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MENTORSHIP: IN RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND PLANNING

Jasmine A. Lee

Dr. Lynn Nybell, Mentor

ABSTRACT

This research examines literature from 1995-2007 involving youth mentorships in America. Mentor/National Mentoring partnership defines youth mentorship as a “structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (2003). Over the past decade there has been a resurgence of youth mentoring as a way to provide support and encouragement to “at-risk” youth in America. My study of the literature involved defining the word mentor and finding the best practices used by mentor programs that create positive outcomes in youth and documenting the process of the mentor relationship. During my research I discovered that there is a lack of information specifically regarding African-American mentors matched with African-American mentees and the impacts that this has on the youth involved. In light of this gap in the research I have taken the information and created a model for a mentoring program based on researched “best practices” and recommendations from scholars concerning how to structure a mentor program. This program has been designed specifically for 25 African-American students, between the ages of 13-15 who will be paired with 25 African-American mentors who are undergraduates at Eastern Michigan University. This literature review and program design serves as the preliminary step for further research.

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring in America as a way to assist youth in positive growth has a long history. From the early 1900s until today, youth mentoring continues to be a positive way to provide youth with relationships with extra familial adults. Founded in 1910, Big Brothers, now known as Big

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Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) is one of the first and most well-known mentoring programs in the United States. Along with BBBS, various programs such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association (YMCA and YWCA) and the Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks were at the foundation of youth mentorship in America (Baker and Maguire, 2005). Baker and Maguire (2005) argue that in America, formal mentoring is largely a twentieth-century development, intertwined with the rise of an industrial economy and urban order.

Now, one century later, interest in mentoring as a support for youth to build positive relationships with caring adults continues to grow. Currently there are over 4,000 agencies and youth-based mentoring programs serving an estimated two and a half million youth each year (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007). From formal mentoring programs to natural mentor relationships, the idea that mentoring assists in positive growth and change in "at-risk" youth continues to flourish. Most formal programs or state-based/federal programs target "at-risk" youth (e.g., single parent families, economically disadvantaged, minority youth) and tend to include on-site youth interventions and community-based efforts that are not confined to a specific context (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007). According to Rhodes (2002), mentoring has been a focus of public attention during the past decade (as cited in Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006), which has led to a resurgence of research and programming.

Through review of the literature on mentorship in America, I have found that there is great focus on what mentorship means and why youth should participate. Some scholars focus on the implications that mentorship has on youth involved and some on the actual mentorship relationship and/or process. However, as I have reviewed the literature, I have found that there is much research on "at-risk" youth, but very little research specific to African-American youth in mentor programs. Finding the relationship between the mentor and the mentee to be key in positive outcomes for youth involved, much of my focus in this paper is on what has been found on the relational process and how to build a positive relationship with youth mentees.

My purpose in this literature review is to design a model for a sample size mentor program between African-American mentors and African-American youth, in an urban community. From the information in this literature review, I plan to focus in on a proven set of best practices to create a comprehensive program design. The program is structured as a pilot program with Eastern Michigan University undergraduate students

and GearUp (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) at Willow Run High School (WRHS), an urban high school in southeast Michigan, and will specifically focus on African-American, ninth-grade students. The topics found in this paper, include mentoring defined, the mentor relationship and what it looks like, the outcomes of mentoring, the “best” program practices, and the overall implications that the research and findings have on African-American youth. At the conclusion of the paper, the proposed program design which will last one academic year and serve as a channel for future research, is included.

WHAT IS MENTORING

To fully understand the mentoring movement, we must first come to terms with the way that the word mentor is defined. There are varying definitions of mentor and mentoring. Rhodes (2002) states that mentoring is a “relationship between an older, more experienced adult and an unrelated, younger protégé—a relationship in which the adult provides ongoing guidance, instruction and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the protégé” (as cited in DuBois & Karcher, 2005, p.3). Merriam (1983) describes mentoring as a “powerful emotional interaction between an older and younger person, a relationship in which the older member is trusted, loving and experienced in guidance of the younger. The mentor helps shape the growth and development of the protégé” (as cited in DuBois and Karcher, 2005, P. 162). The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (1976) states that a mentor is “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher” (as cited in DuBois and Karcher, 2005). Finally as stated in the *Definition and Evolution of Mentoring*, mentoring is a relationship where a caring and supportive, individual, who serves as a mentor, provides guidance and support in various areas of life for the mentee (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007).

While there are some similarities between varying definitions of the word mentor, Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2007) discuss that even within a specific discipline there is often a lack of consensus on a single definition of mentoring. Along these lines, I have not been able to find a solid definition of mentoring or mentor specifically associated with the social work profession; instead the idea of mentoring is mostly associated with psychology and child development. However, in all the above definitions, the similar theme is that mentoring is a relationship between one individual and another caring individual who can provide support and encouragement in addition to or in place of the support received in

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the immediate environment. Also noticed is that the mentor is assumed to be an experienced adult and the mentee to be a younger individual. While the focus of this paper is on youth mentoring with adults, there are also programs that support peer mentoring, with youth-to-youth, those that support workforce mentoring with colleague-to-colleague and a plethora of others.

For the purposes of this paper, the definition structured by the MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership in 2003 is most useful for one to understand “youth mentoring” which is the focus of this paper. As stated in Youth Mentoring, “mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings youth people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2003). Mentoring corresponds with the understanding that youth learn about themselves and their world in the context of relationships with significant adults, e.g. teachers, family, adult friends (Keller, 2007). The primary tasks of a mentor are to establish a positive, personal relationship with the youth; help the student to develop life skills; assist students in obtaining additional resources; and help students in their ability to interact with others (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006). Though these definitions explain what a mentor is and what mentoring involves, the real work is in the relationship, or the process of mentoring.

WHAT IS IN THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP AND WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE

According to DuBois and Karcher (2005), one of the leaders in mentoring research, the mentor relationship must include the following: first, the mentor must be someone with greater experience, or wisdom than the mentee; second, the mentor must offer guidance or instruction that is intended to facilitate the growth and development of the mentee; and third, there must be an emotional bond between the mentor and the mentee, a hallmark of which is a sense of trust. According to this statement, the relationship between the mentor and the mentee needs to be a naturally developed bond that includes trust and vulnerability. While the relationships are often “created” through matching tools and personality profiles, in order to produce positive outcomes, the relationship must be real and authentic. The presence of a strong emotional connection has been found to be a distinguishing feature of those mentoring relationships that are associated with better outcomes such as improvements in

perceptions of scholastic competence and feelings of self-worth (Dubois and Neville, 1997). According to a recent study found in the *Journal of Community Psychology*, the closeness of the relationship rather than the types of shared activities or the amount of contact is what leads to the benefits of the mentoring relationship (Parra, Dubois, Neville, and Pugh-Lilly, 2002).

The length of the relationship is important also. It is necessary to promote the sustained development of positive relationships because longer-lasting relationships tend to yield greater benefits for youth, while short-term relationships may have unintended negative effects (Keller, 2005, as cited in DuBois and Karcher, 2005). S. M. Jekielek, K. A. Moore, E. C. Hair and H. J. Scarupa (2002) found that characteristics of successful mentoring relationships include “relationships lasting longer than six months” (p. 4-5).

Spencer (2006) found that higher quality mentoring relationships are marked by authenticity, engagement, and empowerment. Authenticity, possibly the most important aspect of the relationship, allows a relational partner to have access to one’s thoughts, feelings and intentions but also involves offering perceivable and engaging responses to the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of the other person (Spencer, 2006). Engagement involves being physically there with the youth person and being there mentally and emotionally for him or her. Through engagement in the life of the adolescent, the core of the relationship is built. Engaging in various activities with someone you like and whom you know likes you is believed to contribute to an ongoing state of emotional well-being, enhancing the pleasure experienced in everyday life (Spencer, 2006). Empowerment creates an environment for the youth to find their own strengths, but more importantly it involves teaching the youth how to dis-empower the oppressive forces that challenge their growth. Empowering the youth is what causes the relationship to grow and teaches the youth how to survive and continue growth after the relationship has disseminated.

While there are three main characteristics at the base of the mentor relationship, there are many variables that weave themselves within the relationship that also play a part in the development of it. For example, collaboration between the individuals in the relationship is vital. Spencer (2006) found that individual emotional development at all ages is, in essence, a successful ‘collaboration of two individuals’, or an out-growth of on-going interactions with others. In youth development, collaboration is necessary. It is important for youth to assess

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situations and make decisions based on their own desires and thoughts, but the outcome is typically better when they have ideas, thoughts and some assistance from an individual with experience. At the foundation of any relationship, including mentoring, mutuality and collaboration are thought to facilitate emotional development (Spencer, 2006). Spencer (2006) also found that relationships in which the mentor promotes the youth in his or her own endeavors rather than focusing on changing the young person's behavior or character is also a characteristic of successful mentoring relationships.

Finally, programs that are driven more by the needs and interests of youth rather than the expectations of the adult volunteers are more likely to succeed (Jekielek et al., 2002). Programs based on a "developmental" approach instead of a "prescriptive" approach tend to last longer and be more satisfying for both the mentor and the mentee (Jekielek et al., 2002). In the developmental approach, mentors spend initial time getting to know their mentees, are flexible in their expectations of the relationships, and arrange planned activities, and allow, their mentee to plan activities in which they would engage (Jekielek et al., 2002). Through this method mutuality and collaboration is achieved, while also supporting the growth of youth individuality.

The mentor relationship has a lot to do with the individuals involved, their personalities, their expectations and their desires for the relationship. Keeping this in mind, Eby, Rhodes and Allen (2007) argue that mentoring is a relationship that is truly unique to the individuals involved. In the *Definition and Evolution of Mentoring*, they state that "no two mentorships are the same; distinct interpersonal exchanges and idiosyncratic interaction patterns define and shape the relationship" (p. 10).

MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH AFRICAN-AMERICAN YOUTH

It has been argued that involvement in mentor programs by "at-risk" youth is especially important (Jekielek et al., 2002). "At-risk" youth are considered those who come from families that provide the least support, neighborhoods that offer the fewest positive outlets or positive role models, and some of the poorest-performing schools (Jekielek et al., 2002). Most mentor programs are geared toward "at-risk" youth, which typically includes racial minority youth. However, the mentor relationship with specifically African-American youth and African-American mentors in urban settings has not been fully investigated or

represented in the explored research. In addition to the regular stresses, pressures, and confusion that are faced by all youth, African-American youth also face discrimination, oppression and negative stereotypes that could cause a mentor relationship with them to be slightly different and this relationship must be explored.

According to Hopps, Tourse and Christian (2007), African-American youth between the ages of 12 to 18 years old make up over 32% of the entire African-American population ("African-American" referring to those born in America who are racially assumed to have African ancestry). Within the immediate environment of most of these youth, they experience stratification and control by the dominant group in society which often leaves them feeling powerless, alienated, and angry (Hopps, Tourse and Christian, 2007). African American youth being over-represented in poverty places at risk their emotional, social, cognitive and educational development (Anda, 2002). Anda (2002) argues that since slavery, young African Americans have been and are continuing to struggle for adequate economic and social development. Due to the additional stresses experienced by African-American youth, intervention is necessary to assist them with these feelings and to help them develop positive coping strategies (Hopps, Tourse and Christian, 2007). Anda (2002) characterizes intervention as the "doing of the therapeutic process" (p. 64) and one intervention to assist in the growth of the young African-American psyche is youth mentoring. However, as mentioned, this form of intervention for African-American youth with African-American mentors has not been fully represented in research.

Implications for relationships with specifically African-American youth have not yet been identified. My hypothesis is that in addition to everything that has been proven to provide positive outcomes, a mentor relationship with an African American youth may need additional sustenance. For example, as discussed earlier, Spencer (2006) equates higher quality mentoring relationships with authenticity, engagement, and empowerment. In working with minority youth, these characteristics may include additional traits. Authenticity could possibly include a transparent life of the mentor for youth to associate with and learn from. The transparency of the mentor should lead to greater emotional strength in dealing with a historically racist society, more positive coping strategies, and greater cultural awareness through appreciation for one's own culture, as well as, for others'. Engagement could possibly include engaging in activities that support cultural awareness, but also engaging in conversation and experiences focused solely on the lives of racial mi-

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norities in America and the futures of youth as minorities in America. As mentioned before, empowerment must include empowering the youth to dis-empower the oppressive forces that place barriers in the path of growth. However, to dis-empower the oppressive forces the youth must be empowered to learn beyond what is taught in the schools about his/her history, what is portrayed by the media about the African-American culture and empowered to reach into their own communities to make a difference.

In a mentor relationship with African-American youth, empathy is very important and could prove to be key. Empathy can be defined as understanding the other person's frame of reference and affective experience (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006). While empathy is not extensively explored in the research pertaining to youth mentoring, it is one of the key ingredients of youth mentoring relationships because it is important for youth to feel understood and validated. Though complete empathy can never be accomplished, it is important to establish a sincere appreciation of what youth go through and the changes they continue to face. Especially in the face of racism, classism or discrimination of any sort, it is important for mentors to be able to emotionally connect with the situation even if they have never experienced anything similar; only through empathy can this be accomplished. I argue that empathy may more easily be accomplished with African-American youth by an African-American mentor because of the greater possibility of the mentor having experienced the same type of discrimination and oppression in their own lives.

It is important when working with African-American youth to include exposure to opportunities out of their immediate environment in the mentoring relationship, because often times they lack this kind of exposure. Often one's identity of self is closely related to the environment in which a person has grown up. If youth have not been exposed to diverse opportunities and resources, it can be difficult for them to aspire to something different or know how to achieve their aspirations. Through out the entire mentor relationship, the empowerment should involve exposing youth to opportunities that can provide them with the skills necessary to change their immediate surroundings, i.e. age appropriate job training, college visits, academic assistance etc. Because academic achievement is a key predictor of socioeconomic status (Jekielek et al., 2002), focusing on the improvement of academic and cognitive skills of African-American youth is imperative to assist them in changing their socioeconomic futures.

I only discovered a small amount of research that focused specifically on racial minority youth participating in mentor relationships. Considering that most mentor programs are geared toward “at-risk” youth, it is safe to assume that a portion of the youth served in these programs are racial/ethnic minorities, but specifics on this topic are lacking. What I found is literature concerning mostly cross-raced matches or relationships between racial minority youth paired with White mentors. Because cross-race matches are considered the “norm” they are reflective of the samples in studies from which much of the positive effects of mentoring have been found (Sanchez and Colon, 2006). Research on same-race mentor relationships is minimal, partially because programs often have a lower proportion of racial minority mentors compared with racial minority mentees (Sanchez and Colon, 2006). It is argued that racial/ethnic minority youth could be on waiting lists for long periods of time if mentoring program staff attempted to match solely by race or ethnicity (Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, and Lee, 2002). The overarching theme is not that the cross-race mentoring relationship is as effective as the same-race mentoring relationship, but that they can still be effective given the positive findings in the literature regarding cross-race relationships (Sanchez and Colon, 2006). Despite the number of positive outcomes from cross-race relationships, per my exploration, the amount of studies conducted concerning same-race relationships with minority students does not compare to those concerning cross-race relationships, which begs the question: Which relationships are truly most effective for African-American youth?

Many of the studies reviewed in the literature do not specify whether the students matches are cross-raced or same-raced, so it can not be said that the outcomes are specifically because of cross-raced or same-raced matches, however, scholars like Sanchez and Colon (2006) discuss a similarity-attraction paradigm, which implies that mentors and mentees of similar racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds, who likely have more in common, would experience more successful relationships than those of different backgrounds. While this idea has not received consistent support from studies conducted to date, scholars like Sanchez and Colon (2006) argue that a relationship based on modeling and advocacy, by same-race mentors who understand the social and psychological conflicts that these youth experience, can teach youth how to cope effectively and is worth pursuing. One should also consider that it is important for youth of all racial/ethnic minority cultures to see successful people who “look like them,” so that they can better visualize a suc-

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cessful future in spite of over-representation in poverty-stricken communities, systematic discrimination, racism and the over-looming cloud of oppression in a historically racist society.

DOES MENTORING WORK

Evaluation on mentoring programs varies greatly. Using evaluation to test the outcomes of mentoring programs shows that mentoring does work. Research indicates that children and adolescents who feel a sense of connection with a supportive adult engage in fewer health-risk behaviors (Keller, 2007). The positive outcomes for youth involved in the mentoring relationship range from growth in positive self-worth to experiencing a less likelihood of substance abuse. Jekielek et al., (2002) states that youth involved in mentor programs overall have better attendance in school, experience reduction in some negative behaviors, and experience positive changes in social attitudes and relationships, among other things. Dappen and Isernhagen (2006) found that youth who have participated in mentoring programs have experienced a reduction in alcohol and drug use, likelihood of becoming a teen parent and incidence of hitting and violence toward others. They have also shown improved relationships with others in general (Tierney and Grossman 1995) and with peers, adults, and parents specifically (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006). Youth involved had increased self-confidence and self-awareness and were more able to express themselves (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006). They were more likely to graduate and to enroll in postsecondary training and education and were more hopeful about the future (The Mentoring Institute, 2001).

In a *Child Trends Research Brief*, Jekielek et al., (2002) found that the youth who participated in various mentor programs were 46% less likely than youth who did not participate to initiate drug use during the period that the programs were being studied, and according to this study, minority youth were 70% less likely than the white youth. According to the Impact study of Big Brothers Big Sisters, the positive impact was largest among the minority youth involved: they were 70% less likely to have started using illegal drugs and alcohol they were 10% more optimistic about their academic competence, skipped 78% fewer days, and had a higher GPA than the control group in comparison to their white counter parts (Tierney and Grossman, 1995). Keller (2007) argues that studies consistently find that youth who show healthy adjustment despite environmental adversity are distinguished by the reliable presence and support of at least one caring adult.

While mentoring most often works, it only works if the relationship is purposeful and longstanding. As stated in *Youth Mentoring: Theoretical and Methodological Issues*, research points to potentially harmful consequences of short-lived mentoring relationships characterized by conflict and disappointment (Keller, 2007). If the relationship is terminated too early, it is possible for the mentee to be left feeling inadequate. The mentee may also experience reduction in self-esteem and self-concept. Jekielek et al., (2002) found that youth in one-on-one mentoring relationships of duration shorter than six months experienced no significant improvements in academic, social, and substance use outcomes; and those involved in relationships of briefer than three months actually felt less confident about doing schoolwork and had substantially lower sense of self-worth.

PROGRAM PRACTICES

Research shows that in more cases than not, mentoring does work. However, positive outcomes are in direct correlation with the relationship of the mentor and the mentee, and the practices of the mentor program. Many mentor programs provide options and opportunities to assist in the building of the mentor relationship, such as groups outings, after school meeting areas, etc. However, most mentor programs do not have a specific prescription as to how to make the relationship its best. According to Dappen and Isernhagen (2006), for the mentor relationship to work, “Best Practices” should be followed. Mentorship best practices are described as mentoring programs that include monitoring of program implementation, careful screening of mentors, matching mentors and mentees on at least one criteria, pre-match and ongoing training for mentors, supervising programs, supporting mentors, providing some structured activities and opportunities for parent support and/or involvement, and providing expectations for frequency of contact and duration of the mentoring relationship, which has been found to be the common components of successful mentoring programs (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006).

Before a mentor and mentee are matched, the program must consider who the mentor will be. Background checks and other screening procedures (i.e. interviews) have been included consistently in recommended guidelines for the selection of mentors (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper, 2002). Some programs specifically seek out individuals whose backgrounds (i.e. teacher) may make them especially well suited to forming effective mentoring relationships with youth (DuBois

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et al., 2002). When matching, it is recommended to match youth with mentors based on criteria such as gender, race/ethnicity or mutual interests (DuBois et al., 2002). Even though it is recommended to be matched based on race and ethnicity, most mentoring programs do not have enough minority mentors to match with minority mentees. Keeping in mind the lack of minority mentors, it is important to recruit minority mentors to fill this need.

Jekielek et al., (2002) found that mentors and mentees met at the highest rates in programs that provided regular supervision and at the lowest rates when such supervision was lacking or inadequate. Also key in successful mentor relationships are mentors who are trained by the program both before and after they are matched with the youth; mentors who received the most hours of training had longer lasting matches (Jekielek et al., 2002). Communication of guidelines and expectations regarding frequency of mentor-mentee contact and duration of relationships is imperative, so that the relationship begins with the same level of understanding (DuBois et al., 2002). It is also recommended that in addition to supervision of relationships and provided activities, that provisions for the support and involvement of parents are provided (DuBois et al., 2002).

Best practices vary depending on the goal of the program. Some programs focus solely on a general goal of promoting positive youth development while other programs have adopted more focused goals such as academic growth or consistent employment and job training (DuBois et al., 2002). However, enhanced benefits generally have been expected to result when mentoring is linked to other supportive service such as academic assistance (DuBois et al., 2002).

Blackwell's Handbook of Mentoring features 23 essential best practice principles to follow when planning a large scale formal mentoring program. The principles are separated by category and some of them include:

Planning- Before establishing a new youth mentoring program Miller (2007) suggests that an audit and needs assessment of the area be completed; this is imperative to create a program that meets the needs of youth in the community.

Mentor Recruitment to Matching- Miller (2007) suggest that youth mentoring programs have a process for screening out unsuitable mentors; because a faulty mentoring relationship with a youth can lean to a decrease in self-concept, it is important to only recruit mentors who are committed and willing.

Mentoring Processes- The dissemination of the mentoring relationship can be confusing and painful if not carefully managed. Miller (2007) suggest that both mentors and mentees be prepared by the program before the relationship comes to an end. Evaluation- Evaluation is necessary to conclude whether the program was successful. "Programs should conduct monitoring and evaluation and use agreed national standards to benchmark and improve the quality of program management, operations and outcomes" (Miller, 2007, p. 320).

As mentioned, best practices vary depending on the goal of the program, but also based on size of the program. However, all mentorship best practices seek to provide youth with a relationship, that will assist in growth and future planning.

CONCLUSION

During the past decade, mentoring programs for youth have become increasingly popular and widespread (DuBois et al., 2002). Interest in mentoring programs has been fueled in significant part by the importance that positive relationships with extra familial adults have been indicated to assist in promoting resiliency among youth from "at-risk" backgrounds (Rhodes, 1994, as cited in DuBois et al., 2002). Mentoring provides a way for youth involved to receive support, care, and experiences in addition to what they receive in their home environments. It is important to understand that each mentor relationship is individualized and personal to those involved, some can be life-altering, while others may be superficial, short-lived, or even destructive (Eby, Rhodes and Allen, 2007).

Per my exploration, the impacts that African-American mentoring has on African-American youth in formal mentoring programs was not found in recent research. Major research has been conducted concerning mentorship in America, the relationship involved in the mentor process, recommendations to create a well structured and supportive program and impacts mentorship has made the lives of so many "at-risk" youth. However, understanding that "at-risk" often includes racial/ethnic minority youth, it is my interest to know specifically the impacts that same-race mentoring has on African-American youth. As an attempt to assist in the closing of this gap, I have used this research to establish a mentoring program model for a sample group of African-American youth. Within this program, I will use the proven methods found that provide the greatest outcomes accompanied with various cultural aspects

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to make the program specific to African Americans. At the conclusion of the program, all evaluation methods and materials will be viewed and analyzed. At this time, I will be able to see the impacts. Some of the questions I will be looking to answer are: Have the youth involved changed? What is the likelihood that this change would have occurred without this program? Are the students any closer to being ready for post-secondary education? Is this program worth duplicating? Have the students become more culturally aware? Is the hypothesis that students involved in a mentor relationship will grow academically, emotionally, and mentally if the program follows best practices true? Other questions may be formulated as the program is implemented. Other areas of interest include recruiting and maintaining minority mentors and analyzing if the positive outcomes from same-race mentor relationships differ at all from cross-race mentor relationships. Based on the information gathered during my research, a model program design for future research has been presented below.

MENTOR PROGRAM DESIGN

What: Mentor program for 25 African-American students ages 13-15 and 25 African-American EMU undergraduate students.

When: Nine month program lasting from October 2008- June 2009; bi-weekly programs, workshops, and outings will be provided, while mentors and students will be encouraged to stay in contact regularly outside of provided meeting dates.

Goal: Students involved in the program should experience growth in self-esteem, self-worth and self-concept. Students participating should also experience growth in cultural awareness and academic achievement. Overall students involved in the program should move on to the next grade feeling better prepared and more hopeful about a future in post-secondary education.

Narrative: This program is a planned collaboration between EMU students and GearUp (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). Working with 25 13-15 year olds and 25 undergraduate mentors, this nine month program will provide the students involved with opportunities to learn, grow, and achieve greater academic success. Through the mentor relationship, the students will become bet-

ter prepared for a future in post-secondary education; they will experience greater cultural awareness and appreciation. Also, more importantly they will be able to build a relationship with a caring adult, they will learn more about themselves and they will experience growth in self-esteem and self-concept.

Finding it important for the students involved to have someone close in their age to observe and learn from, the program will have a Youth Liaison. The student chosen is a junior from Willow Run High School and has been participating in the Project Impact Mentoring program as a mentee for two years. Within this position, she will gain important leadership experience, while also being seen as a positive role model to the younger students. Because it is important to provide the students with what they need and desire, the Youth Liaison will be the bridge between the students and the program. She will be able to discuss with the students informally and formally about their needs, whether they are being met, and what should be changed. In addition to the Youth Liaison as a connector, there will be periodic surveys for the students to ensure that a developmental approach to the mentorship relationship is being taken as recommended by scholars like Jekielek, et al. in the Child Trends Research Brief (2002).

This mentor program will be conducted based on what has been reviewed in the research as “Best Practices” (Dappen and Isernhagen, 2006). Within these best practices this program will offer training both pre-match and during the remainder of the relationship, it will offer supervised programs, and it will offer opportunities for families and loved ones to be involved. Also in order to focus on the developmental approach to mentoring, the program will offer varying opportunities for youth involved and will organize the program as desired to fit their needs.

As suggested by DuBois et al., (2002), it is important to recruit and train mentors that can be consistent, reliable and available for at least a six month period, so for this program, they will commit to nine months. Beginning near the end of the summer and promptly at the beginning of the 2008 academic year, African-American male and female volunteers from different majors will be recruited. As recommended by DuBois et al., (2002), during the weeks of recruitment surveys and questionnaires will be completed. These will document personal information, academic history, goals/future plans, and a personality profile, to better assist in the matching of the students with the mentors.

September 25 – October 9, 2008 will be training days for men-

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tors and preparation days for mentees involved. The training days will consist of various workshops that will allow the mentors to open up about their expectations and desires for the mentor relationship as well as what they feel they can bring to the relationship. Some of the workshops topics will include: Time Management/Being Consistent and Reliable; Conflict Resolution; and Responding, Validating and Reassuring. The preparation days for the students will consist of various workshops that will answer questions about the mentor relationship and their expectations about the relationship, while also providing at least one opportunity, if not more for the parents and families to become involved with the program prior to the matching. Some Workshop topics will include: Time Management; How to Get the Best Out of the Mentor Relationship; Family Involvement; and Being True to Yourself. In January, there will be 2 mid-way training dates to allow the mentors the opportunity to refresh any information and skills, while also providing them with the opportunity to share any techniques or information that they have gained during their previous months of experience.

Tuesday, October 7, 2008 will be the "Mentor Rally." This event will be the first opportunity for the mentors to meet their students and their families. Throughout this event, there will be large group activities, small group activities and one-on-one activities. The goal of this rally is to give the mentors and the students their first opportunity to meet one another and begin to become comfortable with one another. By the end of this rally, the mentors and the students should be able to build a relationship at a slow, consistent pace.

For the remaining nine months of the program, there will be bi-weekly workshops/events held where attendance will be required by all mentors and students. Workshop topics will vary based on ideas and desires of youth involved, however some of the workshop ideas include: Why Go to College/Real Stories from Real Students; Building Positive Relationships; and Getting the Best out of High School. The events will vary based on desires and ideas, but some ideas are bowling, "Friday Night Movie" at EMU, skating, etc. Because the meetings will be bi-weekly, the workshops and events will alternate so that there will be 1 educational structured event and 1 "fun" structured event for the students and mentors to attend together per month. Outside of the bi-weekly programs, the mentors and students will be responsible for maintaining contact with one another. In collaboration with GearUp and WRHS, the mentors will be encouraged to tutor after school in the GearUp room to assist in maintaining contact with their students.

During the course of the year, there will be various events in addition to the bi-weekly activities, for example: a Holiday celebration in December and a planned activity during spring break, etc. Wrapping up the program Saturday, June 13, 2008, which is the Saturday after the students last day of school, we will host a “Family Picnic” at Big Bob’s Lake House at EMU. There will be food provided, but the families will be encouraged to bring a dish to pass. During this “wrap-up” event we will celebrate the good times and learn from the challenging times. One student will be provided with the “Student of the Year Award” and a mentor will be provided with a “Mentor of the Year Award.” There will also be an award for “Most Improved Student” and “Most Involved Family Member.” The “wrap-up” event will also serve as a way to collect any/all final data. In addition to a pre-test and a post-test for the students and the mentors to complete, other evaluation methods will be used. The pre and post-tests will be distributed on a Likert Scale and some questions will include: “I am happy with what I see in the mirror,” “I see myself completing high school successfully,” and “I believe that I am positive role model”. Also, there will be personal interviews conducted of each mentee. At the conclusion of the program, all evaluation materials will be collected and analyzed and a final analysis testing the research hypothesis will be conducted.

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