THE INFLUENCE MENTORING HAS ON THE PERSISTENCE OF ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES WHO ARE JUNIORS OR SENIORS AT A PUBLIC, PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTION

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
in the
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology, and Leadership Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2007
The Influence Mentoring Has on the Persistence of Academically Successful African American Males Who are Juniors or Seniors at a Public, Predominantly White Institution

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study assessed the importance of non-cognitive variables in aiding toward African American males’ academic success in college. More specifically, it assessed how mentoring influenced African American males who were currently in their junior and senior year of college and received at least a 2.0 grade point average to persist at a predominantly White public institution. Twelve randomly selected African American males completed a Demographic Questionnaire and one face-to-face interview. The Demographic Questionnaire and interview transcripts were analyzed for cultural themes and a Mentor Taxonomy was developed. The results suggested that mentors help successful African American males in their transition adjustment to college and improves upon their academic, social and emotional development.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The saying “it takes a village to raise a child” also applies to the journey of completing a terminal degree. I could not have reached this milestone without the support of so many people. First, I would like to thank my mother who instilled in me the importance of a solid education and strong work ethic. Everything that I am today and that I will be tomorrow is because of the foundation she laid when I was a child. There is no way I could thank her enough for everything she has done. I just hope I can keep making her proud of me. I love you, mom.

I have sacrificed a lot of time away from my family in pursuit of this journey. Therefore, I must thank my wife, Marica, and children, Terrell and Christian for their patience and understanding. Words can not express the love I have for you.

I also want to thank my dissertation committee, chair - Dr. Beebe, and committee members - Drs. Gunapala Edirisooriya, Deborah Jackson, and Homer Warren for serving and seeing me through the process. Your commitment, guidance, and insight pushed me to produce a product of which I am very proud. I appreciate your professionalism and interest in me and my topic.

I want to give a special thanks to two men who I consider mentors and have helped me in so many ways. Stephen Landrigan and Howard Weinstein gave me a tremendous amount of support and guidance through my impressionable years. Even though I grew up in the projects of Pennsylvania, you laid a foundation that helped me to believe that there were no limitations to my value and that I could accomplish great things. You showed me life beyond my physical walls. I do not know if I ever said thank you or how much I appreciate everything you did for me and my brother, but I am
eternally grateful. I do not know where I would be if it had not been for your interest in me.

I wish my father was alive to share in my accomplishments. He passed away before I received my first degree. Therefore, he did not get the chance to meet his daughter-in-law or play with his grandchildren. I would have loved for him to share some of these things with me. I know you are guiding me on this journey, but it would have been nice to have you next to me.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To achieve social acceptance, participate fully in social networks, and access opportunities for upward mobility attaining a baccalaureate degree is important. The growing number of people pursuing and obtaining baccalaureate degrees, as well as the increasing number of employers requiring potential employees to have these credentials, suggest that people are recognizing the importance of the degree. Because of its importance, some racial minorities and underprivileged persons utilize education as a means to better the quality of their lives (Reed, 1988; Richardson, 1992). Interestingly, some African Americans, particularly males who go to college, display indifferent, unmotivated, and apathetic behaviors in their pursuit to obtain higher education (Reed, 1988, Richardson, 1992).

Fordham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that many African American males do not strive to achieve success through their academic work because they anticipate that there will be no benefit to completing a baccalaureate degree. This perception is further validated when they witness other academically successful African American males not being rewarded with additional opportunities. Arguably, observing African American males not receiving the promised benefits of a degree is a disincentive for many African American males being encouraged to pursue higher education. They perceive that they will also succumb to a similar fate and have limited opportunities if they were to obtain a degree (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).
Fordham and Ogbu (1986) would also argue that African Americans tend to discourage one another from academically succeeding and interpret any positive involvement in education as a desire to assimilate into mainstream America. This view proves to be a major factor in deterring many African American males from achieving their academic goals because being smart is equated to acting White and not being Black (Fordham, 1996). While Fordham’s (1996) study addresses one factor that may have served as a deterrent to African Americans achievement in education, it did not account for how or why some students are still able to succeed.

Cuyjet (1998) and Horvat and Lewis (2003) indicate that the acting White phenomenon is used as a coping mechanism in response to society devaluing the African American culture. These authors note that African American males who are able to succeed do so because they are able to manage their academic success through peer groups in school and not their community. Moreover, these students are able to establish a multitude of support groups that address, reinforce, and satisfy their collegial needs (Skahill, 2002).

Accompanying the negative perception of higher education and the negative affects of reference group inference, Cuyjet (1997) suggests there are many other social factors (i.e., homicide, incarceration, the high dropout rates, health problems, financial hardships, and the lack of positive role models) that prevent some African American males from doing well in college. Those males who have endured these social factors tend to carry emotional scars that affect their ability to acquire strategies to enhance their personal and academic development (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Consequently, on college
campuses these African American male students may need special nurturing, such as mentoring, to assist in their adjustment to the college environment (Cuyjet, 1997).

Young (1990) suggests that powerless groups, such as African American males, lack the authority or status to command respect from the dominant group. Walters (1997) elaborates on Etzkowitz (1994) who claims that minorities could be marginalized when they are a small percentage of the majority population. To adapt to the college environments, Majors and Billson (1992) suggest that African American males have learned to present themselves in ways that restore pride, empowerment, and self-worth. They have developed a coping mechanism called cool pose, where they exude dignity, confidence, and control over life situations. This cool pose behavioral adaptation allows African American males to adjust to society’s imbalanced scales and receive rewards in areas where they want recognition. Though, this adaptation mechanism conflicts with mainstream America’s perception of appropriate behavior in educational and social settings (Majors & Billson, 1992), it provides one explanation as to the African American males’ high rate of disciplinary problems at the elementary and secondary school levels as well as attributes to their behavior at the college level.

The growing amount of evidences concerning the plight of African American males has led many to accept “the inevitable, albeit problematic, and often punitive exclusionary nature of schooling of young Black males” (Duncan, 2002, p. 131). Some researchers such as Cross and Slater (2000) have predicted that if this current trend of low graduation and enrollment continues, African American males will not be involved in higher education by the year 2070. As such, other researchers are using metaphors like “endangered species” or “disadvantaged” to describe the African American males’
current situation in higher education (Gibbs, 1988; Green & Wright, 1992; Mincy, 1994; Noguera, 2003).

While the conclusions of Cross and Slater may lead one to believe that the fate of African American males are in a predetermined, perpetual downhill spiral, the facts show another reality. Looking only at the African American males who graduate relative to other racial groups, researchers, such as Green and Wright (1992), apply the deficit model philosophy to suggest that African American males do not possess the same academic ability to achieve as other races do. Although their graduation rates are lower than African American females and they are 22% more likely than White males to withdraw from college without a degree (Allen, 1991; Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton, 2001), more African American males are graduating from college today than ever before.

The amount of negative literature on African American males has underscored the deficiencies and problems of African American males who pursue higher education while it ignores the successes of many. It has overshadowed the persistence and academic triumphs of many African American males (Batey, 1999). Studies show that there has been a steady increase in the number of African American males earning baccalaureate degrees (Harvey, 2002). The Digest of Education Statistics (2003) reports that 548,400 black males received baccalaureate degrees in 1999, 577,000 in 2000, and 611,700 in 2001 (http://www.nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d03/tables/dt209.asp 6/6/2005).

Recent research indicates that focusing on what students, like African American males, do wrong is counterproductive in increasing retention and graduation rates among this population (Padilla, Trevino, Gonzalez, & Trevino, 1997). Rather, the focus should be on what students do right. Advocating for a more positive image of African American
males and their situation, Hall (1999), Hall and Allen (1989), Freeman (1997) and Graham (1994) suggest that there should be more research examining the barriers successful African American students overcome while matriculating through and graduating from college. Through his research, Wilson (1999) uncovered that not much is known concerning the ways mentoring relationships positively and directly influence African American student's persistence on college campuses.

Some researchers consider social support networks to be the most important criterion to influencing African American students to stay in college (Astin, 1882; King-Saulsberry, 2002; Skahill, 2002, Tinto, 1993). More specifically, Astin (1982) and Wilson (1999) affirm that mentoring is the critical factor to having African American males persist on college campuses. Likewise, the lack of providing African American males with mentorship opportunities or a visibly supportive community could result in unmotivated and unsuccessful students (Person & Christenson, 1996; Tinto, 1987; Wilson, 1999).

Whereas many theories and studies speak to why some African American males do not succeed academically, this study aims to capture and highlight stories of African American males who are succeeding in higher education. The premise of this current study is that, as other non-African American groups, African American males value education and want to be educated (Garibaldi, 1992). More specifically, the study attempts to address this gap in the literature and add to the body of knowledge by examining the degree and nature of the influence that mentorship has on the academic success of African American male juniors and seniors in higher education. Underlining
this study is the strategic thinking about mentorship for African American males at predominately White public institutions.

The preponderance of research pertaining to African American males in education focuses on issues at the elementary level, the secondary level, the transition to college, the first year experience, and life after college. Few studies concentrate on the African American males’ experience between their freshmen and senior year as they are completing higher education. Furthermore, the studies examining the African American males’ matriculation in higher education tend to focus on the impact of the institution’s role in influencing their persistence and success (Allen, 1999). Such studies bestow credit on the institution and not the student. This study will also seek to understand the importance of creating a complimentary relationship for African American males that result in their success.

This current study operationally defines a mentor as a person who offers his or her expertise to a student with the agreed-upon goal of having the student grow and develop specific competencies (Murray, 1991). While there may be only limited interaction between the mentor and protégé, mentoring could encompass any one of four key components: 1) it provides emotional and/or psychological support, 2) it is a relationship focused on achievement, 3) there is role modeling, and 4) there is direct interaction with the protégé (Jacobi, 1991, p. 513). The mentor is viewed as a role model who provides technical information on how to do something, or models what a protégé should do in certain situations (Houston, 1990). Importantly, mentoring is “an activity having less to do with showing others what we can do than with helping them perceive what they can do” (Enerson, 2001, p. 8).
Mentorship may occur through a formal program or materialize through an informal process. The difference between a formal program and informal process is that the former provides a structure that lends itself to an orientation, a system of monitoring program activities, organizational support, assigning mentors to a student, recognition, and rewards (Lahman, 1999). Terrell and Hassell (1994) indicate that a formal mentoring program also requires a solid and committed relationship. On the other hand, an informal process has the mentor provide a similar function except he or she has not been assigned officially to a specific person. Informal mentoring occurs through personality congruence and happenstance and develops into a relationship where the mentor and protégé learn to trust and depend on one another (Wilson, 1999). This study does not attempt to discern whether formal mentoring programs are more beneficial than informal mentoring opportunities, but rather to emphasize that both aspects are needed and that neither one should be considered exclusively.

Two critical elements in this study are the definitions of academic success and mentor. Academic success will be synonymous with college success and student success. In a study that inquired why students do not return to school, a set of college students defined college success as a “means of having the opportunity to develop potential, realize ambitions, enhance career options, and increase self-satisfaction” (Fralick, 1993, p. 29). King-Saulsberry’s (2002) study defines academic success as “maintaining the minimum grade point average and/or minimum number of credits consistent with the academic policies of the degree granting college or university” (p. 9). Stoltz (1997) defines success as “the degree to which one moves forward and upward, progressing in one’s lifelong mission, despite all obstacles or other forms of adversity” (p. 5). This study
incorporates various aspects from all these descriptions to derive at a working definition. Thus, this study will operationally define academic success as maintaining at least the minimum required grade point average to remain in good standing according to the university, reach the junior or senior level according to credit hours, and have clear career goals.

**Problem Statement**

The majority of studies that pertain to African American males in education dwell on negative aspects of this population. The limited numbers of studies that assess their academic success tend to focus on their achievements at the primary or secondary educational level, their transition from high school to college, their first-year experience, and their life after college. Few studies focus on the African American males’ success as they are advancing through higher education. There is a lack of research that examines the social factors that contribute to the African American males’ success while they are currently in their junior or senior year of college. More specifically, there is limited research that addresses the influence and importance mentoring has on African American males’ progress toward their academic success. Such research could provide valuable data to further aid in the development and success of future African American males. The results of this study will add to the literature on non-cognitive factors that influence African American males’ achievement at predominantly White institutions.

**Purpose of this Study**

Whereas Wilson (1999) assess the relationship between mentoring and persistence for African American males at a predominantly White public university after the student has left the university, this study aims to ascertain the influence mentoring has
on current African American males who have reached their junior or senior year in college. Further, this study enhances the literature on African American males in higher education and may serve as a foundation to developing strategies that retain this population.

**Significance of the Study**

The study provides successful African American males with an opportunity in lieu of the vast amount of negative literature. Similar to Wilson’s (1999) study, where he examined the African Americans’ experience that lead them to persist to graduation and how mentorship helps persistence for African American males respectively, this study focuses on the direct influence mentoring has in aiding African American males to persist in college. Also, this study allows successful African American males to provide a self assessment of the importance of mentoring and how it has contributed to their academic persistence. It provides the academic community with a unique perspective on the intricacies of African American males who successfully persist at a predominantly White institution. Unlike Wilson’s study where his participants were African American students who have either graduated or dropped out of a predominantly White institution, this study assess whether mentoring works and is valuable by using students who are currently enrolled at the institution. Furthermore, as a consequence of research undertaking, a mentor taxonomy is created that will assist institutions in constructing formal mentoring systems.

**Limitations**

The following are limitations of this study:
1. The results of this study are specific to the 12 African American males who are participating in this research. The information may not be generalized to all successful African American males in college.

2. This study is limited to currently enrolled students from one mid-size public institution.

**Research Questions**

The following questions are fundamental issues addressed in this study:

1. What direct influence does mentoring have on the academic success of African American males?

2. How has the institution and the African American male formed a complimentary relationship that enables these males to become successful?

3. To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on their academic success?

4. To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American males who are successful in college?

**Definition of Terms**

*Academic Success* – to maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale, and having achieved the required amount of credits to be considered a junior or senior level with the institution.

*Acting White* – to maintain the existing system of power and domination through the celebration of practices and an ethnic put in place by people who migrated primarily from Europe (Fordham, 1996, p. 22) and of those who resist affiliating with their Blackness.

*African American, Black* – will be used interchangeably in this study.
Cool Pose Theory – the coping mechanism that is designed to render African American males visible and “give them a sense of control, inner strength, balance, stability, confidence, and security” (Majors & Billson, 1992, p. 9).

Cultural domain – “a category of cultural meaning that includes smaller categories” where an array of different objects are treated as if they are equivalent (Spradley, 1980, p. 88).

Cultural themes – “any principal recurrent in a number of domains, tacit or explicit, and serving as a relationship among subsystems of cultural meaning” (Spradley, 1980, p. 141).

Mentor - a person with special skills/abilities who offers expertise to another person with the agreed-upon goal of having the student grow and develop specific competencies (Murray, 1991).

Mentoring (formal) - A formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitated that person’s career and personal development” (Roberts, 2000, p. 162).

Resilience – “the capacity to overcome adversity…and rise above disadvantages” (Morales & Troutman, 2004, p. 7).

Self-efficacy – “one’s confidence to succeed at the academic tasks rather than one’s actual ability” (Spitzer, 2000, p. 84).

Social support – “the degree to which a person’s basic social needs are gratified through interaction with other” (Davis, 1991, p. 146).
**Taxonomy** – “an elaborated list of all types of a meaningful cultural category or phenomenon within a particular sociocultural context” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006, p. 146).

**Summary**

While there is much literature on the plight of African American males in society, an underscored, undervalued, and under publicized subgroup of this population are those who are successfully navigating their way through college. The phenomenon of studying African American males who have found ways to succeed academically at predominantly white institutions receives far less attention then those who are failing. Nonetheless, it is an area worthy of studying to assist at-risk African American males, as well as other students, to guide intervention efforts (Morales, 2000). This current study recognizes that while many African American males are matriculating through and graduating from college (Digest of Education Statistics, 2003), there could and should be many more African American males matriculating through college.

A crucial factor in influencing whether these males succeed is their social support networks (Astin, 1982; King-Saulsberry, 2002; Skahill, 2002; Tinto, 1993). This study looks at the influence and importance of having a mentor on their academic success. More specifically, it investigates the influence that mentoring has on African American males who are currently in their junior and senior year at a predominantly White institution.

The body of this research is organized in four chapters. Chapter II summarizes the history of African Americans in higher education, discusses the non-cognitive variables that contribute to academic success, discusses and the influence of mentoring on
academic success, and presents African American identity developmental theories. Chapter III details the methodology. It describes the site, the participants, and the qualitative approach used in the study. Chapter IV presents the results from the data collection. It presents the results of the data collected from the Demographic Questionnaire and responses from the face-to-face interviews. It also presents a taxonomy of mentoring. Chapter V presents the conclusions from the study. It presents the findings, the implications for practice, and concludes with recommendations for future studies.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To investigate the influence mentoring has on successful African American males who are in their junior and senior year at the White University, this review will provide an analysis of literature that best contributes to understanding African American males in their pursuit to attain baccalaureate degrees. To provide a foundation and understanding of the embedded obstacles facing African American males in college today, this review will begin with a historical perspective of African Americans in higher education. Second, it will present an overview of literature that researched effects of non-cognitive variables on African American persistence. Specifically, the review will look at social support factors. Third, the review will highlight the emphasis and structure of formalized mentor programs. Lastly, the review will address African American identity theories that address the psychosocial needs of African American males.

Historical Perspective of African Americans in Higher Education

Bowles and DeCosta (1971) categorized the history of African American students in higher education into four periods and correlates each period with significant social and legal changes with events that occurred in America. These four periods are Pre-Civil War, the Civil War to 1895, 1896 to 1953, and 1954 to the present. The amount of literature that documents the characteristics and number of African American students who graduated from college prior to the Civil War is modest. Woodson (1968) noted that 15 African American students had attended a higher education institution before 1840. This number had risen to 28 by 1861 (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). No literature was found
that clarified how African Americans were able to enroll in a university given that all
students had to swear that they “had no Negro blood in their veins” as a condition of their
enrollment (Woodson, 1968, p. 265). Thus, an assumption could be made that these
students were of fair complexion that allowed them to “pass” for being a White person.

Because White colleges of this era had no enticement to educate African
Americans, abolitionists formed separate colleges where African Americans could
receive an education (Fleming, 1984; Woodson, 1968). These institutions are known
today as historically Black colleges and universities or HBCUs. The American
Colonization Society founded a school for Africans in Parsippany, New Jersey; however,
the school was discontinued by 1831 (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). In 1832, the
Convention of the Free People of Color established a school in Canaan, New Hampshire,
that closed in 1835 because of the town protest.

Upon his death in 1832, Richard Humphrey donated money to establish a school
to educate African descendants. Seven years later, Humphrey’s money was used to
establish Cheyney University. Lincoln University, initially Ashmum Institute, was
established in 1841 to teach boys farming, shoemaking, as well as scientific, classical,
and theological education (Woodson, 1968). The Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist
Episcopal Church founded Wilberforce College in 1855 as the first college totally
controlled by African Americans. By 1852, New York, Vermont, and Maine also
established colleges aimed at educating African Americans. While these institutions were
set up in the North, most of the HBCUs were established in the South where 90% of all
African Americans lived in this region (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971; Quarles, 1960).
The second period was marked by considerable growth for HBCUs. From 1865 to 1890, denominational churches such as Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians formed over a hundred colleges to educate African Americans. Specifically, the ten-year period from 1868 to 1877 saw numerous higher education opportunities for African Americans (Pounds, 1987). The HBCUs in the South graduated more than 1,000 students from 1865 to 1890 and those in the North accounted for 194 graduates (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971).

However, the results of the Civil War did not reduce the mentality that African Americans were intellectually inferior to Whites (Pounds, 1987). This notion was reinforced through the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision upholding “separate but equal” facilities. Consequently, HBCUs remained the primary source of education for almost 90% of African Americans until 1945 (Garibaldi, 1991).

In 1890, the Second Morrill Act established Negro land grant colleges as an alternative to permitting African Americans into white colleges (Fleming, 1984). The HBCU developed an educational system separate from the national system that white colleges used (Jones, 2004; Whiting, 1991). They had inferior facilities and poorly prepared teachers. In addition, they lacked a curriculum, abroad-based mission, and political connections that would have resulted in receiving state and local funding. Nonetheless, this law was crucial to the development of the HBCUs’ financial survival (Pounds, 1987).

The third period started with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* court decision and was maintained through the era of Jim Crow legislation. *Plessy* produced an accepted segregation system in spite of the efforts of the Rosewald Fund and the General Education Board to apply pressure for Southern schools to educate African Americans.
Influence of Mentoring (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) attacked the *Plessy* decision in the 1930s by supporting and advocating cases that challenged the ruling. Such cases included *Holcutt* in 1933, *Murray* in 1935, and *Gaines* in 1938 (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). Despite the attention paid to these highly publicized cases, African American students gained little ground and still were unable to attend White institutions, which they could attend only if they were highly intelligent or a HBCU did not offer an equivalent major.

More Whites became concerned with the African Americans students’ level of education as African Americans migrated to the North in greater numbers around 1940 (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). The fourth period commenced with the *Brown v. the Board of Education* court case. Simultaneously, HBCUs began gaining credibility through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), which was an all-White accreditation organization (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971). Accreditation from this organization was an important step to validating the curriculum and education given at these HBCUs. SACS admitted 15 four-year African American colleges and three junior African American colleges into the association in 1957. This association admitted 59 of the possible 88 HBCUs from 1957 to 1969. Up until this time, HBCUs continued to be regarded as inferior and providing only a high school level education.

Colleges and universities witnessed a significant increase in African American enrollment after World War II and more so after the civil rights legislation of the 1960s (Garibaldi, 1991). Thomas (1981) and Garibaldi (1991) attributed this influx to new federal government policies that provided financial assistance to the African Americans and the enrolling institutions. The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro
Students (NSFFNS) of the 1950s, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the guaranteed student loan program, and the 1972 Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program promoted desegregation by requiring predominantly White institutions to recruit African Americans in order to receive federal funds (Bowles & DeCosta, 1971; Thomas, 1981). As a result, African American enrollment went from 6 percent of the total higher education population in 1947 to 8.4% in 1971 to 10.8% in 1977 (Thomas, 1981). Moreover, the 1970s saw a shift from African American students enrolling predominantly in HBCUs to more than seventy-five percent of them attending White institutions (Fleming 1985; Latiker, 2003; Wilson, 1988); serving as an indication that HBCUs were no longer the primary source of education for African Americans (Jones, 2004).

Non-Cognitive Variables Influencing Academic Success

Current literature about the experiences and characteristics of African American students in higher education continue to concentrate on their perceived inability to persist to degree completion. Despite the significant enrollment gains, Fleming (1984), Tinto (1987), Robinson (1990), Cuyjet (1997), and Jones (2005) caution that increased access to higher education does not equate to successful academic achievement. There are institutional factors and individual characteristics that significantly influence the African American students’ academic success. Cuyjet (1997), Davis (1995), Wilson-Sadberry, Winfield and Royster (1991), Allen, Epps, and Haniff (1991), and Jones (2005) emphasized that these influences are especially significant for African American males.

Allen (1992) and Fleming (1984) found that African American males who attend White institutions tend to experience depression, have low levels of academic motivation, and are generally unhappy about their college experience. If the student leaves college
before receiving a degree, it is often attributed to negative encounters with someone at the university (Tinto, 1987). Conversely, Padilla, Trevino, Gonzales and Trevino (1997) found that African American students are more likely to have success when they can overcome social obstacles.

Some early researchers applied holistic approaches from social learning theories to explain behaviors and experiences that interfered with the African American males’ opportunity for academic success (Rosenthal, 1995; Taylor, 2003). Others attempted to “fit” African American males into developmental theories that could not address their circumstances (Cross, 1991; Howard-Hamilton, 1997). The scholars who focused on African American males tended to do so at the K-12 educational level with the rationale that persistence and success in college was predicated largely by pre-college preparedness factors (Haralson, 1996; Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth, 2004; Porter, 1990).

Notable researches like Tinto (1987), Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth, (2004), Haralson (1996), Taylor, (2003), and Rosenthal (1995) found that a major factor to the African American males’ academic performance was their inability to adjust to social norms in a predominantly White college environment. Similarly, other researchers have noted that African Americans are socialized to have lower self-worth as well as possess cultural defects that limited their ability to adjust to college in comparison to White students (Haralson, 1996; Jordan & Cooper, 2002; Kunjufu, 1986). According to Taylor (2003), adjustment to college is enhanced when African American males enroll in a school that matches their interpersonal skills and values to the structured school environment. Taylor further suggests that their skills and values must also be
incorporated into the curriculum rather than solely have a social focus if African American males are to reach their maximum potential.

Those students who come from lower socioeconomic homes do not perform as well academically as those students who come from higher socioeconomic homes (Morales & Trotman, 2004). Some of them are able to display academic resilience and achieve success despite their economic obstacles. Students who come from such a low socioeconomic level are able to achieve and be productive when their needs and abilities are congruent with the institution (Taylor, 2003). Yet, many African American students have needs and abilities that are not aligned with the college they are attending.

Tracey and Sedlacek (1985) indicate that non-cognitive variables are more effective to predicting academic success among African American males than traditional academic variables used to predict the success for White students. Morales (2000) indicated that social organizations were a necessity to African Americans’ success. It was vital for older peers to display and model desired behaviors to newer students. These students become resilient and learn to adapt to new cultures by manifesting “protective factors” that sheltered and mitigated risk factors. The resilient students are continuously able to refine protective factors that assist them in reaching graduation. As a result, resilient students demonstrate self-awareness about the challenges they face (Morales, 2000). They recognize the challenges and identify ways to meet their needs.

The responsibility to meet the challenges of college should not be solely on the student. Astin (1982) suggests that the institution’s environment should enable the student to develop effective peer and faculty relationships, which would also contribute to academic integration and social involvement. A supportive environment predicates and
provides social satisfaction, which could lead to a positive academic outcome. In short, the more integrated an individual becomes in the academic and social environments of the institution, the more likely he or she will adopt an attitude and goals directed toward graduation (Skahill, 2002).

**Influence of Mentoring of African American Male Success**

While many researchers highlight the appropriateness and effectiveness in using cognitive variables (often measured by SAT, ACT, or GPA scores) to study the success of college students (Boyd, Carstens, Hunt, Morgan & McDevitt, 1987; Kanoy, Wester & Latta, 1990; Loeb, 1982; Lovette, 1982), others caution against the use of such variables as the sole criteria for viewing African-American students' college success (Farrell, 1989; Goldberg, 1969). Some researchers found that influences such as social, institutional, and economic factors confound the predictions of the persistence of African American males in college (Hall, 1999; Hood, 1992; Pounds, 1987). There are additional factors such as family background, personality, gender, income, past educational experiences, and future educational expectations that need consideration (Cross & Astin, 1981; Pritchard & Wilson, 2003; Tinto, 1975).

Accordingly, there is much literature that indicates the need to examine non-cognitive variables such as mentoring in predicting academic success among African American males (Jones, 2005; Sherman, Giles, & Williams-Green, 1994; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1985). However, there is limited research exploring African American male students’ perception of mentoring and mentoring effects on their persistence. Levine (1996) found that mentoring was of particular importance in determining the success of first generation, poor students because it communicates hope, the importance of
education, builds confidence in the protégé, and conjoins the student to the college environment. Similarly, Terrell and Hassell (1994) note that African American students view the mentor’s primary role as providing the protégé with an awareness of institution’s values and culture, as well as acquainting them with customs, resources, and pathways.

The term mentor originates from Homer’s *The Odyssey*, where Odysseus entrusted his friend Mentor to care and tutor the crown prince Telemachus, while Odysseus prepared for the Trojan War (Miller, 2002; Tolentino, 1999). Mentor exhibited wisdom and sensitivity in his responsibility for guiding all of Telemachus’ development. According to Otto (1994), mentoring is a relationship based on mutual respect and made by choice although the mentor has perceived success and/or power. It is also defined as a person who helps another interpret and learn to navigate through unfamiliar environments (Daloz, 1986). In the simplest form, mentoring is helping another person to learn something they would have learned less well or not at all (Bell, 1996). In the last two decades, mentoring has become highly accepted as a way to help those who may need addition support. Miller (2002) attributes the popularity of mentoring to both the trend of the more affluent who volunteer to help those less fortunate and an increasing number of adults wanting to transfer their knowledge and culture to youth.

Brown (1995) indicates that mentoring may appear simplistic in nature, but it becomes complex when applied to minority students. It helps to empower African American students to overcome discrimination at the institution and inadequate academic preparation. Haensly and Parsons (1993) describe the psychology of mentoring as enhancing self-concept, self-esteem, and self-confidence that lead to specific outcomes.
Accordingly, the role of the mentor is to guide and advise the protégé toward self-identification, accomplishments, and eventual self-realization. Wunsch (1994) maintains that the process needs to be more holistic with the emphasis placed in the context of the educational culture where the focus is confronting the disconnection between the individual and the institutional goals. It is important to addressing the needs of students who are most at risk of leaving the university before graduating (Terrell & Hassell, 1994).

Sedlacek (1976) notes that through their encouragement “strong support persons” play a significant role in influencing persistence. He finds that students of color who persist in school are more likely to develop a relationship with someone they view as a mentor (1976). Sedlacek (1976), Astin (1982), Parker, Chambers, and Scott (1985), and Pounds (1987) emphasizes that mentor relationships should be developed early with African American students preferably during recruiting and orientation programs. Sedlacek also finds that mentoring relationship bond students to the institution and increases the likelihood of persistence.

Kim and Conrad (2006), Pounds (1987), LaVant (1997), and Walter (1997) find that student interaction with faculty and peers does influence persistence and achievement. Kim and Conrad added that the faculty-student relationship was crucial to the African American students’ success at the predominantly White and historically Black colleges.

While there is literature that reveals mentoring programs to be a popular method to address persistence among African-American students, not much data exist that
highlights which public white institutions are implementing formalized mentoring programs that specifically target African American males.

A formalized mentoring program is important. As captured in Robert’s (2000) definition of mentoring, it is “a formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitated that person’s career and personal development” (p. 162). Formalized mentor programs were initiated to address those populations that were historically excluded from informal mentor relationships (Hansman, 2001). Similarly, these programs set in higher education settings are designed to address the needs of students at risk and ensure they have a quality academic experience (Terrell & Hassell, 1994). “Researchers have discovered that college students participating in formal mentoring relationships reported an increase in satisfaction with college services and an increase in academic persistence; [both] resulting in an overall increase in student retention” (Lahman, 1999, p.2).

Tolentino (1999) indicates two general types of characteristics, structural and individual, involved in a formal mentor relationship. The characteristics falling in the purview are structural and those that are attributes of the person participating are individual (Tolentino, 1999). The structural characteristics are voluntary versus non-voluntary participation, processes used to assign mentors to protégés, program infrastructure support for mentoring pairs, degree to which goal of mentoring activity has been specifically articulated or understood, nature of commitment expected from participants, and accountability of results. Individual characteristics are mentor/protege individual profiles, dynamic of interaction, degree of commitment of time/effort, and
nature of activity.

Within structural characteristic, voluntary versus non-voluntary participation refers to how the protégé is selected into the program. Processes used to assign mentors to mentees identifies the procedure the program utilizes to seek out to place the protégé with the mentor. Tolentino (1999) notes the protégé is often screened, while the mentor goes through little screening. Program infrastructure support for mentor pair accounts for the level and degree of involvement the program has on the activities between the mentor and protégé. Degree to which goal of mentoring activity has been specifically articulated or understood denotes whether there has been a clear understanding of the desired outcomes. The nature of commitment expected from participants refers to the time and effort to which the protégé is expected to adhere. Accountability for results identifies whether the mentor is evaluated based upon the progress of the protégé.

Within individual characteristic, mentor/mentee individual profiles detail the demographics of both the mentor and protégé. Dynamics of interaction refers to the method in which the mentor and mentee communicate as well as the approach the mentor uses. Degree of commitment of time/effort involves the amount of time and effort the protégé puts into the relationship. Nature of activity focuses on the range of interest and projects between the mentor and protégé.

Informal mentoring does not have the same structure, guidelines when meeting, topics to study, and requirements of the mentor that is often required in a formalized mentor program (Hezlett, 2005). According to Daloz (1986), informal mentoring precipitates from a developed relationship between the mentor and protégé that is built from mutual interests and attraction.
There are downsides to using either the formalized mentor program or the informal mentoring exclusive from one another. Formalized mentoring programs tend not to address the individual human need (Hansman, 2001). Similarly, the mentor and protégé may not share enough common interests to warrant a successful relationship. At the same time, participating in informal mentoring may not be problematic if the protégé does not fit into the culture. For this reason, the two are often used to enhance one another (Terrell & Hassell, 1994).

**African American Male Identity Developmental Theories**

Erikson’s work is most often examined at the onset of researching identity development (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, Cooper, 2003). He, like other early theorists, did not distinguish between African American and white student development. Thus, it did not encompass or reflect the complex social issues (Cross, 1991; Howard-Hamilton, 1997) or the environmental influences (Cheatham, Tomlinson, & Ward, 2002) African American males face on college campuses.

Theorists like Chickering, Perry, Holland, and Loevinger present perspectives on student development but do not adequately present those views from a multicultural society (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Chickering’s seven vectors, for example, address identity development among all traditional college students (i.e., students falling between the ages of 18-24), but do not speak to the specific issues of the African American males’ value system and philosophies. Hence, applying traditional theories to African American males’ behaviors leads to questionable conclusions.

African American identity development theories arose from the need to outline and explain African American consciousness growth during the Black Power Movement
of the late 1960s (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). Cross’ Nigrescence Theory provides the foundation as it details a process where students transform from a preexisting identity (non-African American) into one that is Afrocentric. It purported to explain the education and awareness involved in moving from the state of being “Negro” to the state of being “Black” (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). The theory “is not a process for mapping the socialization of children, it is a model that explains how assimilated as well as deracinated, deculturalized, or miseducated adolescents or Black adults are transformed” (Cross & Vandiver, 1995, p. 98). Since 1971, Cross has revised his model to address cultural, social psychological and historical changes that occurred after the model was first introduced.

The Nigrescence Model is premised on the assumption that a person’s self-concept is derived from his personal identity (PI), which is the general personality common in all people, and a reference group identity component (RGO), which is the social group with whom the person affiliates with to make meaning of who he is. PI also refers to psychological traits and deep-structured personality dynamics (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). While it is used as part of the equation to develop self-concept, PI plays only a small role in determining Black identity. The student’s “Blackness” encompasses more of the group reference identity. The RGO is the social variable used to help a person make sense of himself as a social being.

This model identifies five stages that African Americans advance through when finding their identity. Pre-encounter is the first stage. A person in this stage has low-salient views about being African American (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). He considers his
“Blackness” to be insignificant to his goals and everyday life. Importantly, it contributes little to his happiness and well-being.

The three subsets within Pre-encounter are social stigma attitudes, anti-Black attitudes, and miseducation (Cross & Vandiver, 1995, p. 98). A person who falls into the social stigma attitudes category regard his Black race has a hassle when it involves social discrimination issues. This person aligns with African American causes as a way of destroying the stigma of being Black, not to support the culture (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). The anti-Black category involves a person with extreme racial patterns. He tends to use his Blackness as a negative reference point. He hates other Black people and does not view them as a source of personal support (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). A person falling under miseducation embraces white America’s cultural perspective. He is a product of the formal education system and has been miseducated about the role of Africa on western civilization. Importantly, he has been socialized to favor the Eurocentric cultural perspective.

The second stage, Encounter, suggests instances where a metamorphosis may occur. While Cross and Vandiver (1995) acknowledge that it is difficult to change identities that has already developed fully, there are circumstances that allow for such occurrences. These instances must be strong enough to shatter the person’s current identity while providing glimpses and direction on the path the male is to follow (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). Most often, a series of culminating events is required to dismantle the person’s pre-encounter worldview. It is not crucial that the encounter be negative. It could entail exposure to powerful cultural-historical information (Cross & Vandiver, 1995).
The third stage of the Nigrescence Model is immersion-emersion. During this stage, there is a commitment to personal change. This person tends to have a growing hatred for White people and begins to destroy the Eurocentric cultural perspective. The male develops and embraces his new identity where he is able to engage in African American problems and the culture (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). This person is obsessively dedicated to all things Black and immerses himself in his “Blackness” (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). In the beginning of this transitional stage, the person that becomes immersed is compelled to feel and act in specific ways (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). Once the emotion of being immersed has subsided, the desire to utilize his intellect and emotion emerges.

After working through immersion-emersion, the person enters internalization where he could successfully internalize the African American identity. He has the salience to be Afrocentric. Internalization is the period for dissonance resolution (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). It helps him “(a) to defend and protect himself from psychological insults that stem from having to live in a racist society, (b) to provide a sense of belonging and social anchorage, and (c) to provide a foundation or point of departure for carrying out transactions, with people, cultures, and human situations beyond the world of Blackness” (Cross & Vandiver, 1995, p. 113). This stage also presents a shift from the person worrying about how he is viewed by others to a self-confidence and inner peace. This is the point where the person tends to change his group identity and perceives a revitalized personality (Cross & Vandiver, 1995).

There are varying degrees of salience for people during internalization. It could range from total salience of Afrocentric where the person believes African Americans
and whites are biogenetically different to a bicultural reference group of incorporating both his Blackness and supportive aspects of white America (Cross & Vandiver, 1995). The intermediate perspective is the multicultural viewpoint where the person takes a multiplicity of interests. “This means that Nigrescence may increase salience of race and culture for all persons who successfully reach the advanced stages of black identity development, but internalization does not result in ideological unity” (Cross & Vandiver, 1995, p. 116). The difference between the fourth and fifth stage of the Nigrescence Model, internalization-commitment is the level of interests and commitment.

Mentors play a valuable role in each stage on the Nigrescence Model (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). In the pre-encounter stage, the mentor has to avoid confrontation while providing and promoting a supportive structured learning environment. His focus is on building a rapport with the student. Therefore, the mentor avoids discussions on significant issues pertaining to race, ethnicity, or cultural differences (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). At the encounter stage, mentors provide information on the “good” things about the African American culture and other cultures and engage the protégé in cross-cultural activities (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). The mentor begins to challenge any misconceptions about racial groups. The immersion-emersion stage relies on self-review and introspection. Because there may be appearances of being pro-Black and anti-White, mentors help the protégé to explore the impact of one-sided thinking. Internalization and internalization-commitment offer continuous opportunities for interactions with other groups and gives the protégé opportunities to find a supportive network with similar beliefs (Howard-Hamilton, 1997).
Robinson and Howard-Hamilton’s Africentric Resistance Model differs from the Nigrescence Model in that it promotes psychological health and interpersonal relationships (Torres et al., 2003). This Model develops programs based on Robinson and Ward’s Resistance Modality Model and the Nguzo Saba value system introduced by Dr. Karenga (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). The Africentric Resistance Model has the individual maintaining a healthy mental perspective and controlling his destiny through a strong sense of African American knowledge about his culture, race, and historical roots (Howard-Hamilton, 1997). Everything is interconnected. There are healthy forms of psychological and personal resistance to those negative promotions of one’s culture.

In order to continue to promote psychological health and satisfy interpersonal relationships, the Nguzo Saba value system is interwoven into the Africentric Resistance Model to continue to promote psychological health and satisfy interpersonal relationships. In Swahili, Nguzo Saba means seven principles (Medearis, 1994). The seven principles are: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujaama (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith) (Medearis, 1994, p. 10). Importantly, these principals are to work together as one for the good of the community.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design used in investigating the influence that mentoring has on persistence of academically successful African American males who have matriculated to their junior and senior year at a public predominantly White four-year institution. It provides a detailed description of the participants, the site, and the research method used to answer the following questions:

1. What direct influence does mentoring have on persistence with African American males who have reached their junior and senior year of college?
2. How has the institution and the African American male formed a complimentary relationship that enables these males to become successful?
3. To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on their academic success?
4. To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American males who are successful in college?

To understand the influence of mentoring on successful African American males, the research and interview questions are designed to examine how the participants describe and make meaning of the experiences that have made them successful. Accordingly, a qualitative framework is most appropriate for this study as it best details, captures, and examines the impact mentorship plays on African American males in higher education. Qualitative methodology allows the participants to articulate experiences in their own voice. Further, this method provides rich descriptions of the
participants’ self-perception and understanding of their success as they are going through the experience of matriculating at a predominantly white institution. In fact, this current study relies on the subjects to have voice and interpretations of their constructed realities where themes emerge and are shaped into analysis (Jones, 2005). The meanings given to these experiences are a process of the participants’ interpretation, and is therefore not accidental or happenstance. Thus, the way an individual defines and processes the information is important to understanding the experience (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003).

A qualitative study also helps to elicit patterns that may not be apparent otherwise. The qualitative method used in this study is phenomenology. An ethnological approach searches for the essence of the experience (Jones, 2005) as well as gives the researcher an opportunity to understand the participant’s viewpoint with minimal distortion (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The phenomenological approach, specifically, allows the researcher to explain and interpret human action through descriptions (Holsten & Gubrium, 1994). The goal is “to explicate how objects and experience are meaningfully constituted and communicated in the world of everyday life” (Holsten & Gubrium, 1994, p. 264). Phenomenology is premised around nine principles:

1. It focuses on the appearance of things,
2. It is concerned with uncovering the essence of the experience as according to those who experience it,
3. It seeks meaning and understanding resulting from intuition and reflection on conscious acts of experience,
4. It is committed to revealing vivid descriptions of experience rather than searching for explanations or analysis,
(5) The study is rooted in questions that provide direction and focus meanings in themes,

(6) The subject and object are interrelated – perceptions and the experience interrelate to make the objective subjective, and the subjective objective,

(7) Intersubjective reality is woven throughout the entire investigative process, with the perception beginning with the study participant’s own sense of what the experience is and means,

(8) The primary evidence of the research is the data of experience, and

(9) The research question(s) must be carefully designed as it serves as the focus of the study and provide a rich portrayal of the experience (Jones, 2005; Moustakas, 1994).

This current study is similar to Wilson’s (1999) research in assessing the impact mentoring had on African American males who went to college. While the best way to determine the influence mentoring has on persistence for African American male persistence in college is through an examination of their behaviors as was done in Wilson’s study, this researcher proposes that there is additional value when the data is obtained as a participant is going through the experience. Whereas Wilson conducted his research on African American males, both graduates and dropout, who already attended the university and participated in a mentoring program, this current research seeks to assess whether current African American males, who are successful in college, were influenced by and persisted because of mentoring. Moreover, the participants in the current study are juniors and seniors currently enrolled at White University, a pseudonym used to protect the college used in this study.

This study will also focus on the cultural themes pertaining to African American
Influence of Mentoring

males. Because of the systematic and rigorous procedure required in exploring patterns of
cultural meaning, Spradley’s qualitative model will be used as a template. This will
contribute to the body of knowledge by presenting a more accurate perception of the role
that mentoring plays toward the academic success of African American males currently
enrolled at predominantly White institutions.

Description of the Study Site

The identified institution is located in the Eastern Region of the United States. The
physical grounds cover 585 acres, 43 buildings, a five-acre lake, open fields and
woods, and 10 on-campus residence halls that house 2,500 students. While the enrollment
fluctuates, the University maintains approximately 7,600 undergraduate and graduate
students.

There are 10 master degree programs, 101 baccalaureate degree programs, and 57
minor programs. The University has academic programs accredited through American
Dietetic Association (ADA), Council on Academic Accreditation of the American
Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), Association of Collegiate Business
Schools and Programs (ACBSP), Council on Rehabilitation Education, Inc. (CORE),
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Middle States Association of Colleges and
Schools (MSA), National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), National Council
for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Commission on Collegiate Nursing
Education (CCNE), Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Council for
Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP),
Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing, and the National League for Nursing (NLN). In
addition, the University has articulation agreements with 29 high school and vocational
technology school districts and 11 community colleges. The agreements with the high school and vocation technology school districts affords students the opportunity to take college level classes while in high school and receive college credit for doing so. The agreement with the community colleges presents students with the opportunity to enter the University at the junior level, having all classes and grades transfer into the respective program.

Thirty-nine of the 752 professionals employed at this institution are African Americans. Three are considered executives (two males and one female), 21 faculty (12 males and 9 females), 4 professionals/non-faculty (three males and one female), 9 secretarial staff (all female), one male skilled worker, and one female service worker. Of the 9 full-time African American female faculty members, 3 are tenured, 5 are on the tenure-track, and one is listed as other. Only 2 African American females are full professors. There are 12 full-time African American male faculty members; 4 are tenured and the other 8 are on the tenure-track. Only one African American male is a full professor.

The African American student enrollment has increased each year over the last seven years. It has grown from 302 in 1997 to 504 in 2004. In 2004, African Americans make up 6.79% of the student body, Latinos/Hispanics, 1.02%; Asian Americans, .75%; and Native Americans, .22%; and Non-Resident Aliens, 2.32% (http://departments.edinboro.edu/upirci/custom/analysis.ppt#9, 12/29/06).

White University was selected to be the setting for this study because it has three structured mentoring programs for African-American students. In addition, there remains a recurring problem of retaining African American male students until degree
Influence of Mentoring completion. The Office of Multicultural Programs, the Association of Faculty and Staff of Color, and the Minority Mentor student organization sponsor the three structured programs that assist students in adapting to and matriculating through the university. The Office of Multicultural Programs and the Minority Mentor student organization utilized male and female juniors and seniors who are high achievers as mentors, while the Association of Faculty and Staff of Color called upon its faculty and staff members.

**Selection of the Sample**

While this study is related to Wilson’s (1999) mentoring research, it adds to the body of knowledge of the influence of mentoring on African American males through collecting data from juniors and seniors who are academically successful and currently enrolled at a predominantly White university. In order to participate in this study, the person must be a male, African American, junior or senior at the University, and in good academic standing as measured by grade point average (2.0). In addition, the subject will not be eligible to participate in this study if he participates in collegiate athletics. The rationale to exclude this portion of the population is that the National Collegiate Athletic Association has implemented and enforced policies demanding universities retain and graduate their student athletes. Penalties for not abiding with these policies include lose of athletic scholarships, post-season consideration, and financial consequences (Hamilton, 2005). As such, adding this population could skew the results of this study.

With permission from White University, this researcher used his affiliation with the institution to identify potential participants. All African American males who were juniors or seniors and met the research criteria were asked to participate in the study. They were contacted initially by letter. The cover letter (Appendix A) explained the
purpose of the study and asked that the student return the self-addressed postcard (Appendix B) indicating whether he would participate in the study. To increase the probability of a response, a second correspondence went out to all eligible participants electronically (email) requesting their participation in the study. This correspondence reminded the potential participants to respond to the letter or the email as to their willingness and availability to participate. After the pool of potential subjects was established, each person received a random number that identified him throughout the study. The researcher randomly selected numbers until 12 participants were collected.

Data Collection

An Informed Consent Form (Appendix C) outlined the scope of the study. The participant’s signature conferred his willingness to participate and reasonable understanding of his involvement. As the results were reported with all information pertaining to the identity of the individual kept confidential. As such, all of the participants had fictional names.

The data were collected in two phases. The first phase involved the participants completing a Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix D) that contained nine questions that gathered information to provide general inferences on the composition of the subjects participating in the study as well as that of a successful African American male at this University. The second phase of data collection consisted of one face-to-face interview with each participant. The researcher utilized a bridge person to conduct interviews as to not bias the participants’ response or influence answers. The interviews were between 30 - 45 minutes in length. With permission from the subjects, all interviews were audio taped and the dictations were transcribed verbatim after the session.
There were 13 scripted open-ended questions (Appendix D) for the interview. The interviewer was permitted to deviate from the script and probe further into responses that warranted more information or was pertinent to the study. This study followed Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) method on probing into how relationships develop, the intensity of the time together, the emotional tone, importance placed by the participant on the relationship, and changes in importance (p. 102). Before the interview took place, the interviewer explained the purpose and nature of the study to each participant, including how he came to be selected. The interviewer assured the participant that their identity was anonymous in any written reports arising from the study and the responses were treated in strictest confidence. The participants were permitted to ask for clarification from the interviewer or refrain from answering any questions. The interviewer briefly told the respondent something about himself - his background, training, and interest in the area of inquiry, and each subject gave permission to have the interview audio taped with the understanding that doing so allowed for later, more accurate transcription of data (Lofland, et al., 2006, p. 104).

The participants were reminded of the conditions in the Informed Consent Form. The transcription and documentation occurred immediately after each interview, as recommended, to produce a more detailed recollection from the bridge persons (Lofland et al., 2006). Lofland et al. (2006) note that written records were valuable when they include summaries and notes of what the subject said generally, verbatim transcriptions of responses, field notes of extra interview encounters, methodological difficulties or successes, ideas - tentative pieces of analysis, and personal emotional experiences (p. 108).
Data Analysis

This study was designed to ascertain existing cultural patterns in African American males who are currently successful in college. As such, an ethnographic approach is appropriate. This method allowed the researcher to make inferences about social situations and culture from the nature of their dialogue. To discover how the participants interpreted the cultural meaning of mentoring, Spradley (1980) suggested beginning the analysis with the cultural domain, which is the basic unit in every culture. Cultural domain is a category that enumerates into smaller categories (Spradley, 1980).

Spradley (1980) indicated that cultural domains have three basic elements: cover term, included terms, and semantic relationships. The cover term is also the name of the cultural domain, which for this research is represented by the mentor. The included terms are smaller categories that help to refine the general category. Adding on from the previous example, some included terms for mentor could be career counselor, friend, advisor, or professor. The semantic relationship links the cover term with the included term. The diagram below illustrates the three elements for mentor:

Diagram 3.1 Relationship of a Domain

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semantic Relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Included Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a kind of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
While Spradley (1980) found nine basic semantic relationships to be universal and most useful for the analysis of cultural domains, only four are applicable to this study. They are: strict inclusion, cause-effect, rationale, and attribution (p. 93). Below is an example of how the relationship and terms are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strict Inclusion</td>
<td>X is a kind of Y</td>
<td>An advisor (is a kind of) mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Cause-effect</td>
<td>X is a result of Y</td>
<td>College persistence (is the result of) having a mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rationale</td>
<td>X is a reason for Y</td>
<td>Better grades (is a reason for) a mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Attribution</td>
<td>X is an attribute of Y</td>
<td>Strong interpersonal skills (is an attribute of) a mentor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze such relationships, a domain analysis worksheet was used to help visualize the structure of each domain with a separate worksheet being made to analyze each relationship. In preparing the worksheet, Spradley (1980) suggested the semantic relationship, a statement of the form in which it was expressed, and a sentence included on the top of the paper of how the relationship was formed. This helped the researcher uncover cultural relationships embedded in the transcription notes. Below is an example of a domain analysis worksheet.
Table 3.2 Example of Domain Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is kind of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is kind of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This process was repeated for each semantic relationship in order to compile a list of as many included terms as possible. Each paragraph of the transcripts was read for content to determine if it is appropriate for the semantic relationship. The paragraphs were read with the semantic relationship and question in mind. For example, “What terms could be a kind of attribute?” The goal, at this point, was only to identify included terms that could be an attribute. A completed worksheet should look as follows:
Diagram 3.3 Completed Domain Analysis Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>is an attribute of</td>
<td>a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This domain analysis served two purposes. First, it was necessary to identify cultural categories. This process uncovered the terms that are not obvious. Second, the analysis gave an overview of the cultural scene being studied (Spradley, 1980).

After conducting the domain analysis, the researcher investigated cultural domains through a taxonomy analysis. This analysis provided systematic organization of the contents and showed more relationships between included terms inside the cultural domain. Taxonomy revealed how included terms related to the cultural domain. It also revealed that there were different levels to the relationship and that the discovered domain is part of a larger domain.

Taxonomy was similar to the cultural domain in that it was organized from a single semantic relationship. The difference was that the taxonomy displayed more the relationship among the components where the cultural domain was looking solely to identify the basic parts (Spradley, 1980). This taxonomy showed the relationships among
all the included terms and revealed how the subsets were related to one another. An illustrated taxonomy for this study may resemble the following:

**Diagram 3.4 Example of Partial Taxonomy on Mentoring**

The taxonomy analysis began with the domain that had the most information because this allowed for the easiest analysis. The results created new subsets, and allowed for more cultural categories and insight into the issues surrounding African American males and the views on how mentoring had influenced their persistence.

After creating the taxonomy, the next step involved looking for similarities based on semantic relationships. Once this process had been completed, the researcher regrouped cultural domains to discover more cultural categories. Then another structural question was applied to discover additional included terms. Once the inventories and taxonomy for the domain were created, the researcher discovered significant cultural
themes for understanding the African American males’ viewpoint on whether mentoring had an influence on their persistence at this predominantly White University. “Cultural themes were elements in the pattern that make up a culture” (Spradley, 1980, p. 141). It revealed itself through a cognitive principal that people accepted as true and valid. For example, one principal was “mentors are necessary in order to make it through college.” The themes deriving from such principals maintained a degree of generality and function as general relationships among the cultural domain.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter reports the findings from conducting qualitative research on 12 African American males who have achieved at least a 2.0 grade point average, are non-collegiate athletes, non-transfer, and are either juniors or seniors at White University. The chapter contained the demographic characteristics of the subjects, an analysis of the interviews (i.e., the domain analysis and taxonomy analysis), and the identified cultural themes. It concludes with the interviewees’ responses that pertained to the research questions posed in Chapter I.

The demographic information offers a general description of the participants and is used to make generalizations about the composite of an academically successful African American male student at White University. The research attempts to discover cultural themes and patterns from the subjects as they reflect on the influence mentoring have on their academic success and persistence.

At the time of this study, White University had 92 African American males who qualified as juniors or seniors based on number of credit hours. Of these 92 males, 19 were excluded from participation because they were athletes representing the University in varsity sports. Fifteen students could not participate because they did not have at least the minimum 2.0 grade point average. An additional nine students were ineligible because they had transferred into the university.

The remaining 49 African American males were mailed a cover letter (Appendix A) explaining the scope and purpose of the study and requesting their participation. To
increase the probability of a response after one week, a second correspondence was
emailed to all of the eligible participants. No incentives were provided to the eligible
participants to encourage them to respond. Twenty-two (44.9%) African American males
responded with interest in participating. As an identifier, all 22 potential subjects received
a random number and were given alias names. By drawing numbers, the researcher
randomly selected 12 of the 22 eligible respondents (55%). The researcher explained to
them the purpose of the study and the extent of their participation. Upon signing the
consent form (Appendix B), the participants were assigned to a bridge person. In order to
avoid biasing the answers, two bridge persons, both African American male professors,
who received no compensation, conducted the interviews.

One bridge person was a 29-year-old assistant professor teaching in the Health
and Physical Education Department. The other person was a 38-year-old assistant
professor teaching in the Counseling Department in the Professional Studies Program.
Both bridge persons had doctoral level education. The researcher prepped each bridge
person separately as to the purpose of the study and the intent of each question. They
were encouraged to ask follow-up questions.

**Research Subject Demographics**

Each subject provided information as to their age, ACT/SAT scores, family
household upbringing, mentoring participation (whether formal or informal), and
academic support network. The next six tables show the findings from the Demographic
Questionnaire of the 12 African American male juniors and seniors interviewed in this
study. All the subjects in this study were of traditional college age. Their ages ranged
from 20-23 (Table 4.1). Table 4.2 indicated that 10 subjects took the SAT, one participant
took the ACT, and one participant did not take either assessment test. Scores for the participants who took the SAT ranged from 500 to 1100. Seven (58.33%) participants scored between 900 and 1100. Three (25%) scored below 900. These SAT results are consistent with Farrell (1989) and Goldberg’s (1969) findings. It should be noted that both researchers cautioned against the use of SATs as the sole predictor of college success among African American students. With all subjects who took the SAT scoring below 1100 and three scoring less than 900, some researchers would argue these students were prime candidates for attrition if one was to apply the original purpose of the tests of measuring academic ability independent of high school preparation, teacher judgments, and high school grades (Fincher, 2000). Sedlacek’s (1987) research, however, contends that it is more than intellect that enables African American students to complete college and that traditional measures of intelligence (i.e., high school grades, SAT/ACT) may not be the best predictors of academic success for African American students. The data from the participants of this study would confirm that ACT/SAT scores would not have been a good predictor in accurately determining the academic success and persistence of these subjects.
Table 4.1

Age Range of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2

ACT/SAT Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAT Score</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not take SAT or ACT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took ACT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 501-600</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 601-700</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 701-800</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 801-900</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 901-1000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT 1001 – 1100</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>99.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 indicates the subjects’ composition of their parental/guardian living arrangements prior to enrolling into White University. The table shows that 11 of the 12
subjects (91.67%) lived at home either with both parents or with the mother only prior to coming to college. One participant lived with a grandmother.

The parents’ educational background (Table 4.4) showed that eight (66.67%) of the research subjects stated their parents had attended college compared to four (33.33%) who stated their parents did not go to college.

Table 4.3
Living Arrangements at Home Prior to College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrangements</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With mother only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Grandmother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4
Parents Attended College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents attended college</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 indicates whether the subjects participated in a formal mentoring program at Edinboro University. The results showed that exactly half of the subjects did
participate in a formal mentoring program and the other half did not. These data indicate that it is not necessary for African American males to participate in formal programs in order to achieve academic success, but an informal support is useful. Further, these data are inconsistent with Taylor (2003) who found that a structured system was necessary to ensure that young African American men engage in their learning. This table also confirmed Wilson’s (1999) finding that mentoring, both formal and informal, complement one another and help to influence academic success among African American males.

Table 4.6 displays the response given by the participants as to who they feel had an influence on their college success. This table indicates that the three most identified influences for these subjects are family (91.67%), self (83.33%), and professor (75.00%). Interestingly, the subjects in this study, who are successful African American males, appear to be highly self-motivated. These results, consistently with Kim and Conrad (2006), Pounds (1987), LaVant (1997), also reveal that college staff (professor and administrator) has an influence on students’ success and persistence.

Table 4.5

Participated in Formal Mentoring Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Program</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>91.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Demographic Questionnaire provided valuable insight as to the experience of a successful African American male at White University. It indicted that ACT/SAT scores were not an accurate predictor in assessing the academic potential of African American males at White University. The demographic data also pointed out that there is no difference in the success of African American males who participate in formal mentoring programs versus those that do not, which confirms Wilson’s (1999) theory that formal and informal mentor programs compliment one another in helping African American males to succeed. Lastly, the questionnaire’s results illustrates that a strong family influence, connections with professors, and self-motivation are important underlying factors that contributed to the success of African American males. In fact, the family support system was the prominent influence in the success of these subjects.
Data Analysis

Prior to conducting the research, mentoring was established as the only cultural domain to be analyzed in this study. As stated in Chapter III, the cultural domain, also referred to as the cover term, is the basic unit in every culture and could be refined into smaller categories (Spradley, 1980) with clarifying questions or interests (Lofland et al. 2006). The refined category is called the included term and is linked to the cover term through a semantic relationship. The cultural domain was placed on every domain analysis worksheet card to serve as a reminder of the domain and helped to visualize the relationship between the included terms and the cover term.

During the data analysis, many similarities were found among the 12 subjects regarding their perspective on how mentorship serves as an influence on their persistence and academic success at White University. The data analysis began with a review of the interview transcripts from the interview questions (Appendix D). As Spradley (1980) suggested, the analysis used a single semantic relationship term to uncover embedded cultural themes and patterns within the subjects’ transcriptions. A statement using the semantic relationship was placed on top of each domain analysis worksheet to assist in uncovering these included terms. This statement helped to guide the researcher to find included terms. Of Spradley’s (1980) nine basic semantic relationships found to be universal and most useful for beginning the analysis of cultural domains, special attention was paid to only four as they directly related to the research questions. They were: (1) strict inclusion, (2) cause-effect, (3) rationale, and (4) attribution (p. 93). The following chart is a completed domain analysis worksheet which shows the included terms, semantic relationship, and cover term.
Diagram 4.1 Completed Domain Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishing goals quicker</td>
<td>is a result of</td>
<td>a mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cause-Effect**

The first selected semantic relationship analyzed was *cause-effect* as it addressed two research questions in this study, “To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on their academic success” and “What direct influence does mentoring have on the academic success of African American males?” The analysis of the interview transcripts from all 12 subjects uncovered 77 included terms that both described and fit into the domain (Table 4.7a). The included terms were worded in the exact phrase as used by the participants. Of these 77 included terms, 18 were referenced in more than one interview. The number of times the 18 included terms appeared in different interviews is shown in Table 4.7b.
Table 4.7a

Unduplicated Included Terms Using Semantic Relationship- Cause-Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining Character</th>
<th>Develop the Right Mind Set</th>
<th>Try New Things</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be More Positive</td>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>Staying on track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Building Character</td>
<td>Helping to keep focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Intuitive</td>
<td>Stronger-Minded</td>
<td>Accomplish Goals Quicker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus More on School</td>
<td>Shown How to Study</td>
<td>Extra Help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests Improvement</td>
<td>Fewer Mistakes</td>
<td>Better Study Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherishing Friendships</td>
<td>Extra Knowledge</td>
<td>Attending Study Tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Organized</td>
<td>Priorities Straight</td>
<td>Being on the Ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Routine</td>
<td>Knowing Options</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Someone Available</td>
<td>Better Role Model</td>
<td>Better Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a Better Person</td>
<td>Getting Advice</td>
<td>Staying Out Trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Help</td>
<td>Making College Easier</td>
<td>Constant Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Focus of Life</td>
<td>Getting Involved on Campus</td>
<td>Academic Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>Staying on Track</td>
<td>Keep Me Going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Success</td>
<td>Introduced to New Ideas</td>
<td>A Lot of Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Care of Business</td>
<td>Keeping Me Going</td>
<td>Doing Better in Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to Handle Problems</td>
<td>Job Opportunities</td>
<td>Different Outlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Time Management</td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Extra Push</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Built Up</td>
<td>Extra Support</td>
<td>Good Study Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Positive</td>
<td>Being Academically Successful</td>
<td>Staying Away From Negative People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striving to Do Better</td>
<td>Believing in Oneself</td>
<td>Being Stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Successful Mentality</td>
<td>Studying Harder</td>
<td>Not Being Lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing Positive Things</td>
<td>Pressure to Succeed</td>
<td>Going to Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Doing Negative Things</td>
<td>Graduating</td>
<td>Stepping Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Accomplishments</td>
<td>Not Being in the Streets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7b

Frequency of “Included Terms” for 12 Subjects –

Ranking of Similar Included Terms Revealed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order of Included Terms</th>
<th>Number of Interviews the Included Term Appeared</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects with Same Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic Support</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staying Focus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Motivation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. More Success</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Good Study Habits</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Being Pushed Harder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Doing Better in Classes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Involved on Campus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Getting Advice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Staying on Track</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Persistence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Getting Help</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Staying Out of Trouble</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Prioritizing Things</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Develop the Right Mentality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Knowing Where to Go</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Not Being in the Streets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Involved in New Ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall range and variety of the included terms for *cause-effect* indicated that the interview subjects as a whole saw that mentors have a moderately high to high degree of influence on the outcome of the student’s academic success. Consistent with Levine (1996), Terrell and Hassell (1994), and Tracey and Sedlacek’s (1985) findings, Table 4.7a suggests that mentoring is important as it conveys hope, builds confidence in the protégé, and connects the student with the college environment. The subjects’ response makes it evident that mentoring conveys those characteristics. Further, mentoring is valuable as it resulted in these African American males’ accomplishing their goals quicker, staying motivated and focused, and having a support network away from home.

As these subjects noted the positive effects of having a mentor, the researcher evaluated the subjects’ perception of the necessity that African American males have a mentor. Two subjects, whose views were consistent with Sedlacek’s (1987) and Pounds’ (1987) findings, stated that all African American males should have assigned mentors as they enter college as it would assist in their transition to college as well as help to confirm that the student is in the right major.

*Ellis*

The other ten participants asserted that not every African American male needs a mentor. Some students enter college already possessing the right “mind set” and focus needed to succeed. Ellis was one participant who explained why not all African American males need mentors.

*Ellis*: I don’t really think all African Americans need a mentor, but I would say most males coming into college would probably need one for at least their first year. You have a handful of males that come into college strong-minded and can really make the
transition to college on their own. An advisor or mentor would be nice, but they really
don’t need it to succeed. And then, you have some of the males that really need it. So I
think that basically you have to find out what works for you. I wouldn’t just assign every
African American male a mentor. But I would say if this is what you want to do, then
here we have this program – sign up to get one. But if not, then keep on making it.

The passage suggests that students who do not want mentors will be able to
transition from high school and be able to succeed without additional assistance. In the
same interview, the bridge person asked Ellis to reflect on his own transition to college
and explore whether he was ready for and welcoming of a mentor.

**Bridge person:** - Do you think they know what they want – like when you came in here as
a freshmen, would you have gravitated toward a mentor?

**Ellis:** - Umm, Yeah probably because I was undecided. I knew I wanted to major in
Sports Management or Sports Administration. I always knew that, but as far as what
classes to take and stuff like that, and when you’re about to take your first college test.
Those are the things that you need mentors or older people so they can tell you how it’s
going to be. They can answer what college classes are like. Personally, I needed a mentor
my freshmen year.

**Bridge person:** Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not turn to
this person for advice?

**Ellis:** I don’t think so. I think with my mentor …what pushed me, what made me not give
up, which made me study even harder, which made me try to accomplish some things
that I probably wouldn’t have accomplished if I didn’t have that mentor. If I would have just left it up to myself I would have been lazy about it – like I really don’t think about doing this, I really don’t feel like going to class today and stuff like that. I really had to push myself because my mentor was my advisor, and he sees your grades for the semester and midterms. For me, I really had to do good because he was counting on me so much and wants me to make a difference. I think I wouldn’t have been as successful without my mentor… I think it made me push myself a little bit harder because the mentor I had …they really counted on you to do well. They want to see you succeed. If you’re a person like me, I hate letting people down. They put a lot of pressure on you to succeed.

*David*

Ellis was able to identify that he needed additional support, guidance, and a person to push him. He used this pressure to keep him focused and accountable. Consequently, a mentor was a major influence toward his success at Edinboro University.

In a similar dialogue, David also experienced success because of the influence of a mentor. Like Ellis, David’s mentor also helped him to stay focused and held him accountable for his grades and behavior. Both Ellis and David’s viewpoints are consistent with the findings of Tinto (1987), Haralson (1996), and Taylor (2003) in that the presence of a mentor was a motivating factor in students’ ability to adjust to the college environment. Further, David stated that all African American males should have a mentor to aid in their transition as they enter college. However, it was not necessary for students to maintain mentors throughout the duration of their college career. The following interaction is an excerpt from David’s interview.
Bridge person: What influence did mentoring have on your educational development?

David: It makes me more focused...I mean because...I mean just knowing that person is on you. Because it’s different when you don’t have a mentor, and you’re just by yourself and you mess up. You don’t have to answer to nobody. Nobody is out here watching. You just go and mess up –then it’s oh, whatever. But if you have that mentor and you mess up, that mentor is going to be on you and try to help you. So, I feel that helped me a whole lot. It kept me focused. It lets me know I don’t want to have to go to my mentor and explain to her why I’m messing up, why I’m doing this. So I feel a mentor helps a lot.

Bridge person: Do you think that all African-American male college students should have a mentor?

David: I feel starting a college career, they should have a mentor. I would think...they all should, because it will help them a whole lot, but I feel that it should be the mentors...umm...they should evaluate them and see if they still need a mentor. But I feel like everybody should. They’re some people who don’t need them. I’m not saying that everybody needs a mentor, because there are some people who don’t. I know I needed one. But everybody’s different. Some people are stronger then others. And some people are not strong and as they get strong and they’ll be okay. And some will need mentors the whole way out. So I feel, yeah, starting out everyone should have a mentor. That should be a priority. Everybody should have a mentor coming into college. Everybody should.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?
David: I don’t think I could. I mean…me personally…I’m not going to lie…

Bridge person: What would have happened?

David: Who knows? I probably would have got in trouble. I probably would have flunked out. Who knows? Just knowing somebody that cares and that’s pushing you and helping you that helped me. I know some people up here right now saying…Oh don’t nobody care. I’m just doing this and doing that. Man, if they had somebody to talk to them…you know. That will probably help them out. So I feel like the mentor definitely helped me. That’s probably one of the best things that ever happened to me up here. Honestly.

Corey

Corey and Timothy voice that all African American males should have an assigned mentor as they enter college. Similar to Terrell and Hassell’s (1994) findings, Corey and Timothy viewed mentoring as adding value and guidance to students when they are without direction. In the following excerpt, Corey explained the influence of a mentor.

Corey: The mentor comes in place to show them, to teach them, to help them learn how to overcome any difficulties they run into. I say every student should have a mentor even if they think they sure of themselves they should have one.

Bridge person: So you think that all African-American male college students should have a mentor?

Corey: Definitely… I personally think that without a mentor, it will hurt the student to develop the right mind for success. Not many students know exactly what they want to do. There are a lot of student here that don’t even have a major. They’re still undecided.
It’s like…that let’s me know that they’re unsure of themselves. I’d say the major defines the character. That’s what I’d say. Many of them be like, I don’t know what major to take and I’m like hey you’re unsure of yourself and the future that you want. That’s what I say.

*Timothy*

Like Corey, Timothy stated that all African American males should have a mentor because they need to be more conscious of the race related issues at the university. Timothy suggests that African American males must conjure up a level of consciousness where they are motivated to break the negative perceptions. In assessing the relevance of Cross’ Nigrescence Model, it is important to note that Timothy was the only subject to state that mentors were important in helping African American students break negative stereotypes. However, he did not elaborate as to the nature of these stereotypes. The following dialogue is from Timothy.

**Bridge person:** Do you think that all African-American male college students should have a mentor?

**Timothy:** Yes. I feel all African American males should have a mentor because…even though a lot of people don’t see race related issues and things like that, it still goes on. A lot of Black males, in particularly are pushed out to be either thugs, under achievers, or they don’t want anything. They need somebody to motivate them to keep them where they need to be. Not saying that everybody else doesn’t, I just feel that in a lot of situations that they might need it more than others.
**Bridge person:** Did Melissa or any of your other advisors help you through any difficult situations?

**Timothy:** Well, my one advisor… before I got into my major, my general education advisor kept me on track on what I was supposed to be taking and what I needed to be taking. Anytime I came to her for advice about classes or whenever I needed something she was there. She helped me out and helped me to get all of my credits together. She made sure I stayed on track and on schedule. Even though I have a regular advisor, if I needed something I could still go to her – even though I wasn’t her advisee anymore.

**Bridge person:** What about personal situations?

**Timothy:** Not too many serious personal – I didn’t have any personal problems or anything I had to go to them about, but it was offered that if I ever needed to I could.

**Fred**

Peers served as mentors for Fred. He notes that while all people are different and that one should not generalize, everyone should have a mentor or a person they could go to for help. However, it was not in Fred’s character to go to people for help. The following dialogue conveys Fred’s position on mentors and the influence they had on him:

**Bridge person:** Do you have anyone within the University - faculty or student - you look to for advice?

**Fred:** Outside of peers, not really.

**Bridge person:** In what ways do you look for your peers for advice?
Fred: I don’t have a lot of situations. Going through family problems or academic
problems or social problem or anything.

Bridge person: Why those specific peers?

Fred: A bond was formed when we first met. I was a roommate with one I’ve known
since 10th grade. Recent peers – I’ve learned how to trust and depend on each other.

Bridge person: They helped you through difficult situations?

Fred: Yes, the one is always there no matter what. Of the top of my head, I could talk to
about four people about anything.

Bridge person: Has this relationship changed over time?

Fred: Not significantly. They have gotten better. Nothing has gotten worse. Stronger
bridges.

Bridge person: Do you think that all African-American male college students should have
a mentor?

Fred: Not all. I guess it depends on the person. You really can’t generalize about people.
You have to see where they stand academically and socially.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have
this person to turn to for support?

Fred: Umm…I do believe everyone once in a while you do need somebody to go to. The
type of person I am I usually try to take matters into my own hands and do it by myself.

Keith

Whereas Ellis, Corey, David, and Timothy needed the influence of a mentor for
support and encouragement, a college mentor did not influence Keith. He indicates that
there was nothing a mentor could have taught him that he was not able to figure out
himself. It is important to note Keith sees the value of African American males having a mentor even though he believed no person could make him more academically successful than he was. Keith’s influence came from a high school teacher who convinced him to go to college. As he demonstrated a high level of motivation and focus when he entered college, Keith was an example of a strong-minded African American male that Ellis and David referenced in their interview. The following interaction is an excerpt from Keith’s interview to demonstrate his strong sense of self.

**Bridge person:** What could the University do to make you more successful?

**Keith:** I don’t know if there is anything. Everything, anything that prevents me from being successful is pretty much my own doing. Even now, I’ve never really been much for academics. I never really cared much for them. Sometimes I feel challenged and then I work hard. If I don’t then I kind of fall back. I always need something extra to keep me going. I mean after high school, I didn’t even want to go to college. But there’s no other good alternative, plus the fact I get to go up here for free. That definitely adds merit.

**Bridge person:** The Board of Governors Scholarship?

**Keith:** Yeah, That didn’t hurt at all. But it’s all about me maintaining focus and interest. Academically, there’s not really much the school can help me with.

**Bridge person:** Is there anyone at the University, faculty, student, or staff that you look to for advice?

**Keith:** No.

**Bridge person:** has anybody helped you through anything difficult at the University?
Keith: There’s none I can think of. I really haven’t looked toward anyone else for help ‘cause like I said everything starts within myself and then pretty much go from there. My biggest motivator or biggest distraction is pretty much myself.

Summary

Consistently with the findings of Haensly and Parsons (1993), these students attest that mentoring influences academic success by providing support, confidence, self-concept, and higher self-esteem. The subjects emphasized academic as the primary expected outcome for having mentors. Table 4.7b indicates that five participants identify academic support, staying focused, and motivation as the results they anticipate. Another four subjects note that mentors elicited more success, good study habits, do better in class, and push the student harder. The frequency rankings in Table 4.7b also point out that mentors are valuable to helping the student connect with the college environment, which is consistent with Sedlacek (1976), Astin (1982), Parker and Scott (1985), and Pounds’ (1987) findings. The subjects reference “not being in the streets”, “staying out of trouble”, “prioritizing things”, and developing the right mentality” as important outcomes to their development. Even though not everyone in this study used mentoring, all 12 subjects thought that mentors were valuable because they provided additional academic support, was able to motivate, and kept students focused.

Attribution

The next semantic relationship analyzed was attribution, which also addressed a research question. The question was “How has the institution and the African American male formed a complimentary relationship that enables these males to become successful?” Thus, the semantic relationship for attribution focuses on the composition of
mentors, their role with students, and the formation of a complementary student-mentor relationship that resulted in success for the student. Mentor remained the cover term. An analysis of the transcripts from all 12 interviews uncover 77 included terms (Table 4.8a). Of these 77 included terms, 14 were referenced in more than one interview. The frequency ranking of the number of times different participants used these 14 included terms is shown in Table 4.8b. The included items are presented in the phrase as given by the subjects.
### Table 4. 8a

Unduplicated Included Terms Using Semantic Relationship – Attribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patience</th>
<th>Able to articulate</th>
<th>Good role model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know where the student needs help</td>
<td>Interest in student outside academics</td>
<td>Forthcoming with information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational</td>
<td>Understands the mentees</td>
<td>Able to influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence with students</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>Knowledge of subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of limitation</td>
<td>Someone who cares</td>
<td>Checks on me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets me on regular basis</td>
<td>Cares about student success</td>
<td>On time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Keeps you focused</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stresses education</td>
<td>Wants to do the job</td>
<td>Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stays focused on me</td>
<td>Goes beyond to help</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Black presence</td>
<td>Can teach you</td>
<td>Gives you time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusting</td>
<td>Not driven by money</td>
<td>Dependable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will come and find you</td>
<td>Doesn’t rush you</td>
<td>Work not sloppily done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good character</td>
<td>Has answers</td>
<td>Knows about life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows how system works</td>
<td>Guide on right path</td>
<td>Get you around obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide in personal life</td>
<td>Being there</td>
<td>Time management skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does things professionally</td>
<td>Strong work ethic</td>
<td>Accomplished things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Don’t put me down</td>
<td>Builds you up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the right thing</td>
<td>Counsels through problems</td>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Realness</td>
<td>Leads in right direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Takes care of business</td>
<td>Drills success in me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An advisor</td>
<td>Giving advice</td>
<td>Not doing things negatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push the students harder</td>
<td>Can stand on his own</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving opinions</td>
<td>Nonjudgmental</td>
<td>Attacking the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can get me back on my game</td>
<td>Reaching out</td>
<td>Does things outside advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being cool</td>
<td>Being able to relate</td>
<td>A leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me take risks</td>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8b

Frequency of “Included Terms” for 12 Subjects –

Ranking of Similar Included Terms Revealed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order of Included Terms</th>
<th>Number of Interviews the Included Term Appeared</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects with Same Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge of Classes/System</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Interested in Me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Able to Motivate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Availability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gives Me Time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Not Rushing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stays on Me</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teaches Me Something</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Positive/Right Mindset</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Get Me Back on Track</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Good Role Model</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Caring</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Wants to Help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Can Focus</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The included terms for attribution indicate that the 12 successful African American males in this study want their mentors to be insightful, dedicated to helping them personally and academically, and committed to ensuring the students’ progress. The ranking points out that the interview subjects viewed knowledge of classes and the university system as the most mentioned quality to being a mentor. The overview of the interviews suggests that mentors display a genuine interest in both the students’ academic and social lives. The attributes given by the subjects reflect a reciprocal relationship that formed once the mentor had given advice that the subjects found to be beneficial.

Timothy

In the following interaction, Timothy is consistent with Astin’s (1977) findings where the developing a relationship with mentors was important to increase his academic success. Timothy shows loyalty and confidence in those people who want to help him. This specific excerpt outlines how different mentors fulfill different roles and have a different connection with students. The relationship may be predetermined because of the job position or interaction with the student. Timothy’s dialogue indicates that everyone plays a role in his success.

Bridge person: Do you have someone within the University you look to for advice?

Timothy: As far as faculty members or anybody?

Bridge person: Anybody.

Timothy: I go to a couple of people for advice – academically and socially. I go to the Multicultural Office, my personal advisor for my schoolwork, and a few professors that I had multiple classes with. I go to them for some things. Yes.
Bridge person: What kind of advice do you want from them?

Timothy: Mainly about the class that I’m taking with them or upcoming classes that they may be teaching because I feel that I could learn better in their classes. I vibe with the way they teach. I understand it.

Bridge person: Have you looked to students for advice?

Timothy: Yeah, all the time really. I look to them as far as socially and academically. I’m part of an organization, and I meet other students. I know who I can depend on and the people I can go to, so therefore, I just go to them maybe for classes or take classes together with them.

Bridge person: So what are the qualities of an effective mentor?

Timothy: An effective mentor –I would personally say that a mentor that is available or would become available if it is necessary. One that is willing to do for you and is not rushing. They don’t just try to help everybody –not necessarily help everybody, but they don’t just see you need something and they hurry you up, they give you a little bit of something and send you on about your business. It’s not sloppily done. They take a little bit of time and effort into the situations that you end up in. Some people they just try to help everybody that comes along. So, therefore, they just slide you a little information and then you don’t know what to do with it, but other good advisors will take a little bit more time to explain things to you and try to help you. And sometimes if they see that something might be wrong or that you’re struggling, they won’t just wait for you to come to them, they might say something to you.
According to Timothy, it is important for mentors to be accessible, available, professional, and knowledgeable. David displays more gratitude about having mentors than Timothy. David stated his mentors have positively changed his life and have influenced him to stay focused on his education. He is appreciative that his mentors care and want him to succeed. The following is an excerpt from his interview:

Bridge person: How have you changed as a result of your relationship with these mentors?
David: As far as me first coming up here and me right now, I would say I changed a whole lot. Now, I’m more focused on my school work. I’m a better person. I don’t do the stuff that I used to do. I’m enjoying school right now. At first I didn’t want to work. Now I want to work. I think I’m a better person all around. My whole life did a total 360. I would say like in all aspects, you know. I don’t hang with some of the fellas I used to hang with when I was first up here and at home. When I’m at home, it seems like I’m just bored because I don’t hang around my old friends because I’m just so focused on school. And I would say that’s because my mentor got me so focused on school that I just distant myself from all those people and things. Not even in Edinboro but in Pittsburgh as well. My mentor helped me out a whole lot. It changed my focus on my whole life.

Bridge person: So what would you say the qualities of an effective mentor are?
David: Where do you want me to start? Knowing that somebody really cares about you makes it so much more easier. Not just somebody just trying to teach you or give you time because they have to. You know...I mean that’s good knowing that somebody
always cares about you and always on you...you know. That’s a good quality from my perspective. That motivates me more. Just knowing that somebody cares about you and your college career. That’s a motivating factor for me. They have to be dedicated to really helping somebody, because I know that working with some of these students out here is just hardheaded. You really have to be focused on helping the individual. Sometimes you have to go out your way to help somebody but you have to do what you have to do. Sometimes you have to take the extra mile to do what you have to do.

Darrell

Darrell, Like David is grateful to have mentors. He thinks the mentoring experience was invaluable. Darrell received mentoring from faculty in a structured academic program aimed at increasing retention. The following interaction details Darrell’s appreciation for the mentors’ guidance, perseverance and commitment to ensuring his success.

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, has the University done an adequate job to provide you with academic, personal, and social support? If not, what more can the University do in this regard?

Darrell: Umm, I would definitely say so. When I first entered this institution, I was part of the ACT 101 program. For me, there is nothing else on this campus that has been the biggest help that I could possibly have. They have definitely been there as far as tutoring, study sessions, as far as helping with financial aid, and keeping me to stay on track. They have just been there. I’m able to talk to them when classes are becoming overwhelming. They have different little meetings, little parties, and different little sessions that really
calms us down and helps us to relax before finals and entering a new semester.

Throughout the semester, I visit their office constantly and talk to them on a weekly basis. I talk to Dr. Gleischner and Dr. Iglesias. That has been one help. Ms. Connie- I can’t thank her enough for all the support that she’s giving me. I remember my freshman year I wasn’t able to stay focus. I could always come talk to Ms. Connie and she would always get me back on my game and get me back on track …

Bridge person: What things could the University have provided to make you more successful?

Darrell: Umm, I don’t know. I’m trying to think (long pause) I don’t know.

Bridge person: Do you have someone within the University you look to for advice?

Darrell: Yeah, Dr. Carol Gleischner, Dr. Gibson-Hancock, and Dr. Esposito. Those are the three primary people I look to for advice. And when it comes to taking classes, when it came to pursuing my major, and when I tried to get things situated with the dance team. Anything that I could possibly think to talk about, those are the three professors I talk to.

Bridge person: How did you come to know these people?

Darrell: I met Dr. Gleischner through Act 101. And every since then, she has been my academic advisor, counselor, and support system. Esposito and Hancock are professors. I met them through classes.

Bridge person: Did these people help you through any difficult situations? If so, please explain?

Darrell: Dr. Gleischner, yes. She has helped me through many situations. With her being a counselor as well, she has helped me thorough many relationship problems that I was having. And keeping me on track and get me through the semester – not being focused on
that, but being focused on my schooling. Dr. Hancock has made me see that I have to view life for myself and make choices for me, not just for my family.

Fred

One subject, Fred, discussed the importance of having a mentor. Because he did not utilize faculty as a mentor, he was able to reflect how the influence of one could have been more beneficial to his success. As a result, he sees the attributes that having mentors bring to students. Consequently, Fred believes that every student, not just African American male, should have a mentor as they begin their college career.

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

Fred: I would expect them to have all the knowledge that I would need so I don’t have to go to different people for different things. I would want that person to have everything that I need. As far as academic things…different things in my program that I would need to know about…different organizations that could be beneficial for me to be a part of, concerning my major and all that type of thing.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Fred: Umm, you need somebody to look up to, you need somebody that knows the way. So I think it’s very beneficial and I think a lot of… I think everybody that’s a first year student here should have some type of mentor. I know I didn’t have it and I probably would have been a lot better off had I had somebody to lead me in the right direction in different things. Not that I was terribly off, but some things I didn’t really get done in
time because I didn’t have people to let me know what I needed to do and get done in whatever time.

Pete

Pete notes that while the mentors’ influence is primarily academics, he or she must also help with improving the student’s life. The following excerpt between Pete and bridge person identifies that mentors influence students even when they do not realize what is learned.

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

Pete: Better study skills, improvement on test taking, and grades. It don’t have to be all academics, just life and improvement in general.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Pete: I think it’s basically to help you through college and everything that comes with it like a career search and a relationship and just life.

Bridge person: What influence did mentoring have on your educational and personal development?

Pete: At first I actually didn’t think that it could go anywhere ‘cause it wasn’t helping me at all, but when …later on down the road, I actually realized that it did help me. I was having trouble in one of my classes. And he checked with me and taught me better study skills and I actually saw improvements on my test grades.

Bridge person: Do you think that all African-American male college students should have a mentor?
**Pete:** Yes I do. I think they should to break that negative stereotype that all African American males have…stuff happens and they just get used to the freedom. I think a mentor can help with all that.

**Bridge person:** Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

**Pete:** Umm, I honestly don’t think I could have

**Summary**

Timothy, David, Darrell, Fred, and Pete’s excerpts confirm that mentors are vital to a student’s success. Consistently with Terrell and Hassell (1994), these subjects validate that students want a person to lead them in the right direction, care about their success, and stay on them to ensure that they follow through with the plan. Mentors prove to be valuable influences to students even when they do not instantly realize the impact. The attributes given by the subjects illustrated that mentors are motivating factor and a major influence on their academic success.

The frequency ranking for **attribution** illustrates the most valuable quality for a mentor is to have knowledge of the system. Two-thirds of the participants emphasize its importance. The majority of attributes concentrate on traits that emphasize relationship characteristics. The subjects noted “interests in me”, “availability”, “gives me time”, “not rushing”, and “wants to help” as important attributes. Academically, the participants emphasize “knowledge of the system”, “stay on me”, “teach me something”, and “get me back on track” as important attributes.
Rationale

The third semantic relationship analyzed was rationale. Rationale addressed the final research question, which was, “To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American males who are successful in college?” The analysis focused on how African American males viewed having a mentor helps to promote their persistence in college. As with the other semantic relationships, mentor remain the cover term. An analysis of the transcripts from all 12 interviews uncovered 28 included terms that described the reason for the cultural domain (Table 4.9a). Of these 28 included terms, six were repeated in more than one interview. The frequency in which the included terms were referenced in multiple interviews is shown in Table 4.9b.

Table 4.9a
Unduplicated Terms Using Semantic Relationship - Rationale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To graduate</th>
<th>Getting help</th>
<th>Smoother transition to college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of system</td>
<td>College success</td>
<td>Better grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Experience in field/major</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic support</td>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>Gain wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>Don’t get lost academically</td>
<td>get focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines to follow</td>
<td>Getting motivated</td>
<td>Accomplish goals quicker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain interested</td>
<td>Lay foundation</td>
<td>Break negative stereotype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career search</td>
<td>Learn life</td>
<td>Role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting prioritized</td>
<td>Make better decisions</td>
<td>Know options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better organized</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 4.9b

Frequency of “Included Terms” for 12 Subjects –

Ranking of Similar Included Terms Revealed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order of Included Terms</th>
<th>Number of Interviews the Included Term Appeared</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects with Same Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Better Grades</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Obtain Knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Get/Extra Help</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Networking/Career</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Keep Focus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Role Modeling</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Keith**

The frequency rankings of the recurring included terms revealed that 75% of the participants believed that mentoring results in better grades and helps the students to obtain knowledge. As such, the researcher concluded that the influence of mentoring is beneficial for African American males because it results in greater academic success.

Keith endorses the importance of a mentor. While he makes it clear that he did not have nor needed a mentor during his college career, he saw that it could prove to be an academic benefit to African American males. Keith states that having a mentor should lead to better grades, motivation, and focus. The following is a segment of his interview:

**Bridge person:** What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?
Keith: I expect to probably accomplish any goals that is set out, maybe at a quicker pace. Or more effectively because it wouldn’t just be me working on it. I would also have someone helping me through the situation. So if my goal was get better grades, if I had like a C average, with a mentor I would expect to boost it up to a B or maybe somewhere in the A range. I feel like by myself I could probably get a B, so just …better overall results.

Bridge person: So you would say one reason to have mentors is for better grades?

Keith: Outside of accomplishing goals or umm…some people aren’t motivated enough to stick through a lot. Sometimes they lose motivation or interests, so definitely someone who could be a motivator. Some people struggle in academics. It takes them a little longer to learn depending on their style of learning. And a mentor should be able to notice that and be able to help them in that area. Some teachers don’t actually notice some people learn better by doing, some people are visual learner. I believe that a mentor should be able to pick up on that and work with them from that standpoint.

Pete

Pete explained that his mentor had an influence on him that he did not notice until later in the college career. He was able to see his progress and understand that it was because of his mentor that he did well in a class. The following excerpt of this dialogue:

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Pete: I think it’s basically to help you through college and everything that comes with it like a career search and a relationship and just life.
Bridge person: What influence did mentoring have on your educational and personal development?

Pete: At first I actually didn’t think that it could go anywhere ‘cause it wasn’t helping me at all, but when …later on down the road, I actually realized that it did help me. I was having trouble in one of my classes. And he checked with me and taught me better study skills and I actually saw improvements on my test grades.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

Pete: Umm, I honestly don’t think I could have.

Fred

Two subjects saw their peers as valuable mentors and influences in helping them to achieve academic success. Fred, consistent with Hansman (2001), relied more on his friends to help him than he did university staff because his friends were able to address both his academic and social needs. As a result, he was motivated and able to maintain focus on his academics. The following is an excerpt from Fred’s interview.

Bridge person: Tell me how you developed these skills.

Fred: Trial and error. Basically by growing up, learning the pros and cons of not studying and studying. Having that constant support. There were some peers there that told me to take my academics seriously…

Bridge person: Were they older, younger, or in the same grade?

Fred: Same grade.

Bridge person: Do you have any faculty or student you look to for advice?
Fred: Outside of peers, not really.

Bridge person: In what ways do you look for your peers for advice?

Fred: I don’t have a lot of situations. Going through family problems or academic problems or social problem or anything. A bond was formed when we first met. I am a roommate with one I’ve known since 10th grade. Recent peers – I’ve learned how to trust and depend on each other.

Bridge person: They helped you through difficult situations?

Fred: Yes, the one is always there no matter what. Of the top of my head, I could talk to about four people about anything.

Bridge person: What influence did they have on your educational and personal development?

Fred: Just seeing that person on their – focus on their academics. Not only their academics but getting involved with campus and staying focused. Someone like that. It helps to motivate me.

Summary

These excerpts from Keith, Pete, and Fred illustrated that mentorship is an important, influential component to academic success regardless of whether students believe they could succeed without a mentor or they prefer to form this relationship. Because mentoring comes from students and university staff who have overcome similar obstacles, it serves as a valuable source of motivation, insight, and encouragement to protégé.
Strict-Inclusion

The fourth semantic relationship analyzed was strict-inclusion. Strict-inclusion addressed the research question, How has the institution and the African American male formed a complementary relationship that enables these males to become successful? This relationship provided insight as to those type of people and offices that African American males viewed as providing mentoring at White University. Again, mentor remained the cover term. An analysis of all the transcripts from the 12 interviews uncovered 21 included terms (Table 4.10a). Of these 21 included terms, 13 were repeated in more than one interview. The frequency in which the 13 included terms appeared in different interviews is shown in Table 4.10b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Older brother</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>High school teacher</td>
<td>Grandma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Step-dad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>Father figure</td>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>ACT 101 counselor</td>
<td>Multicultural director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Church/church family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>Roommate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10a

Unduplicated Terms Using Semantic Relationship – Strict-Inclusion
Table 4.10b

Frequency of “Included Terms” for 12 Subjects –

Ranking of Similar Included Terms Revealed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank Order of Included Terms</th>
<th>Number of Interviews the Included Term Appeared</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects with Same Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mother</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Church/Church family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Professor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aunt</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Uncle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Multicultural Director</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ACT 101 Counselor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Grandmother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Advisor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Brother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Cousin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In analyzing this strict-inclusion relationship, it is important to note that this research study did not assess whether the mentors’ sex or race was a determining factor or made a difference in their selection of a mentor. This study only focused on whether mentoring influences the academic success of African American males. The interview questions and the bridge person gave the subjects many opportunities to express a preference if one existed. No subjects referred to this point. In fact, the results from the collected data indicated that mentors were selected based more on attribution and cause-effect semantic relationship factors. The race or sex of the mentor did not appear to be an
issue. The subjects in this study named mentors who were African American, Latino, White, and male and female.

*Darrell*

The interview transcripts reveal that participants are appreciative of people who were sincere in helping them. In the following interview excerpt, Darrell states his gratitude for his family background, involvement in church, and community programs. He expresses great appreciation to everyone who had an influence in his success.

*Darrell*: I had a good strong family background - My grandparents, my aunts and uncles. I just had a lot of that there even though I didn’t have a father. I say the greatest influence on my life was my mom because she always taught me that I could do anything and be anything no matter what and to strive for perfection. Definitely my Uncle Paul - he has been the father figure in my life. My church has definitely played a big influence on my life because I truly believe without God I wouldn’t be here today.

*John*

Next, John discusses the impact that his Step-dad had on his success and how that made him understand the importance of education. Further, John describes how advice from an administrator was helpful in giving him direction. Because of his focus and trust in the advice from the administrator, John views himself as a mentor and tries to lead other to the administrator.

*Bridge person*: Tell me about some of the people who have had the greatest influence on you both personally and academically.
John: I would say the person who had the most influence on me was probably my step dad, even though I didn’t live with him that long. I lived with him up until about 9th grade, but he always…he talked a lot and he always stressed education. Like we could be doing anything, playing around doing this, doing that, no matter what it was, and at the end of the day he be talking about get your education. Education is the key. That’s just something he always said… And then as things went on, my uncles …they’re the ones that…I only had one uncle in my family, he’s the only one that made it to college and the only one that had a decent job or whatever. So I mean from then on, I guess, he was a little bit of a father figure. But after that, my mom, the closer it came to graduating… she had more influence. But I just remember the stuff my step dad said for real.

Bridge person: Did your step dad have a degree?

John: Na…he just worked the job he had until he retired… He had it so hard when he was growing up. He just wanted it to be better for me and stuff. He just stressed education and I knew that was the way.

Bridge person: Do you have anyone within the University – faculty, student or staff - you look to for advice?

John: Advice, I would say…well after I had the meeting, or if I need something like that I usually go to [Administrator A] because he helped me that one time and I feel that was a big influence that really helped me a lot. It’s to the point when I’m talking to somebody and they say - I don’t know what to do and this and that – I will tell them to go to [Administrator A] personally. I try to tell them to email him. People will try to be stubborn or they just don’t want to listen or think that I’m too old. Even older people who are about to graduate or don’t know what to do about grad school, they might think that I
Influence of Mentoring

John: In my first year here, I didn’t know anything. I’m just like…well they’re here to help you other than that, if it’s not them, I’ll try to figure it out myself. I’ll just ask my roommate. He knows a lot about stuff because he’s involved with a lot of things. So either that, myself, or Administrator A. That’s pretty much all right now.

Bridge person: How did you come to know Administrator A?

John: He had a panel discussion. Not a panel discussion, but he was talking to everybody about something. At first, I never really said nothing to him. I knew he was the Dean of Student Life, but that’s all he was. I would never try to talk to him, but now it’s like I have a personal relationship and say how is it going. I just feel more comfortable around him. If I ever needed something, I wouldn’t be afraid to ask him.

Summary

Strict-inclusion relationship showed that these African American males appreciated people who are sincere in helping them, gave them direction, helped them to understand the importance of education, and stressed education. Importantly, not all of the people who were regarded as mentors were all involved in education. They were parents, the mother’s boyfriend, family members, and church members who never attended college. The important thing was that the mentors stressed education and wanted the students to have a better life. The educators who were mentors provided the support, guidance, and knowledge that these students found invaluable.

Summary of Analysis and Semantic Relationship

All four semantic relationships indicate that mentors serve many purposes. The subjects’ responses were consistent with Brown (1995) in revealing the complexity of the relationships and the degree to which the student depends on mentors for their expertise.
The African American males in this study developed complex relationships with their mentors. This confers with the holistic approach and affirms Wunsch’s (1994) theory of the many skills necessary in order to be an effective mentor. Also, the participants conveyed that while a mentor’s knowledge of the system was the foundation to building a mentor relationship, it is the interpersonal relationship that was most valuable to reaching their academic potential. Clearly, their friends, families, and university staff serves as an emotional support system more than an academic support system.

**Taxonomy Analysis**

The domain analysis worksheets uncovered several patterns and themes of cultural behavior reflecting the influence of mentoring on persistence for African American male junior and seniors. This provided the starting point for a taxonomy analysis and an overview of the cultural scene. Thus, the next step was to construct a taxonomy analysis to determine how these terms related to each other. As stated in Chapter III, a taxonomy shows the degree of relationships among all the included terms in a domain, whereas a domain analysis only shows that a relationship exists (Spradley, 1980).

The taxonomy analysis was conducted using the cause-effect semantic relationship as it directly addresses the subjects’ perception of the influence mentoring has on the persistence of African American males at Edinboro University. Because the number of included terms discovered from the transcriptions was large (77), an initial analysis was conducted of the 18 most often used included terms. However, this procedure produced a minimal, repetitive, and incomplete analysis. To produce a more comprehensive result, the researcher grouped similar included terms into an inclusive
subset and then came up with an appropriate name for the subset. For example, “getting help,” “getting advice,” and “knowing where to go” were combined to produce “an advisor.” In addition, “doing better in classes” was placed under “more success,” “not being in the streets” was encompassed to “staying out of trouble,” and “involved on campus” was merged with “involved in new ideas.” Thus, the original 18 included phrases were narrowed to 11. Following the procedure of combining similar included terms resulted in new subsets and allowed for new insights into the influence of mentoring on persistence for African American male juniors and seniors at Edinboro University. The researcher produced a completed taxonomy (List 4.2) by using specific structural questions (List 4.1).

List 4.1 Taxonomy Questions

1. In what ways do mentors provide academic support?
2. What are the different ways mentors influence students to stay focus?
3. What are the different ways mentors provide motivation?
4. What are the different ways mentors influence students to be more successful?
5. What are the different ways mentors influence students to push harder?
6. How do mentors influence students to get involved on campus?
7. What are the different ways mentors act as an advisor?
8. What are the different ways mentors influence persistence?
9. What are the different ways mentors influence students to keep me out of trouble?
10. What are the different ways mentors influence students to prioritize things?
11. How do mentors help students to develop the right mentality?
List 4.2
Mentor Taxonomy

1.0 Academic Support
   1.1 Encourage me to not give up
   1.2 Accomplish goal quicker
   1.3 Decide what classes to take
   1.4 Advice on how to study
   1.5 Person who listens
   1.6 Stays on me
   1.7 Gives me time

2.0 Push Harder
   2.1 Concerned
   2.2 Honest with you
   2.3 Blunt with you
   2.4 Stays on me
   2.5 Gets me to learn something
   2.6 My responsibility
   2.7 Not being hand fed

3.0 Develop the Right Mentality
   3.1 Good understanding of mentee
   3.2 Become stronger minded
   3.3 Does positive things
   3.4 Guide you in the right direction
   3.5 Be around the right faculty/staff/people
   3.6 Can stand on their own
   3.7 Blunt with you
   3.8 Already strong minded

4.0 Motivation/motivates
   4.1 Have competition
   4.2 Makes me step up
   4.3 Counts on me to do well
   4.4 Can’t let him down
   4.5 Instill education is key
   4.6 Inspiration
   4.7 Builds a strong relationship
   4.8 Stays on me
   4.9 Enthusiasm

5.0 Stay Focused
   5.1 Attacks the problem
   5.2 Stays on top of my game
   5.3 Knowledge of the system and how to get around it
   5.4 Helps me through relationship problems
   5.5 Be effective
   5.6 Takes care of business

6.0 Prioritize things
   6.1 Stay on top of your game
   6.2 Does things professionally
   6.3 Frederick Douglass Program
   6.4 Better grades
   6.5 Accomplish goals quicker

7.0 Persistence
   7.1 Takes both you and university
   7.2 Not giving up
   7.3 Knows how the system works
   7.4 Cares about your progress
   7.5 Builds a stronger bridge
   7.6 Improve test taking
   7.7 Keep your head up

8.0 More Successful
   8.1 Don’t automatically jump to conclusions
   8.2 Better grades
   8.3 Interests in me
   8.4 Takes both you and the university
   8.5 Notice that student needs help
   8.6 Positive attitude
   8.7 Has life experiences
Table 4.12 (continued)

Taxonomy of Cultural Domain: Mentor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.0</th>
<th>Involved on Campus</th>
<th>10.0</th>
<th>An Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Smoother transition from high</td>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>Knows how to get around</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td>system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Break negative stereotype</td>
<td>10.13</td>
<td>Build stronger bridges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Make success a lot easier</td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>Gives their opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Stays on me</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td>Don’t automatically jump to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>An Advisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Not just there for the money/title</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.0 Keeps me out of trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Person who listens</td>
<td></td>
<td>Helps me stay of the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Lead you in the right direction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goes out of his way to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Cool person</td>
<td></td>
<td>Does things outside advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Able to relate to advisees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Constant support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Helps academically</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust and depend on each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Sees grades for semester</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gives ways to get in contact with me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>Realness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Guides you in the right path</td>
<td></td>
<td>First person you go to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>Makes success easier</td>
<td></td>
<td>Distance myself from bad friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>Takes care of business</td>
<td></td>
<td>Has time for me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The completed taxonomy indicates numerous interrelated components within the subsets. Consistently with Cuyjet (1997), the table displays that mentors have many roles and expectations as they help African American male junior and seniors persist through college at Edinboro University. The subjects in this study also indicate that they expect mentors to perform various aspects of academic support, advising, motivational tactics, and ways to keep them focused. All subsets of the mentor taxonomy reveal a desired characteristic for the mentor. Within each subset are included terms that explains that there are social and academic components.

The majority of the categories in the taxonomy suggest that the mentor must be able to accommodate the protégé’s needs both academically and socially. Academic Support specifies that mentors provide academic support through encouragement, giving advice, listening, staying on the student, and helping the student to decide what classes to take. Push Harder indicates out that mentors should be concerned about the student, honest, blunt, push the responsibility of learning onto the student, and get the student to learn something.

Mentors could assist students in Developing the Right Mentality through their understanding of the individuals, helping them to be around positive people, having a good understanding of the student, and getting the student to develop a strong mind. Mentors provide Motivation by making the student “step up”, counting on the student to do well, instilling the importance of education, staying on the student, having enthusiasm about learning, and creating competition. Mentors assist the student’s ability to Stay Focused by attacking the problem that arises, helping him through relationship problems, taking care of business, and showing the student how to get around issues through their
knowledge of the university system. The mentor could assist in Prioritizing Things by helping the protégé to “stay on top of their game”, doing things professionally, enrolling the student in a formal mentor program, and helping them to get better grades.

Persistence takes both the university and the student. Mentors help by not allowing the student to give up, caring about the student’s progress, helping the student to “keep his head up”, and knowing how the system works. The student will become More Successful when the mentor does not jump to conclusions, have interest in him, notice when the student needs help, and is able to incorporate life experiences into teaching him the importance of better grades. Involvement on Campus tends to help students make a smoother transition from high school, break the negative stereotype, and make success a lot easier. The mentor’s role of An Advisor involves listening skills, leading the student in the right direction, helping academically, and genuinely caring about the well-being of the student. The mentor helps the student to Stay Out of Trouble by going out of his way to help, having constant support, having time for the student, and doing things outside of advising.

List 4.2 indicates the complexity of the relationship and commitment that is required of mentors who desire to encourage success. While the mentor’s versatility could prove as an asset as he or she performs many of these mentor roles, the research subjects made it evident that it was not necessary that one person fulfill all of the elements of the taxonomy. Most of the subjects considered more than one person to provide mentoring and looked to each mentor to aid them in a specific element of the taxonomy. Clearly, the subjects will have different needs at different times and may look to different people to fill different elements of the taxonomy.
As discovered with the analysis by using the semantic relationships, the created mentor taxonomy indicates that most of the included terms that African American students value in a mentor do not revolve around actual academic work. Rather, the subjects in this study seemed more concerned with character issues, personal connection, and that the mentors have a genuine interest in their well-being. The majority (80.4%) of the included terms emphasized aspects of caring and a personal connection. Eleven (19.64%) of the 56 included terms related to academic support. While the Mentor Taxonomy points out the importance of a personal connection, the participants stressed that they first select a person to be a mentor because of the knowledge he or she possessed. After the mentor has demonstrated this knowledge, the relationship then becomes about the personal connection.

Cultural Themes

Cultural themes are reoccurring principles in the domain and make up the meaning in the culture (Spradley, 1980). Because the data were not discrete, there were occasions when the categories appeared to meld. As such, the analysis identified reoccurring themes. The participants’ experiences overlap many categories as they have different experiences. The data and taxonomy analysis from the transcript notes served to provide a better understanding of the influence of mentoring on successful African American male students. Many cultural themes were found that spoke directly to the research questions in this study.

The data from this study indicated that most African American males would have better academic success if they have a mentor. When first arriving, some African American males lacked the appropriate guidance, motivation, and understanding of what
it takes to be successful at a college. One way most of the students received the tools to be successful was through mentorship that came from informal processes and formal programs. As such, mentoring has a direct influence on the academic success of African American males in higher education.

In the instances where African American males enter college and not need additional assistance, the perception from the participants in this study is that these individuals must be mentally strong and highly focused as well as possess the self-discipline and motivation to balance academics and their social life. Nonetheless, the participants acknowledge that even these students could benefit from having a mentor. While some of the subjects also stated they would still have achieved academic success, the belief is that their success would not have been to the degree that it is currently if the mentor were not involved.

The mentors, in many of these cases, act as an academic advisor. There are times when their expertise is called upon to assist the African American males with scheduling issues and to navigate through the university system. To further aid in the student’s development, mentors may be asked to provide their protégés with options after graduation. For example, some of the subjects in this study were undecided as to go to graduate school or begin working right after graduation. Others wanted to be provided with professional networking opportunities.

The mentors and protégé established a bond and close knitted relationship that became personal once the students verified that the mentor had adequate knowledge of the university system. The saying, “Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” does not hold true for African American students in this
study. While caring is the most valued component in the relationship for these students, the connection does not materialize until the mentors demonstrate their knowledge of the system. After this knowledge was demonstrated, then the most important part about the relationship became the caring.

The mentors’ primary role is to provide African American males with non-cognitive support. While it is important for academic mentors to have knowledge of the university system, it is more essential for mentors to care about these students as people. The recurring message from African American males was that mentors were chosen because these students felt as if they mattered to the mentor. It is important to the participants that mentors want to help the person and not do it or view it as just a job, the title, promotion, or money. In short, the students needed to know the mentor cares.

African American male students want their mentors to be caring, genuine individuals. A reoccurring theme is that mentors have to be available and accessible when the students need them. The mentors the students select are to be nonjudgmental, good listeners, and can give an opinion if it is warranted. The African American male students want to see the mentors attack the problem and not the person.

African American males in this study responded to mentors who have a positive attitude and are “real.” In other words, they are able to tell the truth, be blunt, honest, all while continuing to display a genuine concern for the student. A mentor also has to be available when the student needs them, and when the mentor meets with the student it is important for the students to feel that they are not rushed. The mentor should be willing to spend as much time as needed to solve the problem or to listen.
African American males respond to mentors who are able to raise their esteem despite circumstances. Thus, the life experience of the mentor proves to be an important factor. Students feel comforted when their mentors can speak from life situations and how he or she overcame these obstacles.

African American males want to choose honorable, respectable mentors. These participants reveal that this was an important decision because mentors help to build character. Mentors are there to be role models and to help the student stay out of trouble. Therefore, the students want to pick someone who is going to make them successful in college and in the workplace.

Valuable data were obtained when the subjects addressed, “How they developed the skills that made them successful,” Two students revealed that their academic skills were acquired from the “trial and error” method in high school that carried into college. Both were placed in learning situations that reiterated the importance of experiencing and studying. As a result, these two students looked for mentors who perceived life and work experience.

The experiences obtained in high school also seemed to play a relevant part in their success. Two students appreciated the teachers and peers who pushed them to do better in this environment. Moreover, the competitive environment forced these African American males to study, complete their homework, and take pride in their education.

At the conclusion of all the interviews, all of the participants considered mentoring an important element that contributes positively to the persistence of African-American males in college. These students expected the mentor to produce results. Mentoring should result in better classes, better grades, and a relationship where the
students can discuss and work through personal issues. The mentor should keep the student focused, out of trouble, and help them gain extra knowledge. Better study skills, improvement on test taking are also important. This group also expected to accomplish their goals quicker. A mentor should be able to notice the students’ weaknesses and be able to help them in those areas.

**Summary of Interview Responses Related to Research Questions**

When attempting to answer the research question, “What direct influences does mentoring have on persistence with African American males who have reached their junior and senior year of college” participants were asked, “What influence did the mentoring experience have on your educational and personal development, and career aspirations?” The responses indicated that the successful African American male students in this study were focused, motivated, and pushed themselves harder in order to please their mentor. The protégés responded well to being held accountable.

The research question, “How has the institution and the African American male formed a complementary relationship that enables these males to become successful was addressed with two interview questions. The questions were “Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the university has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially”, and “Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to influence you?” The range of feelings varied from one subject believing he already possessed the necessary skills needed to persist through college to four subjects asserting that they could not have been as successful without the help of a mentor support system. In fact, two subjects gave all the credit of their success to their mentor.
There were similar varied responses when the participants were asked what more the university could do to aid in their success. One subject stated that the university has done a good job. Another asserted he received no support from the university but had no expectations from them when he entered. The consensus was that a better relationship could be formed if the university would provide more mentoring and minority programs and do more things for their commuter population.

The subjects addressed the third and fourth research questions, “To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on their academic success” and “To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American males who are successful in college” with the same three interview questions. They were what are some personal outcomes that you expect from having a mentor; what are some reasons for other students to have mentors; and could you have been successful if you did not turn to this person for advice.

Because their perception of the importance of a mentor was stated previously, the focus will be on the responses to the other two questions. The subjects in this study believed mentors help them to do better in classes, have accomplished some of the goals the student wants to accomplish, have knowledge about the university’s system, and be a role model. In addition, mentors kept these successful African American males students focused on their academics, connected them with positive role models on campus, helped them to stay out of trouble through positive reinforcement, and helped to identify resources that provided additional help. As a result, the subjects believed they would persist through college by having a mentor.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the role mentoring has in encouraging persistence among African American males who have reached their junior year or senior year at a public, predominantly white institution. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) indicate that many African American males do not strive to achieve success through their academic work because they anticipate that there would be no benefit to completing a baccalaureate degree and that they will succumb to a similar fate as many African American males before them. Recent research indicates that focusing on what students do wrong was counterproductive to increasing retention and graduation rates among this population (Padilla, Trevino, Gonzalez, & Trevino, 1997). The focus should be on what African American males do that is right. Studies should focus on how African American males overcome obstacles and matriculate through college (Graham, 1994; Hall, 1999; Hall & Allen, 1989).

Mentoring may be a key component. This study aimed to ascertain the influence mentoring had on persistence in African American males who are currently juniors or seniors in college.

Early research indicated that African American males were graduating in fewer numbers than African American females, white males and white females (Allen, 1991; Hagedorn, Maxwell, & Hampton, 2001). That trend, along with the decreasing number of African American males enrolling in college, had some scholars referring to this group as “endangered species.” However, recent statistics indicated that there were higher numbers of African American males enrolled and graduating from colleges and
universities than ever before. Even with this increasing number, the media continued to
dwell on the negative issues associated with some African American males.

There are many determinants for the academic success of African American
males at White University. This exploratory study was designed to examine the effects of
mentoring, a non-cognitive factor, on that success. Significant to this study was that the
subjects were current students entrenched in the culture of the university. This differed
from other studies that examined experiences after the subjects were no longer in the
controlled environment, or the subjects were transitioning from high school to college.
By using current students, this study provided a more accurate interpretation of a
mentor’s influence on African American males. The participants were able to discuss
recent experiences and views about the influence of mentors on academic and social life.

The following four questions guided this study:

1. What direct influence does mentoring have on the academic success of African
   American males?
2. How has the institution and the African American male formed a complimentary
   relationship that enables these males to become successful?
3. To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on
   their academic success?
4. To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American
   males who are successful in college?

The results have institutional policy implications for higher education dealing
with African American males. The results of the experiences as African American males
who have successfully made it to their junior and senior year at White University could further assist practitioners with retention, programming, and institutional efforts. This section contains a summary of the findings, implications for practice, suggested research recommendations, and closing comments.

Findings

Understanding the influence of mentoring on African American males who are currently in their junior and senior year at Edinboro University is the central focus of this study. The design of the research was a deliberate attempt to examine the extent to which mentors influenced the students’ academic success. As noted in Chapter I, more research should focus on what African American males do right that reflects positive imagery and helps to matriculate more males through college (Padilla, Trevino, Gonzalez, & Trevino, 1997). To aid in getting students to matriculate, Cuyjet (1997) suggested students interact and become involved in mentor relationships that result in a greater satisfaction of their college experience. Consistent with Cuyjet’s study, this study found that mentors assisted protégés with their academic shortcoming, social issues, and personal problems.

All the participants in this study fell within the traditional college student age range. Their SAT scores varied from the 500-600 range to the 1000-1100 range. One participant took the ACT. Eight of the 12 participants entered college in a formalized mentoring program.

Similar to the findings in Astin’s (1982) research that dealt with a student’s educational commitment and motivation predicted his academic success, the subjects in this study recognized that students entered college with different mindsets, expectations, motivational levels, and needs. Accordingly, this study found that their need for a mentor
varied. While only one subject did not have a mentor, thinking it was not a mandatory component for success, he believed mentoring was an important influence and could benefit more African American males in college.

Whereas all the participants in this study agree that mentors were beneficial to African American males, there is no consensus on whether African American males should have assigned mentors where the university connects the student with the mentor. Five of 12 subjects believe that because African American male should have a mentor assigned to him in his first semester of college as this is the critical time in the students’ development. One subject thought that every student, not just African American males, should have a mentor. Another participant maintained it was necessary for African Americans to have mentors, as there are so few of them who attend college. It is the time when students need the most guidance, knowledge, motivation, and help in the transition from high school to college. This belief is consistent with the work of Sedlacek (1976), Astin (1982), Parker and Scott (1985), and Pounds (1987) who emphasize that mentor relationships should develop early with African American students, preferably during recruiting and orientation programs. In Sedlacek’s (1976) view, the mentor relationship would bond students to the institution and increase the likelihood of persistence.

The remaining seven subjects suggest that males entering college should, and can, make an individual decision on whether they need a mentor. The consensus of these subjects suggests that students are aware of their limitations, needs, and aspirations and they also know who could provide the assistance to achieve this goal. As mentioned previously, these subjects note that some students enter college with a strong mindset and ability to stay focused and motivated. However, these students also believed the majority
of students would need assistance from a mentor, even if it is nothing more than reassuring students that they are on the right track. The seven subjects recognized that every situation may be different and, when it comes to mentoring, each recommended that students find out what benefits them most.

Consistently with Wunsch (1994), the participants in this study maintain that mentoring required a more holistic approach that placed education as a part to their personal growth. It is often said that people do not care how much a person knows until they know how much that person cares. This statement does not hold true for the subjects in this study. The primary concern of the participants was that the mentors have knowledge about their field and the university system. Thus, once the subjects verify that the mentor has the knowledge of the system, then a richer relationship emerged and flowed in the students’ personal life. Only after seeing the knowledge base of the mentor, personal issues became the heart of the relationship.

Eleven subjects’ experiences were consistent with Tinto’s (1987) research in that they persisted and were able to navigate Edinboro University due to their successful academic and social integration. The subjects adjusted by developing relationships with peers, faculty, staff, and joining student organizations. In addition, these African American males used their mentor relationship to overcome many academic and social challenges that arose at White University. They received knowledge about the university system, scheduling recommendations, which professors to take, as well as ways to “stay out of trouble.” With the educational goals realized, the subjects described experiences consistent with Astin (1982) and Tinto (1987) who asserted that persistence is realized when students are rooted in their commitment to their goals.
It takes more than academic ability for African American males to matriculate through predominantly White institutions like White University. The subjects alluded to several factors needed for students to persist. They would need someone to push them, keep them on track, serve as a role model, and help them through personal problems. All of these points are expectations and roles the subjects noted were the responsibility of a mentor. The mentor taxonomy (List 4.2) catalogued the subjects’ belief that the mentors’ role is to incorporate academic advising, a liaison between the student and university administration, a friend, a professional, a role model, a problem solver, a support, display knowledge, caring, able to motivate, and give guidance.

This study found that mentoring, whether formal or informal, was effective and influential when it was not intrusive. It seemed to be important that both informal and formal mentoring systems operate and complement each other to ensure the students’ success. The subjects who valued their mentor the most were the ones who allowed the relationship to develop over time. It began as a student seeking knowledge, guidance, and advising insight. The advice was rewarding, which helped create a strong bond. The relationship grew into the student relying on the mentor to be part of his support system where he could discuss social and personal issues. Indeed, two subjects valued their mentors’ input so much they referred to them as father figures.

Relative to the mentor-protégé relationship to the personal discussion, the subject feel it crucial that the mentor have a genuine concern about the students’ academic success. The subjects repeatedly stated that they require their mentor to be caring, sincere, and honest. It was important that the student feel the mentor is concerned about the student’s well being and had his best interest at heart. The subjects did not want the
motivation of the mentor to be money, title, or other accolades that may come with being a mentor.

While List 4.2 presented the mentor taxonomy containing many attributes, no single mentor fulfilled every element. The subjects preferred to have one mentor, but understood that it often took several people to satisfy the taxonomy. Two subjects in this study preferred faculty mentors mostly for academic advice, networking, and life experiences. All of the subjects preferred peers for personal problems and social guidance. One subject expressed this need differently by stating, “Maybe it’ll be better to have more faculty mentors because some students…I mean of course some care and some don’t care ‘cause they’re just students too. They have to get their work done. I don’t know if they actually care about helping another student succeed.”

As stated in Chapter IV, these subjects did not use gender or race as a determinant in selecting a mentor. Mentors were the students’ advisors, professors, staff, administrators, roommates, and friends. They were from formal programs and informal structures. They were male and female, African American, White, and Latino. The most salient criteria were that the mentors have knowledge of the system and they genuinely care about the student.

The family, along with self-motivation, proved to be the instrumental in encouraging success among the African American males in this study. Eleven of the 12 subjects stated that their family played a significant role in their academics. A conclusion could be made that more African American males could be successful in college if the university could derive a way to combine this family support system, the professors, and the student’s motivation.
In a formal mentoring program, the mentor is aware of his or her responsibilities toward the student. However, in an informal mentor system, the person who is providing mentoring to the student is not always aware that he or she is influencing the student.

This study indicated that students select individual mentors for various reasons. It may be due to career aspirations, similar backgrounds, and the mentors’ position on campus, networking opportunities, or personal connections.

Neither Cross’ Nigrescence Theory nor Robinson and Howard-Hamilton’s Africentric Resistance Model was directly applicable in this study. While the questions and focus did not lend themselves to specifically addressing the models, the subjects were provided with prompts to explain the situations in which a mentor is most useful. One suggestion was that African American students, specifically males, experience various stages that awaken their consciousness and motivate them to learn. This study could not confirm either theory. One subject stated that while having an African American mentor would be preferred because of the symbolic nature that success is possible, it is not necessary.

Another observation from this study is that some of the same people were mentors to many of the same students. This may be due to students referring other students to specific people or by participating in formal mentoring or academic programs. A recurring theme was that students received mentoring from the ACT 101 Office, Multicultural Programs Office, and the Office of the Dean of Student Life. One subject emphasized ACT 101 as the most influential component to his academic success and spoke highly of three faculty members who were associated with the office. It could not
be determined whether the participants in this study gravitated toward a person because of the nature of the office or the genuineness of the person.

This study is consistent with Kim and Conrad (2006), Pounds (1987), LaVant (1997), and Walter’s (1997) finding that students’ interaction with faculty and peers is likely to influence persistence and achievement. As noted by Kim and Conrad, the mentor-protégé relationship is a crucial component to the success for African American students at the predominantly White and historically Black colleges. However, the student must choose to become an active participant in his pursuit of an education. As indicated by this study, it is beneficial for students to engage in a relationship with mentors who help to secure a positive outcome.

**Implications for Practice**

The purpose of this study was to explore how mentors influenced African American males to persist at White University. These factors could be instrumental for higher education, practitioners, and policy makers in helping more African American males to persist through post secondary education. The major findings of this study, which were consistent with Tinto (1993), affirmed that persistence is most likely to occur when students are able to adjust socially and academically to college. Mentors could help these students make those social and academic adjustments.

As described by Wunsch (1994), this study confirmed that the African American males at White University required a holistic approach in their development. The Demographic Questionnaire indicated that the family has the biggest impact on the student’s academic influence, followed by the student displaying a great deal of self-motivation to be successful, and the influence of a professor. Because of the family was
the most selected influence for African American males to be successful, it would be advantageous for universities to provide programs and events where the family connection is included and welcomed. The university could create a collaborative environment where they, some family members, and the student work together to ensure the student’s success.

The Mentor Taxonomy identified many social and academic characteristics that the subjects in this study viewed as important attributes for mentors. A major factor toward this development is the student’s connection to his family. Other characteristics range from attributes such as listening, honesty, and a genuine concern for the student’s well-being, to having knowledge of the university system, networking resources, and serving as an advisor. While this taxonomy is specific to the students in this study, it indicated that successful African American students seek the knowledge and experience of another person. It listed the characteristics that are important to students matriculating through college. Moreover, the taxonomy provided a framework from the student’s perspective. Thus, it detailed what was important to them in influencing their persistence at the university. Other universities may utilize such a taxonomy to connect students with appropriate mentors and increase the retention and success rate of African American students.

This study confirmed Kim and Conrad (2006), Pounds (1987), LaVant (1997), and Walter’s (1997) findings that students’ interaction with faculty and peers are likely to influence persistence and achievement, and Sedlacek (1987), Astin (1982), Parker and Scott (1985), and Pounds (1987) findings that mentor relationships should be developed
early with African American students, preferably during recruiting and orientation program.

Sedlacek (1987) argued that African American males must demonstrate a realistic understanding of themselves, the ability to utilize support systems, and the ability to handle racism. This study confirmed that the African American males who participated in this study are aware of their academic abilities and limitations as they enter and matriculate through college. These successful African American males are able to recognize when they need help and seek out appropriate resources. Seemingly, the subjects in this study found mentors to be beneficial but the responsibility lied with the individual student to seek out those resources that would be the most benefit. This is consistent with Sedlacek (1987) who indicated that the ability to utilize support systems and persons is a non-cognitive skill that aids in their persistence through college.

Only one subject in this study voiced an opinion that mentors should help students deal with racism. This study revealed that the race and gender of the person were not a determining factor in selecting a mentor. It was important to the student was that the person has knowledge of the system and has a genuine interest in their academic and personal development. As noted in the Mentor Taxonomy, the person has to connect with the student at various stages in their college career.

Before the person could be considered a mentor, he or she had to first demonstrate appropriate knowledge of how the university works and how this was useful to the student. Once the person showed this knowledge, a rapport was established and the relationship began to form. After this relationship developed, the issues shifted from academic concerns to mostly personal issues. To be an effective mentor, practitioners
must notice when their protégé is in need of help. This comes through developing a relationship where the student recognizes the practitioner’s genuine concern for the student’s development.

This study indicated that successful African American males at Edinboro University have many needs and asks their mentors to fulfill these needs. While it would be advantageous for one person to accommodate the student and fulfill every role, it most likely will take many people in different capacities to satisfy the needs of these students. This serves to help practitioners by understanding that students will seek out those people who have good in a specific area. As such, practitioners could focus on those areas where they feel comfortable and have the most experience.

Along with ensuring the success of students, practitioners must recognize when resources are not being utilized effectively. The subjects in this study noted that it would be counterproductive to utilize mentors with students who enter college already focused, motivated, and strong minded. Such African American students are more prepared than most and do not require the additional attention. Again, successful students know their limitations. Moreover, the students in this study suggest that formal mentoring programs should not pair mentors with students. Rather they suggest letting the student select the mentor because he is aware of his needs at that particular stage in his development. This benefits the mentoring program as well as the student because the relationship is one that the student wants to develop.

**Suggested Further Research**

An interesting component of this study would have been to include African American males who are not academically achieving or have been placed on academic
probation. Examining their perception of the influence of mentors in relation to successful African American males would have been a great addition to this study.

While the possibility of including this population may have detracted from focusing on what successful African American males are doing right, a future study would complement this research. It could record contrasting behaviors, motivations, and relationships with peers, faculty, and staff. The experiences between successful African American males and those on probation could be used as a benchmark to assist with institutional interventions identifying and remedying academic problems at the early stages. Consequently, more African American males may persist to graduation.

While this study was not aimed at exclusively examining traditional-aged African American males, the selection process delivered such results. Students who are not of traditional college age enter the university at a different stage in their development than traditional-aged students. An additional study examining the role mentoring has on the academic success of non-traditional African American students could further enhance this study’s findings as well as provide valuable knowledge to academia. This dimension could prove interesting in assessing whether non-traditional African American males are more likely to utilize mentors as a resource than traditional males.

The subjects in this study agreed that mentors were influential and that many students could benefit academically and socially from having one. Understanding that mentors are important non-cognitive factors in determining success, an additional study examining whether those mentored junior and senior male students contributed mentor qualities to other students. This type of study could be of use to students and institutions wanting to maximize resources.
The subjects were undergraduates. A longitudinal research project would track whether they pursue mentoring relationship in graduate programs. It would be an enhancement to this study to interview students who were mentored on the undergraduate level and assess the level of importance they place on mentoring at the graduate level.

This study was conducted at a midsize public, predominantly White institution. It examined students’ experiences and social support networks. While the questions were not geared to discerning any racism encountered at the university, the subjects were given opportunity to discuss issues that was important to them. The subjects in this study did not mention institutional racism. Importantly, race was not an issue in selecting a mentor. Examining the experiences and support networks of those African American males attending a historically Black college or university would be an addition to this study. It would reveal the social support networks available in the different institutions, the way universities address institutional racism, and the offices the students frequent to receive mentorship.

This study revealed the mindset of successful African American males at Edinboro University. The reality is that more African American women are graduating from college than males. Why is this so? Are there difference support systems for women that help them to graduate at a greater rate? It would be interesting to know what the difference in the support system between African American females and African American males where the women are graduating at a greater percentage rate.

It was evident that the African American males in this study were heavily influenced by their family support system. Further research could reveal when the family
has the most academic impact on these successful students. Moreover, the research could address the family’s influence during the college years.

**Closing Comments**

While many researchers revealed numerous factors that contribute to African American male students’ academic differences, this study focused on the influence mentoring has on the persistence of academically successful African American males at Edinboro University. This study revealed that while no two students are alike demographically, they are to be considered a homogeneous group from which inferences may be derived. These successful African American males found mentoring to be a factor that benefited students who are not strong minded, motivated and focused. For such students, mentoring provided an additional support system to receive discipline, knowledge about the university system, and motivation.

Mentoring does not usually come from one person. Often, many people fulfill different roles at different times in a college career to ensure the students’ success. As noted by Mortenson (1998), the rate at which African American males graduating has declined by 6% percent, which is lower than that of other groups in college. While this statistic may be accurate, the fact remains that more African American males are graduating then ever before although not to the level that would be commendable. Researchers must focus on the positive imagery of this group and continue to encourage and highlight areas worthy of praise.

As revealed in this study, African American males are insightful, reflective, and inspiring. More importantly, they value education and are able and capable of persisting through college. With the support of a mentor that they select, students are to overcome
academic and social obstacles in college. They learned the behaviors, motivation, and persistence needed to persist.
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Appendix A
Sample Cover Letter

Date

Dear Student:

I am writing to request your participation in a study to assess what non-cognitive factors help African American males succeed at this institution. Specifically, this study examines the influence that mentoring has on the persistence rates of African American males who have already made it to their junior and senior year of college. There is no risk to you in this study. Your participation involves one face-to-face interview where you would answer 13 questions about mentoring and complete a 9-item Demographic Questionnaire. It is estimated the activities will take 25-45 minutes in length. Your identity in this study will remain confidential and I will use a pseudonym for your name in the final report.

This study will benefit the college/university sector. It will allow us to have a better understanding of how mentoring affects the persistence rates of African-American males in college and, as a result, make recommendations pertinent to having more African American males at predominantly White colleges academically succeed.

Please return the self-addressed stamped envelope along with the card marking whether you agree to participate in the study within two weeks. If you have any additional questions or comments, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Robert Beebe from Youngstown State University at (330) 941-1437 or rjbeebe@cc.ysu.edu, or Mr. Phillip Harris from Edinboro University at (814)732-2912 or pharris@edinboro.edu.

Thank you for helping to improve upon African American male persistence rates.

Sincerely,

Phillip Harris
Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

This is to certify that I, _____________________________, give my informed consent as a volunteer in a study to assess the influence mentoring has on the persistence of current African-American male junior and seniors at a predominantly White public university.

My participation in this study involves filling out a Demographic Questionnaire and one face-to-face interview of approximately 25 - 45 minutes in length. The interviews will take place during the Summer 2007 and Fall 2007 semester.

I understand that there are no risks to me. Benefits incurred from this research include a better understanding of how mentoring influences the persistence rates of African-American males in college.

I understand that the information I share with the researchers will be audio-taped with my identity remaining confidential at all times, so that no one will be able to identify me when the results are recorded/reported. A pseudonym will be used for my name in the final document to ensure confidentiality.

My participation is totally voluntary. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions asked of me, and/or refuse to participate in any aspect of this project.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

If I do have questions later, I know I can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Robert Beebe, Chair of the Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology and Leadership at Youngstown State University at (330) 941-1436 or rjbeebe@ysu.edu, the co-investigator, Phillip Harris at (814) 732-1461 or pharris@edinboro.edu, and/or Dr. Ed Orona, the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU (330) 941-2377.

I understand the study described above and have been given a copy of the description as outlined above. I am 18 years of age or older and I agree to participate.

____________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of participant                          Date

____________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of researcher                          Date
Appendix C
Demographic Information

Please provide the following information about yourself. This information will only be used to describe the general background of the participants and will in no way allow individuals to be identified. Please circle an answer to every item below.

1. Do you represent the University on any of the collegiate sport teams:
   (1) No  (2) Yes
2. Indicate your current age:
   (1) 19   (3) 21   (5) 23   (7) 25
   (2) 20   (4) 22   (6) 24   (8) 26 +
3. Indicate your academic year level:
   (1) Junior (61 – 89 credits)   (2) Senior (more than 90 credits)
4. Did you transfer from another institution:
   (1) No   (2) Yes
5. Indicate your living arrangements before coming to college:
   (1) Lived with both parents   (2) Lived with mother and step parent
   (3) Lived with father and step parent   (4) Lived at home with mother only
   (5) Lived at home with father only   (6) Lived with grandparent/s
   (7) Lived with other relative/guardian   (8) Lived on my own
6. Indicate SAT scores entering college
   (1) 400 – 500   (3) 601 – 700   (5) 801 - 900   (7) 1001 – 1100
   (2) 501 – 600   (4) 701 – 800   (6) 901 – 1000   (8) 1101 – 1200
   (9) more than 1201
7. Has either of your parents ever attended college?
   (1) No   (2) Yes
8. Have you ever participated in a formal mentoring program at this University?
   (1) Yes
   (2) No
9. Indicate anyone who has had an influence on your academic success? (Circle all that apply)

(1) professor  (3) other student  (5) community
(2) administrator  (4) family  (6) self
Appendix D
Interview Questions

1. Tell me about some of the people who have had the greatest influence on you both personally and academically.

2. What are the academic skills that have made you successful?

3. Tell me how you developed these skills.

4. Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially.

5. Do you have anyone within the University – faculty, staff or another student - you look to as a source of support?

6. Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to influence you?

7. What are some personal outcomes that you expect from having a mentor?

8. What influence did mentoring have on your educational and personal development?

9. What are some reasons for other students to have mentors?

10. How have you changed as a result of the influence of this person?

11. What are the qualities or attributes of an effective mentor?

12. Do you think that all African-American male college students should have a mentor? Why or why not?

13. Is there something that I have not covered that you believe is important for me to know concerning mentoring?
Appendix E
Interview Transcripts Pertaining to Research Questions

1. What direct influence does mentoring have on persistence with African American males who have reached their junior and senior year of college?

The actual question used to elicit an answer from the participants was “What influence did the mentoring experience have on your educational and personal development, and career aspirations?” From that, the following answers were obtained:

Ellis: Umm…I think it made me push myself a little bit harder because the mentor I had. They really count on you to do well. They want to see you succeed. If you’re a person like me, I hate letting people down. They put a lot of pressure on you to succeed.

[Break]

Darrell: That experience for me, it helped me to get through, to overcome, to really press on, because you see that you have people out there who are behind you and will back you up, who care about you and people who have done things, who have done this before you. It just shows that you can do it too. It was just a big help.

[Break]

Jeffrey: Umm…mainly different options as far as graduation, plus the professional development, cause I might want to jump into a position that’s looking for people of color or just looking for someone in the student personnel services area.

[Break]

Timothy: Mentoring – it kept me going. A couple times I felt I should just go to a two-year school like I had planned on. But a lot of the mentors here helped me see that if you just finish this right here, then you might have the possibility to go to a two-year school afterwards. …
Fred: Just seeing that person on their – focus on their academics. Not only their academics but getting involved with campus and staying focused. Someone like that. It helps to motivate.

David: It makes me more focused...I mean because…I mean just knowing that person is on you. Because it’s different when you don’t have a mentor and you’re just by yourself and you mess up. You don’t have to answer to nobody. Nobody is out here watching. You just go and mess up –then it’s Oh, whatever. But if have that mentor and you mess up, that mentor is going to be on you and try to help you. So, I feel that helped me a whole lot. It kept me focused. It lets me know I don’t want to have to go to my mentor and explain to her why I’m messing up, why I’m doing this. So I feel a mentor helps a lot.

Pete: At first I actually didn’t think that it could go anywhere ‘cause it wasn’t helping me at all, but when …later on down the road, I actually realized that it did help me. I was having trouble in one of my classes. And he checked with me and taught me better study skills and I actually saw improvements on my test grades.

Keith: With Mr. Grant, he pretty much set the foundation. I’ve always been someone interested in history, but one thing I’ve come to find out over the years is that if you don’t know who you are, you really can’t lead other people. And I’ve been told for years that if I stay my course that I’ll be a leader. With that in mind I should probably learn who I am.
Through Mr. Grant I got in an organization called One Hundred Black Men of America. There was a fellow by the name of Ed Williams, President of the Pittsburgh Chapter of One Hundred Black Men, and he set me up with a mentor. His name was Dawaud Akbar. He wasn’t as much of a mentor, in regards to your definition, but he’s someone who was there, who accompanied me through some things. Like whenever I come to the One Hundred Black men meeting, I could just unload on him and tell him some things that was going on. But that’s pretty much it. Because of that, I knew I did have a supporting cast. Even if they didn’t help as much, just the fact that I knew I had somewhere to go and someone who had my back. It kind of provided me with some comfort. I’m the type that doesn’t really like to bother people if I can do it myself.

[Break]

Steve: It’s not so much that they influence me directly, but like I said, I’m a very intuitive person. So I look at the things they do and sort of grow from that.

[Break]

Corey: It helps you to grow and uh…not just academically, but it builds character.

2. How has the institution and the African American male formed a complementary relationship that enables these males to become successful?

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Ellis: I think a little bit, but I don’t think that the university does a good job. I think it is basically up to you. But I expected that when I came to college. I knew it was going to be totally different than high school. People were not just going to hand feed you all of the time. If you need help, you’re going to have to go and find it yourself. So maybe, the
university does do a good job. I don’t know because I really didn’t need any help. I just made it through on my own.

_Bridge person_: Could the University have provided something to make you more successful?

_Ellis_: Umm, I think what they are doing and they have done now with the Frederick Douglass Program – if they would have had that when I came into the university – that would have made my freshmen year a lot smoother for me. I would have been able to make the transition a lot easier. You have certain requirements in these programs that you have to do like go to study tables and stuff like that. That can really help you your freshman year because it is definitely helping you make the transition. But they didn’t start that program until my sophomore year.

_Bridge person_: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not turn to this person for advice?

_Ellis_: I don’t think so. I think with my mentor - what pushed me, what made me not give up, which made me study even harder, which made me try to accomplish some things that I probably wouldn’t have accomplished it if I didn’t have that mentor. If I would have just left it up to myself I would have been lazy about it – like I really don’t think about doing this, I really don’t feel like going to class today and stuff like that. I really had to push myself because my mentor was my advisor and he sees your grades for the semester and midterms. For me, I really had to do good because he was counting on me so much and wants me to make a difference. I think I wouldn’t have been as successful without my mentor.

[Break]
Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Darrell: Umm, I would definitely say so. When I first entered this institution, I was part of the ACT 101 program. For me, there is nothing else on this campus that has been the biggest help that I could possibly have. They have definitely been there as far as tutoring, study sessions, as far as helping with financial aid, and keeping me to stay on track. They have just been there. I’m able to talk to them when classes are becoming overwhelming. They have different little meetings, little parties, and different little sessions that really calms us down and helps us to relax before finals and entering a new semester.

Throughout the semester, I visit their office constantly and talk to them on a weekly basis. I talk to Dr. Gleischner and Dr. Iglesias. That has been one help. Ms. Connie- I can’t thank her enough for all the support that she’s giving me. I remember my freshmen year I wasn’t able to stay focus. I could always come talk to Ms. Connie and she would always get me back on my game and get me back on track. I had a lot of professors that I would say have been outstanding professors. I’m real thankful for them. They gave me a lot of help and support. So I definitely think this institution has helped me in being successful.

Bridge person: How could you have been more successful?

Darrell: (fifteen second pause) Umm, I don’t know. I’m trying to think. (a long pause) I don’t know.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not turn to this person for advice?
Darrell: I don’t think so. I really don’t. I think I wouldn’t have. I think God put them in my path for a reason to help me get through. Like I said, everybody needs a little extra push and that extra support because sometimes your parents or the one that you are always closest too can’t always be there. I don’t think that I could have done it without them.

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Jeffrey: Academically, me personally their not offering enough…Socially, some things can be worked out socially as far as…

Bridge person: Personally, What have they done for your personally?

Jeffrey: Umm…I mean everything, I feel like most of the stuff I got, I got through networking and doing it myself. It’s hard to say…

Bridge person: Things that developed personally, individuals you grew up with, what has the institution done to help in that area?

Jeffrey: As far as my personal relationships go with other people on this campus; most people I knew, I knew before I came up here, and then you just happen to socialize with them and with other people, do they provide outlets for that? Yes and No. I mean when I first came up here there was a place where all the African American students would go and talk about issues, and so that was like an opportunity to get to know about events, more or less university events.

Bridge person: What more could the university do?
Jeffrey: A lot more respect! I mean with the recent black face incident, they are treating us better and there was the release of an apology letter, but people still remain ignorant to the fact. I feel like if this happens again what are they going to do now? Say the same thing, like they did it again and, “there’s nothing we can do”, and it’s just like all the other stuff that goes on with our faculty and staff on this campus. I remember when I personally went to Dr. Kiel’s office and asked him about the status about a Multicultural Director cause I knew that he was on the hiring committee, and we had three good candidates, and you mean to tell me that none of them wanted the job? I think that’s a lie. I was like y’all need to do something cause it’s just showing that you don’t care about the minorities on this campus. And thankfully this summer we finally got a multicultural director.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not turn to this person for advice?

Jeffrey: Probably still successful, but not as successful, without a mentor I would not have gotten involved in student organizations, because I wouldn’t have gotten the answers I needed to know, and requirements for graduation.

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Timothy: The academic support, Umm, I feel could be a lot better. The social support – I’m not too sure of. Maybe, in the earlier years when we were here. During my freshman and sophomore years, the social support was pretty adequate. But as the time grew on, it kind of lessened up. A couple of people call this school –it’s what you make it. So,
whatever you put in it is what you get out of it – education and social combined. I find that relying on fellow students sometimes might be better off than relying on professors or other people because of time restraints, schedules, and then some people really don’t care. They say “if you don’t get it, then you just don’t get it” - as far as education is concerned. A lot of my professors have been there for me and have helped me out. A lot of my advisors have been there for me and helped me out. So I really don’t have too many complaints. Most of, anything negative that transpired, more so I could have fixed rather than blame it on somebody else.

Bridge person: You said that your not sure about academically, or that they could do better?

Timothy: I feel that in some departments there is a lack of participation and a lack of equipment that would make things a lot easier for a lot of the students. So many students go here and there is not enough facilities for everybody. Sometimes it is hard to get there and the facilities are inadequate, not up to date information. The equipment keeps breaking down. And that’s about it.

Bridge person: How could you be more successful?

Timothy: Time at some of the facilities would have been better - 24 hour facility where you didn’t have to rush all day. You have class all day and a lot of people work – so then you’re left there at 8:00, 9:00 at night trying to get some work done. Umm, some people don’t have the internet so you have to come on campus to use the internet and there is only one 24 hour lab which just opened up last year in the Towers. And the computers there now are slow and there’s only about 12 computers in there. You have one hundred and something people in that building. You just need somewhere on campus where you
can go all day, anytime of the day. I mean…college students are up all night. I mean I’m up until 3, 4 in the morning. And if need to get some work done I need to be able to go somewhere and get it done.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not turn to this person for advice?

Timothy: I might have been as successful – considering the consequences of me not being successful. But they made it a lot easier for me to get here. It would have been extremely harder if I had not had turned to these people. But because of the repercussions of me not turning to these people…

Bridge person: Are you talking about at home?

Timothy: At home. Yes, at home with my mother and father. I have to succeed to matter what. But through them I was able to succeed a lot easier.

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Fred: Umm…Yeah. I want to say it is here if you need it. There have been times I have asked for help and received the help – academically and socially.

Bridge person: How could the University make you more successful?

Fred: I would say hire more interesting professors, quality professors on campus. I’m talking from experience this semester as well. I’ve lost interests in a couple of my classes from my professors through the years.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?
Fred: Umm… I do believe everyone once in a while you do need somebody to go to. The type of person I am I usually try to take matters into my own hands and do it by myself.

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

David: Yes. I would say it has. I would say it did a good job.

Bridge person: In what way did it satisfy you?

David: Through Act 101. They helped me. Me being around Phil Harris. I kind of watch him. That motivated me. I see a strong Black brother and I say I want to be like him one day. Little things like that really helped me out.

Bridge person: How could the University do better?

David: I feel the university did a good job. I mean… everybody needs improvement on everything. I say if they need more improvement I would say a little more mentoring, mentoring programs, but they done a good job doing that. I really can’t complain about the university not making e more successful. I feel that if you want to be successful it’s not just the university it takes yourself as well. They’re doing a good job.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

David: I don’t think I could. I mean… me personally… I’m not going to lie…

Bridge person: What would have happened?

David: Who knows? I probably would have got in trouble. I probably would have flunked out. Who knows? Just knowing somebody that cares and that’s pushing you and helping you that helped me. I know some people up here right now saying… Oh don’t nobody
care. I’m just doing this and doing that. Man, if they had somebody to talk to them…you know. That will probably help them out. So I feel like the mentor definitely helped me. That’s probably one of the best things that ever happened to me up here. Honestly.

[Break]

**Bridge person:** Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

**John:** Yeah…Umm, I went to the enough little meetings and stuff. Especially when you’re a freshmen, that’s when you get most the stuff. It’s not mandatory, but it’s out there and you will hear stuff from your peers more then from the institute like…before I see a flyer or before I pay attention to a flyer, I’ll hear something from my friends. So, it’s more so about word of mouth from your peers before it gets from the staff and everything. When I actually do hear about it…it actually took me – like I was having some trouble up here trying to figure out what major I want to do. I was actually at a meeting when they was talking about some things. Matter fact, it was when Kahan was giving a little speech, he was talking to us. I was really thinking about well – if I don’t do something now, I’m going to be in school and not know what I’m doing. I don’t want to be another person that just goes to college and ends up dropping out. I actually took the time to write the information down. And then, I called him up. When I showed him I really needed help, he took it upon himself to call me, see how I was doing, and told me what to do. And after I did it, he checked up on me about a week later and made sure I did everything. It’s just like a way to put it. It’s like if you don’t do it, it’s because you don’t know about it. I just got use to hearing it from peers.

**Bridge person:** The peers have had good influence on you.
John: Yeah.

Bridge person: Older peers or the same age?

John: Same age. The people I came in with.

Bridge person: How about the University, What could they do to make you more successful?

John: Basically, just let me know my options. Like when I picked a major –know what different routes you can take – things that will interest me. Umm, with the advisors…I had advisors that told me to just take this class or that class and I’ll be cool. I had some advisors that told me why I need to take this class, broke everything down, how to time everything up. Because at first I was an education major and they just told me to do this, that and try to fix everything up. But I didn’t know all about how the PRAXIS works or that I was supposed to take them earlier and how I needed a certain grade point average and so. It was to the point I was...like I was saying childhood wise, my parents was telling me I got to go to college, I knew I was supposed to go to college – education, education. But when I actually got to college, I didn’t know what to do. I came in undecided for a while and I was switching majors back and forth. I just knew here is where I was supposed to be.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

John: Umm. It’s a possibility, but as I really look at it, I was going so down hill at the time and I didn’t know what to do or who to turn to. I might have just kept on trying and kept making more mistakes. I think I wouldn’t have been in as good a situation I’m in now. If I had the chance I’d do it again and I’d do it a lot sooner.
Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Pete: Yes, I can honestly say they have. Well, my freshmen year, living on the Frederick Douglass Floor. That’s what actually provided me with all the skills. I’m not sure about any other floor, but the living learning communities seem like they would be the best in that because we had to attend study tables and have mentors and all that.

Bridge person: What other things could the University have provided to make you more successful?

Pete: They can…’cause I currently live off campus and it’s hard knowing about stuff that going on campus as far as like mentors and that information needs to get out more to students that live off campus ‘cause I really have no idea what actually goes on on campus. Other then through email.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

Pete: Umm, I honestly don’t think I could have.

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Keith: Not really. I’ve been here for three years and I can’t really think of anything that I haven’t done…I put myself in the position. They have a thing called the writing center where they help you write, but its not …that’s not my weakness so it doesn’t really benefit me.
Bridge person: What more could the University to make you more successful?

Keith: I don’t know if there is anything. Everything, anything that prevents me from being successful is pretty much my own doing. Even now, I’ve never really been much for academics. I never really cared much for them. Sometimes I feel challenged and then I work hard. If I don’t then I kind of fall back. I always need something extra to keep me going. I mean after high school, I didn’t even want to go to college. But there’s no other good alternative, plus the fact I get to go up here for free. That definitely adds merit.

Bridge person: Board of Governors Scholarship?

Keith: Yeah, That didn’t hurt at all. But it’s all about me maintaining focus and interest. Academically, there’s not really much the school can help me.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful at this University if you did not have this person to turn to for support?

Keith: Yeah, I do think so.

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Steve: Academically, I think its fine. I think there’s enough opportunity here. You just have to look for it. Uh, I started out in the Frederick Douglas Program and they sort of gave me the tools I needed to handle the classes and things. I think socially…that’s where they’re lacking. You know it’s a predominantly White school and I wish there were a little bit more Black people. Not that I’m saying there’s a problem with the White people on campus. It’s just that being in that environment, it just…
Bridge person: Is there anything the University could have done to make you more successful?

Steve: Umm, I guess there is more programs they could’ve used for minorities on campus.

Bridge person: Would do you mean? More programs academically? Socially?

Steve: Socially. Like there’s a…I think academically you can find things to do. Just in general with people. But socially there’s only one organization like AFRICA. There’s the fraternities too, but other then that, we don’t have much to do on campus. In a way, I guess you can look at it as a good thing and a bad thing because it sort of teaches you to interact with other races and things. And I guess that’s very important once you get in the working environment also.

Bridge person: Could you have been as successful as you are at this University if you did not have your friends to influence you?

Steve: I don’t’ believe so. Like I said, I’ve been away from family for so long so if I didn’t have friends, who would I have up here?

[Break]

Bridge person: Based upon your experience at this institution, how well do you feel the University has prepared you to succeed academically and/or socially?

Corey: The University -academically, they have prepared me. I guess you can say that in a nice way because the stuff that you have here…the experiences here I guess is like you have to expect them as you prepare for the real world. Just like in high school, they always be like they prepare and stuff you for college. I say in college they prepare you socially, academically to graduate, and…
Bridge person: What about socially?

Corey: Yeah, socially too, ‘cause in classes…they have like many classes where you have to work in groups or present many cases before the class, or they have projects that you go around and you have to like present cases early to other people, get their feedback and stuff. And you have to be creative to attract them into whatever you’re doing.

3. The third research question was, “To what extent do African American males place an importance on mentoring on their academic success”. The fourth research question was, “To what extent does mentoring promote persistence among African American males who are successful in college”.

Because responses to the third response has been previously cited in the number 2 transcription, the following transcription notes will consist of other two questions.

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

Jeffrey: I would hope to do better in my classes and know how to handle certain probably that I would face academically like scheduling conflicts.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Jeffrey: I would expect my mentor to be in the same or similar academic department as I am, have some accomplished the same goals that I am looking to accomplish, and also help me with some of life struggles.

[Break]

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?
Fred: I would expect them to have all the knowledge that I would need so I don’t have to go to different people for different things. I would want that person to have everything that I need. As far as academic things…different things in my program that I would need to know about…different organizations that could be beneficial for me to be a part of, concerning my major and all that type of thing.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Fred: Umm, you need somebody to look up to, you need somebody that knows the way. So I think its very beneficial and I think a lot of… I think everybody that’s a first year student here should have some type of mentor. I know I didn’t have it and I probably would have been a lot better off had I had somebody to lead me in the right direction in different things. Not that I was terribly off, but some things I didn’t really get done in time because I didn’t have people to let me know what I needed to do and get done in whatever time.

[Break]

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

David: I would expect to have better grades, I would expect to have better grades. I would expect to be a better role model for the upcoming freshmen. I want people that’s in college to see me as a better person. I expect to have more academic responsibility. And I would expect to have a better college career basically because that is what a mentor is supposed to do so that’s what I would expect.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?
David: Mentor is to keep you focused, keep you out of trouble, keep you focused on your academics, and keep you walking a straight line basically.

[Break]

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

John: Just extra knowledge. You’ll basically have your priorities straight. You got somebody that you’re checking in with. I mean its like…if your coming to college, like people get this thing like your grown and stuff and they wouldn’t even want a mentor. Especially, like an African American male. He’ll say no I don’t want to do this, I want to do this. But you’ll soon realize that things can work better. I would recommend one because they’ll keep you on top of things. You got to check in and do this and that. You got to show them your schedule, show them the work you do, or something like that. The mentor, say, they know what your major is…they can show you different routes to take and say which way do you want to go. There’s a whole bunch of things really. Like say if I came in, and I thought I been here, like you say go to McNerney and take a test, do this do that. And I didn’t do that until my second year. If had did that my first year and got my classes I wanted to take by my second semester and be on the ball or everything. Then I would have been more organized and had more free time to do a bunch of other stuff. I would have been so organized and had my grades together then I could have got into more extra curricular activities, more programs, and little stuff like that, but it didn’t. So, I’m trying to catch up and my classes are overlapped. And I already got classes I wasted and stuff.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?
John: If you’re someone that needs that extra help or maybe was somebody that came from a family that was harder, that could be somebody that you look up to. If you have somebody that’s always on you, not necessarily on your case, but somebody that’s looking up and making sure you’re getting your work done, then it’s a lot easier just because it’ll be prioritized and everything. I wouldn’t say it’s a bad idea. I didn’t actually have a mentor, but I don’t think it’s a bad idea. It’s something positive.

What influence did mentoring have on your educational and personal development?

[Break]

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

Pete: Better study skills, improvement on test taking, and grades. It don’t have to be all academics, just life and improvement in general.

Bridge person: What are some reasons to have mentors?

Pete: I think it’s basically to help you through college and everything that comes with it like a career search and a relationship and just life.

Bridge person: What are some personal outcomes that you would expect by having a mentor?

[Break]

Keith: I expect to probably accomplish any goals that is set out, maybe at a quicker pace. Or more effectively because it wouldn’t just be me working on it. I would also have someone helping me through the situation. So if my goal was get better grades, if I had like a C average, with a mentor I would expect to boost it up to a B or maybe somewhere
in the A range. I feel like by myself I could probably get a B, so just …better overall results.

**Bridge person:** What are some reasons to have mentors?

**Keith:** Outside of accomplishing goals or umm…some people aren’t motivated enough to stick through a lot Sometimes they lose motivation or interests, so definitely someone who could be a motivator. Some people struggle in academics. It takes them a little longer to learn depending on their style of learning. And a mentor should be able to notice that and be able to help them in that area. Some teachers don’t actually notice some people learn better by doing, some people are visual learner. I believe that a mentor should be able to pick up on that and work with them form that standpoint.

[Break]

**Bridge person:** What are some general reasons a student would need a mentor?

**Steve:** I think that the student would need a mentor so that he has guidelines to follow. It’s kind of like if you’re writing a paper and you have an outline. It helps you to develop the paper so…it’s sort of the same way, if you have a mentor, they sort of help you develop your academic skill.

[Break]

**Bridge person:** What are some personal outcomes that you expect from having a mentor?

**Corey:** Guidance, wisdom, I guess.

**Bridge person:** What are some reasons for other students to have mentors?

**Corey:** It’s a good thing because many students, they come to the university and get lost academically and personally. The things that they do they didn’t hear of. The mentor comes in place to show them, to teach them, to help them learn how to overcome any
difficulties that they run into. I say every student should have a mentor even if they think they sure of themselves they should have one.