but with women being a minority too...so he knows about that.

Bob was confident in his role as Asia’s mentor despite the inherent challenges of being involved in both a cross-race/cross-gender relationship. As someone who teaches and conducts research in the areas of stereotypes and prejudice, Bob has garnered the confidence of Asia. She feels that he is familiar with their plight as women and students of color at a large Predominantly White Institution. Not only did Bob seem confident in his knowledge about dealing with his mentees regardless of their race or gender, but also Asia confirmed this in reference to the gender specific issues that she discussed around or with Bob.

Lisa and I discussed her limited degree of comfort mentoring male students:

Lisa: ...my best working relationships have been with women students. I mean, I’ve had the same intense relationships, working relationships with male students...but I, I never felt like
I was a mentor to those students. But with my women students, I’ve always felt like I’m a mentor. In fact, if you look at my professional circles and my personal circles, most of those women are still in my circles. Like my doctoral students who graduated, when they’re in town we drink together...I recognize the birth of their children...one of my undergraduate student’s who graduated, she and I hang out occasionally now...I mean, it’s much easier for me to view that relationship as important, as intense, as personal, as close with women than I think it would be with men. And not that I wouldn’t serve as a mentor to a male student, I just don’t know how I would do it as well as I think I can do with women.

Interviewer: I guess, some of the inherent things that go along with being different.

Lisa: And I think with women you’re not so afraid to cross boundaries. Like, with men, oh this is an inappropriate boundary. You know with women... I mean, this is a silly example, but going to the bathroom is okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly, that’s a good point.

Lisa: It’s part of what women do. But with a male student you can’t say, “Oh, I’m going to run to the bathroom come with me.” But I mean I would have no trouble with one of my [female] students to go, “Wait, I’m running to the bathroom, come with me.”
Lisa's commented directly on the impact of gender on mentoring relationships, particularly the idea of crossing boundaries and the space of sexual discomfort that might arise as a result of working in a mentoring relationship with someone of the opposite sex. She added that a private intimate space such as the restroom, which often represents a space of commonality for women can be utilized as a means of further developing comfort in the mentoring relationship.

The function of the mentoring relationship

The way in which the mentoring relationship functioned as told by the study's participants was an important finding in this research. Not unlike the professional literature on the function of mentoring relationships, both mentors and mentees shared numerous examples of the ways that mentoring relationship functioned in their interest. In some cases, this meant that mentors served to provide advice, guidance and encouragement. In others, mentors served as role models for the students they mentored. Students and mentors also discussed the benefits of the mentoring relationship, particularly as they related to the opportunities being a part of the relationship presented (e.g., employment and network opportunities). Data coded for analysis as the function of the mentoring relationship was further subcoded utilizing the certain concepts such as those presented: advice, guidance and encouragement; role model; employment and networking opportunities. The data presented here encompassed the myriad ways the mentoring relationship functioned for the participants in this study.

Levinson et al. (1978) defined mentoring relationships “not in terms of formal roles but in terms of the character of the relationship and the function it serves” (p. 98).
James Blackwell (1987a) in his research on the mentoring experiences of African American students in graduate and professional schools argued that in order for mentors to be beneficial to protégé’s psychosocial and career development, the mentoring process must be a multifocal one that is differentiated between individuals who serve in a single capacity of sponsor, advisor, guide or role model. In this multifocal process, mentors function to provide:

...training and advice, emotional support and advocacy, perform[e] developmental roles, socializ[e] the protégé into the profession’s expectations, and assis[t] the protégé [with] obtain[ing] positions or facilitating the protégé’s upward mobility in the professional world. (Blackwell, 1987b, p. 147)

Advice, guidance and encouragement

With regard to providing mentees with advice, guidance and encouragement and the importance of mentorship Donald, a professional mentor indicated that, “It’s important to have mentors in general because one needs some guidance, one needs some direction.”

Donald: Mentors help individuals establish goals. Not only do mentors help [mentees] reach goals, they help individuals set goals to reach...to set them high. Rather than becoming a carpenter, become an architect...or rather than becoming a mechanic, become an engineer. Rather than becoming a schoolteacher become a principal or professor...or a Dean, or a University President. Set goals high. And so, I think mentors allow individuals to
do that. They allow individuals to see some things that they can’t even imagine.

On the subcategory advice and guidance provided the following example:

Ron: ...now [this university] hasn’t been easy you know...I’ve often times considered maybe I don’t want to do this or maybe I don’t want to do that and just start over...He’s [Ron’s mentor] never really dictated...do this or do that. He’s just always supportive. “Wow Ron, that sounds like a good idea, go do that.”... Like every idea I have he’s like, okay that’s great, go do it!”

Stuart: He was always going to be a business major. I don’t think there was any doubt in his mind that that was what he was going to do. I suppose knowing me might have solidified in his mind that this was a good choice.

Both Ron and Stuart’s comments demonstrated Stuart as a professional mentor who provided advice and guidance as well as encouragement as indicated by Ron.

Providing advice, guidance and encouragement are major components in developing and sustaining successful mentoring relationship. Moreover, these components help to instill confidence in mentees to set and reach goals as Donald stated and as Ron said to “Go do it!”

Ray speaks of the way he provided guidance and advice for his mentee, Clint. He says: “We talked a whole lot about academic we talked about things he might be able to do to become a better student. I mean I just think I gave general advice to him.” Like
Stuart, Ray provided guidance to his mentee Clint. By focusing on Clint’s academic performance, Ray’s advice was an important component of the relationship.

Daphne stated that her mentor Katrina provided advice, guidance and encouragement:

*As far as my major, she was always there to tell me that I can achieve anything I wanted to achieve...because I was very bright. She just makes me feel so good. Anytime that we talked, she was like “You are so focused, you are so smart...Anytime that I had a problem or anytime that I just need to talk or I just needed her for anything she was there for me.*

Like Ron, Daphne reported how her mentor had confidence in her performance and potential, which in turn helped her to feel confident herself. Mentors’ expressions of confidence their mentees’ potential helped to build confidence on a number of different levels. These exchanges suggest that it was important that mentors shared how they felt about a student’s potential, while reinforcing those feelings with advice, guidance and encouragement. Although methods of instilling confidence in mentees varied, it was important in the development of these particular relationships.

**Role model**

Daphne and Eve shared how their mentors, Katrina and Danielle served as role models. Daphne described working with Katrina and another unassigned mentor. She stated, “And I feel that I’m a better person because I met [them]. I’m really stronger like as far as my mind is.” I probed Daphne’s example further: “You said you’re stronger. Why do you feel that way?” “Because I look at both of them as role models, I see how
far they got and I want to, not only get at their level but pass them.” Daphne shared the following example of how Katrina served as role model for her:

_Daphne:_ And in order to do that she, she really helped me feel that I could do it. Not only did I have the capability, but I was also able to do it. She helped me find that in myself.

Eve described her mentor Danielle:

_Eve:_ When I first met Danielle... I just thought, wow, I really want to be like that...I want people to look at me the way I look at her. She just always seemed so in control...all the time and I just really admire that...She's getting her Ph.D...I mean I've always liked the idea of being in control, but it's not until recently I realized that it wasn't just something that I saw her do...but seeing her and emulating her I developed my own control, my own esteem, I've developed greater esteem... I got to see myself where I wanted to see myself.

Having individuals that they admired and considered role models, in this particular case older African American females were major aspects of Daphne and Eve’s mentoring relationships. This type of admiration is not uncommon in mentoring relationships, whereby individuals identify older more experienced individuals to emulate. Moreover, among young African American women who may received both subtle and blatant messages regarding their abilities, their developing confidence and self-esteem is aided by working with mentors, particularly other African American
women. Katrina and Danielle served in this capacity for their mentees. The development of confidence and self-esteem discussed by Daphne and Eve indicated that these aspects of their relationships could only have been developed through close contact and successful initiation and cultivation phases of the mentoring relationships.

**Employment and networking opportunities**

In addition to providing advice, guidance, encouragement and serving as role models, mentors also provided employment and networking opportunities for mentees to which that they may not have otherwise had access.

Katrina provided future employment and networking opportunities for one of her mentees Tracy:

*Katrina:* I had an appointment with my gynecologist...and I was talking to him about her [Tracy] and asking what kind of summer programs she could do to be active to get experience in the medical profession...And he was saying that volunteering meant more than anything...So, that’s what I told her to do, what he said. And so, I couldn’t really help her a whole lot because I didn’t know her area, but I just tried to point her in different directions.

As a means of providing networking opportunities, Tracy telephoned one of Katrina’s colleagues in medical school to obtain additional advice on her career interests.

*Katrina:* And so she actually called my friend... and it was good for [them] to talk because [my colleague] struggled a lot early on...and so she struggled with the science
classes...the same way [Tracy was]. She did well in everything else, but the science classes were killing her...and so the way [she] did it was, she took a year after we graduated and she took a class on the MCAT and for a whole year studied for the MCAT and she ended up scoring really, really high...on the MCAT from doing that and then got into [medical school]. Yes, so it was a good example...for Tracy to hear this.

Lisa provided employment opportunities for her mentee Tonya. She stated, "I helped her get a job in the department here." Lisa told Tonya:

Lisa: I want you here where people will take care of you, I don't want you to work study someplace and somebody's going to actually work you to death....I know working here a lot of what you're going to do is backup...So you can study [and] you can meet other people.

Quincy reported on the employment and networking opportunities he received as a result of working with his mentor Bob:

Quincy: I asked him [about getting] some kind of experience. Bob had never had a work study student and...he needed somebody to do some extra legwork so he just said fine.

Interviewer: So what type of work do you do?

Quincy: I...run his experiments and...I do the data entry and I give it to him...It's tedious... I just, you know, deal with
Mentoring, academic and social integration

This section of the chapter introduces the next two categories to be discussed: mentoring and academic integration and mentoring and social integration. Academic and social integration as discussed by the participants in the context of their mentoring experiences was not only utilized as part of the theoretical frame for the study, but also academic and social integration each emerged as broad categories during data analysis, subcoding and further categorizing. Tinto's (1993) academic and social integration model and its corresponding tenets were applied to the formal mentoring experiences of the African American student participants in this research in an effort to examine its applicability for this particular cohort of undergraduate students. To the extent that undergraduate students meet the criteria associated with academic and social integration, Tinto and others (Griffin, 1992, Kraemer, 1997; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1979, 1980) have argued that students will likely persist in school through graduation.

This section not only described the ways in which study participants meet Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) criteria for academic and social integration, but also unlike some other studies of college student school persistence, this study examined the academic and social integration of the student participants in the context of their mentoring experiences (Astin, 1975, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978, 1980). The following research questions were addressed: To what extent do students' mentoring experiences influence their academic integration into the university? To what extent do
student do students’ mentoring experiences influence their social integration into the university?

**Category 2: Mentoring and academic integration**

The presentation of the data in this section closely followed the tenets that Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) academic social integration as they relate to college student school persistence. Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defined academic integration as the degree to which students identify with the institution’s academic requirements and effectively utilize tutorial and other programs that provide academic assistance. Among aspects of academic integration defined by Tinto are: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills; and 3) academic assistance (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).

To this end, the subcategories parallel those presented by Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993); however, they are also discussed as direct functions of mentoring. Data presentation and analysis follows Tinto’s major tenets for academic integration as it relates to the study participants’ mentoring experiences. The discussion of the category mentoring and academic integration is organized as follows:

**Category 2: Mentoring and academic integration**

- Student/faculty interaction
- Study skills
- Academic assistance
- Academic integration and race

**Student/faculty interaction**

Student interaction with faculty outside of the classroom in less formal settings the professional literature suggested (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and
Terenzini, 1978, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) was the most likely predictor of college student school persistence. Assigned mentoring relationships, as in the case of this study, provided a vehicle for both student mentees and faculty mentors with not only the access to one another, but also increased opportunity to interact on a more informal basis. The data presented here provided some examples of the interaction between students and their mentors with an emphasis on informal interaction within the mentoring relationship.

Ron: Well I've been invited to both their homes and spent time spent fellowship with others with them and other friends of theirs and just personal talks not always formal. You know I mean?

Ron provided an example of interacting with Stuart and some of his other faculty colleagues:

Ron: ...This colleague of his...matter of fact I went to dinner with Stuart, his significant other, and his best friend and his wife. We all went out. I think it was to breakfast.

Interviewer: What was it like? Did you have a good time? Was it comfortable?

Ron: Yeah I didn't think anything of it. I was like hey we're all buddies here eating. I didn't feel like I looked like a kid. I felt like one of the gang and it was cool.

Stuart provided Ron with opportunities for student/faculty interaction:

Stuart: I've been able to suggest people that he should go see. I have talked with him about the honors program...
he'd stop by my office, there would be Ph.D. students that would stop by and I would introduce him to them and they would talk. So he has enlarged his contacts in the academic community that way.

Bob another professional mentor and faculty member, who has been an assigned mentor with this particular program for more than ten years has approached working with the student(s) he has been assigned through a group approach to mentoring. Bob's description of one of the group's lunch meeting was also an example of student/faculty interaction:

Bob: Well mostly we just chitchat about random things. But somebody will have a class that they're thinking about taking or somebody will be thinking about you know, changing their major, or what they're going to do. And then often, we as a group will talk about it. Well what are you going to do and why or somebody didn't do well on a test and we, you know, talk about you know, well what's going to happen on the next one and stuff like that...but it's all I think very informal.

He further stated how he has provided networking opportunities for his mentees:

Bob: ...Sometimes just because I'm faculty here I can line things up for them. So sometimes they want to get a research position with somebody...I see if I can arrange that...or they want to get into somebody's class and I e-
mail the person. I see if I can sort of...help them out because by virtually being faculty I have a lot of connections with all these people. So I can often get them to do me a favor. The other thing is that by and large my mentees have always done a good job. Whenever they get involved in other peoples labs or taking classes or whatever and so people, people have been real responsive to me suggesting them. In fact, often people come to me and say do you have another person like that? Or, could I use another someone like that in my lab doing whatever. So mostly, the – sometimes obstacles all I can do is sort of suggest who they might talk to. But sometimes if it’s with faculty there may be something I can do about it.

Bob’s mentees Asia and Quincy reported the advantages they received as a result of working with Bob and other faculty members:

Asia: It’s important, if something doesn’t go right in your college or something, you know that you still have a faculty member that can help you make decisions. Sometimes when you’re in school you don’t think that...your experience alone is going to help you make a good decision about, maybe a class or something and you can still go to somebody you can trust and [that] has the knowledge you need.
Quincy: ...Bob has tremendous...clout with lots of people. And [in] psychology his name carries much clout. He is a great resource...When I got here I needed to do a report...and he was like what do you want to do? Well I’m thinking about counseling psyche. [Bob said] I’ll call [one of my department colleagues who has] books on that. It was already taken care of. I didn’t even have to do anything.

Working with Bob enabled Quincy to register for an independent study course in which he would not have otherwise been able to enroll:

Quincy: But I’ve never taken 693 [independent study] and some of them as you know, you got to have a 3.0. I didn’t have a 3.0. But at least I had the experience to do what a 693 has to do. You know I can say well I worked with Dr. [Bob’s last name] and they’ll be like, “Oh okay.” And you know that’s the kind of thing.

As a result of their assigned mentoring relationships, Bob was able to serve as a resource as well as provide additional resources for his mentees. Bob’s mentees felt comfortable utilizing both he and his colleagues as resources. Bob’s intuitiveness in “lin[ing] things up for his mentees” provided a concrete example of the impact of faculty/student interaction and the multiple levels in which this interaction can occur. Because Asia and Quincy were comfortable approaching Bob as their mentor, they directly benefited from his shared resources as a university faculty member.
Additionally, Bob did not seem overburdened by assisting his mentees, as someone might who did not have a personal relationship with these students. Bob recognized the resources that he had as a White male faculty member at a large PWI and passed those resources on to his African American mentees.

Sarah said that Sharon provided her with the opportunity to meet and interact with other faculty in the Business College:

**Sarah:**...basically I just told her what I was interested in and then she ran with it. She let me talk to the Marketing professors. Everybody seems to like her and talked to me as a favor to her and they were happy about doing that.

**Interviewer:** And you talked to them about your career interests?

**Sarah:** Career interests, what I was interested in, in this school and what I would have to do to get into this school.

**Interviewer:** And this is all your freshman year?

**Sarah:** Right.

Sharon stated that Sarah benefited as a result of working directly with a faculty member. Her comments round out this section well.

**Sharon:** I think it was knowing she had somebody, a faculty member in administration that was in her court. If you know what I mean? That maybe it raised...unconsciously, I don't know, maybe her confidence level, her status level a little bit. I hate to talk in those terms but for a while she was finding her way on campus. And and
I do think we had some good, fun conversations and I do think that I made her think about Business as a career. And what she'd need to do and what, how, where she'd need to go and but also, not to put limits on her aspirations...I think it made her feel good in a little bit of a way to know she had me and that, you know, she could go to this Associate Dean and knock on the door. [And hear], "Hey, Sarah how are you? ...I think she had more consciousness of that than perhaps some of the other students I worked with.

Student/faculty interaction as reported by both student and mentor participants had some impact on their academic integration into the university. For Ron and Stuart the interaction was informal as it related to sharing meals. For Quincy and Bob the interaction was based more on an informal level, with Bob providing various referrals on Quincy’s behalf. For Sarah and Sharon the interaction was primarily on an academic level. Student/faculty interaction provided students with direct access to faculty who act as resources on a number of different levels on students’ behalf. Without being assigned as mentoring pairs, it is highly probable that these students and faculty would not have worked together outside of the classroom, if at all.

Study skills

Student study skills were an important component of their academic integration into the university. Both student and mentor participants were asked about their specific study skills. Mentoring team Ron and Stuart shared their thoughts:
Ron: My study skills are...Let's see...I get frantic when I think I'm going to fail. So I might be all easy going like well I'm a get this done this and that. Well I got a C, then it's like ah man then I get all frantic. But like I said, I work [and] my time is real limited. Let's just get it done. I look at [it] like this needs to get done.

Stuart: ...His study skills were good when he came. And Ron is not interested in a lot of things at the university like sports. He's not a big sports nut. And that's one thing when you have a mentee you can't make any assumptions of what they're interested in. It's run the whole gamut with my mentees. And he has no interest in sports at all. During a...football game he'll be down in the library. He segments his life so that he studies and then on the weekends he plays. But he doesn't play all the weekend. And that's a good balance...But then during his sophomore year all of these other activities started to intervene. And now he said he's moved off campus. And he said, "I've got to get back to the same way I did." And I'm quite sure he will.
Eve made an important distinction between “…doing homework and studying.” She described them as “two totally different things.” She said that she would “take hints from [Danielle]. She would tell me how she studied. And sometimes, just being around her when she studied was inspiration for me to study.” Danielle commented on Eve’s study habits and how she assisted her in focusing on studying:

Danielle: I remember study skills were the thing that she said she was lacking in the most. And so I would... I would always tell her, “If you need to come to my house and study you can, because I’ll be studying too.” ...And you have to force yourself to [study]...But I think her grades did start to get better, but I’m not sure if it was because who she was taking or if it was because she got better with studying...I think motivation was a big issue [with] how much she studied.

Daphne described her study skills as “so terrible.”

Daphne: I have terrible time-management, but I, I – I don’t know how I always accomplish, I don’t know how I always get through it. But I always wait until the last minute...I have a mind set like, I can’t get it accomplished if I don’t wait until the last minute and that is totally incorrect. That is so wrong...Usually at night time I study in my room because by then it’s died down. Everybody is quiet but during the day I go to the Black Studies Library. But
sometimes I can’t study in there because they are just too loud. And I get so angry, I’m like, “Oh, my goodness.”

Katrina stated that “[Daphne] still sometimes started stuff too late…especially [with] classes that she didn’t like… those were the one’s she would do at the last minute.”

Andrea said that she “had to acquire skills, study skills that I never had.”

\[ Andrea: \quad \text{...the classes were harder and just required more...more study time. I couldn’t just go into the class five minutes before and look at my notes. It took reading the book and studying.} \]

Adrienne described Andrea’s study skills as “moderate leaning toward strong.”

\[ Adrienne: \quad \text{...[T]he first year was hard for her ‘cause she really didn’t realize until after she started receiving tests back, like man, I didn’t realize I was going to have to study like this. But I think she adjusted well. As far as, okay, well now I know I need to buckle down and study, study better than what I have [been].} \]

These exchanges among mentees and mentors indicated that students were presented with challenges as they related to developing and sustaining study skills. It is important to note that mentees, such as Eve reported utilizing their mentors to help motivate them. Also, mentors’ knowledge of their mentees’ study skills, whether or not they may have needed improvement, presented mentors with the opportunity to assist students with developing study skills or direct them to the appropriate academic
resources, all contributing directly to students’ academic integration. In the next section, academic assistance, participants reported concrete examples of the ways in which mentors assisted their mentees with further developing studying skills and identifying various academic resources at the university.

**Academic assistance**

In addition to study skills Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993), Griffin (1992) and others reported that students who sought out and effectively utilized various types of academic assistance served as a means of their successful academic integration into the university. Students and mentors reported the following:

**Ron:** Well, if I need help I make friends. You know I might not know who the smartest one is in the class but I will go ahead and make my analysis...You look like you know everything in class. We’re about to be study partners. And I ask them well listen man. I probably won’t say I’m having problems but I would be like you want to study? You know or something like that.

Ron’s use of peer studying was an important aspect of his seeking academic assistance, specifically since it is often peers who can assist one another in the classroom’s academic environment. Ron’s caution in not saying he was “having problems” was another important finding, since many African American students, particularly those in PWIs do not seek academic assistance because they fear that they will be looked at as less intelligent than their White counterparts. Although Ron’s
cautioned indicated some concern, it did not deter him from working with a peer as a “study partner” who may have provided the necessary academic assistance.

Vince benefited from peer tutoring:

Vince: works best with math...especially if you have like four people that are doing the same kind of problem...but they may be three problems behind you or they did the problem before you...they can help you with that problem. You can maybe learn from each other. Sometimes I learn better from other students...because they can break it down to you easier.

Daphne utilized her mentor Katrina who was “the academic person that [she] needed so [she] didn’t need to seek tutorial services” or other means of academic assistance.

Katrina: I tutored her [with] a political science class...and so a couple of times I went over to her room for a couple of hours and we just went through her review sheets and everything on there. I sat there and explained it to her. And that was really good ‘cause she didn’t like international stuff. She was more interested in American politics...And so she ended up doing a lot better in the class then she would have otherwise.
Tonya reported that she had academic difficulty when she first arrived at the university. She stated, “When I first came here I took classes like Math, History, just all the hard classes. I didn’t mix it up. And my GPA went down. And Lisa was like you got to get it up.” Lisa shared that Tonya did seek academic assistance with her guidance:

Lisa: She did a lot with the math tutors, which I again encouraged all this. I said, “All this stuff is here, use it!” I think she needed to know it was normal to need the help. I think [after that] she went after it pretty aggressively. But all students, they don’t want to think they’re the only person who needs tutoring. And I think getting through the Math and Accounting sequence was just a huge victory for her...as it is for all of our students. It was a huge victory for her and I think it [gave] her the feeling that, “Hey, I can do anything!”

Similar to the previous discussion on students’ study skills, the exchanges here demonstrated the ways in which working with assigned mentors provided a vehicle for students to seek out and obtain academic assistance. For example, Katrina assisted Daphne with a political science course and is described by Daphne as the “academic person [she] needed.” Additionally, Lisa’s deduction that Tonya’s initial reluctance in seeking academic assistance paralleled the caution Ron expressed in the previous section. Although a cross-race mentoring match, because of the relationship they developed, Lisa reassured Tonya that seeking academic assistance was normal and expected of students.
who experienced difficulty. Lisa’s mentorship enabled Tonya to seek assistance “pretty aggressively.” In order for African American students in PWIs to academically integrate, it is important that they utilize necessary academic resources. As a result of working with mentors these students indicated that they were comfortable in seeking academic assistance and understood it as an integral component in their academic success at the university.

**Academic integration and race**

As previously mentioned race as a subcategory emerged during the data analysis stage of this research. The mentoring and academic integration category was no exception. Data presented in this section combined issues of academic integration and race in multiple contexts. Both student and mentor participant voices illuminated this subcategory.

*Bob:* ...Sometimes, this hasn’t happened with Asa, but some of my mentees will feel like maybe their teachers don’t think they’re going to do as well because they’re Black. That’s happened with a couple of them. We would talk about that and I mean that’s true. I know teachers do that. I mean that’s what our research shows...I talk to them about that and what you can do about that...I mean the thing is, the main thing, I think and I suspect they that they know this as well, these things are personal and that, you know, it comes out of the teachers not knowing any better. Not out of experiences with students. And so, it’s sort of, in my mind, it’s their job as good college students who happen to
be African Americans to enlighten their teachers about these
types of things.

Bob’s comments were well stated and directly addressed the complexities of
African American student integration and race. His research experience with stereotypes
and prejudice provided him with the knowledge necessary to assist the students he
mentors with countering experiences of racism in the classroom. Moreover, his
discussions with his students were grounded in empirical research. Bob could explain to
his why they might experience racism in the classroom. Bob’s comment that it was the
responsibility of his mentees “as good college students who happen to be African
American” I found problematic, since it seemed to focus responsibility for cultural
sensitivity on students, many of whom may not be either prepared or willing to take the
risk in providing their instructors with lessons in race sensitivity. As a faculty member,
Bob could “enlighten” his colleagues, rather than assume that it is the duty of the students
he mentors.

Danielle addressed the subcategory academic integration and race. She recalled
Eve discussing “being the representation of the race in [her] class.”

Danielle: We'll discussed race a lot because she always had a lot
of questions about ...racial identity...and how she has
had to learn Black history on her own...because she
didn’t get it in school before she got to [the university].
She wasn’t getting it at [the university]. So, she would
always, before I even met her read a lot of things about
Black civil rights and the Black Panthers, you know, just
different things about Black people...and so we would have discussions about those things and I have a lot of books that have to do with race at my house and she would read through them...and be like “Oh,” so excited about different things that I had at my house, in terms of books about Black people. And so we would discuss it.

Danielle and Eve’s common interests in Black history and contemporary Black issues seemed to contribute to Eve’s academic integration and her interest in race specific issues. Danielle’s willingness to discuss these issues with Eve was important, since Eve expressed a concern that she did not receive culturally relevant exposure in high school nor was she receiving that exposure in college. Danielle’s assessment of Eve as moving through the stages of racial identity was also important finding, since exposure to materials specific to Eve as an African American woman could only serve to enhance the knowledge base that she was building as a college student.

Category 3: Mentoring and social integration

Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) defined social integration as the degree to which students identify with the social characteristics of the institution. Peer interaction, social adjustment and interaction within the university have been shown to be the primary tenets associated with social integration. Factors that most affect the social integration of students have included: 1) student/student interaction; 2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support; and 5) self-esteem (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993). Social integration was discussed by the participants in this

---

7 The subcategory satisfaction with college life is discussed under Category Five: African American student experiences.
research in the context of their mentoring experiences. The presentation of the data in this section addressed the research question: To what extent do students mentoring experiences influence their social integration into the university? The proceeding section presents and analyzes data utilizing the following category template:

**Category 3: Mentoring and social integration**

- Student/student interaction
- Social isolation
- Social support
- Self esteem

**Student/student interaction**

The subcategory student/student interaction referred to the extent to which students identify with other students at the university and are comfortable interacting with peers on a number of different levels (Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1987, 1993). This section has presented data as it relates to student/student interaction in the context of their mentoring experiences at a Predominantly White Institution of higher education. Peer mentoring as an emergent subcategory was addressed in this subcategory as well.

Sharon reported interacting with many of her friends from high school during her freshman year at the university.

*I noticed a lot of my friends that I went to high school with are here in college with me. Not [the White high school], my Black high school. So we’re kind of reunited again. But all of them are like experiencing a lot of culture shock. And I didn’t go through that because I went to the White high school. So I don’t know if it’s kind of a little bit easier for*
me ‘cause I’m used to it.

Although Sharon has the opportunity to be “reunited” with some of her friends from her “Black high school,” she is concerned about the “culture shock” that they are experiencing as a result of being in a predominantly White university environment. The culture shock they are experiencing could create difficulty with her interaction with them although she had already established relationships with them since high school since the predominantly White environment is one that she has become accustomed.

Student/student interaction in the context of this study emerged as students developing peer mentoring relationships with both assigned and unassigned peer mentors.

Eve: ...When we first met, we talked on the phone a lot before we were formally introduced. And then one day I went over to her room...and we just started talking. And we talked for hours and hours and she was just really, really cool. We would see each other on campus a lot...I became friends with Shaun [Janice’s roommate]. We did a lot of things together...like go to the movies...out to eat. We would go places together and I was introduced to a lot of people from Janice.

Both Sharon and Eve reported on their social integration in the context of interacting with peers. In Eve’s case the interaction was with her assigned peer mentor Janice, who became a catalyst for Eve meeting a lot of students. The student/student interaction that both Sharon and Eve discussed is with other African American students. This was an important finding since the African American student population at the university research site is less than ten percent. If African American students’ perception
of their interaction with other students is only race-specific, their social integration into
the university could be limited and thus not sufficient for their persistence.

Social isolation

Social isolation Tinto (1975, 1987, 1993) and others have argued is an issue that
can impact the successful social integration of students and ultimately influence their
decision to remain at a particular college or university. Griffin (1992) and others have
contended that African American students in predominantly White college and university
environments reported social isolation as a major reason why they chose to leave a
particular university. They have further suggested that many did not have quality
experiences at the college or university they attended. Data in this section addressed the
subcategory of social isolation from both student/mentee and mentor perspectives. This
section emphasized the ways in which African American students’ experiences with
social isolation particularly as they related to being in a predominantly White university
environment.

Ron experienced social isolation when he first arrived at the university:

*I was pretty independent in high school and at home and I took the same
role when I got here. One thing that I did notice right off is that there
are so many different cultures here but they don’t really interact that
much...maybe on the professional level [but] not that much socially...So
I found myself even though I am on this huge campus [which is] like a
city. I found myself kind of clustered in certain areas.*

When asked about whether or not he was socially comfortable at the university,

Ron stated:
It's not just...I shouldn't say them, it's me too cause I just don't feel comfortable. It just doesn't seem like the norm. Like hey, I'm gonna go to the [university] football game and hang out, but I look around and I'm like where's the rest of my people, you know...It just doesn't feel the same...The football game is supposed to be the epitome of [university] entertainment. We are a big football school. I don't think any minorities take pride in [it] even though it's like a huge pride for the university.

Ron reported his experience with social isolation on a number of different levels. He addressed this issue from the perspective of an African American male at the university. He said he felt he was “clustered” in certain areas in order to be socially accepted. He was discontented with football as a source of “huge pride” for the university and the “epitome of university entertainment.” He stated that he doesn’t take pride in university football and wonders if he did attend a game why individuals who share his same cultural identity were not in attendance.

Stuart provided the following example regarding Ron’s social isolation:

...One of his big concerns when he arrive here was that he felt that African American, the freshman were kind of left out of the special events. He didn’t feel that the musical events were geared toward freshman. And he said, “Where are the rap stars?” There’s nobody here...To some degree in the freshman year I think he felt a bit disconnected. I think he did. And he was kind of exploring what it’s
like to be in a largely White institution but which also has a big African
American community. He's never had that before.

Both Ron and Stuart discussed that Ron felt disconnected and socially isolated at the university. Although Stuart is a White male mentoring an African American male, he was able to empathize with Ron's plight as he "explo[ed] what it's like to be in a largely White institution." It was clear that Stuart helped Ron work through or at least express his feelings of social isolation at the university to someone who was genuinely concerned about his feelings.

During a focus group discussion Clint and Vince reported on how they felt socially isolated:

**Clint:** ...If it's not something going on with one of the Black fraternities or if its not something going on with the [Black Cultural] Center.

**Vince:** Then there's nothing going on for us. Unless we go to the [gymnasium] to play some basketball. That's the only thing we really got going on for the Black males, I say [the gymnasium].

**Clint:** South campus [area where there is a large population of African American students]

**Vince:** South campus, [the gymnasium], [Black Cultural] Center.

**Clint:** It's just this environment is not geared toward African American males or females...All of the clubs...maybe like
one night out of the week, I would say is for African Americans.

Vince: All the Swasains [Caucasians] go on Thursday nights but the Red Zone is popping for the Blacks.

Clint: Yeah, there we go. Only like one club.

Vince: One club.

Eve shared her feelings of social isolation:

I felt so alone because I didn't feel like I fit in anywhere. A lot of the Black students were cliquish...which is understandable at a school like [the university]. You definitely had to clique because no one wants to be alone. So they did their thing [and] I was me. I didn't have a fad. I just did whatever. And then we had the kids who were very into [the university]. You'd have the White kids who were painting their faces, throwing themselves into the lake and that was their thing and I didn't have anywhere to be. I didn't have...I guess I wasn't looking for anywhere, but I definitely...maybe I was looking to be found but none of it happened...because I think after a certain point I didn't want to be a part of the campus community.

Ron, Clint and Vince each shared their experiences as African American males and Eve as an African American female at the university. These students' racial identity played an important part in their feelings of social isolation. Their analyses paralleled findings in the professional literature that African American students in PWIs are often socially isolated despite their attempts to socially integrate into the social fabric of the
university. Eve's case was particularly interesting, because it could be argued that she did not socially integrate into the university which influenced her decision to transfer to another university environment, an Historically Black University that more closely resembled her needs as an African American female.

Social support

The creation of social and cultural networks is critical as it relates to the social integration of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions (Griffin, 1992). Involvement in student organizations, particularly those that students of color can identify with racially, often provides the necessary social support to positively impact African American students' social integration. This section addressed the various means of social support student participants engaged in and the ways in which they utilized university systems in their own interest.

Sharon reported on her experience as an African American female and developing networks of social support at the university:

...Being the minority, you have to kind of make your own way. And look for the help of other minorities... I mean there's a support system there in the majority too, but it's not as readily available to you. You... tend to look for people who are like you to help you out some.

Eve stated that the lack of social and cultural support networks specifically related to her needs as an African American female influenced her decision to transfer to an Historically Black College:

There were Black Greek, well Black organizations on campus... but I think [the university] focused a lot on building multicultural things and
multicultural relationships. And kind of forgetting that while you’re trying to build everything multicultural you’re also denying...You’re denying my ability to...just let people know, I’m Black. This is who I am. This is what I do. I don’t do things multiculturally...and I though that was really unfair because if you’re White...but you were Italian...you might have an Italian festival...If you were Jewish you might have a Jewish festival...But if you were Black and Hispanic and Asian, you would have a multicultural festival. All of our things [were] thrown together. We would have no way to shine by ourselves. And I felt [the university] was moving closer and closer towards that and that really was making me uncomfortable.

At the advice of her mentor, Daphne became involved in campus organizations to help her develop a social support system at the university. She said that Katrina “introduced me to a lot of people [and] a lot of organizations as well...telling me that I should get involved.” Daphne stated further that during her freshman year she “was the hall counselor for my hall...and...secretary of the Black Student Association...where I met a lot of people as well.” Daphne’s social support network also contributed to her interaction with students since as a result of becoming involved she was able to meet other students and become further socially integrated into the university system.

Developing networks of social support for the students here was complicated by race. For example, Sharon stated that as a minority student she has had to make her own way. Eve was upset about the university’s move toward multicultural versus race-specific events and activities. Daphne stated that working with her mentor encouraged
her to become involved with various university activities. Each of these students took
different routes to seeking social support. Because of the complexities of race for
African American students in a PWI, the challenges they experienced were not
uncommon. Interestingly, Daphne was the only mentee who discussed working with her
mentor as a means of developing her social support networks. These exchanges
demonstrated that although mentors were able to assist their mentees with their academic
integration, assisting them with various means of social integration was more difficult.
Students had little if any input from their mentor and were heavily reliant on peers, many
of whom were also African American and probably experiencing similar challenges.

**Self-esteem**

The subcategory of self-esteem is presented here. The literature suggested that
self-esteem was an important component in student social integration. The literature
further suggested that the extent to which students possess and maintain a positive self-
image not only will they successfully socially integrate, but also their overall college or
university experience would be positively impacted as a result (Griffin, 1992; Tinto,
1987, 1993). Both students and mentor participants were asked to report their feelings of
their own or their mentees’ self-concept and ways in which university experiences may
have helped or hindered the development of self-esteem.

The following exchange between Eve and Danielle demonstrated how mentors
assist students with as Eve stated of Danielle, “develop[ing] greater esteem.”

*Eve:* I think when I started school...I seemed strong, I was

*strong but I didn’t have the confidence that I think a lot

*of people had or a lot of people thought I had...I wasn’t a
weak person, but again I wasn’t strong. My character was strong but I wasn’t as outgoing as a lot of people thought I was.

Danielle: [Eve had]...high self-esteem. She was shy a little and maybe kind of insecure with the male/female thing but for the most part I felt like she had high self-esteem and I mostly identify that in terms of racial esteem. She was very proud of being Black, of having natural hair and being big boned and whatever. [She] probably has better self-esteem than I had at her age.

Daphne commented that that Katrina played a positive role in helping her develop high self-esteem. She said by “always letting me know that I could achieve anything that I wanted to achieve” her self-esteem was positively influenced particularly since she was hearing these things from “somebody else other than family.” Katrina also commented on Daphne’s self-esteem, “I think it’s very high. I think she has so much confidence.”

The roles that both Danielle and Katrina played in assisting their mentees further develop their self-esteem can be contributed to the mentors race and gender as African American females. Both mentors possessed an awareness of the types of things they themselves needed to develop their own sense of self-esteem and self-image and subsequently passed them on to their mentees. The role of mentoring in the development of self-esteem among college-age African American female is an important finding in this study, since it suggests that same-gender, same-race relationships directly contribute to African American female’s development of self-esteem in particular and their overall
social integration in PWIs in general. Moreover the professional literature seldom discusses the development of college students’ self-esteem in the context of mentorship. Although this chapter has suggested value in the development of mentoring relationships across race and gender, it still acknowledges the inherent value in mentoring relationships that are same-race and same-gender as in the case of Danielle and Eve and Katrina and Daphne.

**Category 4: Mentoring, race and racism**

As previously discussed, the theoretical frame that guided this study was in part, one that is based on the ways in which race and racism impact the experiences of African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions in particular, and African Americans in the larger society in general. Drawing upon historical and contemporary theories of race, particularly those that have been argued in the interest of people of African descent, this study applied those historical theories to construct theories around race and racism in higher education, in the context of the mentoring experiences of African American student mentoring in a PWI.

This study has argued that African American students attending Predominantly White Institutions sometimes experience hostile racial climates, are invisible and misrecognized (Feagin, Vera, Imani, 1997). Despite some of the positive effects of participating in mentoring relationships and they way in which the mentoring process serves as a buffer to counter negative experiences, these experiences have been reported to occur nonetheless (Allen, 1988; Feagin, 1992; Feagin, Vera and Imani, 1997; Fleming, 1984).
Much like academic and social integration, race and racism in education became a salient topic of discussion with study participants and it was also used both as the second component of the study’s theoretical frame as well as a broad category which emerged as data were analyzed. As student participants discussed their mentoring experiences, embedded in the discourse was the overall experience of being an African American student attending a PWI. Additionally, mentors in the present study who spoke of their experiences with student participants also in many ways addressed issues of race and racism either implicitly or explicitly as they shared stories of their experiences in higher education.

Moreover, race served as a broad category in the overall study, as it was intricately woven into other emergent categories of the study and discussed in the previous three categories: the mentoring process; mentoring and academic integration and mentoring and social integration. In this regard, the category of race was presented as a broad category as well as a subcategory of those presented as a theme runs fluidly through the discussion of mentoring and African American student experiences at a Predominantly White Institution addressing one of the initial research questions at the onset of the study: In what ways do issues of race affect the mentoring relationship? Race and mentoring emerged as the primary subcategory in this data analysis section. Category 5, the final broad category of the study, African American student experiences provided additional discussion regarding issues of race and racism since there was a significant amount of overlap in categories four and five each of which, in some way addressed issues of race. This section is organized as follows:
Category 3: Mentoring, race and racism

Race and mentoring

The topic of race in mentoring relationships emerged as a subcategory during data analysis. This subcategory was particularly relevant since participants who were involved in same or cross-race matches in their assigned mentoring relationships addressed it themselves. The professional literature has suggested that cross-race mentoring relationships may be faced with formidable challenges. Cross-race mentoring relationships the literature has argues may not provide the same value to students since mentees and mentors have to deal with a multitude of issues with regard to developing their mentoring relationships, namely the complexities of race and racism and the ways in which the quality of an African American college students’ experience can be negatively impacted as a result. Participants particularly those who were involved in cross-race mentoring relationships, of which five pairs or ten participants, were asked to share how the topic of race was approached with their assigned mentees or mentors. Some of their stories are shared here.

Stuart: ...Ron is probably the first person who has...very honestly broached the issue of race. I’ve had this conversation with my mentees before about the fact that I’m White and they’re African American but that’s sort of at the beginning. Ron broached it quite a long ways into the relationship [asking], “What’s this thing about race anyway?” But he approaches it quite differently than a
lot of students that I've known before...the sort of cycle
that you see with students is one of a sort of shock, which
is followed by a radicalization for a while and a strong
interest in things African and coming back to thinking
about how the domestic situation unravels. But Ron
doesn't...if he is in that sort of cycle he's at the very early
stages but he incorporates some of the latter stages too.

Stuart followed with a discussion that he and Ron had about race:

And we talked about why people of Europeans descent
have a problem with race. Ron shared with me that he
had been in an all Black elementary school and then his
parents moved to the suburbs and that he was basically at
an all White high school with a very very small minority
there and we reflected on the differences between that. I
finally suggested that he might enjoy doing some reading.

And I often suggest this book Parting the Waters, which is
about the Civil Rights Era. But in this case I had just
gotten back from South Africa and I loaned him a copy of
Mandela's autobiography...Because that's the stuff of
heroism. I though that if he read a bit of that that maybe
he would get to the point of thinking about some things
that are African and how that fits into his worldview.

Stuart's assessment of Ron's movement through the various stages of identity is
represents a mentor who is knowledgeable about his role as a White male mentoring an
African American male. Because Stuart possessed awareness of some historical and
contemporary issues relative to race, he was able to suggest specific reading material for
Ron as a point of reference so that they could begin to make sense of as Ron described,
“this thing about race,” particularly in the context of their mentoring relationship.
Moreover, Stuart’s mention of his visit to South Africa is also important in this exchange,
since his intercultural awareness and openness may have also contributed to his level of
comfort with dealing with an African American male mentee. It is feasible to conclude
that when mentors demonstrate the type of knowledge and comfort such as Stuart did
with Ron they are likely to be successful in developing the necessary trust critical to the
development of cross-race mentoring relationships.
Stuart also shared his involvement in a confrontation with Ron and the city’s
police department in which the issue of race was a point of contention from Ron’s point
of reference as an African American male.

*Stuart:* We’ve just recently been involved in a situation with the
Columbus police did he...I don’t know if he mentioned
that.

*Interviewer:* No, he didn’t mention that.

*Stuart:* He was out at...a dance and the police basically roughed
him up there. They called him and when he didn’t
instantly turn around, they grabbed him and he didn’t
much appreciate it...They slapped him with several
charges.
Interviewer: Was there a fight at the club?

Stuart: I think it was a little bit of a scuffle. I don’t think he was involved in it. But he is quietly angry. He is so angry. But he is a very controlled person in his emotional set up. So he has refused to plea bargain. He has refused all of the overtures from the police department. He’s hired a lawyer and paid his own money to retain the lawyer. He’s asked his parents not to be involved and he’s taking it to trial. It’s a big risk... We spent a long time talking about it. I’m serving as a character witness. I have been down to the so-called trial twice, but it has been postponed. His parents have come down. I met his parents and we have had lunch a couple of times. It’s been very nice to get to know them. But each of these cases, the start up of the entertainment business, this case he’s confronted here, some of the conflicts he’s had with roommates he’s shared these things with me and each time it has been up to me to trust him 100%, absolutely 100%.

The issue of race and mentoring as Stuart mentions is something that Ron approached him with directly. The level of trust that both Stuart and Ron have developed the course of the relationship also enabled Ron to go to Stuart regarding his confrontation with the city’s police department. The trust they shared as it related to not only their mentoring relationship, but also the complexities of race and racism as they impact the
experiences of African American males is something that Stuart did not shy away from but chose to trust Ron 100%. Stuart’s acknowledgment of Ron’s silent anger seemed to also speak to his understanding of some of what Ron may be dealing with as an African American male who has to face the ways in which society chooses to deal with Black males who do not immediately comply with or respond to authority.

Clint and Vince reported on their experiences working with another African American male as their mentor. They say that with Ray being an African American male it:

**Clint:** ...made it easier to relate.

**Vince:** ...made it easier to tell him.

**Clint:** ...one less trial we had to overcome.

**Vince:** Like, we don’t have to use proper English all the time with him. We could just talk and be ourselves.

Ray, Clint and Vince’s mentor added:

*There have been a number of occasions where we have talked about just being Black men in general and just being Black men here...just representing yourself in strong, positive ways and knowing...you are here because someone paid the pride for you to be here...just to be strong and always be sharp around non-Black people.*

Race seemed to be both implicit and explicit in Clint, Vince and Ray’s mentoring relationship. Their shared experience as African American males at a PWI, Ray as a graduate student and Clint and Vince as undergraduates. The level of comfort they shared, described by Vince “made it easier to relate.” The implicit nature of their shared
characteristics as African American males is indicated in the above exchange. Explicitly what Ray described in another part of our interview as “necessary code switching” that he and Clint and Vince must master as Black males is something that suggested their relationship as a space where as Vince says he and Clint “could be ourselves.”

Eve explained the relevance of race with regard to who was selected as a mentee:

...when you’re at [the university] you see White people all day and I mean it’s not uncommon to see a White kid and a White professor just walking somewhere or a White student with somebody else older than them who’s White going someplace together, having lunch together...And we envy that, well at least I did. “Well, you know, why can’t we have that?” When I had Danielle, I had that.

Eve desired the same type of mentoring she noticed that her White counterparts has accessed to, as evidenced by this exchange. Although the professional literature suggested that mentorship for African American students in PWIs is critical in their successful academic and social integration as well as quality of experience, Eve’s comments suggested that these mentoring may not happen as frequently for African American as White students in PWIs. Furthermore, the desire that Eve discussed is important to note as it suggested that she may not have been academically, personally or professionally fulfilled in the absence of her mentor, Danielle. It seemed that formal mentoring served Eve’s interest and similarly it could serve the interest of other African American students in PWIs.
Bob discussed working with Asia in a cross-race/cross-gender mentoring relationship:

...My research is on stereotyping and prejudice. That's what I do my work on and through that I became interested in minority education and the fact that there were a lot of barriers to minority progress in a predominantly White school...This hasn't happened with Asia, but with some of my mentees feel like maybe their teachers don't think they're going to do as well because they're Black. That's happened with a couple of them. We would talk about that and I mean that's true. I know teachers do that...that's what our research shows.

Quincy appreciated Bob's area of research as indicated by the following exchange:

This is the best thing about Bob. Bob teaches stereotypes and prejudice...He basically points out, "Well this is why they're doing it."...I can't see myself, I don't know if can actually see myself going out and being all the way cool with Bill...like some people [African American males] in [another university program]. It's different. You know what I'm saying?

During a focus group discussion with Bob and Asia, Asia explained some of the interaction among Bob and his African American mentees:

...for Bob being around us does not bother him....being around minorities...and it doesn't bother us to be around him...He's real informed about different cultures and stuff and he's not afraid to say
anything...like some people who will get around you and wanting to be politically correct and not say the wrong thing...He's just real comfortable and he's not held back [by] things just because he's White and we're Black. It seems to bother other people more than it bothers us.

Asia shared an example of the interaction among Bob and his African American student mentees:

...We'll be sitting...and I don't know who it was who stopped me...There were a couple of people that came by the table and I think they just really wanted to know what I was doing sitting [with] all these Black people around this table with this one White man...and people kind of take a glimpse...you can see what they’re wondering ‘cause they kind of continue to look.

Asia’s comments regarding some of the challenges that present themselves in terms of perceptions of others as it related to her involvement in a cross-race mentoring relationship were significant. Bob’s experience with issues that impact student of color experiences in Predominantly White Institutions seemed to serve in part, as a catalyst of the types of discussions and degree of comfort that Asia experienced with him as a White male mentor. Not only did Bob feel that his research area contributed to the ways in which he was able to interact with the African American students he mentors in an informed way, but also his experience gave the students he worked with confidence and trust in their mentoring relationship, as expressed by Asia.
Quincy on the other hand, despite the fact that he said he appreciated Bob’s research experience and the ways in which it dealt with issues germane to some of his experiences and potential obstacles as an African American male student at a PWI, he nonetheless felt that he could not be “all the way cool” with Bob. Quincy argued that his relationships with other African American male mentors are “just different” and provided him with a level of comfort that he found difficult to articulate, but was no less valid in his analysis of the subcategory race and mentoring.

Category 5: Mentoring and African American student experiences

The final broad category, mentoring and African American student experiences addressed the research question: What are the experiences of these African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education? Each of the student participants in this research study were involved in assigned mentoring relationship, thus, the assumption is often that their quality of experience at a Predominantly White Institution of higher education was positively impacted. On the contrary, a significant literature base has suggested that regardless of positive mentoring experiences at PWIs, many African American students do not have quality educational experiences, particularly as they related to race when attending Predominantly White Institutions (Allen, 1992; Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991a; Blackwell, 1987b). In this regard, those who mentor African American students as well as the broader university community must recognize that race impacts these students’ not only in their ways of being at the university, but in the world as well.

When asked about their experiences as African American students at the university, the notion of dissonance, academic, social and cultural was woven throughout
the stories that student mentees have shared regarding their experiences. Despite what many of the students as well as the mentors in this study would define as being considered successful mentoring relationships that have benefited them on a numbers of different levels, they still spoke of conflict as it related to their experiences as African American students attending a PWI. This section has addressed the students’ stories of academic, social and cultural dissonance and their degree of satisfaction with their college experience. The template for categorical organization is as follows:

Category 5: African American student experiences

- Academic dissonance
- Social dissonance
- Cultural dissonance
- Satisfaction with college experience

Academic Dissonance

Ron reported feelings of academic dissonance in his classroom experiences:

Ron: In accounting it gives you...the very specifics...so It’s...difficult sometimes and I try to interact my own little philosophies and interpretations and teachers don’t always appreciate that and I find myself doing poor on things that I feel like I did excellent on...I’m like really this really amplifies what I thought...It’s like well that not what we thought Ron, but...I know, that’s what I thought.

Interviewer: I want to get at that point. You said sometimes you see things differently...And your teachers don’t necessarily
value that. Talk some more about how that actually plays out.

**Ron:**

What happens is my professors look at accounting as a science...It is very basic you know water and oil don’t mix. To me it’s more like an art...well how about if I look at it as a game...like the game of monopoly and I might take a couple of paragraphs and describe how accounting is like [monopoly], but they don’t feel me. At the same time well like my writing style may be different. It’s like well your introduction wasn’t four sentences and you put that space here. I don’t know why you put emphasis on this word. Why did you use this word in particular? It’s too big or something like that. But I find myself doing a lot of conforming here at school to get [my] certificate. It’s like I could go to the library and get the same education, but I have to come here and get the certificate and follow these rules and conform I can show I have the discipline...I convince myself...well people must want to know I have the discipline to do it. Everybody else is conforming.

Ron candidly shared how he sometimes sees things differently than his professors and classmates and how his insights were not always appreciated. Ron’s comments indicated academic dissonance for him as an African American male in a PWI. Although
Ron did not make a specific reference to race, he did discuss the importance of conforming because “everybody else is conforming.” Ron’s discussion of conforming to certain academic standards suggested that he may also have to conform as an African American male. By this I mean, Ron’s comments suggested that he may have to become someone other than himself to succeed in the classroom. By showing that he “ha[d] the discipline,” Ron could in turn lose part of his cultural identity in his attempt to conform to PWI standards.

Ray explained well some of the ways in which African American students experience academic dissonance at a PWI:

*Part of what I do in my class is facilitate] discussions about what factors they [the students] attribute to their academic failure and success... Most students said the lack of culturally relevant pedagogy. They said the professors were not interested in trying to make it relevant to them. The lack of African American professors of course is a factor. And the third factor is retention services. They feel like the university is not doing enough to assist them.*

Ray followed with a specific example of how academic dissonance affected one his mentees:

*...Vince [told] me about an English instructor that he...felt wasn’t very supportive and she was African American and he expected a lot more out of her. I asked him about it and he said I expected more from her as an African American female...He talked a lot about it. I think it really bothered him. As a matter of fact this particular day, he walked with me*
to my dorm to from class. He went on and on and on about it. And in turn I would ask the general questions...I know a lot of times professors are racist. A lot of times instructors are not supportive for X or Y reason. I always try to make the students see themselves and try to alter...So most of my questions were geared toward well Vince what are you doing? Have you done this? Why don’t you do this, this and this? ...He initially signed up for the class because she was Black. Someone told him that she was Black and that she was good...I think he was a bit disappointed when she didn’t have a lot of time for him...He felt like she was not trying to help him do what was necessary for him to be successful. And it literally hurt him. He was distraught about it...I think he was having problems. I think they would get these papers back and when he got his paper, he needed to make some corrections or whatever. He went to her for help and she must not have done what he felt like she should do.

Daphne experienced academic dissonance communicating with White professors:

...When I’m with Caucasian faculty I feel as though I have to be somebody different than I really am. Like speak to them a different way. Like so they can, I don’t know, so they can look at me different...‘Cause sometimes I’m in the course and I’m just listening to what the students in there say. And I’m like, “Oh, my goodness, I’m not suppose to be here.” Rather than going to the teacher [or] professor and to letting them know that I’m at this level and I’m not understanding.
In addition to how she was perceived by White faculty, Daphne reported her feelings as the only Black student in some of her courses:

\[
I\text{ had a few challenges as far as being the only African-American in the course... It was terrible...I stayed quiet the whole course...because of what I spoke of earlier how they're language is totally different than mine. I felt as though they were all more intelligent than I was.}
\]

Daphne shared her experiences her mentor. Katrina provided Daphne with positive feedback to help her counter her feelings of academic dissonance:

\[
I\text{ spoke to Katrina about that as well. And she told me some experiences that she had. And told me that I would have to let them know what I was thinking. And she let me know also, that I was intelligent and I could also have input and say different things that were going on. So she helped me a lot with my self-esteem as far as...me not saying anything. And now [I'm] very out spoken and say whatever it is I have on my mind regardless to what reaction the class might have.}
\]

Sarah told of her experience with academic dissonance in the classroom:

\[
It\text{ seems like everybody in that class has been to Spain, has lived in Spain, has family that is Spanish or of Spanish descent...So I don’t say anything in the class...I listen and I understand everything that is being said, but I don’t say anything because I’m like, well all these people have been to Spain and I can’t talk like they do you know. And I feel like I’m lost. I feel like I’m the only one that wouldn’t be able to speak as well or understand as much.}
\]
Student and mentor comments as they related to student/mentee academic dissonance were significant since as previously discussed in the section on mentoring and academic integration, a number of participants presented stories which suggested successful academic integration. The stories on academic dissonance directly conflicted with those of academic integration. These stories suggested that despite the potential of academic integration of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions who work with mentors, academic dissonance could negatively impact that academic integration.

**Social Dissonance**

Similar to their experiences with academic dissonance, African American students spoke candidly about their feelings of social dissonance. These feelings were expressed sometimes with regard to being racially different and others as it related to intraracial relationships.

Daphne shared how feelings of social dissonance affected her when she first arrived at the university:

> I was so quiet when I first got here. I was like, I’m not going to be able to find anybody. This University is just so big. I don’t see any other Black people, I’m like the only one here. And so, she [Katrina] told me different programs to get in and just to be involved. That’s the only way that I would be able to survive really.

Sarah reported on an annual African American social event at the university. She was dismayed regarding the way that the university handled the African American versus a predominantly White social event:
...My first block party, it was bad the streets were blocked off...Everything was shut down, couldn't really go anywhere, couldn't really do anything. Streets blocked off, stuff like that. But, the U2 concert was the exact weekend after that [which] sold out the [stadium]. Me and my friend were down here that weekend just walking around campus. There were people everywhere and there were no police anywhere. And, I mean, the stadium...sits what 100,000 people? And they're just walking all over the street. And...there was like no policemen. And it was like the exact – it was seven days later...Police officers and the [city's] police department had to work. I did a story on that...and every [city] police officer was working that weekend. And um, I talked to a police officer and he said that they were doing it to protect us against the problems from kids in the city. He said the number one problem they have is not with the students, it's with other high school kids or kids in gangs or drug dealers, whatever from around the city...that come to the block party. So in a sense they feel they're protecting them from us – protecting us from them...I don't know that to be true. I mean that's probably what they tell Black police officers so they don't feel uncomfortable. But yeah, I don't know if I necessarily buy that...And I mean block party is supposed to be open to the community. A lot of events that the University, at least Black events, that the University or departments of the University sponsor are community based events. They aren't necessarily just for students and to say you're
separating us...kinda makes me uncomfortable...I talked to the lady who was in charge of it last year and she was saying they had worked with different community groups to try to keep the gangs and a whole bunch of rift raft from over here. They worked with the police on getting a curfew for the younger kids. I mean, they were trying to do stuff, but still the police out populated everybody.

The stories shared by mentee participants Daphne and Sharon are significant as they each addressed in different ways the impact of social dissonance on African American students in a Predominantly White Institution. Daphne’s feelings of being lost and alone in such a large university and Sarah’s feelings of betrayal from the university who chose to in her opinion over-police block party, while not at all policing the U2 concert represented her social dissonance as an African American student in a predominantly White university environment. These students’ notions of dissonance are made more complex by the intersection of race and the ways in which race impacted their everyday experiences as African American college students.

Cultural Dissonance

Student participants discussed their feelings of cultural dissonance in some instances cultural displacement or racist experiences as they related to their experiences as African American students in a predominantly White university environment. The examples below demonstrated the salience of race as an issue in the stories these students shared.
Despite her ability to cultivate a mentoring relationship with Danielle, who did not discourage Eve’s decision to transfer, Eve shared feelings of cultural dissonance while at the university:

...As long as I stayed in [the university], [I] would probably feel...a little empty, a little lost, because I always wanted to experience, have the full – total – complete Black experience and I just, I wasn’t getting it at [the university].

Eve’s comments were significant particularly as they relate to her desire for a “full – total – complete Black experience” since her mentor Danielle also attended an Historically Black College for her undergraduate study. It seemed that not only did Danielle respect Eve’s decision to transfer to an Historically Black College but she could also see the potential benefits for Eve to be in such a culturally relevant and enriching environment. Danielle stated:

...that it made a difference for her being at [the university], which she didn’t want to be at, for me to be supportive for her. And for me to be one of the few people who encouraged her when she wanted to leave [the university] and go to a Black school. For me to say, “You know what, maybe that’s what you should do.” And for her to go there and thrive, and for her to be happy about her decision, and to know that I wasn’t trying to talk her out of going. I think that was significant in our relationship. And I think she appreciated that also.

Adrienne a peer mentor reported on some of the cultural nuances as they related to intraracial relationships for African American students at the university. She shared
some of the unspoken rules of the African American student population that if not understood could lead to cultural dissonance for African American students:

...as far as the student union...knowing like where little Africa is and [that] all the Black people sit over here and how to speak to people. That's one of those important things, jus you know, saying hi, what's up. And so that way...people don't think that you're trying to be separated. Because you can get that reputation, well she acts like she doesn't know how to speak so people will treat you differently.

Donald shared his insight on African American students' feelings of cultural dissonance:

...When I ask my younger brothers and sisters who may be African American and I have a chance to mentor how things are going, they speak on behalf of the group. Even Malcolm X said, if you say I'm doing great, I'm doing well, but we as a people are not doing well, I really can't tell you I'm doing great, I'm doing well. And so what happens is if you do actually...and it becomes known that you are doing well and you at least give off that aura of doing well there is a perception that you're disconnect, that you're not in tune with your people and that you understand their struggles and beliefs. So many of my students now, actually as a mentor I know that when I ask them how they're doing [I know] they feel the pain of the group, of the people. Because I certainly believe the majority of us...are still struggling.
During a focus group discussion, Clint and Vince discussed cultural dissonance with regard to a loss of racial identity as African American males in a predominantly White university environment:

**Clint:** I don’t think anything can help you assimilate to this place unless you lose your identity. But, get through it and be a better person for it.

**Vince:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Now when you talk about assimilating Craig, you said you don’t think anything can make you assimilate to this place but you’re a better person for it. Talk more about what you mean.

**Clint:** It’s like, like I was telling you how you are in Buffalo and you’re riding down the street you’ll see certain things. After a while, you start to, it’s like you start to forget the things that you saw. And you, you can’t do that. You can’t forget where you come from. You can’t forget the things that you grew up on and things that you learned and being here will make some people do that.

**Vince:** Make you forget who you are.

**Clint:** And that’s why I say you lose your identity and it’s like you have to maintain who you are, but you still have to be flexible enough to get where you’re going.
As mentioned in the introduction, students' feeling of cultural dissonance and displacement were also subcoded as their experiences with racism. Eve discussed of her experiences with racism:

There was an incident in the building that I lived in. I stayed on the 6th floor and [this girl I knew] stayed downstairs from me on the 4th floor...On her door somebody had taken some food cup...and smeared food on her door and in ketchup wrote, “Go back to Africa nigger.”

Eve continued sharing another experience with racism:

...My roommate was White. I went to see “Rosewood” with my friend and he and I didn’t say anything out of the way...We didn’t say anything about White people. We were discussing the movie. We were in my room. She was in the back...[My friend] went home and the next day...when I came back, I looked down at the desk and I see a picture that she drew of her and this boy on a horse. And he had...a scarf of a Swastika on his lap. And when I saw that immediately I was just angry...We were girls. We would be up all times of the night talking. We never had any problems...after that she acted like she didn’t even know I was there. But I knew she drew it...And I had seen the picture that it came from, because she showed me her pictures. And that Swastika wasn’t in any of the pictures. [My roommate]...had to come to terms with the fact that just because, and I think that a lot of White people don’t understand that, yeah we can be cool we can be down with you, but were still Black. We’re still brothers and sisters. And I’m still
going to have deep conversations with my boy whether or not were friends...I mean, you can look at me and say that were all one race. That’s fine and good. I’m glad that you can do that. But I’m also going to need you to accept and understand the fact that I am a Black woman and that no, you’re not going to fit in to every conversation that I have comfortably. If you chose to be my friend, that’s just something you choose to take on. If you can’t understand it, showing me pictures of Swastikas is not the answer.

Eve stated that after the confrontation with her roommate she decided to “just stay away from her.”

I didn’t even want to approach her about it because I didn’t want to come off as the loud, angry Black person and I knew that if I said anything to her it wasn’t going to make sense. I would just be yelling a bunch of stuff at her that probably didn’t have anything to do with her [and] had a lot to do with the emotion I had just gone through by seeing Rosewood. And then seeing that Swastika, knowing the stuff that went on downstairs with the girl – so, I just said, “I’m not going to say anything to her about it.” I packed up my stuff the next morning, put it in the corner, called the office of Residence Life and had them change my room.

Eve shared a range of emotions that she experienced as a result of dealing with cultural dissonance and blatant racism. The self-assessment she imposed on herself with regard to how and to what extent to deal with her roommate illuminated her feelings of
dissonance as she expressed that she did not want to “come off as the angry Black person.” Eve’s assessment of her roommate’s racial insensitivity and ignorance and her own means of dealing with the situation in its specific context rather than the range of emotions that she stated seeing “Rosewood” stirred up for her personally spoke volumes about her level of maturity and her ability to deal with racial conflict.

Satisfaction with college experience

Despite feelings of academic, social and cultural dissonance, student participants said that they were satisfied with their college experience. When asked, many said that if they had it to do over again that they would attend the same university. Mentor participants feelings of their mentees’ satisfaction with college life as well as student comments follow.

Tracy: I feel like the experience was really great [the university] overall.

Tonya: I enjoyed my experience. It’s been something totally different. I probably will never go through this again...It’s definitely made me independent. I made it through. I just wanted to make it through. There were some dark times. I think if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.

Tonya’s mentor Lisa added that she thought Tonya “[was] very satisfied” with her college experience.

Adrienne stated that her mentee Andrea was satisfied with her college experience:
I think by coming back first of all. ‘Cause she’s an out-of-state student so it’s not as if she doesn’t have other options or could stay close to home. I think she’s satisfied by still remaining involved in activities and things on campus, because if you’re fed up with the university you will simply go to class and go home. You wouldn’t do anything else around [campus]. But she’s gotten involved in organizations and being an RA [Resident Advisor] and by doing the Student Advisory Council and things like that. That’s a way where she’s tried to make the university more hers so that way she does appreciate it.

Eve discussed her dissatisfaction with her experiences at the university and how that contributed to her decision to transfer to an Historically Black College:

...At a certain point, I didn’t want to be a part of the campus community. My main goal after talking to her [Danielle] a lot was to [begin the] next step. Because after a while, everything I was doing felt temporary anyway.

Eve’s temporal feelings of being at the university seemed to contribute to her dissatisfaction with her college experience at the university research site, a PWI. However, as I interviewed Eve I found out that she was extremely happy at the HBCU she was currently attending. Eve’s case was unique since her feelings of cultural dissonance were countered by her decision to transfer to an HBCU. Moreover, her mentor’s support in her decision was significant since it did not deter her from in attending the HBCU. Eve’s interview suggested that there are different means for
African American students to find satisfaction in college whether attending a PWI or an HBCU. Additionally, Eve’s comments were significant since they further suggested that perhaps transferring to another university, as in Eve’s case an HBCU, for some African American students can create the satisfaction with college necessary to persist through degree completion.

Conclusion

This chapter presented broad categories as they related to data analysis of research examining the mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education. Student and mentor stories of challenge and triumph illuminated the study’s major categories: the mentoring process; mentoring and academic integration; mentoring and social integration; mentoring and race/racism in education and mentoring and African American student experiences. The next chapter summarizes the major findings of the study, conclusions and provides study implications and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS, SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS,
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Limitations of the study

There were some limitations to this research study. First, mentee and mentor participants were not observed in their naturalistic settings. Therefore, discussions regarding their mentoring experiences were retrospective and as such may have been better recalled by participants or observed by the researcher during the initiation phase of the relationship. Although two mentoring teams (e.g., Asia and Bob, Andrea and Adrienne) participated in focus group interviews, the interaction among the mentee and mentor participants was different than if their mentoring interaction was observed in a less obtrusive setting. Transferability is limited to the individual and focus group interviews as conducted during the course of the study.

Second, because of the study’s small sample size (n = 25) and its nature as a single qualitative case-study of a formal mentoring program, transferability aspects of the research are limited. However, the in-depth analysis provided by such an examination of a small sample size and single case provided a broad perspective of the mentoring

177
process as told by the participants themselves which could not be captured through sole quantitative analyses.

Third, unassigned mentoring relationships were not discussed with participants, as they were not the focus of the study. Many student participants did however discuss interaction with other individuals they identified as mentors. Because of the study's focus on formal or assigned mentoring relationships, an examination of the participation in informal mentoring relationships was not pursued beyond the student participants' discussion. In-depth discussion of these students' unassigned mentoring experiences may have enhanced the findings of the study, as well as contributed to its transferability. Students' participation in unassigned mentoring relationships may have made some difference in their academic and social integration, as well as the ways in which they dealt with issues of race and racism at the research study site.

Fourth, discussion regarding the impact of gender on mentoring relationships was limited, although it was posed as an initial research question. For example, one mentoring pair was both cross-gender and cross-race matched (e.g., Asia and Bob), however, this particular relationship did not constitute a representative sample to address this important topic. Additionally, most participants who spoke of the impact of gender on mentoring relationships spoke hypothetically rather than from actual experience of their involvement in cross-gender mentoring relationships or to what extent gender directly impacted their particular relationships.

Finally, because of time restrictions and scheduling conflicts many of our individual and focus group interviews did not seem long enough. Participants were, however contacted via telephone and electronic mail to elaborate on responses germane
to the study's preliminary findings. It was important that interview schedules were
strictly adhered to not only as a means of respecting participants' time, but also so as not
to overlap with interviews that were scheduled concurrently. Despite my attempts,
interviews were held sometimes in less than controlled environments. Interruptions may
have created some difficulty for mentee and mentor participants to remain focused and in
some cases may have affected their responses to interview questions. Limitations
notwithstanding the information gathered from this cohort of participants was extremely
valuable and helped to provide new perspectives on the mentoring experiences of African
American students in a Predominantly White Institution.

Summary of findings

Prior to delving into an in-depth discussion of the research findings, it seems
appropriate to revisit the study's opening quotations, the first from W.E.B. DuBois' Souls
of Black Folk and the other from bell hooks' Yearning: Race, gender and cultural
politics:

How does it feel to be a problem? they say... I answer seldom a word. And yet,
being a problem is a strange experience for one who has never been anything else.

... Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from
others; or like, in mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their
world by a vast veil. (DuBois, 1903, pp. 213-214)

I am waiting for them to stop talking about the "Other," to stop even describing
how important it is to be able to speak about difference. ... Often this speech about
the "Other" is also a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space
where our words would be if we were speaking, if there were silence, if we were there. This “we” is that “us” in the margins, that “we” who inhabit marginal space that is not a site of domination but a place of resistance. (hooks, 1990, pp. 151-152)

These quotes provide a context for the discussion on multiple dimensions of what it means to be an African American student in a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). This research study examined two major issues within the context of higher education and African American student experiences in PWIs of higher education, in particular. First, it examined the academic and social integration of African American students in a PWI involved in formal mentoring relationships. Second, it examined the racial complexities that impact the experience of a particular cohort of African American students who are represented by less than ten percent of the total college student population (NCES, 1995).

Of particular interest for this study, was the question of the ways that formal mentoring programs for African American and other underrepresented students impacted these students’ experiences. Mentoring programs were originally conceptualized as mechanisms to facilitate the success of student populations, which are coded as “a problem” or ‘other’ as eloquently articulated by DuBois and hooks. Such descriptions of students as “problem” or “other” are further validated in research literature such as Feagin, Vera and Imani’s, The agony of education: Black students at a White university (1996) and Allen’s “The color of success: African American college student outcomes in predominantly white and historically black public colleges and universities (1992). This study examined the mentoring experiences of African American students participating in
a formal undergraduate mentoring program for students of color at a large Midwestern research university. Research questions for this study were shaped by the study’s focus on the students’ mentoring experiences and their experiences as African American students enrolled in a PWI. For the purpose of constructing emerging themes around the mentoring experiences of African American students in this particular PWI, the voices of mentees and mentors defined their experience. The main questions that guided the research inquiry at the outset of the study were:

- How do students and their assigned mentors conceptualize mentoring?
- How do students and their assigned mentors characterize their mentoring relationships?
- To what extent do students’ mentoring experiences influence their academic integration into the university?
- To what extent do students mentoring experiences influence their social integration into the university?
- What are the experiences of these African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education?
- In what ways do issues of race affect the mentoring relationship?
- In what ways do issues of gender affect the mentoring relationship?

This study was exploratory and represented research with the goal of moving beyond mentoring victory narratives prevalent in the mentoring literature that emphasize the positive aspects of engaging in the mentoring process, rather than the inherent challenges present in developing mentoring relationships (James, 1999; Noller, 1988; Wilson, 1994; Wunsch, 1994; Sipes, 1996; Stanley, 1994). Mentees and mentors were
asked to share their personal narratives of both triumph and challenge with regard to developing a sustained mentoring relationship. The mentoring experiences of these students were examined through a combined theoretical frame: 1) academic and social integration 2) historical and contemporary theories of race and racism in education. Chapter 4 presented and analyzed study data as reported by student and mentor participants. This chapter presents research findings, conclusions implications of the study and recommendations for further research.

Summative findings are presented as they relate to the study's initial research questions and the emergent themes of the study. Since data analysis went beyond the scope of the questions posed at the study's outset, summative findings are presented as they address the research questions in conjunction with the emergent themes. In this regard, research questions, corresponding categories, and summary findings are presented concurrently. The section is organized with a review of the relevant research question(s), it's corresponding theme and summative findings.

**Discussion of research questions and emergent themes**

**Research questions:**
- How do students and their assigned mentors conceptualize mentoring?
- How do students and their assigned mentors characterize their mentoring relationships?

**Corresponding theme:** The mentoring process

Subcategories for the theme the mentoring process included participant conceptualization and characterization of the relationship; initiation; cultivation and
function of the relationship. Through participants’ conceptualization of the mentoring process in general and their characterization of their mentoring relationship in particular.

**Summative findings:**

- Assigned or formal mentoring relationships function and move through similar phases of development as unassigned mentoring relationships.
- Assigned or formal mentoring requires that mentees and mentors work closely together throughout the initiation and cultivation phases of the relationship to develop necessary levels of trust.
- Development of trust enables mentors to perform functions in mentees’ academic, personal and professional interest.
- Once levels of trust are established, mentees willingly accept the assistance of mentors.
- Mentors experienced indirect benefits as a result of serving in a mentoring capacity. Despite the limited discussion of mentor benefits in the literature, peer and professional mentors gained personal satisfaction and expressed pride regarding their mentees’ potential and accomplishments.

**Research question:** To what extent do students’ mentoring experiences influence their academic integration into the university?
Corresponding theme: Mentoring and academic integration

The broad category, mentoring and academic integration, was examined through the tenets of Tinto's (1975, 1987, 1993) academic and social integration model. Findings here include subcategories of academic integration: 1) student/faculty interaction; 2) study skills; and 3) academic assistance. For the first subcategory, student interaction with faculty outside of the classroom in less formal settings, the literature suggests (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1978, 1980; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993) is the most likely predictor of college student persistence.

Summative findings:

- Assigned mentoring relationships, provide a vehicle for student mentees and faculty mentors to have access to one another and increases their opportunity to interact in informal settings.
- Faculty mentors serve as catalysts and can significantly impact the academic integration of African American students in PWIs.
- The level of interaction that students and mentors reported would have not otherwise occurred if faculty mentors and students were not an assigned mentoring pair.
- Student/faculty interaction occurs on a number of different levels, from faculty providing academic advice, guidance and assistance, to reinforcing student
potential, ability and self-esteem, components critical for successful student academic integration.

- Mentoring which utilizes a group approach serves as a means of academic integration. This approach provides students with a broader base of academic resources, specifically faculty and peer networks.

- With regard to seeking academic assistance, student participants spoke of learning from each other in a mentoring context, in some cases better than they did with their instructors. Group or cooperative learning approaches to tutoring and other aspects of academic assistance can further facilitate student academic integration.

**Research question:** To what extent do students’ mentoring experiences influence their social integration into the university?

**Corresponding theme:** Mentoring and social integration

Similar to academic integration, the broad category, mentoring and social integration was also examined through the tenets of Tinto’s (1975, 1987, 1993) academic and social integration model. Subcategories of social integration included:

1) student/student interaction; 2) social isolation; 3) satisfaction with college life; 4) social support; and 5) self-esteem (Astin, 1975, 1993; Griffin, 1992; Tinto, 1975, 1987, 1993).
Summative findings:

- Faculty and peer mentors specifically help facilitate student social integration by serving as catalysts for enhanced student/student interaction; helping freshman students overcome feelings of social isolation; and assisting students with developing necessary networks of social support.

- Mentors serve an important role in helping students develop self-esteem, a necessary component for successful student social integration.

- Self-esteem and positive self-image as discussed in the literature and confirmed by study participants served to facilitate the successful social integration as well as students' academic integration into the university environment. As student potential and achievements were reinforced through mentorship, student confidence in their own academic ability and their levels of efficacy in both academic and social situations were enhanced.

Research question: In what ways do issues of race affect the mentoring relationship?
Corresponding theme: Mentoring, race and racism

Race and racism in education became a salient topic of discussion with study participants and was also used both as the second component of the study’s theoretical frame as well as a broad category which emerged as data were analyzed. By this I mean, as student participants discussed their mentoring experiences, embedded in this discourse was the overall experience of being an African American student in a PWI. Additionally, mentors who spoke of their experiences with student participants also in many ways addressed issues of race and racism either implicitly or explicitly as they shared stories of their experiences in higher education.

Summative findings:

- Mentors and students, particularly those involved in cross-race mentoring relationships must deal openly and honestly with issues of race. If they do not, they risk underdeveloping the mentoring relationship. African American students in PWIs are frequently confronted with issues of race and racism and their mentoring relationships need to serve, in part, as buffers which allow students to counter negative experiences with race and racism.

- Mentors in same race relationships must also deal with issues of race openly and honestly with mentees, particularly those issues that connect to their own lived experiences. Same-race mentoring relationships
provide safe spaces for students and mentors to share
cultural connections as well as overcome potential
obstacles they might face as they relate to race and
racism in higher education.

Research question: What are the experiences of these African American
students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher
education?

Corresponding theme: Mentoring and African American student experiences

The student participants involved in this research study were in assigned
mentoring relationships. A common assumption made is that their experiences at a PWI
are positively impacted as a result of their involvement in mentoring relationships. Yet, a
significant literature base exists which suggests that regardless of positive mentoring
experiences at PWIs, many African American students do not have quality educational
experiences, particularly as they relate to race (Allen, 1992; Allen, Epps, & Haniff,

In this regard, those that mentor African American students as well as other
academic and administrative offices within the broader university must recognize the way
in which race impacts these students’ ways of being in scholarly communities in
particular, and the world in general. By this I mean, the overall academic and social
integration of African American students in PWIs is the responsibility of everyone at the
university, and should not be the sole responsibility of offices that have been created to
meet the needs of diverse students. Diversity initiatives in the African American
student’s best interest cannot occur in isolation of other university academic and administrative units, if they are to be worthwhile.

Summative findings:

- Unassigned or classical mentoring relationships also had an impact on the quality of educational experience for the student participants. To the extent that African American students in PWIs can maximize their mentoring resources, they can only contribute to their own academic, personal and professional success.

- Both peer and especially professional (e.g., faculty, staff and graduate student) mentors help students counter feelings of dissonance that are prevalent during their experience as African American students at a Predominantly White Institution. Peer mentors serve to counter feelings of social and cultural dissonance, while professional mentors serve to counter feelings of academic dissonance. By providing students with encouragement and reassurance of their potential in academic and social environments, mentors serve as positive catalysts for overcoming feelings of dissonance.

- Individuals mentoring African American students in predominantly White college and university settings
must make attempts to find student-centered and culturally relevant means of initiating and sustaining the mentoring relationship or they risk stagnating the development of the relationship, which could negatively impact the relationship's overall success.

- Although mentors may not be aware of the immediate benefits of working with students, mentoring relationships often have cumulative affects and can positively impact the African American students' college experience over the course of their college careers and possibly beyond.

- Study participants as part of their lived experiences as African American students in a PWI articulated feelings of cultural dissonance. Despite positive interaction in many of their mentoring relationships, mentorship did not necessarily shelter students from feelings of dissonance. At a minimum however, mentorship might serve to counter student feelings of cultural dissonance by engaging students in relationships that are supportive of and sensitive to their cultural differences.
Summary and conclusions

Upon undertaking this study, I found mentoring to be an important yet sometimes elusive topic. Individuals who mentor and who have benefited from their participation in mentoring relationships often have difficulty articulating both the tangible and intangible aspects of the process, beyond the ways in which involvement in the relationship has made a difference in their personal and professional development. This study was an attempt to examine mentoring in a less abstract sense, by describing what how the process unfolded for a small cohort of participants.

As an African American woman who has attended PWIs, the topic resonated most with me while I was a graduate student. I worked closely with African American undergraduate students and I found it uncanny that many of our experiences were parallel, if not almost identical to mine, although I attended a PWI in the Southeast region of the United States nearly ten years prior to the onset of this study. As I neared completion of my graduate study, my interest continued to include African American student experiences at PWIs, particularly those aspects that facilitated student academic and social integration. This was, in part, why the mentoring program was established at the university research study site. Working in an office that addressed academic, personal and professional issues germane to students of color in a predominantly White university setting allowed me to fine tune my scholarly and research interests, while simultaneously working directly with students of color. This aspect of higher education represented a combination of obligatory service and personal satisfaction for me.

As I worked directly with students, their mentors and program directors as a graduate administrator and researcher, I found that the research literature was limited in
its examination of African American students' mentoring experiences. Due to the literatures lack of examination of these students' mentoring experiences, I felt that given both my personal and professional experience, I could engage in research that was meaningful to me as an advocate of equity in education and also to the higher education community that as one of my student participants described “doesn’t always get it,” with regard to the array of issues that exist for African American students attending PWIs.

The major findings of this study suggested that mentoring and African American student experiences at a PWI are interconnected. Examining these topics together provided a better understanding of the mentoring phenomena and the ways in which race was an interrelated and complex component for both the student and mentor participants. In this regard, the mentoring process must be defined by those directly engaged in the process. Researchers and practitioners alike, have sometimes offered prescriptive programming as a means of influencing positive change, particularly programming in the interest of students of color. The findings of this study indicated that those engaged in a formal mentoring initiative can provide invaluable input to enhance education programming for African American and other students of color.

More specifically, the findings of this study reinforced the importance of the student's voice. My experience with students has been, if you ask them, they will share. Several student participants commented that they appreciated having an opportunity to speak about their experiences. Although many times I felt as though I was imposing on their time and personal stories, many of the students regarded the interview process as cathartic. The student voice and input is critical in programming initiatives that are to
operate on students’ behalf, as it is they who ultimately determine the program’s long-term success.

The impact of faculty on student academic, personal and professional development was an important conclusion of this study. Not only did faculty involvement impact student development, but also faculty who served in a mentoring capacity experienced indirect benefits as well. Mentoring interactions provided faculty with an opportunity to develop personal relationships with students in which limited classroom interaction often could not allow. Faculty mentors expressed both pride and disappointment regarding their students’ successes and challenges. However, working closely with African American students provided mentors with better insights about their mentees’ challenges, particularly those that were complicated by race. The next section details implications of the study for those engaged in academic and administrative aspects of higher education, especially those who maintain a commitment to educational equity.

Implications

The implications of this study are intended for two primary audiences. First, because the research is set in a university environment, it has implications for higher educational institutions and those interested in the betterment of scholarly communities. Second, the implications extend further to those who are in any way involved in the education of African American students, particularly those being educated in predominantly White higher educational settings, as the experiences of the study’s student participants were cumulative rather than limited to their experiences in higher education, especially their experiences with race and racism. I now turn to a discussion of the study’s implications.
One of the overarching themes and implications of this study was the salience of race in the everyday educational experiences of African American students in PWIs. The institution of higher education and all of those who work with African American students must recognize this salience and move toward an understanding of what constitutes quality educational experiences for African American and other students of color, particularly those attending PWIs.

The involvement of African American students in formal mentoring relationships positively influenced the quality of their educational experience at the university. In addition, students who were able to combine mentoring resources, that is worked with both assigned and unassigned, mentors also benefited. To the extent that African American students and the institution of higher education can assist students in maximizing their mentoring resources, it can contribute to these students academic, personal and professional success of African American students in PWIs.

The impact of faculty involvement in African American student academic, personal and professional development has implications for higher education. Beyond the implication that faculty take an active role in student development, ideally serving in a mentoring capacity, it suggests that academic and administrative areas have something to gain by working together. Educational programming initiatives such as formal mentoring programs often develop with out sufficient faculty input and involvement. In this regard, it is necessary to communicate across academic and administrative areas in order to develop and sustain programming in the student’s best interest.

Institutions of higher education should consider well-developed formal mentoring programs as a means of enhancing African American student academic and social.
integration, as well as a means to counter these students’ negative experiences with race and racism in PWIs. In developing mentoring programs with these foci, it is imperative that prospective participants be engaged in program development from its inception. Focus groups and surveys can serve program administrators well in establishing programming that allows potential participants input, ultimately meeting their needs and the institution at large.

Because faculty-student interaction plays a key role in African American student academic integration, it is imperative that faculty be compensated in some way for the time they spend with students outside of the classroom. Service is an elusive aspect of faculty responsibility that goes unrewarded beyond personal satisfaction, especially in large research institutions. The findings of this study suggested that the institution plays an integral role in fostering faculty-student interaction. To this end, higher education must find ways to reward faculty who go above and beyond their research and teaching responsibilities or their unspoken prescribed institutional role. Modification of the tenure process and its limited focus on service may serve as an appropriate vehicle to increase awareness and provide incentives for non-participating faculty, as well as reward faculty whose involvement positively impacts student development.

Recommendations for further research

Research studies such as this one generate additional research questions to further our existing knowledge base and raise questions regarding what we know and do not know about particular phenomena. Building on the study’s implications, this next section offers recommendations for continuing research that addresses mentoring and African American student experiences.
Studies that address the impact of faculty involvement on African American student academic, personal and professional development in the context of mentoring are sorely needed. Issues that need to be addressed include factors that contribute to faculty involvement, as well as the impact of faculty involvement on African American student retention, degree completion and quality of experience. Longitudinal studies on faculty involvement and student matriculation can add significantly to existing research in this area and provide needed improvements. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative research studies are needed to make improvement in higher education’s service to students of color at PWIs.

The ways in which African American students in PWIs develop and utilize both assigned and unassigned mentoring resources in their own academic, personal and professional interest can add to our existing knowledge base on African American students’ mentoring experiences. It is recommended that studies be conducted that investigates the outcomes of formal mentoring programs at PWIs focusing on African American student persistence, degree completion, academic performance in addition to the ways in which both their assigned and unassigned mentoring experiences impacted those outcomes. The results of such studies are likely to provide useful remedies to problems in this area of PWIs.

Research that addresses the salience of race in African American student experiences continues to add value to the ways in which higher education understands the peculiar experiences of African American students who attend PWIs. A potential study could examine culturally relevant mentoring strategies that are employed by mentors who work with diverse groups of students. The study’s focus would be on the specific
strategies employed by those who mentor African American students and the impact of those strategies on African American student academic and social integration, successes as well as their overall satisfaction with higher education.

Given that mentoring can and should occur across race, gender, class and difference in general, research examining the specific nuances of cross-gender and cross-race mentoring relationships can add to the existing literature base on the development of mentoring relationships and the need for such components in mentoring programs. With regard to cross-race mentoring, the experiences of African American students who work with White faculty mentors warrant additional study. Quantitative and qualitative studies might address factors that contribute to the success of the mentoring relationship, particularly the strategies employed by both students and mentors to deal with issues of race while developing and sustaining a relationship in the academic, personal and professional interests of the student. Cross-gender mentoring relationships could be examined in a similar context utilizing assigned or unassigned mentoring with a particular emphasis on the benefits and challenges male and female mentees and mentors face when engaging in mentoring relationships.

Mentoring as a formal process should be considered on the elementary, middle and secondary school levels as a means of facilitating the success of African American and other students of color. Studies could address the ways in which students' involvement in mentoring relationships influences their academic, personal and professional development, specifically student grades, confidence in academic ability and aspirations toward higher education. One such study might involve students of color already participating in a PWI-based K-12 recruitment program, since such a program is
already structurally set up to provide possible key solutions

**Conclusion**

The primary goal of this chapter was to provide the reader with an evaluative discussion of the mentoring experiences of a small cohort of African American students as self-reported by the participants themselves and their assigned mentors. To the extent that the reader comes away with information that provides a better understanding of the mentoring process in this specific PWI context, the goal was accomplished. Closing a study whose topic is intricately tied to how and why I am here is difficult. Because of my disinclination to imply a conclusion to the study, an epilogue follows, which I hope allows the reader to enter into the personal space in which the participants’ stories spoke both to and through me. The ultimate goal of this exploratory study has been to add to the existing knowledge base in this important area.
CHAPTER 6

EPILOGUE

Now that I have completed this journey, it seems appropriate to reflect upon what indeed led me here and to some extent where it will lead me. I vividly recall thinking about what things actually made a difference for me as a student moving through an array of young adulthood transitions. My interest in this topic began during my undergraduate career at a Predominantly White Institution in the Southeast region of the United States. Prior to undergraduate school, my experiences were primarily in public predominantly African American educational settings, so attending college presented both culture shock and in many ways a cultural stretch, not only for me, but also for many of my peers.

My undergraduate university had a Peer Mentoring program in place for all entering African American freshman. My experience with my Peer Mentor was one that made my transition to an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment much easier. My interest continues to be a combined scholarly pursuit of the experiences of African American students in PWI's and the ways in which mentoring in some ways serves as an impetus for moving through a sometimes unwelcoming system of higher education. I wanted students and mentors to share their stories of successes and challenges in the
context of their experiences at a PWI. Storytelling validates each story as unique and serves as a means of providing the institution of higher education with some real life examples of African American college student experiences.

Moments of solitude and self-reflection took me back to my first year of undergraduate school in which one of many mentoring experiences for a young African American female at a Predominantly White Institution of higher education was born. Daloz's (1999) metaphor of mentoring as a journey, or specifically a process that facilitates travel from one context to another serves me well as I conclude this epilogue. I hope my personal vignette will, in part, illustrate the beginning of my journey through mentoring and what it means to discuss, construct and critique discourses of mentoring as told by student mentees and mentors themselves.

*Harambee! Harambee! Harambee!* We all shouted in unison as our voices and looks of anticipation filled the air. The resounding, “Let’s push together” in Swahili began one of my first days as an undergraduate student. It was at “Harambee!” where I met my peer advisor/mentor, Rose. All entering African American freshman were assigned a peer advisor/mentor by the Office of African American Affairs. Rose helped me find the dining hall and even joined me for dinner my first evening at the university. She also assisted me with preparing my schedule and reminded me to see my academic advisor to get his approval on my scheduled course load. Rose showed me where the best place to get pizza and eased my worries regarding a reputable hair stylist who could do my hair in between visits back home (one of
many issues African American women face on Predominantly White campuses). I still consider Rose to be one of my many mentors and friends. I look forward to catching up with her bi-annually at Black Alumni weekend.

I share this personal vignette as one that culminates my thoughts as a mentee, a mentor, an African American student who has attended Predominantly White Institutions and a researcher. In many ways, it captures the focus of this research study, the mentoring experiences of African American students enrolled in a PWI, as my story is not remarkably different from those shared by the student participants. My hope is that institutions of higher education continue to look introspectively as they develop programmatic initiatives such as formal mentoring programs, particularly those with the goal of African American student academic and social integration, always acknowledging the student voice. Programmatic initiatives must do more than scrape the surface of African American student experiences. Formal mentoring programs, although a worthwhile programmatic initiative, must be considered as complex as the many student/mentees and mentors who participate in them. Harambee!
APPENDIX A: Oral/Electronic mail Solicitation – Mentees/Protégés
My name is Robin Vann Lynch and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, Department of Cultural Studies. I am currently soliciting participants for my dissertation study, which focuses on the mentoring experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions. Professor Beverly Gordon, Associate Professor in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership is the principal investigator for this research study.

I am interested in speaking with you because of your participation in the [Name of formal mentoring program] during the [name one 95-96, 96-97, 97-98, 98-99] academic years. I am also interested in speaking with your assigned mentor to obtain their view on your mentoring relationship.

I will be conducting focus groups and interviews during the months of September through December, 1999. I am asking that you participate in either a focus group OR a one on one interview. I am also asking that during this time that you complete a mentoring experiences survey. It may also be necessary to ask you some follow-up questions after your initial focus group or interview.

Based on scheduling and availability of participants, focus groups will consist of three (3) to five (5) study participants consisting of mentees/protégés and mentors. Focus groups will last for 1 to 1½ hours and will be scheduled during weekday evening hours between 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and some Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on [name of university] campus.

One on one interviews will be scheduled between myself and participants based on agreed upon times and locations for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Focus groups and interviews will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy. Transcribed copies will be provided to participants upon request. Focus groups and interviews will be scheduled three to four weeks in advance and you will be notified at that time. I will notify you by phone one (1) to two (2) days before your scheduled focus group or interview to confirm time and location and to answer any questions you may have at that time.

I would be pleased if you would consent to participating in my research study. Speaking with you directly in interviews and focus groups will allow me to gain your perspective on your mentoring experiences as an African American student at [name of university].

Please call me at [phone number] or Professor Gordon at [phone number] if you need additional information regarding your participation in this research study.
APPENDIX B: Oral/Electronic Solicitation - Mentors
My name is Robin Vann Lynch and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership, Department of Cultural Studies. I am currently soliciting participants for my dissertation study, which focuses on the mentoring experiences of African American students in Predominantly White Institutions. Professor Beverly Gordon, Associate Professor in the School of Educational Policy and Leadership is the principal investigator for this research study.

I am interested in speaking with you because of your participation in the [Name of formal mentoring program] during the [name one 95-96, 96-97, 97-98, 98-99] academic years. I am also interested in speaking with your assigned mentee to obtain their view on your mentoring relationship.

I will be conducting focus groups and interviews during the months of September, 1999 through December, 1999. I am asking that you participate in either a focus group OR a one on one interview. I am also asking that during this time that you complete a mentoring experiences survey. It may also be necessary to ask you some follow-up questions after your initial focus group or interview.

Based on scheduling and availability of participants, focus groups will consist of three (3) to five (5) study participants made up of mentees/protégés and mentors. Focus groups will last for 1 to 1 ½ hours and will be scheduled during weekday evening hours between 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and some Saturdays between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on [name of university] campus.

One on one interviews will be scheduled between myself and participants based on agreed upon times and locations for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Focus groups and interviews will be audio taped and transcribed for accuracy. Transcribed copies will be provided to participants upon request. Focus groups and interviews will be scheduled three (3) to four (4) weeks in advance and you will be notified at that time. I will also notify you by phone one (1) to two (2) days before your scheduled focus group or interview to confirm time and location and to answer any questions you may have at that time.

I would be pleased if you would consent to participating in my research study. Speaking with you directly in interviews and focus groups will allow me to gain your perspective on your mentoring experiences as mentor to an African American student(s) at [name of university].

Please call me at [phone number] or Professor Gordon at [phone number] if you need additional information regarding your participation in this research study.
APPENDIX C: Consent for participation in behavioral research
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in research entitled: **Mentoring and 'others': The mentoring experiences of African American students in a Predominantly White Institution of higher education.**

Robin Vann Lynch has explained the purpose of this study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation. Also, possible benefits have been described.

Robin Vann Lynch has informed me that focus group and interview data will be held in strict confidence and used only for this research and that any information used for this research will be represented in a manner that maintains confidentiality.

I understand that conversations may be audio taped for accuracy and transcribed to include in data analysis and research write-up.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: __________________________

Signed: ________________________  Signed: _______________________
  (Participant)  (Principal investigator)

Signed: ________________________  Signed: ________________________
  (Co-investigator)  (Witness)
APPENDIX D: General Mentee/Protégé Interview and Focus Group Guide
General Mentee/Protégé Interview and Focus Group Guide

**Background questions**

1. Tell me about some of your experiences before you came to college.
   - family
   - school
   - friends

   - **Probe for additional examples**

2. Tell me about some of your experiences since you have been college.
   - Positive/negative experiences

   - **Probe for additional examples**

3. How have you learned about getting through college?

4. Do you work on or off-campus?
   - Describe your job(s)
   - How many hours per week do you work?
   - How does working affect your academic progress?

5. What people do you feel are most important to your academic and personal success?
   - family members
   - friends, peers
   - teachers
   - university staff
   - faculty

   - **Probe for additional examples**

**Conceptualize Mentoring**

1. How do you define the term mentor?
   - What characteristics are important in someone you consider to be a mentor?

   - **Probe for examples**

2. How do you define the term mentoring?
   - Describe a meaningful experience you have had in a mentoring relationship.

3. Did you have a mentor before you came to college.
   - If so, how did that relationship develop?
• How did your mentor impact your decision to attend college?
• Are you still involved in that relationship? In what ways?
• What have been some of the advantages of being involved in that relationship?

The following questions pertain to your relationship with your formal mentor.

4. I am going to list a number of functions or activities mentors may perform. Please describe how your mentor’s involvement in these functions or activities has assisted you in your academic and social development at the university.

• friendship
• guidance/sharing
• advocating for you
• academic advice
• personal advice
• professional advice
• emotional support
• constructive feedback
• goal setting
• preparation for career fairs/interviews
• introductions to other faculty and staff
• nominations for awards
• belief in your ability to succeed
• social activities
• encouragement and coaching
• serving as a role model

5. How has your mentor helped you overcome obstacles?
• academic, personal, professional
• family

• Probe for additional examples

6. How accessible is your mentor?
• How often do you meet?
• Where do you meet?
• What do you discuss when you meet?

Value of the mentoring relationship

1. How important is this relationship to you?

2. How has it influence you academically?
   • personally
• professionally

• **Probe for additional examples**

3. How has the mentoring relationship influenced you socially?

4. Tell me about a negative experience that you had in your mentoring relationship.

5. Why do you feel it is important for African American students at this university to have a mentor?

6. How have you benefited from the mentoring relationship?
   - academically
   - personally
   - professionally

• **Probe for additional examples.**

7. Do you have other mentors?
   - How many?
   - Who are they?
   - Where are they?
   - How did the relationship begin?
   - Tell me about these relationships?
   - Same/different race?
   - Same/different gender?
   - How is this/are these relationships different from the relationship with your formal mentors?
   - What purpose do they serve?

• **Probe for additional examples**

8. Do you consider yourself a mentor?
   - In what ways have you mentored?

9. How did your formal mentoring relationship prepare you to become a mentor?

**Academic Integration (student/faculty interaction; study skills; academic assistance)**

*Student/faculty interaction*

1. What type of interaction have you had with faculty on campus outside of the classroom?

2. How has your mentor helped you interact with faculty?

3. **If mentee has a Professional Mentor:** Is your mentor a faculty member?
• Describe some of the benefits you have received as a result of your mentor being a faculty member.

4. What have your classroom experiences been like?

5. How have you interacted with staff on campus? Which staff members have you interacted with?

6. What has been your relationship with White faculty?
   • White staff members?

7. What has been your relationship with Black/African American faculty?
   • Black/African American staff members?

8. What has been your relationship with faculty of other ethnic backgrounds
   • Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native, International

• Probe for additional examples

Study skills
1. Describe your study habits/skills.

• Probe for additional examples

2. Do you feel you have strong study habits/skills?
   • How did you develop your study skills?
   • How do your study habits/skills affect your academic progress?

• Probe for additional examples

3. How has your mentor helped you develop your study skills?

Academic assistance
1. What campus tutorial services do you utilize?
   • What subjects?
   • Have you found the tutorial services helpful?
   • How have they improved your study habits?
   • Have they improved your grades in that particular subject? Give me an example.

2. Describe ways your mentor has helped you academically.
Social integration (student/student interaction; social isolation; satisfaction with college life; social support; self-esteem)

Student/student interaction

1. Do you have a lot of friends on campus?
   • Why do you think you do/do not have a lot of friends on campus?

2. What are some of the things you do with your friends?

3. If mentee has a Peer Mentor ask: Do you consider your mentee to be one of your friends? Why or why not?

• Probe for additional examples

Social isolation

1. Describe a situation where you felt alone here on campus?

2. Do you think the university sponsors events that make all students feel like they are a part of the university? Why or why not?

3. Where do you go if feel isolated on campus?

4. How does your mentor help you feel like a part of the campus community?

• Probe for additional examples

Satisfaction with college life

1. In what ways are you satisfied with your experiences here at the university?

2. What are you dissatisfied about regarding your college experience?

3. If you had it to do again, would you attend this university? Why or why not?

4. How has your mentor helped you with your satisfaction with your college experience?

• Probe for additional examples

Social support

1. Describe your social life here on campus.

2. What type of campus-sponsored events do you participate in?

3. Where do you go for social support on campus?

4. What type of social events on campus do you attend regularly?
5. Do you participate in any social activities with your mentor? If so, please describe.

- **Probe for additional examples**

**Self esteem**

1. How do you feel about yourself?
   - intelligence
   - personal appearance

- **Probe for additional examples**.

2. Do you feel you have high, moderate or low self esteem? Why?

3. Do you feel that your experiences at the university have helped or hurt your self-esteem? Why?

**Race**

1. What has been your experience as a Black student at this institution?
   - What has been your experience with racism or discrimination because of your race on campus?
   - Describe any instances where you dealt with racism.

2. What role has your mentor played in helping you to deal with racism?

3. How has the race of your mentor affected your relationship?
   - Describe a situation where race was an issue in the relationship.
   - **Probe for additional examples**

4. **For mentees who have non-Black mentors:** What is it like working with a mentor who is not African American (ask mentees who have non-Black mentors)
   - Tell me about a challenge you have experienced during this relationship.
   - What are some of your cultural needs?
     - In what ways does your mentor recognize and meet your cultural needs?

5. Tell me about a time that you and your mentor discussed race.

- **Probe for additional examples**
Gender

1. What has been your experience as a Black male or Black female at this university?
   - Describe any instances where you felt you were discriminated against because of your gender.

2. What role has your mentor played in helping you to deal with sexism/gender discrimination?

3. For mentees who have mentors of a different gender: Tell me about a challenge that you had in the mentoring relationship because your mentor was a woman/man (ask mentees who have mentors of a different gender)

Concluding remarks
That concludes our interview/focus group on your mentoring experiences. Is there anything that you would like to add at this time?

If yes, solicit additional feedback
If no, proceed with the following:

Thank you for candidly sharing your mentoring experiences with me. I will be in touch if follow-up is necessary. Also, if you would like a copy of the interview transcript please let me know. I will be happy to provide you with a copy.
APPENDIX E: General Mentor Interview and Focus Group Guide
General Mentor Interview and Focus Group Guide

**Background questions**

1. Tell me about some of your experiences in higher education.
   - professional/career history
   - family/friends influences on academic and career choices
   - **Probe for additional examples**

2. What are some of the things you have done to become successful in higher education?
   - What attributes should you possess in order to be successful in higher education?
   - What is advice you share with people interested in a career in higher education?

3. Describe positive/negative experiences you have had in higher education.
   - as a graduate student
   - as a professional
   - **Probe for additional examples**

4. What support systems do you utilize professionally and personally?
   - family
   - current friends/peers/colleagues
   - former friends/peers/colleagues
   - students
   - senior faculty/staff members

**Conceptualize Mentoring**

1. How do you define the term mentor?
   - What characteristics are important in someone you consider to be a mentor?
   - **Probe for examples**

2. How do you define the term mentoring?
   - Describe a meaningful experience you have had in a mentoring relationship.
3. Do you have a mentor or mentors?
   • If so, how did the relationship develop?
   • Describe some of the experiences you have had with your mentor(s).
   • How has your mentor contributed to your success in higher education?
   • Are you still involved in that relationship? In what ways?
   • What have been some of the advantages of being involved in that relationship?
   • How did this relationship help you develop your mentoring style?

4. Describe your mentoring style?

5. Describe some of the experiences you have had as a mentor?
   • In what capacity have you mentored? – students; community agencies, etc.
   • Who did/do you mentor?
   • What was the experience like?

The following questions pertain to your relationship with your formal mentee(s).

7. I am going to list a number of functions or activities mentors may perform. Please describe how you feel your involvement in these functions or activities has assisted your mentee in their academic and social development at the university.
   • friendship
   • guidance/sharing
   • advocating for them
   • academic advice
   • personal advice
   • professional advice
   • emotional support
   • constructive feedback
   • goal setting
   • preparation for career fairs/interviews
   • introductions to other faculty and staff
   • nominations for awards
   • belief in their ability to succeed
   • social activities
   • encouragement and coaching
   • serving as a role model

8. In what ways have you helped your mentee overcome obstacles?
   • academic, personal, professional
   • family

• Probe for additional examples
9. How accessible are you as a mentor?
   - How often do you meet with your mentee?
   - Where do you meet?
   - What do you discuss when you meet?

10. Describe a meeting with your mentee.

Value of the mentoring relationship
1. How important is this relationship to you?

2. How do you feel it has influenced your mentee academically?
   - choice of major
   - confidence in academic ability
   - personally
   - professionally

   • Probe for additional examples

3. How do you feel the mentoring relationship has influenced your mentee socially?

4. Tell me about a negative experience that you have had in your mentoring relationship.

5. Why do you feel it is important for African American students at this university to have a mentor?

6. How do you feel your mentee has benefited from the mentoring relationship?
   - academically
   - personally
   - professionally

   • Probe for additional examples.

7. How have you benefited from the relationship?
   - personally
   - professionally

8. Do you have other mentees?
   - How many?
   - Who are they?
   - Where are they?
   - How did the relationship begin?
   - Tell me about these relationships?
   - Same/different race?
• Same/different gender?
• How is this/are these relationships different from the relationship with your formal mentee(s)?
• What purpose do you feel you serve as their mentor?

• Probe for additional examples

**Academic Integration (student/faculty interaction; study skills; academic assistance)**

**Student/faculty interaction**
1. What type of interaction has your mentee had with faculty on campus outside of the classroom?
2. In what ways have you provided the opportunity for your mentee to interact with faculty?
3. **If Professional Mentor is a faculty member:** Describe some of the benefits you feel your mentee has received as a result of you being a faculty member.
4. What has been your relationship with Black/African American students?
5. What has been your relationship with students of other ethnic backgrounds
   • Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native, International

**Study skills**
1. What type of study skills does your mentee have?

• Probe for additional examples
2. Do you feel that your mentee has strong study habits/skills?
   • How do they develop your study skills?
   • How do their study habits/skills affect their academic progress?
   • How have you helped your mentee further develop their study skills?

• Probe for additional examples

**Academic assistance**
1. What campus tutorial services does your mentee utilize?
   • What subjects?
   • Have they found the tutorial services helpful?
   • How have their study habits improved?
2. Describe ways you have assisted your mentee academically.
Social integration (student/student interaction; social isolation; satisfaction with college life; social support; self-esteem)

Student/student interaction
1. Do you think your mentee has a lot of friends on campus? Why or why not?

2. If Peer Mentor ask: Do you consider yourself to be one of your mentee’s friends? Why or why not?

• Probe for additional examples

Social isolation
1. Describe a situation where you think your mentee might feel socially isolated on campus?

2. Do you think the university sponsors events that make all students feel like they are a part of the university? Why or why not?

3. In what ways do you think your mentee feels like they are a part of the campus community?

3. How does your mentoring relationship help your mentee feel like they are a part of the campus community?

• Probe for additional examples

Satisfaction with college life
1. In what ways do you feel your mentee is satisfied with their experiences here at the university?

2. What things do you feel dissatisfy your mentee with regard to their college experience?

3. How have you helped your mentee become satisfied with their college experience?

• Probe for additional examples

Social support
1. What is your mentee’s social life on campus like?

2. What type of campus-sponsored events do they participate in?
3. Where do they go for social support on campus?

4. Describe any social activities you participate in with your mentee.

- **Probe for additional examples**

**Self esteem**

1. How do you think your mentee feels about him/herself?
   - intelligence
   - personal appearance

- **Probe for additional examples.**

2. Do you feel they have high, moderate or low self esteem? Why?

3. Do you feel that your mentee’s experiences at the university have helped or hurt their self-esteem? Why?

**Race**

1. What has been your experience mentoring a Black student at this institution?

2. How do you feel you have helped your mentee deal with issues of race/racism during their college experience?
   - Has your mentee shared any instances in which they have dealt with racism on campus? Please describe.

3. How has the race of your mentee affected your relationship?
   - Describe a situation where race was an issue in the relationship.

- **Probe for additional examples**

4. Tell me about a challenge you have experienced during this relationship as it relates to race.

5. In what ways do you feel you recognize and meet your mentee’s cultural needs?

6. Tell me about a time that you and your mentee discussed race.

- **Probe for additional examples**
**Gender**

1. What has been your experience mentoring a Black male or Black female at this university?

2. Has your mentee shared any instances in which they felt they were discriminated against because of their gender? Please describe.

3. **Mentors with mentees of a different gender**: Tell me about a challenge that you had in the mentoring relationship because your mentor was a woman/man.

**Concluding remarks**

That concludes our interview/focus group on your mentoring experiences. Is there anything that you would like to add at this time?

If yes, solicit additional feedback
If no, proceed with the following:

Thank you for candidly sharing your mentoring experiences with me. I will be in touch if follow-up is necessary. Also, if you would like a copy of the interview transcript please let me know. I will be happy to provide you with a copy.
References


224


225


Cameron, S. M. (1978). Women in academia: Faculty sponsorship, informal social structures and career success: Michigan University: Center for the study of higher education.


Fine, M., & Weis, L. (1996). Writing the "wrongs" of fieldwork: Confronting our own research/writing dilemmas in urban ethnographies. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2(3), 251-274.


James-Brown, F. (1995). *The Black male crisis in the classroom: A qualitative study of the educational experiences of Black male students as perceived by the students themselves, their teachers, and their parents*. The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.


