# Identifying Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships between Adults and Elementary Students in Urban Settings

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## Abstract

Research has shown that mentoring is a productive way to address multiple needs in education and help children maximize their potential while bridging racial and generational lines (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Liao & Sanchez, 2019; Spencer et al., 2020; Spencer, Gowdy et al., 2019). This research aimed to identify the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings. This study used a basic qualitative approach to interview ten participants in mentoring relationships: five adult mentors and their five child mentees at a community-mentoring organization. Participants answered questions adapted from the effective mentoring factors found in the research. Mentors and mentees were asked which effective mentoring factors were most important and if any factors existed in their mentoring relationships that were not present in the research. Coding was used to analyze participants' responses. All participants specified personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, and safe space as vital factors in their mentoring relationships. In addition, all mentors agreed that paid coordinator support was an essential aspect of their motivations to mentor. Teachers and adults who work with elementary students in urban settings can proactively build a relationship with their students by initiating trust in their students to model a trusting relationship. In addition, by advocating, supporting, and protecting their students, these adults help establish a safe emotional and physical setting for their students.

## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and my family. Lakiesha, I love you, and I am grateful for walking with you through this process. God used you as my anchor when doubt, sickness, bills, frustration, and many other things attacked us – thank you! Alesia, Amaya, and Angel, thank you for your patience and support of Daddy through this study. Always have the courage to pursue your dreams with the strength of The Lord. Finally, Anthony and Vivian, thank you for the sacrifices you made to have me and raise me; this does not happen without you.

**Acknowledgments**

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Thank you, Dr. Amanda Ochsner, for your expertise and guidance in this journey. Your encouragement and sacrifice to take the time to walk with me and provide theoretical insights were such a blessing to me. Thank you for your kindness and patience.

Thank you, Dr. Carnel Smith. You have been like an older brother to me for years. You never let me talk about my dreams without action. You made me find the information to seek my alternative principal's license. You encouraged me to figure out how to get my doctoral degree. You invited me to speak at your summer football camp, and you wrote a letter of recommendation. Also, you shared the hardships of your journey to help me understand that I was not the only one who struggled in the doctoral process. You have shown me that mentoring can transcend a professional bond and move into a relationship of brotherhood.

Finally, I would like to thank all the faculty and staff at The University of Findlay. The love and support I felt from this institution have left an indelible mark upon my life and educational philosophy. Honestly, I want to educate with the encouragement, patience, and love I felt from this institution.

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# Chapter I. Introduction

## Background of the Problem

Mentoring is a productive way to address multiple needs in education and help children maximize their potential while bridging racial and generational lines (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Liao & Sanchez, 2019; Spencer et al., 2020; Spencer, Gowdy et al., 2019). Spencer et al. (2020) define mentoring as, "A flexible, broad-based approach to youth development that has been found to promote positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for children and adolescents, including high-risk youth" (p. 98). Laco & Johnson (2019) assert that an excellent mentoring environment can overcome the low expectations of students and achieve positive outcomes. It creates parental and community engagement opportunities while providing teachers and students with volunteer support and resources to affect academic gains (Henry et al., 2017). Montañez et al. (2015) find that teachers attribute mentors with helping them manage the disruptive behaviors of students who exhibit externalizing behavioral problems without the need to label the students. These new behavioral strategies learned through collaboration with the mentor helped the teacher reinforce current or create improved classroom management policies. The improved classroom behavior allowed these teachers to focus more on teaching the curriculum rather than managing behavior. According to Keller & Pryce (2012), students who had structured mentoring relationships showed statistically significant reductions in depressive symptoms.

The demand for mentoring has led educational administrators and community stakeholders to create programming in order to maximize the impact of mentoring on the youth in their community. The influx in the creation of mentoring programs has caused challenges for the programs. Mentoring programs are being created impetuously without full understanding of

the components of effective programs (Frels et al., 2013). Rhodes and DuBois (2008) assert that mentoring programs are moving in a direction of creating caring relationships, which trivialize the heart of mentoring. An adult simply "caring" for a student does not create a mentoring relationship. According to Keller & Pryce (2012), effective mentoring relationships reveal a hybrid between friendly mutuality and intentional adult support and guidance unavailable in their typical friendships. Mentoring relationships are typified by a balanced approach with a mix of activities, structured conversations, and unconditional support from the mentor.

Mentor programming faces another challenge as mentors are recruited and matched with youth. Frels et al. (2013) list lack of mentor commitment, insufficient mentor training, and minimal emotional support for mentors as reasons many school-based mentoring programs are unsuccessful. Mentor recruitment was identified as the top challenge faced by programs in the 2016 National Mentoring Program Survey (Spencer et al., 2019). Youth are often matched with adults with whom they have no prior relationship. This has led to the premature end of mentoring relationships, especially in at-risk youth. Some mentors struggle with releasing their initial expectations of mentoring and accepting the actuality which can be mundane and challenging, especially in the initial stages as mentors and youth struggle to find common ground. At-risk youth may possess negative beliefs about their self-worth and the intentions and dependability of others. These challenges have led mentors to feel overwhelmed and/or underappreciated and thus they leave the mentoring program which perpetuates the initial feelings of the youth (Spencer et al., 2019).

Recent research on mentoring relationships reveals a disconcerting revelation – mentoring relationships have the capacity to cause harm to the children involved. Spencer et al., (2019) state that mentoring relationships that end prematurely make matters worse for vulnerable

youth by introducing another regrettable relationship with an adult into their lives. Spencer et al., (2020) report a discrete reduction in the functioning of youth whose mentoring relationships ended before the initial time commitment. Mentors who do not consistently attend their weekly commitments with youth might do more harm than good (Frels et al., 2013). The need to continue research on mentoring relationships develops into an obligation with the knowledge that it has the capacity to help or harm young people. Children should not be left to explain what happened or if they were the cause of the mentoring relationship ending early.

**Rationale & Significance of the Study**

Research has identified effective practices for mentoring programs to implement that can curtail the challenges mentioned above in their programs. Liao & Sanchez (2019) report that close and consistent mentoring relationships are an important program practice that promotes sanguine youth results and avoids harm. Frels et al. (2013) list monitoring the program, providing ongoing training for mentors, involving parents, structuring activities, clarifying expectations about attendance, structured framework, an evaluation method for the program, and incorporating program benefits for youth as effective practices for mentoring programs. Having these factors show an increase in the desired results for stronger mentee outcomes.

Mentoring relationships involve a high level of complexity that necessitates ongoing investigation. Mentoring relationships can range from being trusting and lifelong to conflicting and resulting in early termination (Keller & Pryce, 2012). This complexity exists because of the intricacies of human behavior. Development of trust takes time and requires opportunities for the individual to be observed, so their trustworthiness can be assessed. This is especially true of young people who are relationally vulnerable (Spencer et al., 2019). Levine (2016) defined trust in mentoring relationships as, “The willingness of a youth to rely on and confide in a mentor…

formed through the relational experiences of reliability in word and deed, honesty, and emotional sensitivity and protection from harm" (pp. 1-2).

There are times when this trust is developed with young people naturally. Young people have informal mentoring relationships that develop organically over time with adults in the young person's social network (Liao & Sanchez, 2019). These family members, coaches, custodians, gang members, youth pastors, neighbors, drug dealers, teachers, and others are a key part of the youth's support system. It is the opinion of the researcher to note that whom we feel should be in the child's social network is irrelevant. The child defines who exists in their social network based on support in their environment. Mentoring relationships experienced difficulties when mentors used more rigid "prescriptive" approaches based on the mentor's goals and expectations to fix the youth. More success was seen in mentoring relationships that adopted flexible, youth-centered "developmental" approaches that focused on building friendship, focusing on the child's needs and interests, making joint decisions, and allowing the relationship to develop at its own pace (Keller & Pryce, 2012, p. 60).

Adults might have the right intentions and the necessary commitment to mentor youth, but they may be limited by being unaware of factors for effective mentoring relationships (Frels, 2004). Some adults have tried to engage youth in mentoring relationships with plans to alter the child's behavior and attempt to address the challenges in the child's life early in the relationship. Other adults have expected the child, despite their age, to act more like a peer and take equal responsibility in maintaining the mentoring relationship by initiating contacts and planning activities. The results of these actions have caused the child to become alienated from the adult and the adult to become frustrated (Keller & Pryce, 2012; Shelmerdine & Louw, 2008; Spencer et al., 2019). Spencer et al. (2019) would describe an adult who lacked realistic expectations on

how to build a relationship with a young person by relying on the child's parent and other mentoring support personnel to help the adult communicate appropriately with the child. Other adults were listed as prematurely ending the mentoring relationship because they erroneously thought that the child was not interested in mentoring or did not need the mentoring due to the lack of the adult initiating the contact. The adult did not realize that the child had recently experienced a major change in their family structure and was looking for a stable adult on which they could rely on.

How does one balance allowing the mentoring relationship to develop naturally while not becoming just another caring adult who is a friend to the child? This can be confusing for adults who desire to mentor children effectively. Researchers recognize these challenges for mentors as well. Sanchez et al. (2018) state that it remains unclear if specific relationship activities are useful in fostering close relationships with youth. Frels et al. (2013) assert that goal-oriented interactions are not indicators of relationship closeness in mentoring relationships. The gravity of influence and impact that mentoring relationships can have on young people requires further investigation in order to provide direction to mentors tasked with guiding mentoring relationships. A small body of research is beginning to identify the factors that lead to more successful mentoring relationships and demonstrate how characteristics of those mentoring relationships correspond to youth outcomes (Keller & Pryce, 2012).

The standardization of mentoring programs allows educational administrators and community stakeholders to evaluate programs. This will allow them to identify that the mentoring programs have the fundamental components these programs should have according to research before allowing access to children. However, the programming structure is subordinate when it comes to ensuring that the child will experience positive outcomes. Sanchez et al.

(2018) reveals that the mentoring relationships youth develop with their mentor is at the heart of mentoring interventions. The quality of mentoring relationships, specifically relationship closeness, is directly related to positive youth outcomes. Keller & Pryce (2012) assert that the benefits achieved through mentoring depend on the nature and quality of the mentoring relationship between the adult and the child. Since mentoring relationships are the primary determinant of youth outcomes, these relationships should be scrutinized with at least the same intensity as mentoring programs. Mentoring relationships exceed the connection of an adult friend. Students obtain greater benefits when the mentor offers the type of intentional adult support and guidance unavailable in youth's typical friendships. Mentors engage students in meaningful conversations about significant issues in their lives while providing a valuable adult perspective in supportive, rather than judgmental, terms. In other words, mentors are youth-focused by attending to student interests and fostering fun. However, they also preserve their adult sense of purpose, attempting to improve the student's circumstances through their instrumental support. There has been little research exploring mentoring programs for elementary-aged children and the best approach to establishing mentoring relationships among adults and youth (Van Ryzin, 2014).

**Purpose of Study**

This research aims to identify the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings. The goal is to identify how adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban settings can leverage these factors.

**Research Questions**

This qualitative study will look to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in relationships between mentors and mentees?
2. Which aspects of these effective practices do mentees find most valuable and why?
3. Which aspects of these effective practices do mentors find most valuable and why?
4. What practices do participants feel are missing from the list of identified effective practices for mentoring relationships?

**Definition of Terms**

**Mentoring.** Spencer et al. (2020) defines mentoring as, "A flexible, broad-based approach to youth development that has been found to promote positive social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes for children and adolescents, including high-risk youth" (p. 98).

**Informal mentoring.** Liao & Sanchez (2019) states that informal mentoring includes relationships that develop organically with adults in the youth's social networks.

**Youth mentoring.** Keller & Pryce (2012) define youth mentoring as, "A popular relationship-based intervention that offers support and guidance to young people in need of adult attention" (p. 47).

**Youth-Initiated Mentoring.** Spencer et al. (2019) state, "Youth-initiated mentoring (YIM) is an innovative approach in which youth select adults from within their existing social networks to serve as mentors in formalized mentoring relationships" (p. 4).

**Mentee.** Mentee identifies the individual that receives guidance in a mentoring relationship.

**Mentor.** Mentor is an individual who provides support for another person.

**Subjectivity & Researcher Positionality**

Mentoring relationships have been an essential part of my life experiences and personal relationships. I endured a culture shock as my family's socioeconomic status shifted from middle class to poverty as a child. It was challenging transitioning from having our own home, attending private schools, having both parents at home to living with my grandparents, attending public schools, and having only my mother in the home. However, the positive relationships formed with teachers and adult family members helped me through these transitions. I hope this research can help adults who work with urban elementary students become intentional about supporting students with challenges they may face in their lives. This research was open to all adults and students, regardless of group identification. This was to ensure that the research was not just about those I identify with on a group level. My personal level of identification reveals the value I have placed on education and ministry through the achievements I have invested in these areas. However, through the literature of this research, I have learned that the mentoring relationship's goals are not always centered on educational achievement, spiritual identification, or growth. Mentoring relationships are specific to the child's needs and not what mentors think are the needs of the child (Caldarella et al., 2010).

Parker (2018) describes research bias as the intentional or unintentional influence that the researcher may have on a study causing the bias to prejudice the results of the research findings. A systematic error is introduced into the sampling or testing, encouraging one outcome over another. I was working to create research questions and methods that did not reflect my personal experiences to mitigate design bias. Sampling or selection bias may exist in my research due to my decision to use students in the district I work in as a part of my research. However, I planned to extend the research to sample students beyond my district to limit the sampling or selection

bias. I planned to make sure questions were not influencing subjects to provide specific types of information and that these questions were open-ended to reduce measurement bias. Analysis bias would be decreased by using a team to ensure that all feedback is coded and included in the research. I acknowledged that experience bias could exist due to my positive and negative personal experiences with mentoring relationships. I kept my personal experiences out of the research and allowed others to help identify if I looked at the research from a skewed perspective. I also acknowledged my population bias due to an implicit bias toward African Americans over White individuals, males over females, and Christians over non-Christians. I mitigated this population bias by randomly sampling participants in the study. I kept their race, gender, and religious affiliation anonymous. The challenge with implicit bias is that it is normal to possess and act on these unconscious beliefs. I relied on my dissertation committee to hold me accountable when my implicit bias was revealed. I continued to educate myself and take action against my biases with continual learning and appreciation of other cultures and genders.

## Chapter II. Literature Review

This chapter will initially explore how the literature reveals that mentoring contains practical factors that influence positive outcomes for children. Effective mentoring programs with committed coordinators can increase the impact of mentoring relationships. Next, the chapter will show how mentoring relationships must establish trust. This trust increases connections between the mentor and mentee. Students who feel trusted by their teachers are more likely to make an effort to come to school and work hard to avoid letting the teachers down (Keller & Pryce, 2012). Then, the literature reveals how mentoring supports students to build academic resilience. Mentors expand the mentoring relationships beyond the individual mentoring of the child to incorporate external factors around the child, such as family, friends, teachers, and others. The chapter ends by examining the negative impact that ineffective mentoring can have on children. Liao & Sánchez (2019) suggest that ineffective mentoring can cause depressive symptoms and negative behaviors in children.

### Effective Practices and Guidance for Mentoring

Laco & Johnson (2019) emphasize the importance of education and intervention programs asking not only "What should our students know?" but also "What kind of people should they be?" This research is not to provide prescriptive actions applied to students to create desired outcomes (Liao & Sánchez, 2019). The individuality of the students should be foundational to the mentoring process. The mentor becomes a student of the child to learn how to build a relationship with the child. Laco & Johnson's (2019) research investigated the initial three months of a school's school-based mentoring (SBM) program, delivered by teachers and required for all first-year and second-year high school students (N=103). This research reports about the outcomes and mediators of the initial phase of a school-based-mentoring program.

Mentee expectations were associated with a quality mentoring environment (QME), not gender or initial school engagement.

This program studied is based at an exam-selective private high school in Bratislava, Slovakia (N = 250), and is part of the school's broader emphasis on personal development of students and good student–teacher relationships. The school is bilingual (English and Slovak), has 5 years of study serving students aged 14 to 20, and has a very high (90%) rate of graduates going on to higher education. The few mentors not teaching at the school are outside formally trained counselors who are familiar with the school (e.g., former students). All mentors in the program receive approximately fifteen hours of training in nondirective support, regularly meet with supervisors, and have monthly peer-support group meetings. Mentees select their mentors based on personal preferences and mentor availability, with the most popular mentors selected on a first-come-first-serve basis. Selection of mentors and first meetings occur 3 weeks into the first semester. This allows time to manage expectations through explanation of the program purpose and mechanisms (e.g., through testimonials of sophomores and previously mentored older students). Subsequently, mentors and mentees were expected to arrange approximately 30-minute meetings every 2 weeks throughout the academic year. In these meetings, students were asked about their grades and attendance, and were welcome and encouraged to discuss any personal issues or themes. The matched sample included 81 students. This was consistent with the school's average enrollment of three males for every five females, 30 males and 51 females in the age range of 14 to 17 years (M = 14.85, SD = 0.81) at Time 1 participated. Forty-eight (59%) were freshmen who had not experienced the program before and 33 (41%) were sophomores who had participated in their first year. Response rate based on the matched sample

and total number of enrolled freshmen and sophomores, including those not present at school when the questionnaires were administered, was 76.4%.

The questionnaire was administered electronically in the school's computer lab to groups of 14 students, during times scheduled by the school. Students who were not present at school did not participate. Prior to starting the questionnaire, each participant was briefed and gave informed consent.

After 3 months, mentees who reported higher quality mentoring environments (QME) tended to have greater school engagement and greater perceived benefit of discussing personal themes. No such association was found for grades or perceived benefits of discussing academic themes. QME partially mediated the relation between baseline and later school engagement and fully mediated the relation between expected and experienced benefit of discussing personal themes. Student sex, initial school engagement, and whether mentees were taught by mentors did not predict mentoring outcomes. In contrast with this, mentees expectations contributed to mentoring processes and outcomes.

Mentors must be proactive in their efforts to establish mentoring relationships with the students in order to reach the teachers and caregivers of these students. Mentor efforts are vital for targeting the guardians and teachers in the child's life. Mentors cannot expect the teacher or family to maintain communication even if they are the ones who initiated the mentoring request. It is the mentor's responsibility to establish and sustain these connections. The insight from the caregivers or the teachers of the child will provide imperative information about the student that will help the mentor build the mentoring relationship (Montañez et al., 2015). The goal of the Montañez et al. (2015) research was twofold: (1) to outline the key components of the Turn 2 Us (T2 U) model, and (2) to demonstrate the positive impact that the T2 U model had on the social

and behavioral functioning and academic performance of students enrolled in the program. T2 U was a multicomponent, grant-funded program that (a) identifies and provides intervention services to at-risk third through fifth grade students to improve their social and behavioral functioning and academic performance, and (b) provides classroom teachers and parents with group and individual psychoeducation aimed to increase mental health literacy to support at-risk students. To accomplish these objectives, T2 U uses (a) a full-time program manager, who is a licensed bilingual and multicultural clinical social worker; (b) college graduates who provide in-school mentorship, student follow-ups, and after-school programming; (c) professional partners who volunteer in the program; and (d) physical education teachers who facilitate the sports curriculum. Efforts are put in place to hire bilingual staff to facilitate services to ESL students and parents. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was used as a baseline measure of student risk for mental health problems after the students were enrolled in the program. It is a brief behavioral screening questionnaire validated for assessing mental health difficulties in children ages three to 16. The SDQ has 25 items, organized into five subscales (Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity and Inattention, Relationship Problems, and Prosocial Behavior), with five items in each subscale. In this study, the elementary students demonstrated significant improvements in social and classroom performance as reported by their teachers. These students also showed improvements in their attendance and standardized scores. The program had a greater impact on those students at highest risk for internalizing or externalizing problems. The outcomes of this study enhance the limited research on the effectiveness of elementary school-based mental health prevention and promotion programs serving low-income at-risk ethnic minority youths, and in particular Latino youths. The pilot data

further demonstrate the efficacy of engaging school administrators and community stakeholders to implement effective school-based mental health services in urban elementary schools.

The mentor learns specific information about the child from the effort invested in establishing rapport with the individuals surrounding the student. What the mentor learns about the child personally and the information that the mentor receives from these individuals becomes the foundation of the mentor's actions with the student. This foundation specific to the child can be used with research based effective practices for mentoring to guide mentor's actions to support students. The following are effective practices for mentoring programs for elementary school based programs:

1. Ongoing training for mentors that addresses their motivations for mentoring (Caldarella et al., 2010; Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019).
2. A paid coordinator for the mentoring program dedicated to monitoring and running the program (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019).
3. Mentors who are committed to mentor students for the school year, willing to meet consistently for weekly meetings, and vulnerable enough to self-disclose (Caldarella et al., 2010; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).
4. Students should have prolonged interaction with the same mentor during the duration of the school year (Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).
5. A mentoring relationship that is built on trust between the student and the mentor (Henry et al., 2017; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).

6. Culturally relevant and appealing mentoring activities sustained through the mentoring relationship enabling youth to explore their own identity and develop greater self-knowledge (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Weiss et al., 2019).
7. A safe, familiar, and accessible setting that addresses the needs of the students (Frels et al., 2013; Henry et al., 2017).

Coordinators are important for the management of elementary school based programs. They can provide support and guidance for the mentors, and organize the mentor training based on the needs communicated by the mentors. There may be times when mentors encounter an emergency which prevents them from participating in a mentoring session with the student. The coordinator can plan for a substitute or serve in the mentor's place, and explain necessary information to the child to assure them of how mentoring will continue. Coordinators can also work to ensure the safety of the setting where the mentoring is taking place and communicate with the authorities and mentors in emergencies (Frels et al., 2013; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019). Coordinators can also provide mentors with set activities that the mentors can embellish on. Coordinators can help mentors identify culturally relevant activity ideas by sharing these ideas among mentors. This could save individual mentors time and provide a positive impact on the overall mentoring experience (Denson & Hill, 2010).

While coordinators provide administrative support and encouragement, the mentors hold the most responsibility in the mentoring relationship. The mentor initially must be willing to meet with the same child, or group of children, consistently for the duration of the school year. Often the trials faced in the rapport building stages of the mentoring relationship can be alleviated by the consistency of the mentor. As mentees explore their self-identity through

culturally relevant activities, mentors have the opportunity to help the students navigate these life challenges. Mentors can share how they got through these difficult periods and ways that they currently face challenges (Caldarella et al., 2010; Frels et al., 2013; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).

The LaVenia & Burgoon (2019) study is an example of a mentoring program that efficiently incorporated many of these effective practices and successfully collaborated with classroom teachers. The Mentors in Toledo Schools program (MITS) paired adult community volunteers with elementary school students in need of reading support. The study sought to determine if elementary school students who participated in the MITS program demonstrated higher reading performance compared to students in the same school who did not participate in the MITS program. Starting in 2012, MITS operated in five elementary schools in Toledo Public Schools. The MITS program operated dependent upon the collaboration and coordination of classroom teachers, site coordinators, and volunteer mentors at each school. Teachers recommended students in their class to be included in the program based on an observed need in reading or writing. Teachers also provided specific reading tasks, aligned with the classroom curriculum, for mentors to complete with students during the mentoring sessions. The program coordinators recruited and assigned mentors to work with students, and ensured that mentors were prepared to facilitate the completion of the tasks assigned for the students by their teachers.

Mentoring sessions were conducted Monday through Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30am, except during school holidays and special events. Mentoring demographic information was recorded in a database, tracking meeting times, student behavior with mentors, teaching materials reviewed with each student, and permits written comments to the teachers regarding student performance and behavior. Mentors documented the tasks that were accomplished, and

evaluated the student's participation during the session. Mentor feedback was provided to teachers and principals daily, so the information could be used to guide instruction. Critical components of this program were the structural organization maintained by the database, the consistency and frequency of the tutoring, the use of site-based coordinators for scheduling and feedback, mentors' use of lessons and activities provided by the teacher, and the quality of communication between teachers and mentors about the children's work. This process allowed teachers to continually shape mentoring activities to the changing needs of the students over time.

This quantitative study of 379 students (n = 128 mentored, n = 251 comparison) tested the effectiveness of MITS, using changes (fall to spring) in students' scores on STAR Reading. The STAR Reading Assessment evaluates four major skills, which can be broken down into eleven domains. The assessment is a computer-adaptive test. It continually adjusts the difficulty of the test by choosing each question based on the student's previous response. An average of fifteen minutes is for students to complete the test. The results of the test were used to monitor a child's literacy skills. Multilevel models demonstrated students who participated in MITS made statistically significant, and educationally meaningful, reading gains compared to students who did not participate. According to the What Works Clearinghouse, effect sizes for educational interventions of .25 or higher should be considered substantively important, and educationally meaningful, irrespective of p-value. Students who participated in reading mentoring at least once per week showed the most educationally meaningful improvements.

The literature reveals that mentoring possesses effective practices that can influence positive outcomes for student mentees (Frels et al., 2013; Montañez et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2017; Caldarella et al., 2010; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Van Ryzin, 2014). However, mentors

and programs must consider what kind of people they want to inspire these children to become. Therefore, these effective practices cannot be implemented without considering what kind of people the mentors are or how the mentoring program is run. For example, are the adult mentors and those leading the mentoring program modeling the behavior we expect from the children in the program (Laco & Johnson, 2019)?

**Establishing Trusting Relationships**

According to Liao & Sánchez (2019), close mentoring relationships are the "active ingredient" (p. 457) for successful and high quality mentoring. How do mentors develop close mentoring relationships? Trust is of the utmost importance in establishing mentoring relationships (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2012; Erdem & Aytemur, 2008; Louis & Freeman, 2018; Sánchez et al., 2018; Weimer, 2019). "Trusting the other party is linked with considering that person to be competent, consistent, benevolent, interested, and open to communication" (Eerdem & Aytemur, 2008, p. 56). Students must see these actions in the mentors in order to develop trust in the mentor. Students need to know that mentors can provide necessary direction to academic or social questions, or at least be willing to explore how to find the answer with the child. This time spent finding the answer could mean more to the child than the mentor's competency to produce the answer. Competency, consistency, benevolence, interest, and open communication can all be expressed and developed over time.

"Relationships at school are not educational by default" (Frelin, 2015, p. 598). Frelin's (2015) case study researched the relational practices of a teacher who negotiates educational relationships with students who have a history of school failure. Eleven teachers in different schools were identified by experienced teacher educators as having positive relationships with their students. They were each interviewed twice, usually in small meeting locations in their

schools. Interviews were relatively unstructured, guided by four open-ended themes. The themes were starting points for capturing everyday practices: 1) the informants' backgrounds, education, families, and important influences as a person; 2) their career histories; 3) important professional influences; and 4) practices fostering democratic citizens. The reason for the last theme is an overarching purpose of education in Sweden that is not connected to one subject. Interviews lasted one hour. One contextual observation was conducted during a lesson that took place after the first interview. The observations were unstructured and aimed at facilitating conversations. The second interview reviewed the issues raised during the first interview and the observation. The participants were repetitively asked to describe their practices and reasons for various actions taken in their everyday situations.

The results show how relational practices create an emotionally safe school climate. In the initial phase of the teacher-student relationship, the main purpose of the activities is to establish trust and repair the students' self-image. This allows the student to view themselves as successful learners. This requires professional closeness and teachers distancing themselves from a conventional teaching role, in order to display humaneness and empathy. The establishment of educational relationships is contingent upon negotiating trusting relationships, negotiating humane relationships, and the students' own self-images. Frelin (2015) shows that for students with negative school experiences, positive and close teacher-student relationships are more important for these students than for their peers. Teachers must work to create relationships with students at the school instead of expecting that the relationship exists because they are the teacher. Trusting relationships must be built while the teacher is expected to educate the child on the specified material adequately at grade level.

Frelin (2015) and Armstrong's (2014) research provides guidance on how to develop trusting mentoring relationships. It shows that mentors who are able to proactively gift trust to mentees model the vulnerability needed to develop a trusting mentoring relationship. Individual acts may not reflect the entirety of one's character or be the best source to determine a child's trustworthiness. Instead of looking for assurances that the child is trustworthy, adults could approach the child as "person worthy" and on that basis extend trust to the student. Perceptions of possibility have the power to shape what is possible. Students can be gifted "worthiness" instead of being required to earn it (Armstrong, 2014). This values the student's authenticity above approval and focuses the adult on evidence of worthiness than the desire for compliance. By separating the motivation and rewards of mentoring from the purpose of trying to change the child, this frees the mentors from the preoccupation with disappointment in the student's actions and cynicism. By placing trust proactively in the student, the expectation is not that the trust will never be broken, but that the trust will be strong enough to withstand disappointments. The adult does not need to perform large or grandiose activities to build trust with the child. In fact, the teacher can relate and connect with students on the micro level by doing small and repeated daily actions. The culmination of these small actions over time can make a big difference in the lives of the students. The power in the adult's ability to broker trust lay not only in their willingness to extend trust to the child, but also in the persistent repetition without expectation of reciprocation, thereby demonstrating the adult as trustworthy. The way to gain trust is to practice trust (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015). Students' exposure to vulnerability through the adult's gratuitous bestowal of unearned trust can generate trust-responsiveness even in the absence of trust-worthiness in the child. It could be that trust is as trust does (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015). The process of sharing struggles, reciprocal vulnerability, helps students and adults

abandon perceptions of difference and appreciate their commonalities of struggle to form relational connections. Shared vulnerabilities are an important part of developing relationships. Building mentoring relationships means accepting fallibility because failing is human. This means that adults must too be willing to show and acknowledge their own humanity and imperfections (Armstrong, 2014). Students begin to honor the trust adults place in them by trying to be trustworthy in action and demonstrating the courage to be honest in their most vulnerable moments, when they mess up. Owning up to struggles, difficulties, and failures is one way for students to "give back" the trust the adult gives to them. The students being trusted provides the opportunity to be honest about failures and the motivation to strive for success. Students show that they are trust-responsive when they fail at being trustworthy but reach out for help instead of hiding their actions in shame. The adult's proactive trust is capable of transforming untrustworthy action into good trust because it facilitates the open and honest expression of success and failure in a way that strengthens the trust relationship. Adults exhibit the "gifts of imperfection" when they express the courage to communicate, compassion in the face of shame, and connection through vulnerability to their students. In a dynamic trust relationship, being trusted is an intrinsic part of being, or becoming, trustworthy. Adults connect with students by trusting them, taking risks to help them, and by putting themselves in positions of vulnerability. The adults encourage self-governance in students by prioritizing connection over perfection through encouraging honesty and openness in interactions(Armstrong, 2014).

Effective mentoring establishes a hybrid relationship. This mentoring relationship balances fun and partnership that keeps the child engaged in a horizontal relationship with the intergenerational support, guidance, and instruction that promotes development through a vertical relationship (Keller & Pryce, 2012). These mentoring relationships have produced better

academic outcomes for students (Caldarella et al., 2010; Keller & Pryce, 2012; Liao & Sánchez, 2019). The mentor serves in a capacity that exceeds friendship but does not sit in the structured hierarchical role with the intention to teach without the possibility of learning in the mentoring relationship. In effective mentoring relationships, the mentors have learning experiences, develop knowledge and skills, and express important values. Teachers are also able to experience these benefits with their students through structuring relationships with their students through trust. Positive student-teacher relationships are important for at-risk students. Teachers and students benefit from support in developing these relationships (Frelin, 2015). Laco & Johnson (2019) suggest that teacher-based mentoring has the potential to bolster the impact seen in mentoring. Students and teachers' daily interaction provides the maximum capability to develop trust and engage students over the course of a school year (Laco & Johnson, 2019; Anderson, 2007). Working through these issues not only allows the child to learn but the class can grow by learning how to take steps toward more desirable outcomes and manage disruptive emotional expressions. Teachers in the Montañez et al. (2015) study credit mentors for helping them achieve more balance in meeting the needs of their students. There are those students who exhibit internalizing behavior, such as unwarranted nervousness, anxiety, or withdrawal from peers. These students often go without intervention as the externalizing behavioral students command the attention of the classroom. The teachers in this study cite mentors as helping to identify the students exhibiting internalizing behavior and assisting with connecting these students to resources. Positive outcomes were seen in these students by mentors providing individual mentoring to the students promoting self-efficacy, empowerment, and coping skills or connecting students to creative arts groups or drama clubs.

Mentors must proactively establish trust with their mentees. The adult honestly recognizes that everyone makes mistakes and transparently shares the process of learning from those mistakes with the children they serve. This vulnerability is the core to the most significant ingredient in mentoring relationships – trust (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2012; Erdem & Aytemur, 2008). Mentors who see the child as person-worthy instead of requiring the child to earn the trust can give trust freely. As students realize that they are trusted, trust is reciprocated to the mentors through honest communication and actions (Armstrong, 2014).

**Building Academic Resilience through Mentoring**

"Academic resilience is the result of a combination of character traits and external protective factors that mitigate the influence of risks and vulnerabilities experienced by students living in poverty" (Williams et al., 2017, p. 193). Williams et al. (2017) describe three ways that concentrated poverty directly impacts urban students' performance in school: limited access to academic and social supports, students are often exposed to conditions that negatively influence their health, safety, and well-being, and the schools and parents of these students do not have access the social capital to combat these conditions. Students who are successful in spite of these conditions are referred to as academically resilient.

Williams et al. (2017) conducted a phenomenological qualitative study examining a national sample of high performing, low-income middle school students' (N=24) perspectives of protective factors that help them maintain their high academic achievement. The research question was: What are high-achieving, low-income students' perceptions of the protective elements that contribute to academic success in school? This study used multiple case studies allowing for a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and

reporting results. Stratified purposeful sampling was used to identify 24 out of 30 prospective participants. They were drawn from a national sample of applicants applying for a foundation-funded scholarship program for academically successful low-income students. The strata were formed based on income, gender, race, and geographic locale. Participants were a diverse racial/ethnic groups, including White American (n = 5); African American or Black (n = 5); Hispanic or Latina/o (n = 5); Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander (n = 4); multiracial (n = 4); and Middle Eastern (n = 1). Half of the partici- pants were males (n = 12), and the other half were females (n = 12). Participants lived and attended schools in diverse geographic locales, including urban areas (n = 8), suburban areas (n = 8), and rural areas (n = 8). Students were representatives of the District of Columbia and 19 states across the four major U.S. regions (West, Midwest, South, and Northeast). The participants were 13 (n = 13) or 12 (n = 11) years old at the time of the research. The average gross family income was below $18,000 per year for this sample population, as reported on their tax returns. Students met this criteria for inclusion: (a) were enrolled as seventh graders in middle school, (b) showed evidence of academic success as indicated by grades earned (mostly As with no Cs in core academic subjects [English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies/history, and foreign language] since sixth grade), and standardized test scores (i.e., at or above the proficient level in reading, mathematics, and science in the state in which they resided), (c) eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch, (d) were residing in low-income households (Internal Revenue Service–reported adjusted gross income of less than $24,000 per year was classified as low income for the purposes of this report), and (e) were applicants to the 2012 cohort of the Young Scholars Program. An interview protocol was developed and reviewed by a group of experts and included eight open-ended questions, such as “How, if at all, has your family (nuclear and/or

extended) helped you to do well in school?" Follow-up interviews during the analysis process were conducted with each of the 24 student participants via telephone 4 weeks after the conclusion of the initial interview. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the phenomenological data attained in this study. Thematic analysis is performed by coding in six phases to identify patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) offered six steps for performing a thematic analysis: (a) familiarizing yourself with your data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing and refining themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing up the results. In Step 1, the authors read all transcribed interviews before they began coding. When reading the transcripts, the authors took notes and marked ideas (i.e., potential themes) for coding in the margins that were later revisited. In Step 2, the authors reread the transcripts to detect recurring words, phrases, or thoughts that may form the basis of repeated themes across the data set, which were then categorized using codes. The authors also took note of contradictions or discrepancies in students' responses. In Step 3, once a list of the different codes were identified, they were sorted into potential themes based on patterns, and all the relevant coded data extracts were collated within the identified themes. In Step 4, the authors considered the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes (e.g., main overarching themes and subthemes within them). Then, the authors conducted a separate observation to identify overlapping themes or uncoded text and subsequently refined and revised each category. In Step 5, the authors compared themes and found a high degree of consensus (95%) between codes. Coding decisions that were different were discussed and modified, and theme names were jointly agreed upon until 100% consensus was reached on content and wording.

The four main themes identified were peer social capital, teachers who care, family and community assets, and multiple streams of motivation. All participants credited their academic success to positive peer social capital, especially friendships and the assistance gained through these relationships. Participants shared that these positive peer relationships cultivated proacademic behaviors, nonacademic peer support, and reciprocal academic support. A positive and supportive relationship with an adult, most often a teacher, inspired students' academic efforts. Participants stated that teachers' caring behavior, empathy, and cultural knowledge revealed how much they cared. The third theme of family and community assets involved students' ability to draw on family and community assets to help support their academic aspirations and efforts. Participants felt strong in this theme if they had access to caring adults, resilient role models, and learning beyond the school walls. The final theme of multiple streams of motivation related to students' ability to draw on both intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation to succeed despite the odds. Participants revealed strength in this area with a desire to transcend poverty, see the fruits of one's labor, career aspirations, and receive encouraging words from others.

Mentor interventions must extend beyond the mentoring relationship with the child in order to build the social capital and reveal the positive networks around the child. The adult builds an academic identity for the student by proactively connecting students and their families to assets through partnerships, building relationships and collaborating with the teachers, parents, and community, upholding high expectations for students academically, and extending academic content through culturally relevant interventions and activities (Anderson, 2007; Montañez et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2017; Gordon et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2007; Wyatt, 2009). Adults having an understanding of the dynamic influences of the environment on the behavior of the child,

from more proximal influences (family) to distal factors (school), is vital to the mentoring relationship. The stronger the ecological connection between the school and family of the student, the higher the potential academic trajectory of the student. This potential becomes even stronger when the student and the teacher have a positive relationship. Students with positive and supportive relationships with their teachers are motivated to succeed in school and persevere through the challenges of adversity. Students reported that they work harder in the classroom, persevere through challenges, accept teacher direction and criticism, and attend more to the teacher when they have a positive relationship with the teacher (Williams et al., 2017; Montañez et al., 2015).

Mentors continue to build the student's academic resilience by creating access to positive peer networks through group activities. This positive peer social capital can contribute to the child's academic success. These individuals help provide academic resources and support that may otherwise be unavailable to the student. These positive peers promote academic behaviors and identities that can inspire changes in the academic goals of the mentee and heighten the intensity in which the student pursues these goals. Finally, these peers can provide emotional support, intimate counsel, or advice on personal matters necessary to withstand personal challenges and cope in appropriate and effective ways (Williams et al., 2017). It can be helpful for the child to share their trials with a peer they have built this relationship with and know that there are others who are going through issues as well. There is comfort in knowing that you are not the only one who is struggling. The subjects of the struggles may differ but the connection of struggling to success is what binds them.

Adults can use individual mentoring to build students' academic resilience by motivating students to overcome contextual barriers. Anderson's (2007) research revealed that teachers have

the ability to increase the level of expectation for the student and the student rises to the level of expectation from the caring adult beyond their educational identification. Urban African American males are shown as being over-identified as having a disability in which the students' chances of scoring well on standardized tests are significantly diminished. However, if the students are identified as academically gifted and held to higher expectations while receiving a higher quality education, these urban African American males have higher test scores and perform well in the gifted curriculum. This is another example of how important teachers are to the mentoring process.

Mentors make the effort to build the student's academic resilience by proactively reaching out to ensure the collaboration of the parent, teacher, and community. This multilevel approach to the mentoring relationship shows not only the elimination of achievement gaps in the mentored students reaching the non-mentored students' achievement but the eventual surpassing of achievement in the mentored students (Henry et al., 2017). These results are consistent with urban elementary students identified with disabilities as well (Anderson, 2007). Academically resilient students draw on both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation to succeed in schools despite the odds. These students use many forms of motivation as the energy needed to engage, learn, work effectively and achieve their potential at school (Williams et al., 2017).

Mentors must proactively work to build academic resilience around the child. Mentors extend the mentoring relationships beyond the individual mentoring of the child to incorporate external factors around the child. The collaboration of the parent, teacher, and community provides the child with the academic resilience needed to work toward academic success despite

the challenges students face in urban education (Anderson, 2007; Montañez et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2017).

**Negative Impact of Ineffective Mentoring**

Despite their growing popularity, research has shown school-based mentoring programs for youth have shown considerable variation in mentoring benefits, including negative effects of mentoring (Laco & Johnson, 2019). Mentoring relationships and programs must be assembled with the essential components to minimize the risk of a failed adult relationship in the students' lives. Therefore, the mere presence of a caring adult does not constitute a mentoring relationship. Just having a mentor does not produce improved academic outcomes or the positive impact seen in mentoring (Liao & Sánchez, 2019; Scott et al., 2013; Spencer et al., 2020; Spencer et al., 2019).

In fact, bad mentoring is worse than no mentoring. Mentoring relationships that end prematurely showed declines in the self-worth and perceived scholastic competence of the children. "Youth almost seem better off not having a mentor unless they form a closer and growth-oriented relationship" (Liao & Sánchez, 2019, p. 458). Keller & Pryce's research in 2012 reveals mentees rated floundering mentor relationships very negatively. These relationships exhibited disengagement, lack of motivation, unfulfilled expectations, poor relational skills, and inadequate program support. These types of relationships revealed depressive symptoms and increased problem behaviors in the children. For mentors and mentees clearly not connecting, staying in a strained mentoring relationship through the whole year is worse than prematurely ending their participation.

Liao and Sánchez (2019)'s quantitative research aimed to (a) identify mentoring quality profiles based on characteristics of informal mentoring relationships, (b) examine how mentor

and youth demographic characteristics were related to the profiles, and (c) investigate whether the profiles were related to youth's academic outcomes. The following were the research questions:

- What is the nature and quality of mentoring relationships?
- How to identify the types of mentoring relationships that youth possess?
- Are the mentoring relationship profiles associated with participants' demographic characteristics and mentor characteristics?
- How the mentoring relationship profiles were associated with youth's academic outcomes, including educational aspirations, educational expectations, intrinsic motivation, economic value of education, and grade point average (GPA)?

Survey questions asked the 411 ninth-grade students to provide information to questions pertaining to their demographics, informal mentors, mentor's characteristics, mentor type, relationship quality, growth-focused activities, frequency of contact, relationship duration, amount of time spent with mentors, educational aspirations and expectations, intrinsic motivation, economic value of education, and GPA.

Research assistants administered surveys during school hours in classrooms. Students had the option of completing the surveys in either English or Spanish. The survey took approximately 45 to 60 minutes to complete. The research assistants visited ninth-grade homeroom periods to present information about the study in English or Spanish to approximately 1,100 students. Convenience sampling was used and those who expressed interest and provided parental consent and youth assent participated in this study. Approximately 37% of the students who received the presentations participated. The attendance rate for the first school was 85% and for the second school was 76%, whereas the attendance rate for our sample was 89%.

Furthermore, the average ninth-grade GPA for the school district was 2.0 whereas the mean GPA for our sample was 2.38. The majority (74%, n = 302) of participants reported at least one informal mentor. Among those who reported mentors, 17% (n = 52) reported one mentor, 21% (n = 63) reported two mentors, and 62% (n = 187) reported three mentors. Mentors were listed in order of importance. For Mentor 1, participants predominantly reported extended family members (n = 123, 41%) or siblings (n = 116, 38%), and 21% (n = 63) identified non-familial adults. The mean age for Mentor 1 was 28.51 years (SD = 12.14 years), and their mean educational level was 2.33 (SD = 1.22), which is in between high school graduate/GED and technical school or 2-year college. Forty-four percent (n = 133) of these mentors were male and 56% (n = 169) were female. The mean relationship duration was 11.85 years (SD = 4.89 years). Mentor 2 tended to be mostly extended family members (n = 146, 58%), whereas 22% (n = 56) were siblings and 19% (n = 48) were non-familial adults. The mean age (M = 29.84 years, SD = 13.60 years) and educational level (M = 2.25, SD = 1.14) for Mentor 2 was similar to Mentor 1. About half of Mentors 2 were male (51%, n = 128; female = 49%, n = 122). The mean relationship duration was 11.36 years (SD = 4.94 years). Mentor 3 also comprised a mostly extended family (n = 104, 56%) with only 32% non-familial adults (n = 59) and 13% siblings (n = 24). The mean age and educational level for Mentor 3 was 30.43 (SD = 13.63) and 2.32 (SD = 1.16), respectively. Mentor 3 was 50% (n = 93 male and 50% (n = 94) female, with a mean relationship duration of 10.08 years (SD = 5.46 years). Higher instrumental and relational mentoring quality were significantly associated with higher GPA, educational aspirations, economic benefits of education, intrinsic motivation, and lower perceived economic limitations of education. Higher relational quality was significantly associated with higher educational expectations. Engagement with more growth-focused activities was significantly associated with

more intrinsic motivation, higher educational expectations and aspirations, and lower economic values of education. Frequency of contact with mentors was not significantly associated with any of the academic outcomes. Surprisingly, the amount of time spent with mentors was significantly and negatively correlated with GPA.

Mentoring that is disengaged, unmotivated, inconsistent, and has unfulfilled expectations can cause children to display depressive symptoms and negative behaviors (Liao & Sánchez, 2019; Keller & Pryce, 2012). A paid coordinator ensures that the relationships between the mentors and mentees are functioning optimally (LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019). However, suppose this is not occurring in the mentoring relationship. In that case, it is the coordinator's responsibility to step in and make the necessary changes so that the child is protected and the adult can grow in their mentoring abilities or be removed. This work can minimize the negative impact that ineffective mentoring can have on children.

**Summary**

Mentoring relationships can be maximized through effective mentoring programs and dedicated coordinators. Mentors must proactively establish trust with mentees and work to build academic resilience around the child. This work can minimize the negative impact that ineffective mentoring can have on children. The literature reveals that mentoring possesses effective practices that can influence positive outcomes for student mentees (Caldarella et al., 2010; Frels et al., 2013; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014). Mentors and programs must consider what kind of people they want to inspire their students to become, therefore, these effective practices cannot be implemented without consideration of what kind of people the mentors are or how the mentoring program is being run. Are the adult mentors and those leading the mentoring program modeling the behavior we expect

out of the children in the program (Laco & Johnson, 2019)? The expectation is not perfection or even that the adult helps the child, but the adult honestly recognizes that we all make mistakes and exhibits the willingness to share the process of learning from those mistakes with the children we serve. This vulnerability is the core to the most important ingredient in mentoring relationships – trust (Armstrong, 2014; Erdem & Aytemur, 2008; Frelin, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2012). Mentors who see the child as person worthy instead of requiring the child to earn the trust can give trust freely. As students begin to realize that they are trusted, trust is reciprocated to the mentors through honest communication and actions (Armstrong, 2014). Mentors extend the mentoring relationships beyond the individual mentoring of the child to incorporate external factors around the child. The parent, teacher, and community collaboration provides the child the academic resilience needed to work toward academic success despite the challenges students face in urban education (Anderson, 2007; Montañez et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2017). Mentoring that is disengaged, unmotivated, inconsistent, and has unfulfilled expectations can cause students to exhibit depressive symptoms and negative behaviors (Keller & Pryce, 2012; Liao & Sánchez, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to have someone who is paid to ensure that the relationships between the mentors and mentees are functioning optimally (LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019). If not, it is their responsibility to step in and make the necessary changes so that the child is protected and the adult can grow in their mentoring abilities or be removed. There has been little research exploring mentoring programs for elementary-aged children and the best approach to establishing mentoring relationships among adults and youth (Van Ryzin, 2014). Therefore, this study will add to the research by identifying the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings; so adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban settings can leverage these factors.

# Chapter III. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the principles of high-quality mentoring relationships between adults working with urban elementary students. This chapter will review research questions and provide the rationale for the research paradigm and methodology. Descriptions, explanations, and ethical considerations will be provided for the sample of participants used in the research. The qualitative instrumentation, data sources, and data analysis will be illustrated and justified. Specific details will be provided regarding data collection procedures. An explicit description will be provided regarding what the researcher assumes to be true, and a summary of data analysis procedures will be outlined. Finally, the steps taken for ensuring that all research findings and conclusions were valid and trustworthy will be reported.

## Research Questions

This qualitative study will look to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in relationships between mentors and mentees?
2. Which aspects of these effective practices do mentees find most valuable and why?
3. Which aspects of these effective practices do mentors find most valuable and why?
4. What practices do participants feel are missing from the list of identified effective practices for mentoring relationships?

## Research Design & Qualitative Approach

This study followed a basic qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research allows for the investigation of meanings people attribute to their behavior, actions, and interactions with

others. This type of research is designed to reveal the meaning that informs the action or outcomes through interviews, observations, and document analysis (Crossman, 2020). The basic qualitative research design facilitates investigation as to what practices mentors and mentees have identified as effective, and what experiences participants have observed in their mentoring relationships that may be missing from the list of effective practices.

**Participants & Sampling Technique**

Mentors were selected from a community-mentoring program currently working with the urban school in Northwest Ohio. Mentees were selected according to the study's criteria and the child's and parent's willingness to participate. The community-mentoring program provided the researcher with a list of participants who meet the research criteria and are willing to participate. Participants were pairs of adult mentors and elementary-aged mentees who worked together in a formal mentoring relationship. Participants conducted mentoring in urban areas of Northwest Ohio. Mentors were eighteen years or over. Mentees were under the age of 16 in grades Kindergarten through Eighth. The research studied five mentoring relationships with ten participants (n=10). The researcher worked with the community-mentoring program to identify adult mentors who have worked with urban, elementary-aged students in Northwest Ohio in November of 2021. Purposeful sampling was used for this study to identify individuals who had experienced mentoring and were being mentored. The mentoring program facilitated selecting five mentoring relationships that met the research criteria. Letters of consent were collected for mentors and the parent or guardian of mentees before the study. In addition, letters of assent were collected from participants who were minors.

**Ethical Considerations**

The Institutional Review Board at The University of Findlay approved this study by determining that participation poses minimal risk to all participants. This research involved interviewing participants who are minors. Research consent forms were secured from all minor participants' legal guardians before they participated in the study. This consent form provided the guardian information regarding the study, why the minor was selected, what precisely the participant will be asked to do, information about audio recording, potential risks of participation, benefits of participation, how the minor's information will be used in the research, and the child's ability to leave the study at any point during the research. A form of assent was secured from the minors before they participated in the study. This assent form informed the minor participant about the purpose of the research and inquired about their willingness to participate in the study. They were informed of their ability to choose not to participate in the study and that there would be no negative consequences of this decision. Minors were informed of their ability to leave the study at any point during the research and the possible benefits of their participation. The participants who are minors needed to be interviewed separately from their mentors. The minor participants and their guardians had the option of having the guardian present during the minors' interviews in order for the participant to feel as comfortable answering the interview questions as possible.

Research consent forms were secured from all mentors prior to their participation in the study. This consent form provided the mentor with the purpose of the study, a description of research procedures, the expected duration of time associated with their involvement in the study, potential risks of participation, potential benefits of participation, and steps taken to protect their confidentiality. They were also informed that they would be notified of any new findings that may impact their decision to participate, that participation is voluntary, that they

have the ability to withdraw from participation at any time for any reason, that there would be no project alternatives to participate in this study, that there are no costs or compensation for participation, that there is no compensation for injury, and that there are no circumstances for dismissal from the study. Mentors were asked how they receive training and support from their community-mentoring program. Their mentoring organization will not have access to their recorded responses.

All participants and minor participants' guardians were informed of the need to audio record their interview responses. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants after the interviews in order to protect their identities. The audio recordings were stored by the researcher and reviewed by the researcher for the purposes of the study. The researcher's dissertation chair had access to the data if necessary for the purposes of the research.

**Instrumentation & Data Sources**

The interview questions for the participants were created from the effective practices of mentoring programs identified in the literature review and the research questions for this study. The following are effective practices for mentoring programs for elementary school based programs:

1. Ongoing training for mentors that addresses their motivations for mentoring.
2. A paid coordinator for the mentoring program dedicated to running the program.
3. Mentors who are committed to mentor students for the school year, willing to meet consistently for weekly meetings, and vulnerable enough to self-disclose.
4. Students should have prolonged interaction with the same mentor during the duration of the school year.
5. A mentoring relationship that is built on trust between the student and the mentor.

6. Culturally relevant and appealing mentoring activities sustained through the mentoring relationship enabling youth to explore their own identity and develop greater self-knowledge.
7. A safe, familiar, and accessible setting that addresses the needs of the students (Frels et al., 2013; Montañez et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2017; Caldarella et al., 2010; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).

The interview questions for this study were developed by adapting the identified effective practices of mentoring programs into questions. Having participants identify each other's names in question 1 allowed the researcher to accurately match and compare responses from the mentor and mentee since interviews were conducted separately. Participants identifying the minor's school allowed the researcher to confirm that the school is identified as an urban school in Northwest Ohio. The mentor's correct response was another confirmation used to verify mentor-mentee pairing. The questions asked of the mentor and mentee in the third portion of the interview are directly adapted from the identified effective practices identified in the literature review. The researcher attempted to ask the questions in an open-ended way, allowing the participant the opportunity to respond according to their personal experience. The first two effective practices are specifically related to logistics of the mentoring program. The researcher did not feel that elementary aged students would have knowledge of this information, therefore, those questions were omitted from the mentee's questions. Questions in section three were adapted to help elementary aged students understand the question better so that they may give a comprehensive response. For example, in order to examine this item "Culturally relevant and appealing mentoring activities sustained through the mentoring relationship enabling youth to explore their own identity and develop greater self-knowledge." The researcher asked the

mentor, “How do you conduct culturally relevant activities for the mentee to participate in where the mentee can explore his/her identity and develop knowledge about herself/himself?” The mentor asked the mentee, “What activities do you do where you learn about yourself? Why do you like these activities?” The researcher hoped to explore the effective practice through the experience of each participant by adapting the question to allow the mentor to speak to his or her intention while allowing the mentee to express her or his experience and interest in the experience. The section four questions identify and explain which effective practice is most important to the mentor and mentee in their mentoring relationship. The mentor and mentee were specifically asked which question from section three was most important to their mentoring relationship and why. Participants were provided the list of questions to reference as they answered this question. Section five allows participants to identify and express the importance of a practice that occurs in their mentoring relationship that was missing from the line of questioning established by effective mentoring practices identified in the literature. This provides the researcher ongoing information of applied mentoring practices that can continue to be explored in future research. The specific interview questions can be reviewed in the table below and in Appendix A.

**Table 1**

*Interview Questions*

| Mentor | Mentee |
|---|---|
| 1. What is the name of your mentee? | 1. What is the name of your mentor? |
| 2. What school does your mentee attend? | 2. What school do you attend? |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3. Please answer the following questions.<br>a. Do you receive ongoing training influencing your motivations for mentoring? If so, how?<br>b. Is there a paid coordinator of your mentoring program dedicated to running the program? If so, how are you supported by the coordinator?<br>c. Do you and your mentee meet consistently? Why or why not?<br>d. Do you connect with your mentee using information from your personal life? Why or why not?<br>e. How long have you had this mentee?<br>f. Do you trust your mentee? Why or why not?<br>g. Do you conduct culturally relevant activities for the mentee to participate in where | 3. Please answer the following questions.<br>a. Do you and your mentor meet regularly? Do you like meeting this often?<br>b. Does your mentor tell you about his/her life? Would you like to know more or less about your mentor?<br>c. How long have you had this mentor?<br>d. Do you trust your mentor? Why or why not?<br>e. Do you do activities with your mentor where you learn about yourself?<br>i. If so, what have you learned about yourself?<br>f. Do you feel safe where you receive mentoring? Why or why not? |

| | |
|---|---|
| the mentee can explore his/her identity and develop knowledge about herself/himself?<br>i. In what ways do you think these culturally relevant activities might help the mentee?<br>h. Do you feel that the location where you mentor is safe for the mentee? Why or why not? | |
| 4. Which of these components are most important for your mentoring relationship with your mentee? Why?<br>g. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices | 4. Which of these components are most important for your mentoring relationship with your mentor? Why?<br>h. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices |
| 5. Is there anything missing from this list of components that you do with your mentee? Why is this important to you? | 5. Is there anything missing from this list of components that you do with your mentor? Why is this important to you? |

| | |
|---|---|
| i. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices | j. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices |

**Data Collection Procedures**

After clearance from the Internal Review Board at The University of Findlay, the researcher secured the contact information for the mentors at the community-mentoring program. They were emailed about the research opportunity in August 2021. Attempts were made to conduct all interviews virtually to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for participants and the researcher. Interviews were held at the community-mentoring organization and made provisions for participants to sit at least six feet apart and with proper personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer. Mentors had three weeks to respond with interest in participation for the mentoring pair. This time allowed mentors to have an initial conversation with the mentees about the opportunity and decide whether this would be something they would be interested in learning more about for possible participation. An initial meeting over the phone or using Google Meet was offered for the researcher to introduce himself and inform the participants about the study. Another two weeks was provided for the participants to review and complete the letters of consent and assent. Mentors provided mentees with consent letters to take home and discuss with their guardian. If mentors did not receive feedback from the guardian in three days, they called to answer any questions the guardian might have. Mentors could mediate questions to the researcher for clarification, or the guardian could speak directly with the researcher for answers. Once the consent and assent forms were signed, the researcher conducted

separate interviews of the mentors and mentees. The goal was to have all interviews completed for all mentoring pairs by December 2021.

The interviews were conducted with mentoring pairs of adults and elementary-aged students who attend urban schools in Northwest Ohio. Mentors work with elementary students who attend an urban school in the area. Interviews were conducted separately. All interviews were conducted in person. Ten interviews were conducted with participants, five with mentors, and five with mentees. These interviews lasted nine minutes to twenty-six minutes. The researcher used The Google Recorder application on the Pixel 5 cellular phone to record the participant interviews. The audio recording mp4 files were removed from the researcher's cellular phone within twenty-four hours, stored on the researcher's computer hard drive, and backed up with the researcher's flash drive. Participants were asked if they would be comfortable if the researcher took notes during the interview and informed that only the researcher would see the notes. The researcher used the notes to track trends heard in other participants' responses, identify subjects that the participant could expound upon, and identify possible codes for data analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The participants' responses from the interviews were analyzed through a process called coding. Coding is assigning a shorthand designation to various aspects of participants' responses so specific pieces of data can be easily retrieved. A code is a word or short phrase that assigns a summative or essence-capturing attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2009). The Google Recorder application provides options for an mp4 audio file and a Google document of the interview's rough transcription. The transcription is "rough" because it is the software's effort to accurately transcribe the conversation but often has

errors that need correcting. The researcher used the transcription in the Google Document to comb through each interview to accurately transcribe the document while listening to the mp4 audio file. Google Documents were removed from the researcher's Google Drive account within twenty-four hours, stored as Microsoft Word Documents on the researcher's personal hard drive, and backed up with the researcher's personal flash drive. The researcher also created memos while collecting participants' responses and during the transcription process.

The researcher initially assigned descriptive open codes to participants' responses that showed relationships. This process is known as axial coding. Afterward, the researcher engaged in analytical coding by reducing the number of axial codes into smaller abstract categories or themes found in significant portions of the data. Finally, the researcher used these codes to test and confirm the categories that emerged as most salient to the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2009).

All data analysis was conducted by the researcher for this project. Taylor & Bogdan (1998) state, "since qualitative data analysis is an intuitive and inductive process, most qualitative researchers analyze and code their own data" (p. 141). Microsoft Word and Excel were used to organize codes and color code themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Assumptions**

This study assumes that the theoretical foundation of this study is an accurate reflection of the variables studied. The criteria for inclusion of the sample are appropriate, thus assuming that the participants are representative of the population and have all experienced a mentoring relationship. Participants have a sincere interest in participating in the research without other motives. It is also assumed that the participants are aware of the phenomenon of mentoring and willing to discuss their experience in mentoring relationships under investigation to help the

researcher draw conclusions regarding effective practices in mentoring relationships. The methodology is limited by the definitions used in the study. The researcher assumed that all research questions would adequately uncover the themes inherent in the study. It is assumed that the interview questions accurately reflect mentoring relationships and will allow the researcher to elicit rich textural data to address the research questions. This textural data will contain information that allows the researcher to draw valid and reliable conclusions. Also, the researcher assumes that the methodology is appropriate to identify effective practices in mentoring relationships. Finally, the researcher assumes that the detailed descriptions of meaning-making generated from participant responses can be helpful to other researchers and individuals interested in mentoring relationships for urban elementary students.

**Trustworthiness**

Member checks established trust with participants by giving them an opportunity to verify their statements and fill in any gaps from the interviews. Purposive sampling was used to establish likely transferability by ensuring participants were actively engaged in mentoring relationships and that mentoring pairs included one adult mentor over the age of eighteen and one minor mentee under the age of fifteen. Details of the research methodology have been included so that the research may be replicated to show confirmability.

## Chapter IV. Results

This study examines the principles of high-quality mentoring relationships between adults working with urban elementary students. A qualitative study design was utilized. Ten total participants, five mentoring pairs of an adult mentor and a child mentee, were separately interviewed to determine their opinions on their mentoring relationships. This chapter will detail the results from the interviews with the participants. The first research question is, to what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in relationships between mentors and mentees. Participants' responses will be provided for each factor of effective mentoring relationships defined in the literature review: ongoing training impacting mentors' motivations, paid coordinator support, consistent meetings, personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, culturally relevant activities, and safe space. See Tables 2 and 3 for details. Emerging themes from the participants' responses will also be identified. Research question two asks which aspects of these effective practices mentees find most valuable and why. The most prevalent practices and concepts from the collective responses of mentees will be identified. Research question three asks which aspects of these effective practices mentors find most valuable and why. The most prevalent practices and themes from the collective responses of the mentors will be identified. Finally, research question four asks what practices participants feel are missing from the identified effective practices for mentoring relationships. These practices will be identified from participant responses.

Participants who are mentors have been assigned pseudonyms starting with "M" to indicate adult mentor. They have also been assigned a number to distinguish each mentor participant from the others. Mentors are identified as M1-M5. Mentees have been assigned pseudonyms starting with "C" to indicate child or mentee to help distinguish them from the

mentor codes. Mentee participants are also provided a number to distinguish each mentee participant from the others. Mentees are identified as C1-C5.

C1 is an African American female at an urban charter school in the fifth grade, ten years old. Her mentor, M1, is a White female. C2 is an African American female who is ten years old and in the fifth grade at an urban public school. Her mentor, M2, is an African American female. C3 is an African American male who is eleven years old in the sixth grade at an urban public school. M3, his mentor, is an African American male. C4 is an African American female nine years old in the fourth grade at an urban public school. Her mentor, M4, is a White female. Finally, C5 is an African American male who is eleven years old in the sixth grade at an urban public school. His mentor, M5, is a multi-racial female. See Table 2 for a quick reference of participants' demographics.

**Table 2**

*Participant Demographics*

| Mentoring Pair | Mentor | | | Mentee | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Age | Gender | Race | Age | Gender | Race | Grade | Type of School |
| 1 | 18+ | Female | White | 10 | Female | Black | 5 | Urban Charter |
| 2 | 18+ | Female | Black | 10 | Female | Black | 5 | Urban Public |
| 3 | 18+ | Male | Black | 11 | Male | Black | 6 | Urban Public |
| 4 | 18+ | Female | White | 9 | Female | Black | 4 | Urban Public |
| 5 | 18+ | Female | Multi | 11 | Male | Multi | 6 | Urban Public |

**Research Question 1**

The first research question is, to what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in relationships between mentors and mentees? The first two established frameworks, ongoing training impacting mentors' motivations and paid coordinator

support, were only asked of the mentors. The mentee participants were not expected to know about the mentor's training, motivations, or support from a coordinator. See Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3**

*Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships for Mentors*

| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | Total Yeses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ongoing Training Impacting Motivations | YES | NEUTRAL | YES | YES | YES | 4 |
| Paid Coordinator Support | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Consistent Meetings | NO | YES | YES | SOMETIMES | YES | 3 |
| Personal Disclosure | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Length of Mentoring Relationship | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Trust | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Culturally Relevant Activities | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Safe Space | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |

**Table 4**

*Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships for Mentees*

| | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | Total Yeses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consistent Meetings | NO | SOMETIMES | ONCE | NO | NO | 0 |
| Personal Disclosure | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Length of Mentoring Relationship | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Trust | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Culturally Relevant Activities | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Safe Space | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |

### *Ongoing Motivational Training*

Four out of five mentors indicated that they receive ongoing training at the community-mentoring organization that impacts their motivation to mentor. Participants described the topics of ongoing training: handling kids' emotions, mindfulness tactics, keeping children entertained and having fun, handling kids in healthy ways, mandated reporting, CPR training, and fun activities with educational elements. All the mentors were asked how the

ongoing training influenced their motivations to mentor. The most prominent themes in the mentors' responses were:

1. They feel more confident to handle situations. The mentors described themselves as feeling more secure in working with the mentees because they had received strategies they could use with the children through this ongoing training. M3 said, "I feel more equipped and comfortable in situations; it gives me more confidence to handle situations." M4 said that the random training helps her "better understand the kids and things to help the kids." M5 said, "Trainings are never the same. I get different ideas for planning each week."
2. Ongoing training helps the mentors remember their "Why" to mentor. Mentors express that ongoing training helps them reflect on why they are mentoring the children. M1 stated, "The ongoing training reminds me of my why to help them. I am here to help them live out their potential, become respectful people in society, and become loving and caring adults." M5 expressed, "Trainings spark my motivation to mentor. I'm learning what's best for the child."
3. Mentors feel they develop by learning on the job. They experience growth in their mentoring by asking questions and getting answers as they work with mentees. M5 communicated, "This is the type of job that's learning on the job. They give you tools as needed." Despite M2's response of being "neutral" for receiving ongoing training, she admits that getting questions answered as needed has helped her growth as a mentor. She stated, "I get answers to questions as needed. I ask and get responses."

The mentors at the community-mentoring program feel that the ongoing training they receive influences their motivation to mentor by feeling more confident in handling situations,

reflecting on why they are mentoring, and experiencing growth by asking questions and getting answers as they mentor students. The mentors did not feel that ongoing training meant formal professional development. Some mentors felt that their ability to learn by doing the job was just as critical to their motivation to mentor as any formal professional development. Participant M2 was the only mentor to provide a neutral response to this question. She did not say that she does not receive ongoing training influencing her motivations to mentor. "It's like neutral. If I ask questions, and I get answers for the most part," says M2. She is more motivated by the support given in real-time. M5 also describes this process of learning by doing, "A bunch of clubs will come up and like, would train on different games and stuff. It's relatively informal, just a lot of playing games. Like, here's something you can do with the kids."

***Paid Coordinator Support***

All five mentors indicated they receive support from a paid coordinator or supervisor at the community-mentoring program. The mentors were asked how the paid coordinator or supervisor supported them. The most prominent themes in the mentors' responses were:

1. Coordinators provide mentors guidance. Paid coordinators support mentors by offering advice, direction, and suggestions in their mentoring relationships. M1 communicated, "She offers very, very good constructive criticism without being too overbearing, which I appreciate." M1 appreciates her supervisor allowing her to make mistakes, providing direction on how to improve, and allowing the mentor the freedom to go and implement the feedback. M3 discusses specific uncomfortable situations that supervisors have supported him with, "They help me deal with unfamiliar and difficult situations like calling CSB or dealing with a parent." M5 provides a list of ways that coordinators support her, "They keep us organized, updated, provide different ways for us to run our

rooms and interact with the club, and help us coordinate with different staff members in the club."

2. Coordinators mentor the mentors. The supervisors model their expectations for mentoring to the mentors. In this way, the mentors can see how they are expected to mentor the children at the club. M1 expressed that her supervisor has been a role model by showing understanding when the mentor needs to talk. "She is a good, wholesome to look up to who is understanding," says M1. M2 shared that she values the mentoring of the supervisor because of her consistent check-ins and conversations. "Having a bond with someone makes it easier to work with them."
3. Coordinators motivate mentors. Mentors discuss the supervisors providing encouragement for their mentoring relationships. M1 stated, "She motivates me as an instructor." M2 explains how the supervisors provide encouraging messages for the staff, "Like before work, sometimes we have a meeting, and it's very encouraging like we can get through today, we can do anything." M4 describes the supervisors as motivating because they are "helpful" and "engaging."

Paid coordinators support the mentors by providing guidance, modeling mentoring expectations, and motivation. M2 shares that she feels that she has a personal bond with her supervisor because she asks and talks to her about the mentor's personal life. "She cares about the staff on a personal level," says M2. The personal lives of the mentors can impact their professional work at the club. As the supervisor has modeled this behavior for M2, M2 also shares personal information about her life with her mentee C2. M3 described his supervisors' guidance under challenging situations just by their presence. Knowing that the coordinator is there helps provide the mentor with confidence. These coordinators encourage innovation from

the mentors. M5 communicated, "They support our new ideas." Finally, M2 shares how coordinators gather mentors before the students arrive to boost the staff's energy and attitudes by providing encouraging messages. The following factors for effective mentoring relationships will include reported themes from mentors and mentees.

***Consistent Meetings***

All participants were asked if they had consistent meetings with their mentoring partners. Only three total participants, all mentors, indicated consistent meetings. None of the mentees indicated they had consistent meetings. M2 said yes, but C2 said sometimes. M3 said yes, but C3 said once. M5 said yes, but C5 said no. Only the mentor and mentee in the first mentoring relationship agreed that they did not have consistent meetings. The community-mentoring program has a mentoring program that does not require students to see adult mentors at a set time. Instead, the meetings could occur multiple times in a day if the mentee desired to come back to see the mentor or needed to "take a break" with an adult that they trusted. When participants were asked why they met consistently or why they did not meet consistently, the following themes emerged:

1. Participants relied on check-in meetings. Participants relied on random occurrences to see and talk to one another. These meetings can be used for participants to embrace physically. M4 expressed that their mentee hugs them daily during check-ins. M1 said, "She comes to my room and gives me a hug. We catch up real quick." "He comes to me, and we dap each other up," states M3. "Dap" refers to a type of handshake that results in a hug. Mentors use check-ins to ensure mentees' well-being. "If I see her sitting by herself, I know that she is upset because she is a talker, so I will go check on her," said

M2. "If I feel upset, she'll ask me what's wrong," described C4. C5 communicated that he uses the check-ins to confide in M5, "I tell her a lot of things I wouldn't tell other people."

2. Mentors ensured availability but allowed mentees to choose when they met. M1 described, "She comes in and out throughout the day." M2 said, "She comes to me a thousand times a day." M5 expressed, "He looks for me." "He's the first kid in my room." "[I see him] most of the time, all day." Mentees discuss their choice to go see their mentor. C1 said she goes to her mentor's room daily whenever she comes to the club because "She is my favorite staff, and we do a lot of activities together." C2 describes meeting with M2 whenever she comes to the club because "She is a good teacher and staff." "I meet with M3 whenever I come to the club," stated C3.
3. Participant relationship dictates consistency of meetings. The mentee would visit the mentor if they felt like they got along with the mentor or the mentor was nice. C1 and C2 explained why they meet with her mentor every time they come to the club, "She is nice to me." C4 said she likes meeting with her mentor because "We get along."

Consistent meetings were the least apparent of the effective factors in the mentoring relationships of the participants who participated in this study. See Tables 2 and 3. This may be due to the community-mentoring organization’s policy that does not provide mentors and mentees a set time to meet. Although none of the mentees indicated that they meet regularly with their mentors, they all said they like meeting this often with their mentors. The mentee could have thought the question asked if they meet regularly like they meet for class. However, they may enjoy the power to meet with their mentors whenever they feel the need to meet with them instead of at a set time.

***Personal Disclosure***

All participants were asked if the mentors shared personal information from their lives with the mentees. All participants indicated that the mentors' disclosure about their personal lives was involved in their mentoring relationships. All of the mentee participants except one, C2, said they wanted to know more about their mentors' lives. Participant C2 said they were comfortable knowing what M2 wanted to tell them. Mentors were asked why they chose to connect with their mentoring partner with information from their personal life. Mentees were asked why they would like to know more or less about their mentors. The concepts revealed were:

1. We relate to one another. Mentors explain that they choose to share information about their personal lives to connect with mentees. M3 states that he discloses information from his personal life with his mentee so that he does not feel isolated. "He thinks he is the only one who struggles or can't succeed. It's something I've been through as well. He's not the only one," says M3. M5 describes relating to the mentee through family relationships and similar interests. "I see him like a little brother here. I'm the oldest sibling of four, so I think that helps me connect," expressed M5. She also shared, "We both enjoy some of the same TV shows and cartoons." Nevertheless, C5 says that he would like to know more about his mentor, "We could do similar things we like together." C5 wants to learn more about his mentor.
2. I want to know more. Despite all the mentors and mentees admitting that the mentors choose to personally disclose, four mentees desired to know more about their mentors. "I'd like to meet with her more to learn more about her," conveyed C1. C3 shared that he would like to know more about his mentor, "It would make me more happy to know more about him. I really like him." "I would like to know more about her, so I could see what stuff we have in common," said C4. C5 says that he would like to know more about his

mentor, "We could do similar things we like together." C5 wants to learn more about M5 to do things together they both enjoy to continue building the mentoring relationship.

3. Help them through my experience. The mentors share personal information about their lives to help the mentee understand their current situations by discussing the mentor's past experiences. M1 shared how she advised the mentee about her situation. "I give advice on their personal situations they ask about. I focus the conversation to make it about them, said M1. M1 is mindful of allowing the mentee to do most of the talking and only share specific information that she feels is relevant to the child to not talk too much about herself. "I share similar stories of when I was young that she is currently going through," declared M2. She says that C2 is often misunderstood like M2 was when she was younger, "She reminds me of myself when I was young." M3 stated that he shares information from his life with his mentor to help him with his angry outbursts. "I can help him understand his anger through my similar experiences," stated M3.

The mentors choosing to share personal information about their lives with their mentees provides opportunities to relate through interests and challenges. These challenges are opportunities for mentors to advise the mentee while recollecting on lessons mentors learned from the past. Personal disclosure does not always satisfy the mentees' desire to know more about the mentors. However, the child's desire to know more creates an opportunity for the mentoring relationship to continue to grow.

***Length of Mentoring Relationship***

All participants indicated that they had been involved in this mentoring relationship for what they felt was a significant amount of time. However, none of the participants agreed precisely on the amount of time they were involved in the mentoring relationship. Responses

ranged from three to four months to two or three years. Some participants discussed when they first met their mentoring partner. Others indicated when they started a formal mentoring relationship with their mentoring partner. See Table 4 for each participant's response.

**Table 5**

*Participants' Responses for Length of Mentoring Relationship*

| Mentor Relationship | Participants | |
|---|---|---|
| | Mentor | Mentee |
| 1 | 5-6 months | 4-7 months |
| 2 | 3-4 months | couple of months |
| 3 | 1 year | 2-3 years |
| 4 | 8 months | 4-5 months |
| 5 | known 1 year, mentored 3 months | 8 months |

***Trust***

All participants were asked if they trust their mentoring partners. All participants indicated that they trust their mentoring partners. Next, participants were asked why they trust their mentoring partners. The following themes emerged from their responses:

1. Honesty: the mentoring partner has proven to be honest or shows qualities that reflect honesty. M1 said, "I trust her because she is genuine, honest, and well-mannered." C1 reflects this trust because M1 is a "safe person" because she protects her. Mentoring pair 3 is another pair that discusses the importance of honesty in their trust for each other. M3 described C3 as honest because "He wouldn't lie to me" and "He admits when he makes mistakes." C3 expresses that he trusts M3 because "He never lies and he keeps his promises." C2 said, "She won't lie to us." C4 shared, "Yes, I trust her because you can believe her." M5 explains, "If he [C4] deems you as worthy, he goes all-in for you."

2. They are nice to me. The mentoring partner is described as treating the other mentoring partner well. Mentoring pair five both discuss the importance of being nice with building trust. M5 expresses that C5 normally "berates" people initially. Working through those initial challenges has helped them build trust in one another. He saw that she stayed through the challenges. She invested in him by staying through the challenges. She realized, "He does not trust many people." C5 admitted, "I didn't like her at first because I thought she was replacing one of my old favorite staff. I trust her because she is nice." C3 voiced, "I really trust him because he doesn't do me wrong." "I trust her because she is nice," said C4.
3. I choose to believe in them. The mentoring partner chooses to place trust in the other mentoring partner. M1 said, "I trust her because I don't suspect her of being dangerous or manipulative." C2 explained that she trusts her mentor even if she had to be dishonest, "If she would need to lie to us, it would be for a good reason." M5 states, "I believe he won't betray my trust." M3 shared that he would trust C3 with a task, "I trust him in taking my keys to another staff member to unlock a door. I don't feel this way about all kids here."

Trust is revealed as a critical component of the effective factors because all participants indicate that it exists in their mentoring relationships. Participants share that they trust the other mentoring partner due to honesty, how they treat one another, and choosing to trust the other. M5 described, "He does not trust many people." The fact that the mentee's trust was exclusive helped M5 realize how precious his trust is. M3 also discusses this exclusive trust when describing how he would let C3 take his keys but not trust other children to do this. C2 discussed a level of trust that surpasses the need for honesty, "If she would need to lie to us, it would be for a good reason." It may be that C2 has had enough experiences of trust with M2 to express this level of

confidence in her character. This is the mentoring relationship where the mentor sees herself in the child, self-discloses, provides her the freedom to express herself emotionally and in competition, and makes herself available to the child.

Mentors also express trust in their mentees to use personal disclosure for the mentees to better their lives. "I trust her to use the personal experiences we discuss to better her life," said M2. M3 communicated that he trusts that C3 wants to succeed, "I trust that he will learn to believe in himself and not hold himself back from the things we have discussed." "I trust her enough to talk to her on a personal level," voiced M4.

***Culturally Relevant Activities***

Mentors were asked if they conduct culturally relevant activities where the child explores their identity and develops knowledge about themselves. The question was modified for the mentees for their comprehension. The children were asked if they did any activities with the mentor to learn about themselves. All participants indicated that culturally relevant activities occurred in their mentoring relationships except for one mentoring pair. Participants M4 and C4 agreed that there were no culturally relevant activities in the mentoring relationship. Mentors were asked how they thought the culturally relevant activities might help the mentee. Mentees were asked what they had learned about themselves by doing the activities. The following concepts were provided:

1. Mentees' acceptance of who they are. Mentors conduct activities to help mentees value their identity. M1 discussed Black Lives Matter worksheets, Black History Jeopardy, and making friendship bracelets as activities in the mentoring relationship. M1 expressed, "I wanted to do things with the kids, so they were comfortable with who they are." C1 did not list any of these activities as things she values in learning about herself. Mentoring

pair two discusses the importance of dance as an activity that helps the child learn more about herself. C2 said dance helps her grow in character. "I can be judgmental. She helps me stop being mean to others," expressed C2.

M2 discussed playing get-to-know-you games, dancing, and doing things where C2 can talk about herself. M2 stated, "She wants to feel like she has to outshine everyone else. We give her the freedom to do so, especially in dance." Mentoring pair three discuss how the mentor learns more about himself through playing basketball. C3 shared, "I've learned my strengths and weaknesses playing basketball. I talk to him about things I feel I'm bad at, and he makes me feel better about these things." M3 discussed playing basketball and golf with the mentee. M3 articulated, "The goal is to get him to express himself through a variety of inclusive activities." Basketball allows the child to talk about the game and provides a forum where he feels comfortable discussing things outside of basketball. C5 discussed talking to their mentor about making friends and controlling their anger. C5 stated, "I've learned that I can respect myself as a young man and bond with other people." M5 discussed doing activities that will help the mentee accept himself. Things centered around Black culture, teen activities, trivia, and art. M5 spoke, "He has shared personal things about his life, and I listen."

2. Mentees receive encouragement through activities. Participants discuss the significance of help and support through these activities as the children learn more about themselves. C1 said she is encouraged by learning she is good at Bingo, Color Simon Says, and puzzles. C2 said she is encouraged to grow in her character by participating in dance. M2 uses dance to encourage the mentee to be who she is and have the freedom to compete. C3 said he receives encouragement from his mentor when discussing things he feels

terrible at; M3 helps the mentee feel better about these things. C5 declared, "I can talk to her [M5] about my bad attitude, and she will help me."

3. These activities help the mentees learn self-control. Participants discuss activities that help the children learn to control their emotions. "I can be judgmental. She helps me calm that down. She helps me stop being mean to others," expressed C2. M2 commented that activities give the mentee a chance to separate from her peers for a moment and put her attention on something else. C4 voiced, "She [M4] talks to me if somebody makes me mad. She helps me calm down, so I can find them and apologize. M4 helps them calm down, find the person, and apologize." M4 said educational activities, science experiments, cooking, and making friendship bracelets provide the mentee options. They can help shift the mentee's focus when she is upset. C5 said that by talking to his mentor, "I've learned that I can control my anger."

Participants provided a wide range of responses when providing culturally relevant activities present in their mentoring relationships. C1 listed Bingo, Sparkle, Color Simon Says, and puzzles as activities she does with her mentor where she learns about herself. When asked what she's learned about herself, C1 said, "I've learned that I'm good at them." These games may not hold cultural relevance, but the child has grown in her self-confidence in playing these games.

***Safe Space***

All participants indicated that their mentoring relationships were occurring in a safe space. Next, participants were questioned on why they felt that the environment where their mentoring relationship exists is safe. These three themes arose:

1. Mentees feel safe in the mentoring relationship. Children express a feeling of security by having a mentoring relationship and the mentor's character. "I feel safe where I receive mentoring because she's [M1] is my favorite staff," described C1. C2 stated, "If the club were to get robbed or something, I know I wouldn't get hurt because I trust M2 like that." C2's comment speaks to the reality of the club's location, as her example of it being robbed was viable. "I feel safe because M3 is a really nice guy," expressed C3. C4 declared, "I feel safe because [M4] won't harm anybody." Finally, C5 shared, "Yes I feel safe because I know the staff is trustworthy." His feeling safe extended beyond the mentoring relationship to the entire staff because he said he had known the staff for a while.
2. Taking a break: mentors provided children the time and freedom to express their emotions. "Sometimes teens need their own time and space away," conveyed M5. M4 stated, "She can express herself in my room." M2 discussed a desire for a room in the club for the mentee to express her emotions. "I wish there was a private place where I could talk to her when she is upset or emotional, so she can feel safe to vent without ridicule from the other kids," described M2. M1 depicted her room's deck with a small staircase that leads to an upper-level platform. This deck is only in M1's room. M1 has decorated it with pillows and stuffed animals. She allows any student to utilize the space as needed. "Students can choose to rest, calm down, or take a break from others at the club," declared M1.
3. Protection: the mentoring relationship provided a guardian for the child at the club. "I feel safe because he [M3] protects me. He doesn't let people mess with other people,"

reported C3. C4 declared, "I feel safe with her [M4]." M5 described, "I go out of my way to make it safe. I address unsafe things immediately."

None of the participants expressed feeling safe in the physical location of the club. M5 described a situation of "hearing gunshots nearby." "The neighborhood outside the club is not safe," admitted M3. However, these children attend the club almost daily. They live in the club's neighborhood, so they are aware of its dangers. Participants expressed that they feel safe where they experience mentoring due to having the mentoring relationship, expressing emotions freely, and feeling protection from their mentors. They do not feel safe due to their physical location. They feel safe in the confidence of their mentors despite their physical location.

**Research Question 2**

Research question two asks which aspects of the effective practices mentees find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? All of the mentee participants indicated that trust was most important to their mentoring relationship. All of the mentee participants, except for C2, indicated that safe space was essential to their mentoring relationship. When the mentees were asked why trust and safe space were most important, the following themes emerged:

1. Protection: C1 said trust immediately when asked what practice was most important to them. C1 stated, "She has a safe room. When someone hits me, she stops them or tells them to go to timeout." C2 said she needs to trust that their mentor will be there if she is injured or needs help. C3 said he needs a safe space because he has been bullied a lot by other kids at The Club. C3 said one kid "punched me in the face." He said that M3 dealt with the other kid and talked to C3, making them feel better. C4 said trust but did not elaborate. C5 said safe space, "I need to follow directions in order for them to keep me safe."

2. Confidence: C1 said being mentored in a safe place is essential. She is confident the mentor will not tell anyone else what they discuss. "She don't tell nobody else what we talk about," said C1. C4 said being safe was essential to be confident, "I can stay with my family." The mentee would not elaborate on what they meant by this statement.

Trust was the most prevalent practice that all the mentees mentioned. C1, C2, and C4 all discussed protection as critical in establishing trust. This protection included security from other children at the club, advocacy from other adults who may not understand them like their mentor, and help if they got injured. C3 discussed the importance of honesty in their mentor to establish trust. C2 and C5 also stated how important the time and availability of their mentor were to build trust. C1 and C4 stated that a safe space was necessary to confide in their mentor. C3 and C5 shared that the safe space with their mentor was a place of protection for them. C1 also discussed the importance of choosing to use the safe space at any time.

**Research Questions 3**

Research question three asks which aspects of these effective practices mentors find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? There was no consensus by all mentors on any single practice. However, three out of five mentors indicated trust, three out of five indicated safe space, and all except M1 indicated consistent meetings as the essential practices for their mentoring relationships. When the mentors were asked why trust, safe space, and consistent meetings were essential to their mentoring relationships, the following concepts were indicated:

1. Intentional care: M2 said consistent meetings would help them understand their mentee more and mitigate problems as they arise since kids' issues change daily. M3 said a safe space provides the mentee with unconditional support. "He knows that I have his back even if everyone else is against him." M3 also discussed the importance of consistent

meetings. "I observe him intentionally enough to where, even if he tells me, I'm fine; I've observed him consistently enough to be able to see different," says M3. M4 said the mentee often describes not getting enough attention at home. Consistent meetings allow M4 to provide the mentee with the needed attention. M5 said, "He's emotion-driven; not meeting consistently could impair the relationship." M5 also said the length of the mentoring relationship was significant because the more time invested in the relationship, the more the mentee trusts the mentor.

2. Intervention: M2 says that trust is essential, so the mentee knows that "I have her back" with other kids and when the mentee is in the mentor's supervisor's office and needs an advocate. M3 says, "If someone is bothering him, he will seek help from me or someone, so he can be heard and receive help." M3 also states that consistent meetings allow M3 to see the mentee to know how he is doing. This allows the mentor to do something if there is a problem. M4 stated, "Consistent meetings allow me to check on her mentally, physically, emotionally, etc." M5 commented that not having consistent meetings would inhibit the mentee from discussing his issues and impair their relationship.
3. Comfort to express themselves freely: M1 stated that culturally relevant activities allow the mentee to express herself freely. M2 said the mentee would not open if she were uncomfortable or not in a safe space. The mentee must trust she has "The freedom to be real," according to M2. M3 discussed the importance of the mentee being comfortable in a safe space at The Club because "We don't know what's going on at home." M5 expressed the need for a safe space so the mentee could be free to be himself. M5 said, "Being happy is more important than fitting in." C5 has shared with his mentor that he has challenges relating to the other students. M5 described him as a "Weird kid." She

says, "I get him." M5 describes her challenges relating to her peers growing up. This common challenge has provided an opportunity for M5 to share how she has coped with this challenge. She says, "I connect with him like this because I had a similar mindset when I was younger." M5 says that she has learned that being happy herself is more important than fitting in with the crowd, and she shares this with C5. "I think these things help him accept himself," says M5.

Trust emerges as necessary to the mentors as well. M2 and M3 say they have the confidence to advocate for the mentee or intervene during problems because there is trust in the mentoring relationship. M2 says that trust allows their mentee to open up about things. M5 states that trust helps them bond with their mentee. Safe space was the next effective practice essential to the mentors in their mentoring relationships. M2, M3, and M5 share that a safe space allows their mentors to feel comfortable and express themselves freely. M3 also says that a safe space allows them to show intentional and unconditional support to the mentee. Finally, consistent meetings are revealed as an effective practice by the mentors. M4 and M5 say that consistent meetings allow them to check in on mentees and provide their mentees the choice to see the mentor. M2 says that consistent meetings with the mentor allow them to mitigate problems before they become emergencies with the mentee.

**Research Question 4**

The final research question is, what practices do participants feel are missing from the identified effective practices for their mentoring relationships? Each participant was asked the open-ended question: is there anything missing from the list of effective components important to their mentoring relationship? Here is what the participants said:

- Bonding: M3, C2

- Fun: M3, C2
- Love: M3, C5
- Care: M3, C5
- Friendship: M5, C5
- Advocacy: M2

Participants C2 and M3 indicated “Bonding” and “Fun” as effective practices in their mentoring relationships. They discuss how they bond through laughing, joking, and having fun in their mentoring relationships. Participant M2 indicated advocacy as an essential practice in their mentoring relationship. M2 shares that advocacy allows her to speak up for the child with another child or adult when the mentee is uncomfortable advocating for herself. M2 also says that this advocacy involves holding the mentee accountable when she is wrong. Participants M3 and C5 indicated love and care as effective practices for their mentoring relationships. M3 expresses this care in the availability of not being too busy to stop and help the mentee. Participants C5 and M5 were the only participants apart of a mentoring pair to agree on a missing component important to their mentoring relationship. They both identified friendship as essential to their mentoring relationship. They discuss friendship as caring and bonding through conversations and experiences.

**Summary**

Research question one asks to what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in the mentoring relationships between the mentors and mentees at the community-mentoring program. All participants indicated that these factors were present in their mentoring relationships: paid coordinator support, personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, and a safe space. Consistent meetings were indicated as evident in

the mentoring relationship by three mentors but not any of the mentees. All of the mentee participants indicated that they did not see their mentors consistently. However, the mentors said that the mentees would come to the club as often as possible. The themes participants discussed in each effective practice will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Research question two asks which aspects of these effective practices mentees find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? All of the mentee participants indicated that trust was most important to their mentoring relationship. All of the mentee participants, except for C2, indicated that safe space was essential to their mentoring relationship.

Research question three asks which aspects of these effective practices mentors find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? There was no consensus by all mentors on any single practice. However, three out of five mentors indicated trust, three out of five indicated safe space, and all except M1 indicated consistent meetings as the essential practices for their mentoring relationships.

The final research question is, what practices do participants feel are missing from the identified effective practices for their mentoring relationships? Participants C2 and M3 indicated bonding and fun as effective practices in their mentoring relationships. Participants M3 and C5 indicated love and care as effective practices for their mentoring relationships. Participants C5 and M5 were the only participants apart of a mentoring pair to agree on a missing component important to their mentoring relationship. They both identified friendship as essential to their mentoring relationship. Finally, participant M2 indicated advocacy as an essential practice in their mentoring relationship. Each research question will be analyzed for in-depth interpretation in the next chapter. Patterns and connections will be made to the research provided in the literature review. The established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships from the

research will be reviewed to see how evident they are in these mentoring relationships. How the research defines establishing trusting relationships will be compared to how these participants built them. These mentoring relationships will be analyzed to review how they avoid the negative impact of ineffective mentoring.

# Chapter V. Conclusions And Recommendations

This final chapter will begin by revisiting the purpose of the study, the research questions, the methodology, and the findings. Next, the discussion will provide an in-depth interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of the results and findings. The literature will be reexamined to identify patterns and unexpected results while providing a credible rationale for this study's findings. The conclusion will identify what is known based on integrating the research questions' findings, analysis, interpretation, and synthesis. Based on these conclusions, recommendations will suggest actionable steps that adults mentoring urban elementary students can take. Limitations will recognize the constraints of data sources and other aspects that cannot be accounted for or measured. Finally, future research opportunities will be identified by addressing the unanswered questions left from this study.

## Review of the Study

A basic qualitative study design was used to identify factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings. Ten total participants, five mentoring pairs of an adult mentor and a child mentee, were separately interviewed to determine their opinions on their mentoring relationships at the community-mentoring organization. The interview questions were adapted from the effective practices for mentoring relationships identified in the literature review. The prevailing practices and concepts from the collective responses of the participants were identified based on each participants' mentoring relationship practices.

The first research question is, to what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in relationships between mentors and mentees. Participants responded to each factor of effective mentoring relationships defined in the literature review:

ongoing training impacting mentors' motivations, paid coordinator support, consistent meetings, personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, culturally relevant activities, and safe space. All participants identified personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, and safe space as essential factors in their mentoring relationships. All mentors agreed that paid coordinator support was a vital aspect of their motivations to mentor. Next, research question two asks which aspects of these effective practices mentees find most valuable and why. All the mentees identified trust. All but one mentee specified a safe space. Research question three asks which aspects of these effective practices mentors find most valuable and why. There was no consensus on any single practice by all of the mentors. Trust, a safe space, and consistent meetings were the most prevalent responses from the mentors. Finally, research question four asks what practices participants feel are missing from the identified effective practices for mentoring relationships. Different participants identified bonding, fun, love, care, and friendship as essential factors in their mentoring relationships not specified in the list of effective practices from the literature review.

## Discussion

### *Research Question 1*

Research question one asks to what degree are established frameworks for effective mentoring relationships evident in the mentoring relationships between the mentors and mentees at the community-mentoring program. The following are effective practices for mentoring programs for elementary school-based programs:

1. Ongoing training for mentors that addresses their motivations for mentoring (Caldarella et al., 2010; Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019).

2. A paid coordinator for the mentoring program dedicated to monitoring and running the program (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019).
3. Mentors who are committed to mentor students for the school year, willing to meet consistently for weekly meetings, and vulnerable enough to self-disclose (Caldarella et al., 2010; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).
4. Students should have prolonged interaction with the same mentor during the duration of the school year (Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).
5. A mentoring relationship that is built on trust between the student and the mentor (Henry et al., 2017; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019).
6. Culturally relevant and appealing mentoring activities sustained through the mentoring relationship enabling youth to explore their own identity and develop greater self-knowledge (Frels et al., 2013; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Weiss et al., 2019).
7. A safe, familiar, and accessible setting that addresses the needs of the students (Frels et al., 2013; Henry et al., 2017).

All participants specified personal disclosure, length of the mentoring relationship, trust, and safe space as vital factors in their mentoring relationships. In addition, all mentors agreed that paid coordinator support was an essential aspect of their motivations to mentor. The section below describes the unique analysis of the effective practices found in this study.

**Consistent Meetings**

Consistent meetings were the least evident of the influential factors in the mentoring relationships of the participants who participated in this study. This may be due to community-mentoring program's policy that does not provide mentors and mentees a set time to meet but allows children to choose when to meet with their mentors. Although none of the mentees indicated that they meet regularly with their mentors, they all said they like meeting this often with their mentors at their convenience. Research suggests that effective mentors commit to meeting with students for the duration of a school year and are willing to meet consistently for weekly meetings (Caldarella et al., 2010; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019). The mentees at the community-mentoring program receive mentoring interactions multiple times a week as often as they like. However, these mentoring interactions are not consistent enough to make the mentees nor the mentors feel that it is evident in their mentoring relationships. These mentoring interactions are often informal and quick check-in meetings. These meetings may occur when the child first arrives at the club. M1 shared, "She comes to my room and gives me a hug. We catch up real quick." M4 described how C4 comes and hugs her daily when she arrives. These check-in meetings can also occur reactively. "If I see her sitting by herself, I know that she is upset because she is a talker, so I will go check on her," declared M2. "If I feel upset, she'll ask me what's wrong," explained C4.

Participants may desire to have scheduled meetings with their mentoring partners to feel more consistent in their mentoring interactions. C2 communicated that she only sometimes meets regularly with her mentor despite choosing to go to her room daily. Mentees and mentors may appreciate the ability to meet with their mentoring partners at a set time, uninterrupted. M2 expressed a desire to have scheduled meetings with C2 once or twice a week because she feels

that it would help her better understand C2. She said that she often feels rushed in her meeting with C2 because she has to run back to her room to attend to her role as a room facilitator.

**Personal Disclosure**

All participants recognized that personal disclosure was essential to their mentoring relationships. However, four out of five child participants acknowledged that they would like to know more about their mentors when asked why they would like to know more or less about their mentors. For example, mentee C2 said she was comfortable knowing what M2 wanted to tell her. The participant is not admitting that she is satisfied with what she knows about her mentor. Instead, she is conceding to the reality of what her mentor is willing to share with her. If all the mentors participate in self-disclosure, why do the mentees desire to know more? The desire for the mentees to know more about the mentors creates an opportunity for the mentoring relationship to grow. This aligns with the research conducted by Caldarella et al. (2010), demonstrating that mentoring must be viewed as a relational partnership instead of a hierarchical structure. The mentees in Van Ryzin's (2014) research expressed that their relationships with their mentors were developmental rather than prescriptive. The relationships were flexible, supportive, and guided by the mentees' interests rather than focused on accomplishing a goal through advice or guidance.

The desire for mentees to know more about their mentors in this study shows that the mentors' decision to disclose personally is functioning to build the mentoring relationship. C3 said, "It would make me more happy to know more about him" [M3]. C5 said that he wants to learn more about his mentor so they can do things together they both enjoy to continue to build the mentoring relationship. The mentees' desire to know more about their mentors shows their persistent desire to continue to develop the mentoring relationship.

**Culturally Relevant Activities**

The concept of culturally relevant activities is challenging to evaluate for children between nine to eleven. Some of the adult mentors asked for clarification on this question. It was rare that the mentee and mentor listed similar activities as culturally relevant. This could be due to the adult and the child holding different values for the different activities, or the mentees' question could have been adjusted to make it more focused on activities where they learn about their values. Time may have been needed to define what values mean to the children. Participants focused on activities that helped the children deal with current issues and express themselves. What establishes the cultural relevance of an activity? Bingo, Simon Says, basketball, dance, and puzzles were all culturally relevant to these children because they provided an opportunity for acceptance, encouragement, and self-control. Maybe it is less important what the activity is and more important how an adult interacts with the child during the activity as the child learns about themselves. Frels et al. (2013) state that adult relationships, support for a child from an adult other than a parent, is vital for school-aged children to feel a sense of connectedness. The activity being Black Lives Matter Jeopardy or a puzzle is less significant than if the child connects with the mentor through the activity. Montañez et al. (2015) reveal that positive outcomes were seen from students engaging in creative arts and drama curricula and direct mentorship that promoted self-efficacy, empowerment, and coping skills.

**Safe Space**

None of the participants communicated that they felt safe due to the physical location of the community-mentoring organization. M5 discussed a situation of "hearing gunshots nearby." M3 admitted that the neighborhood outside of the club was unsafe, which caused the staff to be intentional about making sure it was safe inside the building. "This needs to be a safe place

because home might not be a safe place. Here he [C3] knows that no one will put their hands on him, he will receive a meal, and someone loves him here," said M3. Mentees expressed that they felt safe at the community-mentoring program because they felt confident in their relationship with their mentor, it provided them a place to express their emotions freely, and they felt protected by their mentors. Despite the dangerous environment surrounding the club, children still decide to participate. "A safe space was described as an environment where students feel comfortable being themselves and expressing themselves without being judged nor negative consequences" (Sanchez et al., 2018, p. 20). A safe space is more about ensuring the emotional safety of children just as much as it is about ensuring the physical safety of the children.

Safety is needed for children inside the club as well. C3 described a situation of being physically assaulted at the club. "One kid punched me in the face. I talked with M3 about it, and I felt better after I talked with him," expressed C3. M1 illustrates how she allows any student at the club to use her deck in her room to "calm down and take a break from others at the club." C4 said, "She [M4] talks to me if somebody makes me mad. She helps me calm down so I can find them to apologize." C5 stated, "I can talk to her [M5] about my bad attitude, and she helps me control my anger." M3 shared how most of these students live in the community surrounding the community-mentoring program. Therefore, they carry "baggage" of circumstances around with them of the realities of things they face daily in their lives. These mentors are not just working to keep their mentees safe from the other students. There are times that they must keep the other students safe from their mentees. This reveals the necessity of activities teaching self-control that was seen as a focus when discussing culturally relevant activities.

***Research Question 2***

Research question two asks which aspects of these effective practices mentees find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? Mentees acknowledged trust and safe space as the most valuable practices in their mentoring relationships. What follows is why the mentees felt trust and safe space were the most important practices in their mentoring relationships.

**Trust**

All mentee participants indicated that trust was most important to their mentoring relationship in the same way the literature cited (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2012; Erdem & Aytemur, 2008; Louis & Freeman, 2018; Sánchez et al., 2018; Weimer, 2019). C1, C2, and C4 all expressed protection as critical in establishing trust (Solari, 2014). This protection included security from other children at the club, advocacy from other adults who may not understand them like their mentor, and help if they got injured. C3 discussed the importance of honesty in their mentor to establish trust. C2 and C5 also stated how important the time and availability of their mentor were to build trust.

Trust becomes critical for mentors to start connecting with the child's parents, teachers, and other adults in the community of the child in order to build academic resilience (Coyne-Foresi, 2015; Williams et al., 2017). This is virtually impossible if the mentor has not established trust with the child initially. The mentor will have to work to earn their trust from the adults in the child's life. This becomes easier if these adults see that the mentor is protective, honest, and spends time with the child.

**Safe Space**

All of the mentee participants, except for C2, indicated that safe space was essential to their mentoring relationship. C1 and C4 stated that a safe space was necessary to confide in their

mentor. C3 and C5 shared that the safe space with their mentor was a place of protection for them. C1 also discussed the importance of using a safe space at any time.

The concept of safety begins to transcend the environment when the child trusts the adult. The child begins to associate safety in the environment when they know the mentor is present. "I feel safe where I receive mentoring because she's [M1] is my favorite staff," said C1. C2 said, "If the club were to get robbed or something, I know I wouldn't get hurt because I trust M2 like that." The fact that this child uses the example of being robbed to describe her trust in her mentor reveals that robbery is something she considers a possible situation in her life, and she has complete trust in her mentor to keep her safe. Her trust is not in the building but her mentor. The literature describes the phenomenon of a child feeling safe in a physical location due to the presence of another person as a sense of safety (Armstrong, 2014; Frels, 2014; Spencer et al., 2019; Van Ryzin, 2014). This also reveals the importance of consistency and availability of the mentor with the child. It reinforces the sense of safety and continues building this trust.

***Research Questions 3***

Research question three asks which aspects of these effective practices mentors find most valuable to their mentoring relationship and why? There was no consensus by all mentors on any single practice. However, three out of five mentors indicated trust, three out of five indicated safe space, and all except M1 indicated consistent meetings as essential for their mentoring relationships.

**Trust**

Trust emerges as necessary to the mentors as it was for the mentees. M2 and M3 said they have the confidence to advocate for the mentee or intervene during problems because there was trust in the mentoring relationship. M2 said that trust allowed their mentee to open up about

things. M5 stated that trust helped them bond with their mentee. The mentors at the community-mentoring program understood how initiating trust in their mentees allowed them to open up and bond with the mentors. Becoming vulnerable with their mentees and entrusting them freely reflects the research (Armstrong, 2014; Frelin, 2015). These mentors anticipated opportunities to show their trust in their mentees by advocating for them with other students and other adults. Parents, teachers, and other community adults in the child's life appreciate mentors' advocacy, which assists in building the academic resilience network (Sánchez et al., 2018).

**Safe Space**

Safe space was the next effective practice essential to the mentors in their mentoring relationships. M2, M3, and M5 share that a safe space allows their mentees to feel comfortable expressing themselves freely. M3 also says that a safe space allows them to show intentional and unconditional support to the mentee. The literature of this research reveals that the mentoring relationship's goals are not always centered on educational achievement. Mentoring relationships are specific to the child's needs and not what mentors think are the needs of the child (Caldarella et al., 2010). The mentors in this study understood that they create a sense of safety for the child to freely express themselves when they prioritize the child's needs over what they feel the child needs. M4 said, "I focus on her [C4] needs, not my own." Then when the child responds to the invitation to be vulnerable, the mentor shows intentional support for what the child reveals. The impact of ineffective mentoring is revealed when mentors:

- do not initiate vulnerability in the mentoring relationship by modeling trust
- do not invite the child to be vulnerable on their own terms through a sense of safety
- attempt to force the child to open up

- do not respond with the intentional support of the child when they choose to be vulnerable and express themselves.

If mentors engage in these behaviors, the results are disengaged mentoring relationships, lack of motivation, feelings of unfulfillment, and poor relational skills (Keller & Pryce, 2012; Liao & Sánchez, 2019; Scott et al., 2013; Spencer et al., 2019; Spencer et al., 2020).

**Consistent Meetings**

Finally, consistent meetings are revealed as an effective practice by the mentors. M4 and M5 say that consistent meetings allow them to check in on mentees and provide their mentees the choice to see the mentor. M2 says that consistent meetings with the mentor allow them to mitigate problems before they become emergencies with the mentee. Research suggests that influential mentors commit to meeting with students for the duration of a school year and are willing to meet consistently for weekly meetings (Caldarella et al., 2010; Henry et al., 2017; LaVenia & Burgoon, 2019; Montañez et al., 2015; Van Ryzin, 2014; Weiss et al., 2019). The mentees at the community-mentoring program receive mentoring interactions as often as they like, multiple times a week. These mentoring interactions are not consistent enough to make the mentors or mentees feel that consistent meetings are evident in their mentoring relationships. These mentoring interactions are often informal and quick check-in meetings. M1 shared, "She comes to my room and gives me a hug. We catch up real quick." M4 described how C4 comes and hugs her daily when she arrives. These check-in meetings can also occur reactively. "If I see her sitting by herself, I know that she is upset because she is a talker, so I will go check on her," declared M2. "If I feel upset, she'll ask me what's wrong," explained C4.

Mentors may desire scheduled meetings with their mentoring partners to feel more consistent in their mentoring interactions. C2 communicated that she only sometimes meets regularly with her mentor despite choosing to go to her room multiple times daily, according to the mentor. Mentors and mentees may appreciate the ability to meet with their mentoring partners at a set time, uninterrupted. M2 expressed a desire to have scheduled meetings with C2 once or twice a week because she feels it would help her better understand C2. She said she often feels rushed in her meetings with C2 because she has to run back to her room to attend to her role as a room facilitator. This is consistent with the research that described mentoring meetings as a set time for the mentor to focus on the mentee for a specific amount of time (Keller & Pryce, 2012; Laco & Johnson, 2019; Sánchez et al., 2018; Weimer, 2019).

***Research Questions 4***

The final research question is, what practices do participants feel are missing from the identified effective practices for their mentoring relationships? Participants C2 and M3 indicated "Bonding" and "Fun" as effective practices in their mentoring relationships. They discuss how they bond through laughing, joking, and having fun in their mentoring relationships. Participant M2 indicated advocacy as an essential practice in their mentoring relationship. M2 shares that advocacy allows her to speak up for the child with another child or adult when the mentee is uncomfortable advocating for herself. M2 also says that this advocacy involves holding the mentee accountable when she is wrong. Participants M3 and C5 indicated love and care as effective practices for their mentoring relationships. M3 expresses this care in the availability of not being too busy to stop and help the mentee. Finally, participants C5 and M5 were the only participants apart of a mentoring pair to agree on a missing component important to their mentoring relationship. They both identified friendship as essential to their mentoring

relationship. They discuss friendship as caring and bonding through conversations and experiences.

**Conclusion**

This study identified the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings. First, a paid or dedicated coordinator is vital for the operation of a successful mentoring program. Second, mentors must be vulnerable enough to self-disclose with their mentees. Third, mentors must commit to consistently mentoring the same students for at least a school year. Fourth, the mentoring relationship must be established in trust. Finally, mentoring should occur in a safe, familiar, and accessible setting. This study supports the identified factors of effective mentoring relationships found in the research.

**Recommendations**

Teachers and any adults who work with elementary students in urban settings can be proactive in ensuring their children experience these effective conditions by first offering trust to the mentee willingly to ensure trust in the mentoring relationship. In the past, trust was given to adults by children. Trust had to be earned by children from adults. The community of adults who looked after the community's children does not exist as it did in the past. Now parents are protective of their children by teaching them to make adults earn their trust. The days of children earning the trust of their mentors are gone. If adults wait for them to earn trust, they may never succeed in establishing a mentoring relationship. However, it can grow if trust is modeled for the child by freely receiving it and nurtured in a personal relationship (Armstrong, 2014; Erdem & Aytemur, 2008; Frelin, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2012). In addition, adults must address children's emotional and physical safety needs to establish a safe space for relationships. This does not mean that the adults are responsible for preventing every instance of emotional or physical

abuse. It means the adult has created an environment where children feel safe enough to express themselves and their feelings honestly. This may mean that the teacher or school adult provides the child with an exclusive time and location to express themselves. Finally, mentors must be willing to meet consistently with the child, at least weekly or as often as the child needs, for at least one school year. This must occur outside normal classroom hours for teachers or during regular school functions for school adults. The classroom already has a dedicated purpose. If the school adult's goal for meeting with the child conflicts with the established classroom purpose, the classroom purpose will always trump any other function with the child. Therefore, another dedicated setting must be created that is focused on the mentoring relationship. Before school, during lunch, after school, or on the weekends are all options. The child must have the option of individual time with the adult if needed.

**Limitations**

This study had several limitations. In terms of participants' rapport with the researcher, none of the participants had ever met the researcher before the interviews. Therefore, it could have been difficult for them to speak openly and honestly to the researcher, especially for the child participants. Also, the researcher presumed that all mentors understood the meaning of culturally relevant activities. Instead, many of the mentors asked for clarification on this question. The researcher could have worded the question better to make it more comprehensive for the mentors: what activities do you do with your mentee where they learn about themselves? It was also assumed that the mentees would speak about culturally relevant activities if asked about things they did to learn about themselves. Instead, some mentees provided games like Bingo, Color Simon Says, and puzzles because they had learned that they were good at these

games. The researcher could have rephrased the question: what activities do you do with your mentor where you learn who you are?

In addition, this research did not evaluate the mentors' efforts to connect with the parents, teachers, and other significant adults in the mentee's lives outside of the community-mentoring organization. However, the research showed that mentors who connected with these adults in their mentees' lives were able to influence resilience in the lives of these children. This network of caring adults works together to influence the child to make good decisions and hold the child accountable. Future studies could assess how mentors of elementary-aged students living in poverty work with their parents, teachers, and adults in their community to impact the child at school and home.

Finally, this study did not assess the impact of the participants' mentoring relationships on the children's academic performance. The literature on effective mentoring revealed a positive impact on students' academics. Future studies could focus on how effective mentoring relationships of elementary-aged students living in poverty impact students' academics, behavior, attendance, and state test scores.

**Future Research Opportunities**

Future studies may assess the differences in participants' responses in school-based mentoring programs and community-based mentoring programs. Conducting the research in a school-based mentoring program could make the research results more generalizable to mentors working in schools. The method of mentoring used at the community-mentoring program may not be how mentoring is conducted in urban elementary schools. Children are presented with multiple choices at the community-mentoring organization, and they choose which activities they want to participate in and when they want to participate. Elementary students in schools may

have to decide to participate in mentoring at a school that has one mentor with only a few activity choices. To commit to the mentoring group at school, they may have to participate in activities that do not interest them. Children at community-mentoring program have multiple mentors' choices; they can build relationships and decide when to see those individuals. Students in school may only have one or two mentors and be required to attend mentoring meetings if they want to be considered part of the program. The community-mentoring organization is not a school. Its mentors are trained differently than teachers. These mentors do not have the same accountability of testing and evaluation standards that teachers carry from the Ohio Department of Education, which may negatively impact the generalizability of this research to school-based mentoring programs.

Also, future studies could expand the number of participants involved in the study and perform the study in a school to help increase the generalizability of the research for educators. Another area of research that would be helpful to know more about is the assessment of mentoring programs. First, are there any types of evaluations being used to can help educators assess school-based mentoring programs using best practices for school-based mentoring programs in elementary schools? Second, these identified factors for effective mentoring relationships can be used in future research studies to help establish the reliability and validity of these factors in mentoring children in urban settings. Then these factors could be developed into an assessment for educators to evaluate and improve their school-based mentoring programs. Third, did the participants comprehend the question about culturally-based activities? Future studies could spend more time explaining what is meant by culturally-based activities to participants to ensure their understanding of the question during the interview or explore this topic more in-depth to see what other implications it may have for effective mentoring practices.

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## Appendix A

**Table 2.**

*Interview Questions*

| Mentor | Mentee |
|---|---|
| 3. What is the name of your mentee? | 4. What is the name of your mentor? |
| 4. What school does your mentee attend? | 5. What school do you attend? |
| 6. Please answer the following questions.<br>a. Do you receive ongoing training influencing your motivations for mentoring? If so, how?<br>b. Is there a paid coordinator of your mentoring program dedicated to running the program? If so, how are you supported by the coordinator?<br>c. Do you and your mentee meet consistently? Why or why not?<br>d. Do you connect with your mentee using information from | 3. Please answer the following questions.<br>k. Do you and your mentor meet regularly? Do you like meeting this often?<br>l. Does your mentor tell you about his/her life? Would you like to know more or less about your mentor?<br>m. How long have you had this mentor?<br>n. Do you trust your mentor? Why or why not?<br>o. Do you do activities with your mentor where you learn about yourself? |

| | |
|---|---|
| your personal life? Why or why not?<br>e. How long have you had this mentee?<br>f. Do you trust your mentee? Why or why not?<br>g. Do you conduct culturally relevant activities for the mentee to participate in where the mentee can explore his/her identity and develop knowledge about herself/himself?<br>i. In what ways do you think these culturally relevant activities might help the mentee?<br>h. Do you feel that the location where you mentor is safe for the mentee? Why or why not? | i. If so, what have you learned about yourself?<br>p. Do you feel safe where you receive mentoring? Why or why not? |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4. Which of these components are most important for your mentoring relationship with your mentee? Why?<br><br>q. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices | 4. Which of these components are most important for your mentoring relationship with your mentor? Why?<br><br>r. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices |
| 5. Is there anything missing from this list of components that you do with your mentee? Why is this important to you?<br><br>s. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices | 5. Is there anything missing from this list of components that you do with your mentor? Why is this important to you?<br><br>t. Participants will be a list to reference researched effective practices |

## Appendix B

**Table 2.**

*Participant Demographics*

| Mentoring Pair | Mentor | | | Mentee | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Age | Gender | Race | Age | Gender | Race | Grade | Type of School |
| 1 | 18+ | Female | White | 10 | Female | Black | 5 | Urban Charter |
| 2 | 18+ | Female | Black | 10 | Female | Black | 5 | Urban Public |
| 3 | 18+ | Male | Black | 11 | Male | Black | 6 | Urban Public |
| 4 | 18+ | Female | White | 9 | Female | Black | 4 | Urban Public |
| 5 | 18+ | Female | Multi | 11 | Male | Multi | 6 | Urban Public |

## Appendix C

**Table 3.**

*Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships for Mentors*

| | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | Total Yeses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ongoing Training Impacting Motivations | YES | NEUTRAL | YES | YES | YES | 4 |
| Paid Coordinator Support | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Consistent Meetings | NO | YES | YES | SOMETIMES | YES | 3 |
| Personal Disclosure | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Length of Mentoring Relationship | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Trust | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Culturally Relevant Activities | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Safe Space | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |

## Appendix D

**Table 4.**

*Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships for Mentees*

| | C1 | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | Total Yeses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consistent Meetings | NO | SOMETIMES | ONCE | NO | NO | 0 |
| Personal Disclosure | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Length of Mentoring Relationship | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Trust | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |
| Culturally Relevant Activities | YES | YES | YES | NO | YES | 4 |
| Safe Space | YES | YES | YES | YES | YES | 5 |

## Appendix E

**Table 5.**

*Participants' Responses for Length of Mentoring Relationship*

| Mentor Relationship | Participants | |
|---|---|---|
| | Mentor | Mentee |
| 1 | 5-6 months | 4-7 months |
| 2 | 3-4 months | couple of months |
| 3 | 1 year | 2-3 years |
| 4 | 8 months | 4-5 months |
| 5 | known 1 year, mentored 3 months | 8 months |

## Appendix F

## IRB Approval

University of Findlay.

**Institutional Review Board**

Date: **October 6, 2021**

To: Dr. Mary Heather Munger

CC: Antonio R. Davis

RE: Identifying Factors of Effective mentoring Relationships Between Adults and Elementary Students in an Urban Setting

**Project Expiration date: October 6, 2022**

The University of Findlay Institutional Review Board (IRB) has completed its review of your project utilizing human subjects and has granted authorization. This study has been approved for a period of one year only. The project has been assigned the number **1582**.

In order to comply with UF policy and federal regulations, human subject research must be reviewed by the IRB on at least a yearly basis. If you have not completed your research within the year, it is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that the **Progress Report** is completed and sent to the IRB in a timely fashion. The IRB needs to process the re-approval before the expiration date, which is printed above.

Please note that if any changes are made to the present study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Understand that any proposed changes may not be implemented before IRB approval, in which case you must complete an **Amendment/Modification Report**.

Following the completion of the use of human subjects, the primary investigator must complete a **Certificate of Compliance form** indicating when and how many subjects were recruited for the study.

Please refer to the IRB policy and procedures manual for additional information. Please include the project number on any other documentation or correspondence regarding the study.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact IRB at (419) 434-4640 or email irb@findlay.edu.

Sincerely,

Landon Bellavia

Landon Bellavia, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

Cc: IRB Office

## Appendix G

**Adult Research Consent Form**


**Institutional Review Board**
**Adult Research Consent Form**

**DATE: 9/1/21**

**PROJECT TITLE:** Identifying Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships between Adults and Elementary Students in Urban Settings

**PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR(S) AND CO-INVESTIGATORS:**
**Principal Investigator (P.I.):** Dr. Mary Heather Munger, PH.D.
**PI CONTACT (PHONE, E-MAIL, ADDRESS):** 419-434-4090, MUNGER@FINDLAY.EDU, 163 DAVIS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
**STUDENT/SECONDARY INVESTIGATOR (SI):** ANTONIO R. DAVIS
**STUDENT/SI CONTACT (PHONE, E-MAIL, ADDRESS):** 419-318-9025, DAVISA7@FINDLAY.EDU, 2339 WINTERSET DR. TOLEDO, OHIO 43614

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:** This research aims to identify the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings. The goal is to identify how adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban settings can leverage these factors.

**DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PROCEDURES:**
After clearance from the community-mentoring organization, the researcher will e-mail the mentors to inform them about the research opportunity. Every attempt will be made to conduct all meetings and interviews by phone or virtually to minimize the risk of exposure to Coronavirus for participants and the researcher. If meetings or interviews have to be held, all provisions were made for participants to sit at least six feet apart and with proper personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer. Mentors will have three weeks to respond with interest in participation for the mentoring pair. This time allows mentors to have an initial conversation with the mentees about the opportunity and decide whether this would be something they would be interested in learning more about for possible participation. An initial meeting over the phone or using Google Meet will be conducted to introduce myself as the researcher and inform the participants about the study. Another week will be provided for the participants to review and complete the letters of consent and assent. The researcher will conduct separate interviews of the mentors and mentees by phone or Google Meet in the next two weeks. Since the interviews will be done virtually or by phone, the participants can complete the interview in the most convenient location for the mentors or mentees. The researcher will need

permission to contact them at this location, the number to contact (if necessary), and the time they wanted to meet.

Approximately ten interviews will be conducted with participants, five with mentors and five with mentees. Participants will be asked if they would be comfortable if the researcher took notes during the interview and informed that the researcher would only see the notes. The researcher will use the notes to track trends heard in other participants' responses, identify subjects that the participant could expound upon, and begin identifying possible codes for data analysis. For virtual interviews, participants will have the option to leave their cameras on for the interview duration. The researcher will intentionally leave his camera on during virtual interviews to assure the virtual participants that there was no one in the room with the researcher so they could be confident in speaking freely

**DURATION/TIME ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR INVOLVEMENT:** The total time investment of the participant is between 30 and 45 minutes, dependent on the amount of feedback the participant provides for the interview questions.

**POTENTIAL RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS:** This research involves interviewing minors about their mentoring relationship with their mentors, which could impact the mentoring relationship between the mentor and mentee in the future. Mentors will be asked their opinions about the community organization in which they are employed. However, your community organization will not have access to your recorded responses. Also, pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants and used after the interviews to protect all participants' identities.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS:** The information gained from this research will allow us to compare the theoretical effective factors for mentoring relationships with the experiential practices of mentoring practitioners working with children in urban areas. Identifying factors for effective mentoring relationships in theory and practice can help adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban settings leverage these factors. These benefits are all at the expense of minimal risk to the participants' psychological, social, and economic well-being.

**PROJECT ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY:** There is no project alternative to participation in the study. Individuals are free to decline participation in the study.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA:** Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants and used during the interview in order to protect their identities. Notes and memos from the interviews will be converted into digital formats and stored in the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. All physical copies of notes and memos from interviews will be immediately destroyed after digital transcription. Digital notes, memos, and audio responses of interview responses will be directly uploaded, deleted from the phone and computer hard drives, and stored in the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. Data will only be accessible to Dr. Mary Heather, Principal Investigator, and Antonio Davis, Secondary Investigator. All digital data from the interviews will be immediately deleted from computer and phone hard drives after upload to the password-protected University of Findlay

provided Google Drive account. In addition, all digital data from the research interviews will be deleted from this Google Drive account after three years.

**COSTS AND/OR COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION:** There are no costs and/or compensation for participation in this study.

**CIRCUMSTANCES FOR DISMISSAL FROM THE STUDY:** There are no circumstances for dismissal from this study.

**COMPENSATION FOR INJURY:** This study should pose no threat to physical well-being of participants from completing an interview. Therefore, there is no compensation for injury from this study.

**CONTACT PERSONS:** For more information concerning this research, please contact **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Dr. Mary Heather Munger at OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER 419-434-4090**. If you believe that you may have suffered a research related injury, contact **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR Dr. Mary Heather Munger at OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER 419-434-4090.** If you have further questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

IRB Chairperson
The University of Findlay
Findlay, OH 45840
419 434-4640
irb@findlay.edu

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. In the event that you do withdraw from this study, the information you have already provided will be kept in a confidential manner.

**NEW FINDINGS:** You will be notified of any new information that may change your decision to be included in this study, should any new information become available.

**CONSENT:** Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, and other issues. This includes the use of "informed consent" procedures. Please read carefully.

I, _____ (PRINTED NAME OF SUBJECT) have been adequately informed regarding the risks and benefits of participating in this study. My signature also indicates that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent to participate at any time without penalty by contacting the study contact person designated above. Any and all questions I had about my participation in this study have been fully answered.

---

SUBJECT SIGNATURE:_____

DATE

I have witnessed the consent process and believe the subject has been fully informed, understands the research study, and has agreed to participate in the study.

WITNESS PRINTED NAME:_____

WITNESS SIGNATURE:_____

DATE

**YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SIGNED COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.**

## Appendix H

**Parent/Legal Guardian Permission Form**

University of Findlay

**CONSENT FOR A MINOR TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT**

**Parent/Legal Guardian permission form**

Project Title: Identifying Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships between Adults and Elementary Students in Urban Settings

Principal Investigator: Antonio Davis

Participant's Name: _____

**What is the study about?**
This research aims to identify the factors of effective mentoring relationships between adults and elementary students in urban settings of Northwest Ohio. In addition, the goal is to determine how adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban environments can use these factors to improve mentoring relationships with these students. Your child will be asked ten questions about the opinion of her or his experiences with the mentor.

**Why are you asking my child?**
This study focuses on the mentoring experiences of elementary students in urban settings of Northwest Ohio. Therefore, participants were sought between the ages of 9-15 in grades 4-8, attending school in an urban area of Northwest Ohio, and have been involved in mentoring. Your child was selected by the community-mentoring program to participate as a result of meeting these criteria.

**What will you ask my child to do if I agree to let him or her be in the study?**
Your child will be asked to participate in an interview with me to answer the ten questions about his or her experiences with the mentor. Every effort will be made to conduct this interview virtually or by phone. However, suppose you or your child prefers to conduct the interview in person. In that case, all provisions will be made for at least six feet of separation with proper personal protective equipment such as masks and hand sanitizer as precautionary steps to minimize risk of exposure to Coronavirus. You are invited to be present as your child participates in the interview with me.

Your child will be asked about her or his opinions about the mentoring relationship they have with the mentor. This could have a negative impact on your child's mentoring relationship with the mentor. To minimize this risk, the community-mentoring program nor your child's mentor will not have access to your child's responses in the interview. Also, your child will be assigned an alternative identification.

**Is there any audio/video recording of my child?**
There will be no video recording of your child. However, there will need to be an audio recording of her or his responses during the interview. Suppose you and your child decide to conduct a virtual interview. In that case, I will leave my camera on to provide you both assurance that no one is in the room with me during the interview. However, you and your child are free to leave your camera off during the duration of the interview. Because your child's voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, confidentiality for things said on the tape cannot be guaranteed. However, the researcher will try to limit access to the recording as described below. Notes and memos from the interviews will be converted into digital formats and stored in the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. All physical copies of notes and memos from interviews will be immediately destroyed after digital transcription.

**What are the dangers to my child?**
The Institutional Review Board at The University of Findlay has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants

*If you have any concerns about your child's rights, how he or she is being treated or if you have questions about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Antonio Davis who may be contacted at (419) 318-9025 or davisa7@findlay.edu.*

**Are there any benefits to my child as a result of participation in this research study?**
There are no direct benefits to participants in this study.

**Are there any benefits to society as a result of my child taking part in this research?**
The information gained from this research will allow us to compare the theoretical effective factors for mentoring relationships with the experiential practices of mentoring practitioners working with children in urban areas. In addition, identifying factors for effective mentoring relationships in theory and practice can help adults who desire to mentor elementary students in urban settings leverage these factors.

**Will my child get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything for my child to be in this study?**
There are no costs to you or payments to you or your child due to participation in this study.

**How will my child's information be kept confidential?**
Notes and memos from the interviews will be converted into digital formats and stored in the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. All physical copies of notes and memos from interviews will be immediately destroyed after digital transcription. Digital notes, memos, and audio responses of interview responses will be immediately uploaded

and deleted from phone and computer hard drives. They will be stored in the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. Data will only be accessible to Dr. Mary Heather, Principal Investigator, and Antonio Davis, Secondary Investigator. All digital data from the interviews will be immediately deleted from computer and phone hard drives after upload to the password-protected University of Findlay provided Google Drive account. All digital data from the research interviews will be deleted from this Google Drive account after 3 years.
All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. ***"Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing."***

**What if my child wants to leave the study or I want him/her to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to allow your child to participate or to withdraw him or her at any time, without penalty. If your child does withdraw, it will not affect you or your child in any way. If you or your child chooses to withdraw, you may request that his/her data that has been collected be destroyed when possible.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**
Suppose significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to your willingness to allow your child to continue to participate. In that case, this information will be provided to you when possible.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**
*By signing this consent form, you are agreeing that you have read it or it has been read to you, you fully understand the contents of this document and consent to your child taking part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child who wishes to participate in this study described to you by Antonio Davis.*

_____ Date: _____
Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

_____ Date: _____
Participant's Parent/Legal Guardian's Signature

**Appendix I**

**Research Assent Form**


# RESEARCH ASSENT FORM

Required for children 7-17 years old

Project Title: Identifying Factors of Effective Mentoring Relationships between Adults and Elementary Students in Urban Settings

IRB #1582

Principal Investigator: Antonio Davis

Date: 9/1/21

We want to tell you about a research study we are doing. A research study is a way to learn information about something. We would like to find out more about how adults can become better mentors for students. You are being asked to join the study because you have a mentor, you are between the age of 9 and 15, and you are in grades 4-8.

If you agree to join this study, you will answer ten questions about your time with your mentor.

We do not know if being in the study will help you. We may learn something that will help other children involved in mentoring someday.

You do not have to join this study. It is up to you. You can say okay now, and you can change your mind later. All you have to do is tell us. No one will be mad at you if you change your mind.

Before you say **yes** to be in this study, we will answer any questions you have.

If you want to be in this study, please sign your name. You will get a copy of this form to keep for yourself.

_____ _____

(Sign your name here) (Date)

Updated 05/3/2022