AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF A PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING

OF FOURTH GRADERS PARTICIPATING

IN A MENTORING PROGRAM

By

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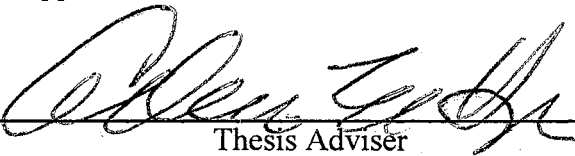University of Oregon
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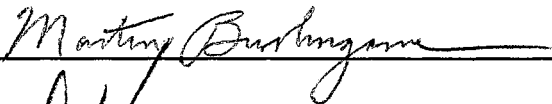Oregon State University
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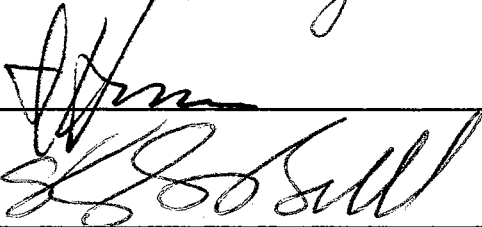
IN A MENTORING PROGRAM

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CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In 1983, The National Commission on Excellence in Education released a report

titled, <u>A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.</u> This report announced

that the United States would lose its competitive edge over industrialized nations in the

near future. The commission stated that the loss of our country's prowess in science,

commerce, and technological innovation resulted directly from the ineffectiveness of our

schools in preparing young people to compete in the global marketplace. The report

continued on to state that regaining our economic superiority would require a complete

overhaul of America's public school system (Burke, 1995).

<u>A Nation at Risk</u> set the stage for almost 10 years of research and political

initiatives referred to as the educational reform movement. This movement has gone

through two "waves" and has now entered a third (Kirst, 1990). The first and second

waves of reform primarily focused on improving specific policy and structural elements

of the public school system and teacher preparation. These reforms typify the more

traditional problem solving approaches in education. The problem is identified with a

specific solution targeted. Third wave reform is different from the problem-oriented

approach. They do not target specific problems, but focus on empowerment through

relationships. The third reform wave focuses on a complete restructuring of schools

(Cohen, 1989; Jennings, 1989, Lieberman & Miller, 1990). Third-wave reformers maintain that substantial improvements in the educational system cannot be realized until public schools structure themselves to empower parents and students in the implementation and design of the educational program. In sum, educational agencies need to work with community groups to develop a comprehensive system of services that meet the needs of children in today's society (Hawley, 1988; Kirst, 1990).

Typical of first and second wave reform, Goals 2000, developed during the Bush administration targeted school readiness, school completion, student achievement and citizenship, science and mathematics, adult literacy and lifelong learning, and the school environment–safe, drug free, and disciplined (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992). Six goals and objectives were to be accomplished:

Goal 1: By the year 2000, all children in American will start school ready to learn.

Goal 2: By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Goal 3: By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Goal 4: By the year 2000, United States students will be first in the world

in science and mathematics achievement.

Goal 5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will

possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global

economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Goal 6: By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs

and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to

learning. (Ysseldyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992, pp. 145-146)

These goals, albeit lofty and admirable, seemed to overlook the human element. They

were primarily achievement oriented, in the cognitive domain, and primarily driven by

world competition and accountability factors.

Recognizing this omission, on March 31, 1994, Goals 2000: Educate America Act

became Public Law 103-227 when it was signed by President Clinton. It legislated

National Education Goals and developed a process for establishing national education

content standards, opportunity-to-learn standards and student performance standards

(Midwest Forum, 1994). In addition to the six goals to be accomplished by the year 2000,

there were two more. The following two additions are more reflective of third wave

reform.

1. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the

unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined

environment conducive to learning.

2.   Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental

involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and

academic growth of children. (Midwest Forum, 1994, p.1)

School, home, community partnerships have proven to be a prominent and

powerful strategy in accomplishing the above goals (Epstein, 1995). The proliferation of

partnerships between schools and communities in recent years has sprung from a myriad

of issues in education (Miller, 1997). Limited financial resources for schools in some

areas and the need for increased student motivation top the list (McClellan, 1994). In

response, there has been a concerted attempt to improve the emotional health, academic

achievement, and interpersonal skills and vocational knowledge and skills of our youth

through organizational and governmental programs that attempt to compensate for a

general lack of adult attention, support, and guidance. One of the methods for

implementing these programs is often labeled mentoring.

"Mentor" is defined in the <u>American Heritage College Dictionary</u> as "a wise and

trusted counselor and teacher." Homer's Odyssey, written around 700 B.C., depicted the

mentor as a faithful, wise friend of Odysseus. The king entrusted the development and

safety of Telemachus, his only son, to this mentor while he was away fighting the Trojan

War (Yeomans & Sampson, 1994).

Ordinarily, the standard concept of mentoring has three common elements. First,

mentors foster their protégés' achievement. Second, they help nurture their protégés to

adulthood by teaching them specific skills. Third, the relationships are positive in nature,

usually intergenerational, and characterized by the voluntary assumption of responsibility for people of the next generation (Freedman, 1991).

Freedman (1993) explains mentoring from two perspectives. Primary mentoring relationships are defined by emotional openness, extraordinary commitment, and intensity. These partnerships become tantamount to family. Secondary relationships are convivial in nature, but are more limited in intensity and openness. She believes that the power of these relationships, particularly primary mentoring relationships, can be pivotal in reaching youth.

The professionals participating in a Juvenile Welfare Board Community Forum in St. Petersburg, Florida (Florida Mental Health Institute, 1995) described primary and secondary mentoring relationships in terms of role models versus mentors. Mentoring was described as a process whereby adult role models provide values and decision-making skills to youths. The end result of role modeling is young people finding a positive identity or image that appeals to them. Mentoring goes a step further to impart the skills required to achieve that image.

In sum, defining mentoring is difficult, but describing it is very easy. It is like having an uncle that cares for you for a lifetime, and wants to see you do well. He is not your competitor, he is there to support you, not to compete with you or discourage you. He is not your critic as much as he is your cheerleader (Hendricks & Hendricks, 1995).

Struchen and Porta (1997) contend it is also helpful to provide youth mentor-rich environments such as those involving coaches, teachers, supervisors, youth workers, counselors and others who have time to give young people. Parker (1995) detailed

support for the benefits of groups when he suggested that since problems start in group settings, they could be solved best in a group setting. Groups can engender a sense of belonging, provide peer support, help by giving and receiving, establish that people share problems, and teach young people how to function in the interpersonal world. Lieberman & Miller (1990) suggested that members of a group almost always alter their behavior and views when pressured by others to change.

The two types of mentoring are planned and natural. Natural mentoring results from collegiality, counseling, teaching, coaching and friendship. Planned mentoring, on the other hand, results from structured programs where mentors and participants are chosen and matched through formal processes (Office of Research Consumer Guide, 1993). Flaxman, Ascher, and Harrington (1988) reported that

> planned mentoring . . . can improve the social chances of . . .
> disadvantaged youth by giving them resources they might not have had
> and it can give them some psychosocial support for new behaviors,
> attitudes and ambitions. (p. 11)

In all likelihood, the same contention holds true for advantaged youth.

Evaluation of mentoring programs is difficult, because mentoring programs do not all follow the same format. Therefore, not all evaluations for the programs will be the same. The evaluation protocol design should take into consideration what change is anticipated, degree of change, how long it might take, and how change will be measured (Struchen & Porta, 1997). But some of the short-term measures frequently used to assess change include antisocial activities, academic performance, attitudes, and behaviors, relationships with family and friends, self-concept, and social and cultural enrichment (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). It must also be remembered that evaluating

mentoring programs can be a big challenge because the program's impact may not be evident for years, or even decades (Struchen & Porta, 1997).

This country's emphasis on student achievement and higher test scores is clearly at the forefront of educational initiatives (Yssedyke, Algozine, & Thurlow, 1992). At the same time, evaluation research has shown that mentoring programs do not improve student achievement (Carmola, 1995). Consequently, although there is a widely held belief that youth mentoring programs are beneficial, data showing the academic impact of mentoring is limited (Struchen & Porta, 1997). Flaxman (1992) contends that they should be retained, however, because of the positive role model for the child.

Most recent studies focus primarily on teen-agers and young adults. Majors and Weiner (1995) wrote that their studies indicate that children display the effects of negative life experiences by their early school years, during the primary grades. Due to more stresses in children's lives and fewer resources, schools have an even bigger part to play in the push to provide mentor – rich environments (Rockwell, 1997).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

Few evaluations of mentoring programs have been able to provide substantive support for their continuation. Thankfully, despite this reality, mentoring programs continue to be promoted as the vital links and necessary partnerships needed for the improvement of students and school communities (Carmola, 1995; Struchen & Porta, 1997). Based on an experimental design, the most recent research on one of the nation's best known mentoring programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, identified three elements as

successful outcomes from mentoring relationships: (1) improvements in relationships with family and friends, (2) improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance, and (3) decreased antisocial behaviors (Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995). But, can these same outcomes of mentoring be assessed by looking at the perceptions of participants (parents and teachers)?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to apply the outcomes identified in the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) quantitative design with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998) to the evaluation of a mentoring program. Specifically, in this study, the following questions were answered:

1. What did teachers and parents identify as the outcomes of mentoring? Why? How?

2. How did the findings of this study compare to those identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995)? In what ways did the findings enhance, or alter their outcomes of mentoring programs?

3. What other realities were described?

4. How useful were Tierney, Grossman and Resch's identified outcomes in determining the success or benefits of mentoring programs?

Summary

Mentoring has become a well-recognized and respected means of meeting the needs of our youth. Mentors can serve as extended family to children and help bridge the gap created by broken homes, single parents, and/or separated families. There are varying opinions as to the "boilerplate format" for mentoring programs weighed against the cultural variations in program design to meet the needs of unique target populations (Struchen & Porta, 1997, p. 119). Tierney, Grossman and Resch's (1995) research conducted in local affiliates of Big Brothers/Big Sisters targeted three outcomes of mentoring. This study investigated the outcomes of a mentor program in a Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) school. It enhances existing knowledge, research, and mentoring practices.

Throughout the 20th century educational reforms have emphasized and demanded academic excellence. The goals specified in these reforms have not come to fruition and our society continues to struggle with the disenfranchisement of our youth. Reforms in the late 20th century began to identify and address these concerns. Schools are implementing programs to facilitate and improve social and emotional development, but they continue to be cloaked in promoting academic excellence. Schools continue to measure success based on academic achievement. Although mentoring is said to promote academic achievement, there is little research to support that contention (Carmola, 1995). Despite this, schools are adopting and implementing mentoring programs. Research reports show benefits in the areas of self-esteem, behavior, and social/emotional development (Sipe, 1996; Guetzloe, 1997). The outcomes identified by Tierney,

Grossman, and Resch (1995) were used as the lens to focus this study to determine if these outcomes were evident in this setting. They report that mentor programs improve relationships with family and friends, attitudes, behaviors, academic performance, cultural and social enrichment.

"It takes a village to raise a child" (African Proverb). I believe it is important to study the content, process, and results of mentoring as programs grow and improve. Mentoring relationships may help and strengthen both the mentor and child in ways too subtle and far-reaching to measure and interpret in a traditional manner. At the end of the day, if people feel better about themselves, more confident, connected, and content; mentoring is well worth the time, effort, and resources provided.

Reporting

This chapter introduced the study, problem and research design. Chapter II presents a review of related literature. Chapter III explains the methodology. Chapter IV presents the interview data, and Chapter V reviews the analysis. Chapter VI contains the summary of the study, analysis and conclusions from the data, and implications for theory, research and practice.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will define mentoring, explore its history, relevance, and rationale

for implementation and explain the findings of some of the research already conducted in

this field. It will focus on the significance of caring relationships as identified by Tierney,

Grossman, and Resch (1995) in particular.

Mentoring

Webster's (1986) first definition of a mentor is, "a friend of Odysseus entrusted

with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus." The second definition states "a trusted

counselor or guide." Synonyms include tutor and coach. The common denominator for

the continuing mentoring relationship is establishing a positive relationship between the

mentor and mentee. Mentors are adults who take on quasi-parental roles as role models

and advisors to young people to whom they are not related. They differ from counselors

and teachers who may serve as mentors, as well as serving their professional roles. The

scope of their role in the young person's life is unbounded. Mentors may serve as a tutor

(i.e., helping with homework), a sponsor (i.e., helping the youth find work), and

confidant (i.e., offering emotional support) (Roche, 1979).

The most common notions about mentoring address three areas. Mentors foster their protégés' achievement, support their protégés to adulthood by teaching them specific skills and mentor relationships are positive, and ordinarily intergenerational. They are characterized by the voluntary assumption of responsibility for people of the next generation (Freedman, 1991).

The operational definition of mentoring may vary, somewhat, from one program to another, but the gist of the term connotes an established relationship between a young individual and someone older. The focus of this relationship is the older person assisting in the developmental needs of the younger person. Most people appear to "know" what mentoring means, although there is confusion around what is being measured, or what is successful (Merriam, 1983).

Support for mentoring goes back beyond normal ideological differences on social issues. United States Departments of Education and Labor secretaries have been outspoken advocates of mentoring. Several major foundation heads have also encouraged the cause of mentoring. New mentoring programs are appearing around the country. The Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BB/BSA) organization has played a major role in this area, although that group has not normally employed the term mentor (Lefkowitz, 1987).

History and Relevance

Freedman (1993) has traced the mentoring movement in the United States back to the Friendly Visiting program in the last quarter of the 19th century. This groundbreaking

effort was designed/established to give poor children middle-class role models. Friendly Visiting had run its course by the early 1900s, but was followed by Big Brothers, the "brain child" of the Men's Club of the Central Presbyterian Church of New York in December, 1904. This program is currently Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BB/BSA) and boasts 483 local affiliates in 41 states that match 70,000 young people with adults. They own the right to the phrase "one-to-one" as a mentoring program descriptor (Guetzloe, 1997).

The growth of mentoring programs in our schools has been born out of a combination of factors (Miller, 1997). McClellan (1994) identified these as limited financial resources for schools in some areas and the need for increased student motivation. She further elaborated that there has been a concerted attempt to improve the academic achievement, emotional health, and interpersonal skills and vocational knowledge and skills of our youth through mentoring programs.

Eleanor Guetzloe (1997) pointed out that all children's need for safe, supportive relationships with caring adults are often not being met by the family, church, school, or community. The functions and roles that were once considered the responsibility of these institutions have been turned over to organizational and governmental programs that attempt to compensate for a general lack of adult attention, support and guidance. One of the methods for implementing these programs is often labeled mentoring. California's previous Governor Wilson's multi-million dollar Mentor Initiative has been heralded as a means of combating the structural changes in our society, such as the breakdown of

community and neighborhood networks and the disappearance of most of the traditional family models (Mejorado, 1998).

Communities can reach the needs of youth and build solid, protective environments through mentoring programs. The rationale for mentoring efforts is built on a belief that risk to youth is a complex interaction between multiple risks and protective factors at all three levels—the individual, the immediate family, and the larger social context (Werner, 1990). Mentoring programs are developed to strengthen youth in communities by "creating and enhancing the personal environmental attributes that serve as the key to a healthy development" (Bernard, 1991, p. 2) and by establishing "social networks" throughout the community that serve as "sources of strength" (Kelly, 1998).

Osterman (2000) in her article, Students' Need for Belonging in the School Community, reviews literature that defines community as "a feeling of belongingness within a group." The research also explores whether the feelings of belongingness are important in an educational arena, if the students are currently experiencing schools as communities, and how the schools impact the students' sense of community (Osterman, 2000). Her theoretical framework contends that people have psychological needs, and the satisfaction of these needs affects behaviors and perceptions (Osterman, 2000). The framework also includes allowances for social context to influence how well the needs are met (Osterman, 2000). Her conclusions suggest that students' perceptions of acceptance in the school community bring to bear multifaceted aspects of their behavior (Osterman, 2000).

Community is explained in a variety of ways throughout the literature reviewed. Many share the concept of belongingness in the definition (Solomon, Wastson, Battistich, Schapes, & Delucchi, 1996). Furman (1998) further expands the definition to incorporate the notion that members must have feelings of belonging, trust and safety, in order to experience a sense of community.

The organizational boundaries of schools, as discussed by McMillian and Chavis (1996), state that community consists of four elements: affiliation, authority, integration and satisfaction of needs, and common emotional association. The group is important to the individuals as the individuals are to the group (McMillian & Chavis 1996). The members are confident that their needs will be met and they will receive support and care (McMillian & Chavis 1996).

Dewey and Vygotsky reflect the importance of community in education. They see education as an individualistic process instead of a social phenomenon. Dewey recommends the notion that pupils should work as a social group to enhance collaborative activities for experiential learning based on individual needs (Dewey, 1958). Collaboration is the vehicle that enables learning.

Community mentoring structures aim to create personal and social support networks that contribute to a "competent community" (Iscoe, 1974), one that is able to provide support across the lifespan, as well as attachment and bonding to the community (Bernard, 1991). Mentoring programs are community wide, systematic protective frameworks that entail trained individual and group mentors in families, schools, and communities (Miller, 1997).

We know that the feelings of isolation in human beings can have many negative consequences. The Columbine High School tragedy is just one recent example of some of the far-reaching negative consequences of disenfranchisement. The new attention in our schools being given to the social, emotional, and behavioral development of students is in response to the burgeoning disenfranchisement of our youth (Miller, 1997). We know that without a sense of connection to the community, youth can become disenfranchised.

The National Dropout Prevention Center cites examples of students who drop out of school stating that no one there cared about them and that was the main reason they left. These students were not connected to the school and felt no attachment to the staff. "Mentoring programs are a way to bridge the chasm between these people and caring adults who could make a difference in their lives" (Walsh, 1989, p. 8). The mentoring relationship is one that is developed over time. The hope is that the careful coupling of adult and student will create a bond, although, there are no guarantees (Struchen & Porta, 1997). Although mentoring can be an effective technique for shaping youth, it is only as good as the relationships that develop between the youth and the adults to whom they are matched.

Rutter (1984) contends that once youth are successfully engaged in school activities, they are more apt to feel empowered and confident. One outcome of this empowerment is increased student involvement and participation in the school. This leads to less isolation and alienation. Schools that focus on student involvement and participation act as a protective force in the prevention of problems.

The preadolescent phase of life is a crucial period as a building block toward the development of a fully functioning, contributing, well-rounded adult. Majors and Weiner (1995) found from their studies that it appears that children display the effects of negative life experiences by their early school years, but most of the research on mentoring has targeted programs that reach out to young adolescents. Guetzloe (1997) suggests that more information would be helpful about the usefulness of mentoring for younger and older age groups. Youngsters between the ages of 10-14 years old are in the process of forming basic assumptions about society and their possibilities in it. These assumptions are created through observations of, and interactions with, adults and their world. If concerned, caring adults and role models are assessable to the young, they will be far more apt to develop into successful, healthy adults themselves (Furstenberg, 1993; Garmezy, 1985; Rutler, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's report, Great Transitions (1995), argues that the ages 10-14 are society's best and last opportunity to prevent social problems.

The book some schools are using as one of their current educational flagships is, Best Practice (Zemelman, Daniels & Hyde, 1998). This book addresses "the primal power of social relations to promote learning" (p. 11). This spontaneous social helping is frequently referred to as "scaffolding" using the simile that as a temporary scaffold makes it possible for the bricklayer to make a wall that will eventually stand on its own, these interactions act as support for the language building child along the way. This will eventually lead the child to independent action.

I believe the same process is valid in social/academic interactions, as well as in the development of language. The students learn not only through imitation, but also by taking an active role. The authors suggest that schools tap into the strength of social interaction to promote learning (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998). The mentoring process is clearly a social interaction.

Currently, mentoring in grades K-12 is undergoing the biggest surge ever as a major intervention in the educational reform movement (Mejorado, 1998). It appears to be one of the trendy, new concepts that taps into the spirit of volunteerism. The perception seems to be that mentoring is an inexpensive, easy, win/win proposition for the mentor, mentee, schools and society at large (Mejorado, 1999). The reality is that mentoring is a labor intensive and complicated process (Freedman, 1993). The recruitment, screening, matching, training, and monitoring of mentors and mentees takes a considerable investment of time and effort.

There should be key elements of any planned endeavor to increase direct adult involvement in improving young people's lives. Common sense dictates that programs that aim to bring youth together with adults (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, and recreational activities) should take precautionary measures to make sure that the program will be positive for those involved. (Brown, 1996; Crockett & Smink, 1991; Furano et al., 1993; McHale, 1990; National Mentoring Working Group, 1991; U.S. Department of Education, 1990).

Experts in this arena suggest that the following elements be included in planned mentoring efforts. These elements were included in the BB/BSA study (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). They include:

- Recruitment. The time required for such activities as coaching, counseling, and tutoring, makes it necessary to recruit adult participants. College-age adults and single or nonparenting adults are a good source of potential volunteers. Older adults represent a growing and often untapped pool of potential volunteers.

- Screening. Adults who want to work with youth need to have more than just a willingness to volunteer their time. Potential adult volunteers should be evaluated to determine whether they possess a disposition and character suitable for working with youth.

- Education or training. Before the initiation of any relationship, adult volunteers should be exposed to such things as communication skills building, limit setting, and cultural sensitivity training, depending on the nature of the activity in which youth and adults will be engaged.

- Supervision and provision of ongoing support. Continuing supervision and contact will ensure that guidance will be available to adults should they need it; having such guidance usually requires a paid staff.

Research on Mentoring Programs

Research has demonstrated a lack of an empirical link between mentoring and

academic success (Flaxman, 1992; Rand Report, 1992). Research has found behavioral

changes as a result of mentoring in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of American and only a

slight improvement in academics (P/PV, 1993). Other studies have found academic

success indirectly linked to mentoring (Erkut & Mokros, 1984; Wilson et al., 1975).

Flaxman (1992) reckons that the benefits of mentoring programs are often based

on a mystique that although they may not be achieving all the identified goals, mentoring

must be doing some good, because of the positive role model for the child. The majority

of self reporting survey evaluations completed on mentoring programs suggest that the

mentors and teachers of the young people believe that the mentoring relationship is

having beneficial effects on the student (Carmola, 1993). Human relationships are

complicated and complex. The degree to which one human being impacts another, in

what ways, and in what time frame, is impossible to measure in precise terms. The entire

mentoring movement is predicated on the supposition that what might be lacking in a

more naturalistic form can be artificially created for children.

The one-to-one supportive relationships are what are created to provide support

and guidance both personally and academically to the child participating in the mentoring

relationship. The people who were previously unknown to one another are introduced and

it is hoped that they will bond and "make a difference" in the way of support and

guidance for the child (Carmola, 1995). One of the reasons for the problem of

determining the effects of mentoring on students is the complexity of trying to weigh and

measure what effects one person might be having on another (Flaxman, 1992; Ianni, 1992). This is difficult, because mentoring goals may not be realized for a long time. The program goals imply a process that takes a great deal of time (Ianni, 1992; Levinson, 1978; Weinberger, 1992). Changes in personal development may not lead to tangible results. Human beings are complicated and often not amenable to attempts to fit into scientific principles or generalities.

The unpredictability and disparity of human development is a given (Munsinger, 1975; Poulous & Straus, 1974, Stassen Berger, 1994). It is difficult to measure the effect one person may have on another. This includes the identification of variables that can be quantified and measured to show growth and change. The variables selected for study may not encompass the full effects or changes that have taken place. Frequent changes are covert and subtle, or may not surface until sometime in the distant future (Flaxman, 1994). The observed changes in the variables could be a result of other unmeasured factors.

Mentoring programs can take various forms, with each one addressing somewhat different goals (Welch, 1993; Flaxman, Ascher & Harrington, 1988). However, most school-based programs attempt to increase school confidence, school attendance, student achievement, high school completion rates, and lead to success in further education or employment (Flaxman & Ascher, 1992). Although, these goals are appropriate, it has not been possible to state definitively if mentoring programs are indeed achieving their stated goals, and, if so, to what degree (Flaxman, 1992; Rand Report, 1992).

Mentoring is seen more and more as an intervention for youth thought to be at-risk, vulnerable, or likely to be unprepared for adult living (Mech, Pryde, & Rycraft, 1995) and as a way to shore-up inner city youth against delinquency, school dropout, teen pregnancy, unemployment, and other negative life situations (Bleckman, 1992). Formal matching of adult volunteers can be followed back to the first Big Brothers agency in 1902 (Morrow & Styles, 1995). In spite of this background, few empirical studies have documented the benefits of mentoring on young people's lives. Big Brothers/Big Sisters (BB/BS), to name one organization, have been giving adult support to young people from single-parent households for over 90 years without any proof that "conclusively demonstrated that youth who participate in Big Brothers/Big Sisters programs fare better than they would have, had they not participated" (Furano, Roaf, Styles, & Branch, 1993, p. 6). Although, Big Brothers/Big Sisters has started a four-year research initiative, the most recent report on this project observed, "It remains to be seen whether developmental mentoring relationships can produce real changes in the lives of youth, such as improved grades and more positive behavior" (Morrow & Styles, 1995, p. ix). Slicker and Palmer (1993) have also noted a "clear lack of research on the effects of a mentoring relationship with low achieving potential high school dropouts" (p. 328).

The majority of students in Milwaukee's One-on-One program did not show improvement in grades during the school year, although it was a main objective. Baltimore's RAISE project discovered that students stayed far below average in academic performance and above average in the risk of dropping out of school. RAISE researchers projected that gains in grades and school attendance were not "sufficient to eliminate the

academic risks with which students entered the program" (Freedman, 1993, p. 83). The project has not had much success with adolescents and has started working with second and third graders (Freedman, 1993).

The Effects of Mentoring on Student Growth (Carmola, 1995) studied how and how much students are affected by a mentoring program relationship. This evaluation of a mentoring program spanned three years and attempted to improve student achievement, motivation and behavior. The study explored some objective measures of student achievement for 40 elementary school students before they started the mentoring relationship and six months after mentoring. The same measures were gleaned from a comparison group of 40 students, in addition to a survey of 85 mentors and 89 teachers. The measures used included reading and math subtests from the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), Piers-Harris Self Esteem Inventory, and the Behavior Scale. Additional data was secured through interviews with 15 mentors and 20 students in the program. The survey results indicate that mentors and teachers usually agree that students showed positive growth. There was more growth seen in confidence and motivation, and less seen in student achievement. The students who worked with mentors did not show any significant differences in achievement test scores. Student behavior measures did not show any significant behavior differences. Most of the students perceived the program as beneficial and preferred working with mentors in small groups (Carmola, 1995).

There are some studies that show positive outcomes of mentoring, although they are not in abundance. Frecknall and Luks (1992) reviewed surveys from 76 parents in New York City whose children participated in a BB/BS program. Sixty-three percent of

the parents stated that their children "greatly improved" in behavior or attitudes. When parents had more contact with BB/BS and children spent more time in the program, the authors noted a pattern of greater parental perception of success.

Nelson and Valliant (1993) found that boys with adult male substitutes (mentors) scored significantly lower on assaultiveness than boys in the young offenders group with no male role substitutes. Depression scores for those waiting for a Big Brother and those in the group home were more elevated than the scores of those boys from intact families and those participating with a Big Brother for at least three years. They did not find any significant difference in the self-esteem of boys waiting to be assigned a Big Brother from intact middle-class two parent families.

Recent research lends some support to the notion that mentors can make a difference in young peoples' lives. Several researchers have questioned why some young people, raised in conditions known to predict numerous problems, not only survive but also become well-adjusted, productive adults. These researchers have identified sources of strength in the face of adversity. One factor found to be associated with "resilience" is a connection with a strong parental figure who gives encouragement and guidance (Joseph, 1994).

Resilience is the ability to actively respond in a positive way to stress, life situations, and trauma in such a way as to bounce back and continue to approach life using positive actions. According to Joseph (1994) a resilient person is one who is "responsible, positive, self-reliant, committed, and socially skillful" (p. 33). Children who are resilient are able to cope with life's challenges. They can use negative situations to

their advantage and work toward a goal (Joseph, 1994). Resilient children feel a sense of control over their lives (Anthony & Cohler, 1987; Redl, 1966). They possess a basic belief, coherence, that they can control their lives and that life makes sense (Antonovsky, 1979). This sense of control will help a child with self-efficacy and feelings of empowerment.

Katz (1994) states that turning point events can provide at-risk students a chance to develop in ways not previously accessible to the child. Mentoring relationships can be especially helpful during transition periods, or turning points, in a child's life. One example of a turning point event might be starting in a new school. Special relationships, unique opportunities, acquired interests, and hobbies can broaden horizons and create opportunities for change (Rutter, 1979; Werner, 1989). When the needs of each child are anticipated, a learning environment can be created that protects the child, supports the developing needs of each child, and encourages the characteristics that increase resilience in children.

The efforts at the state and local level to avert failure in the classrooms, has led to a statewide initiative to reduce the primary level class sizes. There have been limited programs that make use of community volunteers as supplements to classroom lessons. One such adjunct program at California State University in Fresno (CSUF) is designed to aid children who are at risk of school failure. This program is in its seventh year and at its core is a course called the Liberal Studies Senior Project. This course is a requirement for Liberal Studies majors at CSUF. The new requirement known as the Senior Project was initially intended to be a summative experience rooted in Community involvement and

service learning. The cooperative project between California State University in Fresno (CSUF) and local school districts enables 200 or more Liberal Studies students to "give back to America" by giving one-on-one mentoring to at-risk children (Meyer, 1997).

The Senior Project focuses on one-on-one mentoring of at-risk children in elementary schools. The children are selected by using informal teacher assessments and standardized tests in the hope of bringing them close to normal expectations (Meyer, 1997). The mentor's progress is monitored daily by a CSUF supervisor from the Liberal Studies Program. The mentors meet frequently with the classroom teachers. Seminars are held on a weekly basis to reinforce the mentoring efforts. The mentors meet with their mentees twice each week.

The administrators who are involved in the program and have first hand experience are not concerned about assessing the effectiveness. The CSUF mentoring program is unique in the sense that it does not lend itself to traditional forms of assessment, according to a general instructional specialist at one of the participating schools. The success of the program is evidenced by the reports received from the teachers about positive changes in behavior and attitude toward schooling, and self-image.

Mentors also act as an important support to children who are at risk as a result of trauma, poverty, abuse, or other events in life. Children who have an important bond with, or attachment to an adult, or another child in some cases, tend to face their challenges more productively and are more apt to experience success (Garmegy, 1987, 1992; White-Hood, 1993). Teachers, counselors, administrators, and aides are in a

position to provide support for at-risk students. This entails a specific adult taking a special interest in a child and developing a facilitating relationship (White-Hood, 1993).

Meyers (1995) believes that mentoring is the type of endeavor Senator Edward Kennedy was thinking about when he said that, "democracy means more than the freedom to pursue your own self-interest. It also means the responsibility to give back to America in return for all it has given us" (p. 314). Mentoring is one way of giving back. Children have the right to have a chance to some day give back.

It is good that today's schools have the capacity to provide an interesting and rich environment for their students, especially in the early years. Mentors provide the opportunity for children to process information by sharing in the one-to-one context. We are often so busy "inputting" that children are not given time to discover what has "sunk in" and reflect before they are required to re-present what they have "learned" (D'Arcy, 1989).

Public/Private Venture

The outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) was the result of a study conducted at local affiliates of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of American (BB/BSA), one of the oldest and best-known mentoring programs. Their report is the cornerstone of Public/Private Venture's eight-year research initiative to study mentoring. These researchers identified five positive results of BB/BS mentoring programs: 1) reduced antisocial activities, 2) improved academic outcomes, 3) better relationships

with family and friends, 4) improved self-confidence, and 5) social and cultural enrichment. Appendix I provides outcome measures of each area.

The 959 youths in the study were between 10 and 16 years of age (with 93% being between 10 and 14) when they were first eligible for the BB/BS program. A little over 60 percent were males, and more than 50 percent were minority group members (of those, approximately 70 percent were African American). Most lived with one parent (usually the mother) the rest with relatives or a guardian. Many were from low-income households, and many came from households with a prior history of either substance abuse or family violence.

Both groups were interviewed again 18 months later. Out of the 1,138 youth initially randomized, 959 (84.3%) completed both baseline and follow-up interviews, thus becoming the sample on which the findings rely. Of the 487 youth in the treatment group, 378 were matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister, and were given the agency supervision and support that would ordinarily be provided. The matched Little Brothers and Little Sisters met with their Big Brother or Big Sister.

The national manual lists five "common" goals for a Little Brother or Little Sister. These include: developing a successful relationship; providing social, cultural and recreational enrichment; improving peer relationships; improving self-concept; and improving motivation, attitude, and achievement related to school work. Conversations with staff members implied that having a Big Brother or Big Sister could reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, and could improve the relationship with the parent.

Researchers working closely with staff from the BB/BSA national office, local agencies, and through a review of BB/BSA's manual of standards and practices identified five impacts appropriate to measure in the context of the BB/BS program.

The hypothesis was that participation in the BB/BS program would impact all or some of the five-targeted areas: Components of these areas are listed in Appendix A. A description of each area follows:

1. Reduced Antisocial Activities. Youth with good role models would deal better with peer pressures, practice thinking through their behaviors in socially acceptable ways without using drugs/alcohol or resorting to delinquent behavior.

2. Improved Academic Outcomes. By mentors demonstrating that they value education, taking an interest in the mentees school progress, stressing the importance of education to future success, mentees might improve school performance and attitudes toward school. Therefore, they hypothesized that Little Brothers and Little Sisters would value school more, have better attendance, and maybe even better grades.

3. Better Relationships with Family and Friends. The theory being that the volunteer can help the young person trust others, express negative feelings more productively, and basically become better able to relate effectively with others. Therefore, they hypothesized that (1) BB/BS participation would have positive effects on the youth's relationship with their custodial

parent (usually their mother); and (2) participation in BB/BS would have positive effects on the youth's relationships with their peers.

4.   Improved Self-Concept. A successful relationship might affect how a mentee feels about himself or herself. Therefore, they hypothesized that the young person would report a better sense of competence and self-worth than their non-program counterparts.

5.   Social and Cultural Enrichment. Mentees participated in a variety of new activities. Therefore, they hypothesized that the young people would report taking part in more activities, such as attending sporting events or going to the library.

Developing a successful relationship, a goal in the BB/BSA standards and practices manual, is not included as a hypothesized impact. They saw the development of a successful relationship as the core of the program treatment rather than an outcome of participation.

The research strategy was to compare youth who participated in BB/BS programs with those who did not. Baseline interviews were conducted with all the youth found eligible for the program. Then, they were randomly assigned to the control group or treatment group. Those assigned to the treatment group were eligible immediately to be matched with adult volunteers.

This study included social-psychological and behavioral measures on questionnaires. Study questionnaires contained 48 measures of behavior across the five-targeted areas. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was used to assess

family relationships. Antisocial behaviors were investigated through the use of The Behavioral Conduct subscale of Harter's (1985) Self-Perception Profile for Children. Berndt and Miller's (1990) School Value Scale and Harter's (1985) Scholastic Competence Scale were used to measure the student's perceived ability to complete schoolwork. Academic outcomes were identified by assessing behaviors through grades, skipped classes, attendance, tardies, number of books read, number of hours spent at the library, and number of hours spent reading. Five subscales were used from Berndt and Perry's (1986) Features of Children's Friendship Scale to investigate friendship and peer interaction. Self-concept was measured using items from Petersen's (1984) Self Image Questionnaire for Young Adolescences (SIQYA) and the Global Self Worth and Social Acceptance Subscales developed from Harter's Self- Perception Profile for Children. Social and Cultural Enrichment was assessed through single item questions that dealt with social and cultural enrichment activities. Questions related to sports, music, volunteer and community service activities, art, and social and cultural events were explored (Appendix J).

The comparison of the two groups after 18 months found that participants in a BB/BS program made improvement in all five targeted areas. Participants were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol and to hit someone. They demonstrated improved school attendance and performance. Their attitudes toward completing schoolwork improved as well as their peer and family relationships. These results provide hopeful evidence about the significance of caring relationships between young people and adults supported by

mentoring programs (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). The five areas identified by these researchers were used as the lens to focus this qualitative study.

Summary

Mentoring programs are enjoying the largest surge in our history as a major intervention in the educational reform movement (Mejorado, 1998). Although these programs are implemented to benefit students, there is little research documenting improvement in academic achievement (Carmola, 1995). Outcomes of mentoring programs have been traditionally measured by standardized achievement tests. In addition to academic success, Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) have found additional positive outcomes from participation in the BB/BBS mentoring program: reduced antisocial activities, better relationships with families and friends, and improved self-concept. These areas were used as the framework to focus this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study used the results found in the Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) quantitative research with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998) to evaluate a mentoring program. Predicated on an experimental design, the research conducted on one of our countries most renowned mentoring programs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BB/BSA) found three benefits resulting from the mentoring relationship: (1) improvements in relationships with family and friends, (2) improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance, and (3) decreased antisocial behaviors (Tierney, Grossman, and Resch, 1995).

This study attempted to determine what parents and teachers believed were the results of participation in a mentoring program and why they felt that way. It also sought to determine in what ways these findings enhanced or differed from the results found in the Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) study, and to describe other realities revealed. This study also attempted to determine how useful Tierney, Grossman, and Resch's identified results were in finding the benefits of a mentoring program.

Type of Design

The qualitative research method was selected to examine the benefits of mentoring as understood by the teachers and parents. This translated into how those participants interpreted their observations and experiences after interacting with the child who had engaged in the mentoring experience. This qualitative research is based on the belief that meaning is ingrained in experiences and the meaning is filtered through the investigator's own perceptions and biases (Merriam, 1998). I also believe that qualitative research tries to understand individual situations in their context and the interactions that result (Patton, 1985). This qualitative research did not attempt to predict what may happen at a later date, but rather to better understand the results of the mentoring program under study.

Cresswell (1994) describes qualitative studies as being investigative in design, attempting to describe and find meaning from social phenomena employing inductive reasoning. This case included eight teachers and eight parents whose students and children, respectively, participated in a mentoring program. This study attempted to determine what results these 16 people noted in "their" children after 12 weeks of participation in a mentoring program in the school for one hour per week. The subject of the investigation was fenced within definite boundaries of what was relevant, and not relevant, to the study within a specific time frame (Yin, 1994).

The data was obtained through semi-structured, open-ended interviews. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants (Merriam, 1998). This means the participants were selected because they represented the phenomena under study.

Researcher

The brief history that follows sets the stage for understanding my values, views, and perspectives as the main instrument for data collection and analysis. My biases and subjectivity focused the findings of this study (Merriam, 1998).

My life began approximately a half century ago. I was welcomed into the world by a three-year-old brother and two parents in their early forties. This was an era before the likes of Cherie Blair and Madonna made it fashionable for pre-menopausal women to have babies. My parents were closer in age to many of my friends' grandparents. The reason for the delay in starting a family was that my father was in a sanitarium with tuberculosis for seven years. My parents were married as soon as he was released and my brother was born a respectable ten months later. The doctors told my parents in 1945 that my father would live only ten years, at best, after having one lung collapsed. He died in 1998 in his late 80's.

I believe that all families have themes that shape its members. My family's main themes revolved around being kind, honest, and worried. My extended family included an aunt, uncle, and cousin. My paternal grandparents died before I was born, and my maternal grandparents died before my second birthday. My mother's three brothers all died young as a result of different accidents preceding their parents in death. I believe that the premature loss of all my mother's siblings, coupled with my father's health issues provided the cornerstone for my parents being worried, loving, kind, and over-protective.

I attended a small elementary school from kindergarten through eighth grade. It was a close-knit community with many of my friends being more akin to siblings. I have

always had a small number of people in my life who believed in me more than I believed in myself. This continues to be true. I have a strong connection with Blanche DeBois' line in "Streetcar Named Desire" when she says, "All my life I've depended on the kindness of strangers." My passion is for people, their stories, and the relationships that develop. I believe that meaning and empowerment is derived from these connections to our fellowman. I read a quote by the Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel, addressing the U.S. Congress (February, 1990) that read:

> The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human
>
> heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness, and in human
>
> responsibility.

In my opinion, children deserve the opportunity to reflect their feelings, accomplishments, academic endeavors, and thoughts with responsible, caring adults. I believe that mentoring is one method of achieving that goal. I clearly possess a bias that the mentoring relationship can be a powerful tool for empowering and helping people in many different ways.

I started my career in education in 1971 as a teacher in a self-contained special education classroom with 16 students from grades one through eight. I designed and ran this program from 1971 to 1986. This experience reinforced my belief that individualizing instruction and working with students individually, and in small groups, helps promote confidence and competence. I also started, and finished, a Master's Program in special education. I worked as an Individual Education Program Developer

from 1977 to 1986 on a half-time basis, and completed a Master's Degree in the field of

counseling.

My work as a guidance counselor from 1986 to the present in grades one to five

has made me a believer that there is a strong connection between self-esteem,

empowerment and "success" in school. There were numerous components to the

counseling positions I held during that period of time. My work with the students was by

far the most interesting, challenging, and rewarding.

Data Collection Procedures

This section includes a description of the setting, sample selection, interviews,

and documents. Data was collected throughout the duration of the study through face-to-

face interviews and document reviews.

Setting

This study took place in an elementary school (pre-school through fourth grade)

with a population of approximately 1,000 students. The school is located on an American

Air Force Base in Europe. The student population is comprised of dependents of Air

Force personnel with a small percentage of civilian dependents. I chose this particular site

because I am one of three counselors at this school. I service the five kindergarten classes

and nine fourth grade programs.

The research focused on the academic and social mentoring program designed and

delivered to fourth graders. In this program, students met weekly with their mentors.

Sessions were for a one-hour period in a large room equipped with round tables, card tables and games. The children brought something academic from class to work on for 20 minutes and 40 minutes were spent on lunch, socialization and games.

The Department of Defense Education Activity granted me approval to complete my research, *An Evaluative Study of a Purposeful Sampling of Fourth Graders Participating in a Mentoring Program.* I gave the principal of my school a copy of my written proposal and approval to share with the superintendent. The Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (Appendix K) granted permission for my study after the Department of Defense Education Activity (Appendix L).

Sample Selection

This study used purposive, as opposed to random, sampling methods to select the participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Patton (1990) recommends that the participants in the qualitative study be "information rich" for the purposive sample. The eight teachers and eight parents interviewed were "information rich" sources for this study. These participants reflected the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998) and exemplified the qualities under study (Patton, 1990).

The phenomena under study in this evaluative case study of a mentor program was what teachers and parents identified as the outcomes of mentoring as compared to those identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that many case studies are qualitative and not a methodological choice, but rather a choice of object to be investigated, such as a person or a group.

Usually, the researcher focuses on a process, or a population of cases, not one case. Stake (1978) explains the uses, varieties, and problems (theory, bias, triangulation, story, case selection) of each. Researchers ordinarily provide information on areas like the nature of the case and historical background. These have been addressed in this study.

The participants were first contacted either in person, or by phone, by the researcher and told the nature and purpose of the study. They were invited to be interviewed with the understanding that their names would not be used and complete confidentiality would be maintained. Once permission for the interview was granted, the time, date and site were established. Each participant read and signed the permission form that explained again the nature of the study and the participants' rights (Appendix M).

Merriam (1998) reports that a qualitative research investigator must be a good communicator, as well as a sensitive analyst and observer. An effective communicator empathizes with participants, develops rapport, asks good questions, and listens well (Merriam, 1998). Guba and Lincoln (1981) explain that one of the "hallmarks of outstanding anthropological and sociological studies to date has been the empathy with which they have presented major actors, performers, and informants" (p. 140). They also say "the extent to which inquirers are able to communicate warmth and empathy often marks them as good or not-so-good data collectors" (p. 140).

Rapport is built on empathy. The interview, or conversation, with a purpose is better achieved in a trusting atmosphere (Merriam, 1998). "The purpose of interviewing," states Patton (1990), "is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (p. 278). This information cannot be specifically measured or observed. Therefore, to gain meaningful

information, the interviewer must ask questions in a skillful, empathic, and sometimes-intuitive manner (Merriam, 1998).

Good listening skills are also required for effective communication. The successful qualitative researcher "looks and listens everywhere." It is by listening "to many individuals and to many points of view that value-resonant social contexts can be fully, equitably, and honorably represented" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 142). "Hearing" what is not said, but merely implied, as well as being mindful of silences, whether in documents or interviews, is an integral part of being a good listener (Merriam, 1998). I believe these are skills that I brought to the table as the researcher in this study.

Interviews

The interviews were all conducted in person between April 24, 2001 and June 1, 2001. They were audio taped in my office and transcribed at a later date. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Merriam, 1998) were used to collect perspectives about the outcomes of the mentoring program. The questions (Appendix A) addressed the perceived changes in student behaviors, attitudes, self-concepts, relationships and academic performance. They were grand tour in nature (Merriam, 1998; Spradley, 1980). Follow-up interviews were not necessary for verification and clarification.

Documents

The program description, (Appendices B, C, and D), parent permission (Appendix E), mentor security clearance, (Appendix F) disclaimer form (Appendix G), the student

information sheet (Appendix H), and the mentor information sheet (Appendix I) for program participation were reviewed. These documents provided helpful information about the program goals, terms, requirements, expectations, and process.

Data Analysis

Data collection was an on-going part of this research process, with data analysis following closely behind. Themes, patterns, and categories came to light from the perspectives of the participants. Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) suggested themes from their research on the BB/BSA mentoring program that set out some guidelines from which to compare (Yin, 1994). The Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) framework was used to help sort the data and compare the outcomes (Merriam, 1998). If the data did not match this framework, a domain analysis was used to identify other patterns, themes, and categories that emerged. Codes, or symbols, were assigned to domains that emerged. The teacher/parent interviews and document reviews were cross-checked to gain a more comprehensive picture. Member checks were used to examine interpretations secured from interviews. Teachers and colleagues accomplished peer examination through critiquing the data as it emerged. Data collection, interpretations, and the decision making process was documented throughout with an audit trail that provided authenticity of the study.

Research Criteria

The goal of research is to ensure that the end product is achieved with honesty and integrity in the process. This includes an ethical approach, reliability, and validity. The two types of validity concerned are internal and external. Internal validity (credibility) addresses the truth of the information and how it compares to reality, or trustworthiness. This also involves the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations of the participants' perceptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). External validity takes into account the notion of transferability, or to what degree the outcomes of one study can be generalized in another area.

Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed (Merriam, 1998). That translates into how people interpret their world and their experiences. This qualitative research is predicated on the supposition that "meaning is embedded in people's experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions" (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). Patton (1985) explains that qualitative research attempts to comprehend unique situations in their context and the resulting interactions. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon under study, and not necessarily to predict what may happen in the future.

Internal Validity

Merriam (1998) explains internal validity as the "meaning of reality" (p. 201) using thick, rich descriptions. The information in this study will be gathered primarily from teachers and parents and cross-checked for a more complete understanding. The

researcher used member checks to study the interpretations secured from interviews and observations. Participants in the study read and verified the analysis of the interviews. Colleagues completed peer examinations by commenting on the data as it emerged. The participatory modes of research included the participant's involvement throughout the research (Merriam, 1998). This was achieved through the researcher gleaning their feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and interpretations throughout the study.

Researcher Bias. It is important to be sensitive to the biases built-in to this type of research. Le Compte and Preissle (1993) state, qualitative research is "distinguished party by its admission of the subjective perception and biases of both participants and researcher into the research frame" (p. 92). Since the main instrument in qualitative research is human, everything is filtered through this individual's values, perspectives, and worldview. There are many different interpretations of reality in this type of research. Therefore, the researcher's view of reality interacts with the participants' interpretations of the phenomena under scrutiny. The end result being another construction by the researcher of the participant's reality filtered yet again through the researcher's interpretations. This all makes sensitivity to how subjectivity, or biases, influence the findings of the study important (Merriam, 1998). My biases and subjectivity were explored and explained in the study.

Peer Examination. This process makes it possible for the researcher to check the results and interpretations of the study with fellow travelers. Two other Oklahoma State University doctoral students (also known as friends) have met with me on a bi-weekly

basis during the dissertation phase of this endeavor. The feedback, encouragement, and fellowship have been invaluable in keeping up my momentum and confidence to continue. They, along with my advisor, Dr. Hyle, have mentored me through the process.

Member Checks. This procedure gave the participants in the study an opportunity to check the accuracy of my interpretations by reading the transcripts and providing feedback relating to the accuracy. They were used to better understand the interpretations gathered from the interviews.

External Validity

External validity is described by Merriam (1998), as reliability and the degree to which the outcomes can be replicated. However, the in-depth study of one case makes it possible for the reader to recognize similarities or generalities that might be applicable in other situations. Purposive sampling and thick, rich descriptions are techniques that contributed to the reliability factor (Merriam, 1998). The data gathering, interpretations, and decision-making exercises were detailed throughout the study. The audiotapes, transcripts, interpretations, and analysis provided the study's authenticity.

A conscientious replication of the techniques employed in one study ought to produce similar results in the following research. Although, qualitative researchers believe that reality cannot be repeated verbatim, there are situations when the need for replication might be necessary to extend the research, or apply it to a different setting (Merriam, 1998).

The phenomenon under study is comprehended and detailed as experienced by the participants in qualitative research. The numerous interpretations of reality are dynamic. Therefore, replicated interviews would not necessarily yield the same results. The researcher wants the reader to see that the results are credible given the data provided as more important than getting the same results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Ethics play a major role in the research process. All the participants in this study enjoyed total anonymity throughout the research. I explained the nature of the study verbally and in written form, to the participants. Then, I gleaned written consent before I started the interviews. The information from the participants has been kept under lock and key, or on my computer to which only I have access with my password. The transcripts with the interpretations were shared with many of the participants. I received approval from the Department of Defense Educational Activity, principal of the school, and superintendent, and Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University.

Summary

This qualitative study sought to better understand the outcomes of the mentoring relationship as viewed through the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) lens. I interviewed teachers and parents of mentored fourth graders to gain insights and perceptions about how the process impacted these children. They discussed their feelings and impressions about the program, and why they felt as they did. They also mentioned

what, if any, behavior changes they noticed. It was interesting to note change, or alternatives they suggested and observations about which I had not inquired.

I shared personal biases that drove the manner in which I conducted the research and deciphered the results. I believe that meaning and understanding are born out of experiences and relationships. This evaluative study was conducted at a European school with dependents of American Air Force military members. The setting was an elementary school (kindergarten through fourth grades) with a student population of approximately 1,000.

Member checks, peer examination and the exploration of researcher bias contributed to the study's internal validity. The audit trail included data collection and analysis. Thick rich descriptions enhanced external validity. The documents, notes, and protocols have been saved for future reference, should they be required. Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board guidelines were followed throughout the process.

CHAPTER IV

DATA PRESENTATION

The mentoring program that served as the focus of the study was in its second

year at our school. It was offered every Tuesday to a teacher-selected group of third and

fourth graders for one hour in duration. This hour was broken into 20 minutes for lunch,

20 minutes for games, and 20 minutes of something academic that was provided by the

child's classroom teacher. The lunch and recess schedule dictated that the fourth graders

left for mentoring approximately 15 minutes before their classes broke for lunch. They

spent their lunch and recess time with their mentors in the Parent Center. The Parent

Center was a large area with an entire wall of windows. There were round tables and card

tables set up so that each child could sit at their own individual area with their mentor.

The room was equipped with a microwave oven and a variety of games. The counselor

and/or school psychologist set-up every week and acted as mentors when necessary.

There was a strong commitment to the program and it ran smoothly.

Eight teachers (total number of fourth grade teachers at the school) and eight

parents of some of the fourth grade students participating in the mentoring program were

interviewed at the school. They were asked about their involvement, feelings and

impressions of the mentoring program and why they felt as they did. They were queried

about "their children" who participated in the mentoring program and their understanding

of the selection criteria and changes (if any) that they had noticed in the children after participating in the mentoring program for six months. Some of those interviewed had suggestions about how the program might be improved. The final question covered anything that the interviewee might like to add that had not been asked in the interview.

The interviews all took place in my office where I had two comfortable chairs. The room was cheerful and bright with a wall of windows, an area rug, and a lamp that was nestled on the desk amongst assorted paperwork, books, a flower vase, and a large wooden carving from the Gambia. The atmosphere was relaxed and "homey" with an eclectic ambiance that includes a "Rogue's Gallery" on the walls of family and friends. A large poster of the John Singer Sargent painting "carnation, lily, lily, rose" hangs on the wall accompanied by an ornate, gilded framed oil painting of flowers and a large contemporary watercolor/tempra version of a desert storm. It was a space that has been conducive to quiet, relaxed, productive visits with children, parents, staff and community members over the years. The contents and decor reflect the interests and passions of its current occupant.

I had worked with the fourth grade classes on a weekly basis, as the Guidance Counselor for fourth grade, for the past several years. I knew all the fourth grade teachers well as a result of going into their rooms to give lessons for 45 minutes each week. I ran small groups on Social Skills and Anger Management for a select group of fourth graders and taught the Boys Town Parenting Program to any and all interested parents from the community. I also attended parent conferences, Child Study Committee meetings and Individual Education Program (IEP) sessions when necessary. I enjoyed a working

relationship with all the fourth grade teachers and had the utmost respect for each and everyone.

<div align="center">The Teachers</div>

The following details will provide the reader with a small amount of the teachers' demographic and background information, as well as expressed ideas, feelings, and suggestions. The data was provided to the researcher during personal interviews. The lettered surname was used with the intention of providing anonymity, as well as maintaining a personal perspective. The coding of the participants using the letter "T" and an assigned number was done to reference each interviewee in this and subsequent chapters.

<u>Teacher One: Mr. J (T-1)</u>

Mr. J is a "rare bird" in our elementary school. He is an African American and a male. Both of these characteristics made him a unique phenomenon. He was the only male classroom teacher in the entire school. There were 41 classroom teachers in total.

Mr. J celebrated his fortieth birthday a few months before the interview (the average age in DoDDS was 49), so he was also relatively young compared to many teachers in the school. He grew up in a poor family in East St. Louis. He once shared with me that when he graduated from high school, he and his friends left town on "the first thing they saw that was smokin'." Mr. J is certified to teach music and physical education, as well. It was not uncommon to go into his room and hear him playing his

guitar and singing with his class. He enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a caring, competent, and kind teacher.

Mr. J entered my office wearing his trademark warm, impish smile and Gentleman Quarterly (GQ) attire. He appeared relaxed and not bothered by the tape recorder gently purring on the chair in front of us. He responded that his selection criteria for recommending students for the mentoring program included checking his roster to make sure that they were not involved in any other activities, such as on an IEP Mr. J looked for students who were "maintaining grade level" but seemed to have a need for individual attention. He stated that he did not necessarily mean because of negative things, but those individuals who "yearned for something extra" in his opinion.

Mr. J shared that his initial impressions about the program were neutral and he assumed it would be something like the Big Brother/Big Sister program in the states, although he did not know much about that program. He did not find the mentoring program to be extra work for him in terms of putting materials together to send with the students, or letting them leave class a bit early for lunch on Tuesdays.

This was the second year that our school has offered mentoring and Mr. J has not had anyone refuse or drop out. He said that he did not get much feedback from his mentored students, but believed that they seemed to enjoy the one-on-one attention and always reminded him when it was time to go to mentoring.

The students from Mr. J's class took math or social studies work to complete with their mentor. He could not say for sure if there were any significant gains because of the program, but stated, "It certainly hasn't hurt." He believed that there were positive gains

in the social/emotional areas. He noticed one boy's recess problems disappear and another mentored student mentioned that his best friend was his mentor. Mr. J felt the program was a confidence building experience for those children participating and gave them "another outlet."

The question about possible suggestions for changing, or altering, the program was answered with ideas about perhaps more than once per week, trips outside the school, inviting more children to participate and getting the mentors and teachers together. Apparently, Mr. J had some additional children request to have their names put forward for mentoring. He explained that the numbers were limited and there was a waiting list.

Literacy Place (the adopted Reading and Language Arts curriculum for the whole school) introduced every unit with what they called a mentor. Mr. J told me that one day at the beginning of the year his class discussed the definition of a mentor. I asked him how his fourth graders explained the term mentor. He answered,

> They say it is someone you look to, a friend, basically along those lines, someone who is special to them, not their parents or a teacher, but someone else who is very special. Someone you can go to if you had a problem.

These were the explanations given by the individuals who had participated in the program.

Mr. J responded to the question about what else he might want to say about mentoring that I had not asked with,

> I hope that the program continues. I hope that the students will continue with it next year and the years after that onto middle school, high school. I think the program is a plus to our school and to our students; there is a lot to gain from it and nothing to lose.

<u>Teacher Two: Ms. Y (T-2)</u>

Ms. Y is in her early 40s with twin four-year-old girls, a daughter who recently graduated form high school and a son who was going into his senior year in college. She has a strong background in Special Education and is going to teach the Pre-School Handicapped children for school year 2001-2002. She is a woman who appears to have boundless energy and her short-cropped red hair match her fiery, opinionated, passionate personality. She has been teaching fourth grade at our school for the past four years, and will be missed by most of her colleagues at fourth grade next year.

Ms. Y believed the bond, friendship and support network provided by the mentors was crucial to the success of the program. Her selection process included; characteristics the children were exhibiting in class, knowing their family history, if their fathers were remote, if they seemed to be having adjustment problems. "If I felt they needed some extra TLC [tender loving care] more regularly, more often than your run of the mill students, at risk I guess you could say." I queried her whether she meant socially, academically or both. Ms. Y further elaborated that she meant socially and emotionally, because she believed that the benefits of the program were the social interactions they got with another person, and the emotional tie they might have to that person. She had three students who went to mentoring.

Her feelings about the program were that it was better the second year, and she has not been dissatisfied at all. Ms. Y found the mentors reliable, dependable and committed. She believed that one child's strength in math had improved and she thought it had to do with the time with the mentor and the "positive praise" given by the mentor.

The other two children in the program were more confident. They demonstrated this by raising their hands to participate more frequently, and read aloud in front of the class. This was not the case at the beginning of the school year. Ms. Y explained that it was impossible to say for sure that the mentoring program brought about these changes, but that she thought their "spotlight time" made them more confident to try new things.

She would like to see the mentors have more contact with the classroom teachers. The children did not usually talk about mentoring unless they were prompted. Ms. Y found it helpful to share information with the mentor.

She believed the greatest benefit of the program was the individual attention and sitting down to play a game. In her opinion, children learned to socialize and get along with others, through playing games. She talked about talking, chatting and being informal as the things everyone used to do before we had video games, videocassette recorders and lots of television. She thought children were missing game playing, for the most part, and that the academics were secondary in mentoring.

The children in her room knew when it was time to go for mentoring and were excited about it. She thought that all children could benefit from the intimate, special bond that mentoring provided. Ms. Y talked about how busy and rushed all our lives had become. She would like to see mentoring offered to more children to create a "better mix." She talked about servicing children who were not quiet, withdrawn, at risk, in need kids, but "regular children" to stimulate and provide role models.

Teacher Three: Ms. L (T-3)

Ms. L grew up in a small town in Utah and got married at 18. She had four children by the time she was in her mid-twenties and was divorced, on income support, and going to college with four young children by the time she was 30. Her story reads like a country-western song until she re-married and moved to Germany with her new teacher husband and the eight children they shared between them. Currently, she is in her late 40 or early 50, and a member of the fourth grade team. She is also a certified music teacher and has a piano in her classroom. It is a treat to walk by her room and hear her playing while her students accompany her with their sweet, angelic ten-year-old voices.

When I asked her about the mentoring program, she told me her understanding was that she needed to find some children who could use a little bit of extra tender loving care, or extra involvement from another positive adult. Ms. L referred those students that she saw as being needy, or did not have friends, or as much parental support as she would have liked. Her first criteria were social and emotional issues, followed by behavior concerns. She said that these students usually had academic problems, as well.

Ms. L used the words "fantastic" and "great" when referring to the mentoring program. She said that the children remembered the day and time of mentoring, because they liked to go. She has not had any children who did not like it. The other students wanted to know why they did not get to go, because it seemed like a reward to them.

Ms. L stated that she was not looking to measure anything when questioned about any noticeable changes in the children who had participated in the program. She said, "It

just makes sense in your own mind, that if you have another positive adult in that child's life, it can't help but help. This makes sense."

When asked if she were to expect changes, what changes she would anticipate Ms. L answered, "Change in their self-esteem, that was the most important reason for doing it." She explained that the mentor became an important person in the child's life.

Ms. L discussed temporary duty (TDY) responsibilities as a problem with some mentors. The mentors have had an assignments where they might be gone for a few weeks. She also felt that the time should be longer (one and a half to two hours) and perhaps after school. She has met her students' mentors once, but did not feel that more contact was necessary. It was difficult for her to put materials together in the middle of the day for the students to take to the mentoring session. Ms. L thought that the optimum number of children to go from each class was three or four. They usually missed 15 to 20 minutes of class, but did not mind making up work they had missed.

Ms. L reiterated that she believed that having one adult taking an active interest in the child was even more important than being a good role model. It was having someone else care about what was going on with a child. She said that as a parent she knows how hard it was to listen when kids come home from school. She explained that the needy children she sent to the program did not have the chance to tell anybody about anything they were doing. Ms. L shared that even in the classroom they did not have time to tell personal things. She said that she liked them to have that time. Ms. L believed that school was a security base for lots of children and the only place some of them had to be heard.

Teacher Four: Ms. G (T-4)

Ms. G is a master teacher with over 20 years of teaching experience "under her belt." Her husband is a principal at another DoDDS school and they have four grown children. She raised her family in Japan and was transferred to the United Kingdom a couple of years ago. Her classroom management skills are superb; she is highly organized and dedicated to her profession.

Ms. G's criteria for selection were children who she thought needed an extra adult in their lives. Some of her choices were single parent situations, stepfamilies and/or a family bonding issues going on with the child. There were three children going from her room for mentoring.

Ms. G explained that she was not always consistent about sending work with the children. Her thoughts were that the child needed some bonding time with the adult. She contended that social skills were improved through playing board games, learning about winning, losing, and having a conversation while engaged in a game. She said that all the children she has sent had behavioral issues. When she sent work, it was always language arts, because that was what she was teaching during that time frame when they were gone for mentoring. She believed mentoring was "a great program." The parents of the mentored children had been co-operative and sometimes the children shared what they had done during the session.

The question regarding any changes that she could see in the children that she would attribute to the participation in the program was met with, "That is a hard question.

It is a hard to tell what happens to a child when the child is not in the classroom." She suspected that the growth was more in the social-emotional area than in academics.

Ms. G met one of the mentors. She said that the mentored students "watch the clock" and told her when it was time to go to mentoring. One child was chosen because he lived alone with his mother and Ms. G felt it was important for him to have another influence in his life and a man with whom he could talk. Then, the girl chosen to participate has social issues, liked to talk to the counselor quite a bit, and sometimes felt persecuted by the other girls in the class and by her sisters at home. She had some self-esteem problems. The third child was a boy who had self-esteem issues, as well. Mentoring gave them someone else to listen to them other than the counselors, teachers and their parents. It gave them a "fresh start" with the mentor.

Ms. G believed that all the children would benefit from having a mentor and it would be great to have the program meet the needs of some that were not as "socially needy." She would like to see the mentors come to the classrooms, but did not think there should be more, or longer sessions.

Ms. G closed with,

> I think it is valuable for those children and something we can't measure about how it is affecting a child. We can't measure it, some of the things we do in class, in school, we can't measure it, it is just there. We know it is a good thing, but we can't rate it as to how good it is for that child. The child himself, or herself, may never be able to express how good it is.

She would like to see it continued throughout the years and said that the parents would like to see it continued.

Teacher Five: Ms. N (T-5)

Ms. N is an exotic beauty in her late 20s. This year has been her first teaching

assignment at the school after substitute teaching for a year. Her mother is Thai and her

father is an American who was stationed in Thailand about 30 years ago. She was born

there and the family moved when she was about a year and a half. She has been married

for a few years to her Air Force husband and would like to visit Thailand at some point.

Her mother cooks the traditional Thai dishes and she understands the language "a bit" but

cannot speak it. Ms. N presents as a gentle spirit and her students appear to adore her and

respond well to her respectful, circumspect, and conscientious manner.

Ms. N seemed a little nervous at the beginning of the interview. Her rapid speech

and nervous smile belied an otherwise calm exterior. She settled and resorted to her calm,

relaxed self after about five minutes of conversation about her teaching and students.

Ms. N's two mentored students both suffered from low self-esteem and did not

get much help at home. One girl, J, was "real needy," hails from a single working mom

situation, and has one older brother. The other girl, A, has both parents at home and was

the only child that was school age at her house. The girls had quite different experiences

with their mentors. A's mentor has had to be away on assignments (TDY) so she has had

substitutes over the year. Ms. N had not met that mentor.

J's mentor was a civilian employee and so she was not subject to deployment

issues. Ms. N said that she brought J a gift when she returned from a trip to Holland and

gave her a Christmas present. Ms. N received feedback from J's mentor and the mentor

attended the same church with J and her mother and brother. J is African American and

her mother requested a female, African-American mentor for her daughter. That request was granted and after J put her mentor through the "testing phase" which she did routinely with the adults in her life, it turned out to be an excellent match.

When I asked if the girls paid attention to the time and day on their own – Ms. N responded, "I get the full story first thing in the morning – it's mentoring today. They remind me, they are pretty keen."

The feelings and impressions question was answered with,

> I think it is a good idea. I think the one thing I would like to see is the mentor to be more involved in the classroom – to be invited in. To be a part of the classroom, and that way we could get some of the other kids involved in that, too. I think that would be a good idea. I think it is working well, it just has to be consistent, the one that is consistent I can see that is good for her.

The two girls who went to mentoring were friends. J had social problems and "doesn't know how to act with the others." A was shy and making friends was difficult for her. I asked if she thought the girls were better after attending the mentoring. Ms. N answered,

> The little girl who has difficulty making friends, her mom told that for the first time in her whole schooling she has a friend, that she has been invited for a sleep over. So she has a friend that comes over, and the other one I would say yes to an extent. The day she is happy to see her mentor I can see an improvement, but overall I don't see great improvement.

Academically? "Yes, actually with one of them she likes to do homework with the mentor. Academically, she is turning in homework and makes sure she gets it in. That is an improvement in that area."

The question that related to whether or not J's attitude toward school was better was met with, "Yes, definitely." Ms. N believed that the improvements were somewhat related to the mentoring. The other change Ms. N noted was, "The one that is very shy has become more outgoing, even to me, she has a lot of things to tell me."

Ms. N would like to see mentoring done a couple of times each week with a little involvement in the classrooms. She mentioned that she felt that mentoring let the children know they were special, and that they were part of something bigger than the classroom. Her general impressions were that the most important aspect of the mentoring, and where she saw the most improvement, was in the areas of relationships, friendships, socialization, and emotional as opposed to academics.

Teacher Six: Ms. M (T-6)

Ms. M is in her late 40s, never married and is of Mexican-American decent. She has been teaching the Spanish Language Immersion fourth grade class for the last few years. Ms. M fosters a thought provoking, productive, high functioning, interesting group of individuals who work well together. She takes a no-nonsense approach and has high expectations. The children rose to the challenge and were a delight to interact with, teach and watch. They were quite remarkable. I believe it was in large measure due to her guidance, teaching, personality and spirit. Ms. M mentioned mentoring as a time to work on the weak areas (academically) and the other period was spent on game time with the mentor, for them to develop a relationship.

Ms. M's selection process was based on social/emotional reasons. She felt her two choices needed to develop a relationship with another person. They did not get along with some of the other children in class. Their interpersonal skills were lacking. She shared that the children really enjoyed going and the one with a weak academic area was improving. Ms. M invited the mentor to come into the classroom for an occasional special activity. She had lunch once with the mentor and "touches base" to see how things were going. The "Divine Ms. M" has initiated all this. She told me that she knew that mentors really enjoyed the experience, as well.

Ms. M stated that her male mentored student got really upset if his mentor had to be gone. She felt that he opened up to her to "quite an extent." Her feelings and impressions were that the program benefits the children more emotionally than academically. She thought that the extra attention and time to talk made it possible for these students to "settle down in class a little bit more" and made it easier for her to teach. The children did not want to miss mentoring so they were good about remembering the day and time to go.

Ms. M would like to see more children involved in mentoring. She would like to select at least five children for social/emotional reasons. Her concluding remarks were:

> The other thing that is great about it is one of the kids who is going
> doesn't have a male presence in the house. Mom requested a male for him
> to interact with. I think it's great, it fills a need that mom can't meet. They
> are new here, he doesn't have any other male role models to back up on, I
> think that is great. I really support the program. I think it is worthwhile
> and I put a lot of thought into which children I select. Most of the children
> I select is more for the social/emotional aspect. I am very happy to have it
> here at school. I know it is hard to get more mentors, but it is very
> worthwhile. We have had parent volunteers come in but that's not the
> same thing. They don't develop a relationship.

Teacher Seven: Ms. A (T-7)

Ms. A is 27 years old, daughter of a retired pilot and her husband is in the Air Force. She was planning to go to Iceland in a couple of months for "their" next assignment. She met the news with her characteristic good humor and had already secured a teaching job. Ms. A is an energetic, enthusiastic professional who gives one hundred percent to her students academically and personally. She took her responsibilities home and worked with families after hours and on weekends many times. She is pretty, petite and personable. Currently, she is giving herself over to trying to start a family. She would earnestly tell me how hard she and her husband were trying. This translated into romantic cruises, charts and not letting any opportunities pass. They were undoubtedly "trying" as I labored on my Chapter IV. Fortunately, this new goal did not diminish her enthusiasm for teaching, or her energy level. Ms. A has been a consummate professional. Iceland's gain is clearly our loss.

The reason Ms. A gave for the three choices she selected included; academic help, more support than they were getting at home, boost their ego, another adult spending time with them and someone who could help them be accountable for what they were and were not doing.

When queried about her feelings and impressions about the program and why, she enthused, "I love the program, because I have seen a lot of improvement in the kids. Their grades have gone up and they have been able to open up to peers, as well as adults."

The behavior changes that Ms. A reported in one particular child who was not listening in class and "goofing around" were that his grades improved and he was excited

about "reporting to his mentor." Ms. A believed that when the mentor, teacher and parent assumed "accountability" for this boy their combined efforts created the impetus for his improved attitude and academic achievement.

Ms. A reiterated that her reasons for referral were behavior and/or academics. She mentioned that the boy who had not been motivated and went from an "F" average to "C" to "B" average. His behavior improved, he assumed responsibility for his work, and started showing his mother what he was doing at school. Ms. A attributed those improvements to his one-on-one work with the mentor and her communication about this student with his mentor. This child was from a single parent family and his mother worked 12 to 13 hour shifts in the Air Force. He has an older sister with whom he often quarreled, by his account. Ms A credited the mentoring program with giving the children support that she believed they were not getting at home. It gave them "someone to talk to " and it was "for friendship and playing games."

Ms. A revealed that one boy especially talked about his mentor. His mentor was male and "he was very excited when he would do well and get praise from him." He shared things with his teacher that he had talked about during the session.

She felt that the mentor letting her know what was going on with this child was really important. This communication revolved around the academic component, because initially the child would tell his mentor that his teacher had not sent any work. Once he understood that his mentor talked to Ms. A and the "jig was up," he did his 20 minutes of schoolwork.

Ms. A talked about the girl she referred, because of low self-esteem. She felt the mentor "could pull things out" that she was not able to address, because she had 26 to 27 children in class. "I couldn't do the one-on-one time." Ms. A shared that she thought the extra talking time had improved the girl's self-esteem. She saw her as being "successful in little things." The examples she cited included not being scared to raise her hand anymore, volunteering and making eye contact. Ms. A said that the girl would not do those things before she went to mentoring.

The other student that she referred was a boy with learning and behavioral difficulties. She felt that the mentor was a good incentive for this boy. She thought that when she told him that he was going to see his mentor that day that it helped him focus. "It's not just me, not just mom and dad to be accountable to. There is someone else who is pushing for him and wanting him to be successful."

Ms. A would like to see the program happen twice each week and for the mentors to be a part of the classroom in some way. She thought it would be great if the child could introduce their mentor to the class and for the mentor to be involved in playing games at free time with the class. She said that one of the mentors came to her room briefly last year and "it was really neat to see the child's reaction. He had a big smile on his face. He was very excited this was his mentor, and he knew why he was there."

I asked Ms. A what else she would like to tell me about the mentoring program. She responded:

> I think it is a success I think it is good for all kids especially single parent
> families. It is good for children with behavioral difficulties. It is good
> with children who need that little boost, for responsibility, academics;
> overall it is a great program. I would like to see it more incorporated

instead of just once a week. I think it would benefit the kids to see the mentor at the beginning of the week and the end, to have more accountably. Maybe to be more involved in the school activities as well.

I asked her what she believed was the cornerstone of the success of the program and she replied:

> I think the mentors feel they want to take a role in the child's learning, and life, that they are willing to take the initiative. They are excited about meeting with these kids; these were people that were really excited about being with the kids. The kids sense that and know that they genuinely care. The communication, caring and taking responsibility for the kids as if they were their own.

She believed the success of the program was borne out of the caring relationship.

Teacher Eight: Ms. V (T-8)

Ms. V is in her early 40s, and has two sons who attend British school. She grew up in Oregon and visited England for the first time in her early 20s to attend a cousin's wedding. Ms. V's mother is English and she met her future husband at her cousin's wedding, which certainly changed the course of her life. I envision that meeting to be something like a scene from the movie "Four Weddings and a Funeral." Ms. V is a lovely lady in a very gentle and gentile sort of way. Her husband is a good-looking Yorkshire man and her sons are well mannered and handsome. They are a beautiful family and Ms. V carries her dignity, intelligence and gentle, caring manner into her classroom.

Ms. V referred children whom she felt needed a "little extra help, a push and someone else watching over them." She said that she could not always say why she made certain selections, but said, "It's those kids that fall between the cracks." She did not

necessarily choose males over females and usually had them work on reading or social studies, as their academic assignment during the mentoring time.

Ms. V said that the children who went to mentoring did not talk too much about it other than general sharing, or a "quick chat." She revealed that some children would say, "I like to be in mentoring." Some children asked if they could go to mentoring or asked, " Why am I not in mentoring?" They saw it as something special, according to Ms. V.

Ms. V believed that the mentored children all benefitted from the extra reading practice. She shared that one boy appeared quite grateful to be getting extra help. Ms. V mentioned another student who would "sit and watch the clock the whole day" on mentoring days and say, " Is it time for mentoring? Is it time for mentoring?"

Ms. V found it interesting that he looked forward to it so much, because he was such a quiet child who "never said anything about how he felt." She knew he looked forward to it and thought it was "a boost" and "something quite positive" for him. She recalled that it was "very hard to get to know him." She believed he made a personal connection with his mentor and thrived on adult company. Ms. V stated that all her mentored students "seem to enjoy going." She saw it as "another person watching over them." Her opinion was that some of these students did not get much support at home, or the extra help they needed. She did not see the mentor as a parent replacement, but another adult to help and support the child. She never had anyone refuse the program, or a child who did not want to go.

Ms. V would appreciate being able to "go and sit and watch one day." This would require someone taking her class. She had "poked her head in" during her lunch and saw

them "playing the games" and working with the students." Ms. V believed that once per week was enough time and she hopes that it continues.

She talked about a little girl in her room that went to mentoring. She said that this child was extremely shy at the beginning of the school year and "has really come out of her shell." The class took a field trip to the hospice later in the school year and this girl "chatted with the people, sat with one patient for a long time and spoke to him, hugged him and gave him a kiss." Ms. V recalled that she would never had done that earlier in the year. She said that she could not say that this girl's more confident behaviors were the result of one particular thing, but contended it was "all part of the school experience."

Ms. V concluded the interview by talking about some of the ways she felt the program could be enhanced. She stated,

> It would be nice to meet the mentor individually and have a few minutes to talk with them about the children and to talk in confidence. To say this is what I see and if you are wondering in what way you could help, like to tell about the background, and what I think the child needs. A little bit about the family, so they know too. I'm sure for the mentor they see them an hour a week, so it takes some time, as it does for us, before you can figure out what the kid can do, can't do, and how to help that person. It must, as they see them once a week for an hour, so I think that it would be nice, if as they get into it, they have a chance to talk with the mentor. This is what I know about the child, and what do you think, how can we help them.

Summary

The common thread that ran throughout the teachers' interviews was that, from their perspectives, mentoring proved to be a positive experience for every mentored child. Half of the teachers would like more mentoring time each week. Some would like more

contact with the mentors and many would welcome the mentors' participation in the classrooms.

All of the teacher participants noticed positive changes in their mentored students, mentioned the importance of the one-on-one friendship bond/relationship that was established between the child and the mentor, and believed that the self-confidence/esteem aspects were critical to the program's success. The role model element was felt to be relevant in a few of the cases. Everyone hoped to see the mentoring program continued in the future.

Most teachers felt that the gains were more significant in the emotional, social, and behavioral areas than in the academic arena. Academic improvements were noted as; completing homework, higher grades, increased participation in class, better attitude about school work, settling down in class, and students being easier to teach and more confident about learning.

All of the teachers voiced doubts about how to measure the benefits they had noted. It was unanimous that the improvements could not be directly related to mentoring by any proven method. It was hypothesized that many of the gains observed were due to having participated in the mentoring experience.

The Parents

This section will include a brief description, some demographic information and the impressions, feelings and suggestions of the eight parents interviewed. The letter name was assigned to personalize the participants while maintaining their anonymity.

The letter P and numbers, 1-8, will be used for coding the findings in Chapter V and Chapter VI.

Parent One: Ms. W (P-1)

Ms. W has a son who was referred for the mentoring program at the beginning of school year 2000-2001. Ms. W signed him up initially, because she thought, "it is not something that would hurt him."

When Ms. W was asked about what she hoped her son might gain from participation in the program, she said,

> At the time he seemed like he needed it. He was acting like he wanted a lot of individual attention. Obviously, he wasn't getting what he wanted, as much as he'd like within the classroom. He was still trying to settle into a new school.

The response to whether she was more hopeful about the social and emotional aspects, as opposed to the academic. She stated that her concerns were more of a social nature and that her son loved the games he played with the mentor.

Ms. W told me that he did not talk much about it, but when she asked him about mentoring, he said; "He loves it, he likes playing games." She has met his mentor and mentioned that the woman was very quiet. Ms. W had not noticed any behavior changes in her child that she would attribute to participating in mentoring.

Her feeling and impressions about the program were:

> I know he really enjoys it. I know it has probably been a benefit to him, but I can't say specifically what that is. I know he enjoys it; he looks forward to the visit. When they don't occur, he will mention that.

Ms. W did say that her son had "settled down better in class" but did not know if that had anything to do with mentoring. She viewed the mentor as a friend and support for her child.

This boy did not have close friends in class and his one close friend lived in another country. She found his relationship with his younger brother to be "typical" and mentioned that they shared a bedroom.

Ms. W felt it might had been nice to know the mentor a bit better, but did not think she needed to be more involved. She thought that the amount of time was adequate and would not want to see the mentors go into the classrooms. She appreciated that the mentor "will focus and visit him" and would not want to see him having to "to split it" with other children.

This family was moving on the first of June and I felt that the mother was feeling somewhat overwhelmed. Her responses to my questions were somewhat delayed, soft spoken and less definitive that the other interviewees. It was very kind of her to make the time for me during such a hectic period in her life. She had mentioned earlier in the interview that her son "likes continuity and change is unsettling for him." Their tour in the United Kingdom was brief and moves are often stressful for the Air Force family.

Parent Two – Mr. M (P-2)

Mr. M is an active duty military member of African American descent, who had recently re-married. He was a single parent to his only son for several years, although he has had live-in girlfriends before marrying his British fiancé last year. The family was

planning to move to the Untied States within a couple of weeks when Mr. M accepted my phone invitation to be interviewed. He appeared at my office door on time and looked chipper and bright for a man who had been up working all night. He completed his shift at 7:00 a.m. and was at school at 8:00 a.m. Mr. M settled quickly into a chair, read over the paperwork before signing and had a smile on his face throughout our time together. We were somewhat familiar with one another because his son, K, was on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for reading, took Ritalin at school for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and had some significant behavior problems that brought him to the attention of the Counselor, School Psychologist and the Teacher for the Emotionally Impaired students. Mr. M had been at school more that most parents to discuss his child's behavior and academics.

Mr. M anticipated that the mentoring experience would help K "broaden his horizons" and "become more familiar with the way people are dealt with socially." He understood that his classroom teacher referred K because of his social skill problems. The social skills problems Mr. M addressed were "a feeling of belonging," and inappropriate behaviors to draw attention to himself. He believed that the mentoring was an avenue for getting K "to focus on the things he did well."

Mr. M had not met K's mentor and said that K did not talk about it. When Mr. M was asked if he had noticed any differences in his son that he thought could be attributed to the mentoring program, he answered that K was "a lot better off than he was before." He mentioned that his behavior had been "totally out of control at school" and since mentoring and being on an IEP, K has "become more focused and educated." He

elaborated that he "allowed himself to become more educated." Mr. M believed the program made it "easier for him to deal with school." Dad was getting fewer phone calls from the school about behavior problems.

Mr. M's feeling and impressions about the program were positive. He felt that it would enhance the program if the parents were more involved and were aware of "what was going on." He thought that could be accomplished with monthly, or quarterly, notes from the mentor to the parents. He mentioned becoming "familiar with the person who is having an emotional attachment to your child."

Mr. M did not have more ideas about changing the program in any other ways. He closed with, "I'm pretty sure I would have voiced my opinion" in reference to concerns or suggestions, he might care to share.

Parent Three – Ms. W (P-3)

Ms. W has three daughters and one son. The boy was the youngest (pre-school age) and her mentored daughter, D, was the second child, middle daughter. Ms. W met with me three or four times over the course of the school year to discuss D's shyness and low self-esteem. Ms. W shared that school was more difficult for D than for her sisters and that D had a bigger body style than her siblings and worried that she was fat. Ms. W signed this daughter up for the mentoring program to "build up self esteem and self confidence in the school area." D took math assignments to mentoring and her mom felt that doing math projects with the mentor helped her in that academic area. The teacher

explained it to Ms. W and D as being with the same person each week to build up a rapport and build confidence in learning.

Ms. W voiced that she believed it had been a good program for D because she saw more self-confidence and an increased enjoyment from learning. Apparently, D talked about it at home in a positive way and related to her family that "she enjoys it" and "likes going to the mentor."

Ms. W thought that her daughter could handle math better, and that she thrived on the one-on-one time that was lacking in the classroom. Ms. W met D's mentor once at the store, and was glad that she was a female. Her hope was that she would be able to continue when she goes to a new school next year for fifth grade.

The changes that D's mother would welcome in the mentoring program included "a time when the parents do meet the mentors" and "correspondence in how the mentor was working with the child" versus only hearing from the child about the experience. She would also like to see mentoring happen twice per week, but would not like to see the mentors go into the classrooms. Ms. W asked about providing the opportunity in the middle school and high school. One of her final remarks was that mentoring was a "good, positive experience for the kids on the whole."

Parent Four – Mr. H (P-4)

Mr. H, like Ms. W, has three daughters and one son. His mentored daughter, R, is the youngest daughter and her brother is two years younger than R. Mr. H mentioned that he works, "pretty hard with the military" and he has "four kids at home."

Mr. H agreed to stop by my office to be interviewed before we all went on the fourth grade field trip to Sandringham. He offered his day off to act as a chaperone for R's group. He presented as a serious, shy, introspective and concerned parent. It was clear that parenting was a high priority for this man and that he and his wife worked hard at it.

Mr. H shared that R was on an IEP for academics and that her siblings were all "gifted and extremely smart." He made the comment; "I don't know as much how to deal with R, as far as educating her. We had tried different angels. It is harder for her to grasp things than the other kids. Sometimes I don't know how to help her."

R was in her second year of mentoring. When asked if he remembered the initial reasons for his daughter's referral for mentoring, Mr. H answered,

> that she would benefit from a little bit more one on one, to talk about any
> personal problems in any area that she was having, just personal attention.
> The personal attention for R was one of the main reasons we agreed.

Mr. H met R's mentor at the end of last year when there was an end of the year lunch and celebration. He had not met R's mentor this year.

The feeling and impressions Mr. H has formed about the program were expressed in this way:

> My impressions are that it is a good thing. I know R, as she is high
> maintenance, needs a lot of attention, that is good for her. No matter what
> any test or whatever tangible results come out of it, at least the intangibles
> I am happy with.

Mr. H described what he believed to be the intangibles as:

> Just that attention, her liking school, getting to know her mentor,
> somebody she can talk with, another friend. If she is happy about school,
> or if the mentor can help her or encourage her if she is not doing well, that
> is a good thing. It can only help her ultimately. As far as the tangible,
> measurable, that is more difficult. I can't be certain what she got out of it.

Mr. H answered that R liked school okay when she was interacting with people and friends. He explained that her test scores were "never really good" and that she was happy when she experienced success. She got frustrated with "bad grades" and "nothing comes extremely easy to her." Therefore, "a lot of the time she is not happy about going to school."

Mr. H shared that he was a "real firm believer" in mentoring. He shared that R has "come out of her shell a little bit more and has become more outgoing." He explained that in the past when she was having trouble in school she would become more withdrawn and now she was "just happier in general." Mr. H added, "I don't know how much you can put it to any one thing. It's all part of it, and the kid growing up. We are trying everything to see what helps."

Parent Five – Ms. S (P-5)

Ms. S arrived at the interview with her kindergarten son, A, in tow. I gave lessons in the kindergarten classes, so A and I knew one another. He bounded into my office ahead of his mother, questioning what I had to offer him. I clambered unsteadily up on my desk chair, which was on wheels, to pull the Legos and Connect Four games down from the top of the cupboard. A settled happily onto the floor with his new found bounty. Ms. S was settled comfortably in the chair, and had read and signed the paperwork by the time A and I had finished exchanging pleasantries and setting up his game area.

Ms. S is Mexican-American, as is her husband, and I had many dealing with the family. Both parents took the Boys Town Parenting Class that I co-taught last year. Their

son, N, who had participated in the mentoring program since last year had been diagnosed as having Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and had a multitude of behavior problems. N took a combination of high powered, high dosage medications and spent a lot of time in the classroom for the Emotionally Impaired (EI) students. He has been on and IEP for behavior for the last couple of years.

Ms. S was waiting to hear what assignment they would get in the states when she came in for the interview. She was discouraged that the family had been turned down for a location they really wanted, because the schools in that area could not meet N's needs. She had resigned form her job at the commissary a few days earlier. Ms. S's slumped shoulders, flat affect and sad looking face made me think that she was down hearted and resigned to accepting her fate at the hands of Air Force personnel.

Ms. S described her understanding of the mentoring programs:

> My understanding, volunteers come in and spend some time with certain students that have been pulled for mentoring. They spend sometime together, talk, play games, and have free time together.

Her feelings regarding what she felt her son was getting from participating in the mentoring program were: "I think he enjoys the time, he likes spending time with other people. He doesn't talk to me about what they do, or what they talk about." Ms. S commented that N looks forward to going. Her feeling and impressions were:

> I think it is a good thing for the kids. I am sure they look forward to missing part of class, spending some time with the mentors. It's one on one time. I think it is good for him. He enjoys it.

She had not noticed any sustained changes in N, although she has said that he was never difficult with his mentor. Ms. S stated that he must be behaving himself with the mentor or "she wouldn't want to be spending time with him again."

Her hopes for N to gain from participating in mentoring involved:

He'd be able to talk to other people, not just kids but adults too. He deals with things case by case; talking to a mentor is totally different than talking to somebody else. He knows that person, and he doesn't like Mr. H [Assistant Principal] at all. He doesn't think that Mr. H is on his side at all. It is hard for him. He knows that his mentor is nice to him. He can get along with her. He has his own perceptions.

Ms. S did not believe that the mentors should be more involved with the parents or the classroom teacher. She viewed that as other people "invading" on their time. Ms. S thought the child needed to have the mentor all to himself or herself.

Yes, it is a lot better when it is one to one. It is a totally different personality. I know it, this one is the same way [motioning to A who is still happily building with[Legos]. It is better for them to have one to one time and they don't want someone else invading on their time.

Ms. S stated that she thought N was better with her "but I can't control him that well."

We ended the interview by joining A on the floor with the Legos and talked about pack-outs, possible moving locations and life in general.

Parent Six – Ms. P (P-6)

Ms. P initiated mentoring for her daughter after talking with the School Psychologist and J's Classroom teacher. J was not referred for mentoring by her third grade teacher last year.

Ms. J appeared punctually at my door in her crisp, navy blue Air Force Officer's uniform with black shoes so highly polished one could use them as a mirror. Her coifed

hair and red lacquered nails were done to perfection, and she looked every inch the officious, smart, clean-cut competent image that the Air Force wants their people to portray. She is a single mother of two children. J has a brother who was in fifth grade this year.

Ms. P requested information about "how the program was run, where it would be held, what they were going to offer, and what she could do also, hand in hand 50/50." She filled out the paperwork, and as an African-American, she requested to have the same for a mentor. The request was granted and J began her traditional "hazing period" with her patient, kind and well-meaning mentor. J was notorious for testing the adults in her life. She did this by being non-compliant, stubborn and sometimes downright rude. Ms. B, J's mentor, stood her ground, laid down the rules, was consistent, kind, firm and gained J's respect and compliance. It was difficult for the first few weeks, but they worked through it together.

Ms. P was asked if her main interest was academic, social or behavioral and she answered,

> It was equal, both. She needed both; it was on behavioral more social. That is what we were working on with the psychologist. I felt that the mentoring would just enhance.

Ms. P specified the following as behavioral goals:

> To be more socially acceptable. She was doing things, where whenever anyone said anything it was not considered acceptable. Talking, just wouldn't do, stubbornness. It is my way or no and that was it. When you are around people all the time, you have to compromise. Things are not always going to go your way. We wish it would go our way, but it's not going to go that way. So, she has to learn to deal with other people, and other people's personalities along with hers. That is what triggered me to get her into this.

Ms. P saw the program as "surely working," at times, but also expressed periods of uncertainty as well.

The times when Ms. P felt encouraged about J's progress in the mentoring program were expressed when she said:

> She will come home after session and say we did this today, Ms. B we did this, and one day she came home and she was really bright. We go to church a lot and stuff like that, and Ms. B does too, we frequent her church sometimes. She came home and said Ms. B talked about this, and was really into that, it was so good to see her. It was I know I have to be good, and I will do this and that, in order to get this book. There are those moments when I see that it is working, all her endeavors, me and her talked in detail at one point in time. We talked about it, I knew it would be good for her, but I said it is your decision, I understand if you choose not to stay with her. But, I said to her, J will win if you don't, she will win, we talked about it, and she said OK, I will not let her win, I will stick it out. It has helped both of them to grow, I think we are always growing and J has a lot to learn as a young kid.

The possibility of J sharing her experiences and feelings about mentoring with her mother were relayed with the response:

> Yes and no, it all depends. I ask everyday, how did things go, and on mentoring day, I ask in particular. It all depends, if there is something she did wrong, I might not hear about that, or it is twisted to her version. If it is good, I will hear about it.

Ms. P said, "Yes. Initially it was a challenge and a change; someone who was not going to let her walk over them. Once the law was laid down, the testing period was over" in reference to J's positive feelings about her mentor. Ms. P also stated that her general feelings and impressions of the program were positive.

Ms. P related that her situation was unique because she had a personal friendship and communicated with J's mentor. She said,

I wanted to know, I email her, and ask how is she doing, what is she doing, and email me if there is a problem, so we have that line of communication. So it's ok. J, I know Ms. N. I know Ms. B, she tells me what you do, so she knows I know Ms. B and they email. So she thinks I can't get away with some of the things that I probably would.

The involvement with the mentor was helpful and most would benefit from that type of involvement, according to Ms. P. She thought that twice a week instead of once a week would be an improvement. Her response to the mentors being more involved in the classrooms and with the teacher were:

I would imagine so; I know from J her teacher has some rapport with Ms. B as she gives her the work. I don't know if they all do that, but I guess that is the extent of it. I think it makes the kids feel good because it is one person they have that nobody else in the room has on Tuesday this is my person that I go to. I don't know if they do that, but I would think if I was a child, I would feel good, and I wouldn't want to share that person with anybody else. So I don't know if that would be a good thing for them to go in the classroom, because that would be an infringement on the mentee.

Parent Seven – Ms. L (P-7)

Ms. L explained that her son, R, has a learning disability and was referred by his teacher. The idea was to help him "come out of his shell," to become " more forward" and help him "find direction as far as something he would like to do." Ms. L stated that her son was quiet and not forthcoming with information unless he was asked directly. I asked her what R said when he was asked about mentoring and she replied:

He likes it. He likes the lady that he works with. He said they have a good time. She has a playstation, they play Spyro the Dragon, and they share things like that. He goes to a Gifted Program, the teacher said that the days she has him, is the day he also gets mentored. She said he is always watching the clock, and says it is my time to go, to be with my mentor, so that is a good thing.

When queried about what Ms. L thought R liked so much about mentoring, she

replied,

> There is not any set thing they have to do. Sometimes he takes his
> homework and they have to do certain things. But I don't think it is so
> strict that if he wants to do something else, or if he is upset or stressed,
> there is not the pressure on him to respond, like in class he would have to.

Ms. L's feelings and impressions about the program were:

> I think it is a good thing, the ways the people volunteer their time, and in
> R's case, for me being a parent that would have difficulty with his
> learning. At one point he is very gifted, but he lacks social skills a lot of
> the time. I think as much as he can interact with other people one on one,
> adults that are willing to come to his level, to see eye to eye, that helps
> him more.

The question about any specific changes or differences that could be related to

mentoring was answered in this way,

> I don't know that it could be pinpointed to that, but I do notice that he
> used to be very withdrawn, and even in the last school year. This year
> since he has been here, he has come out of his shell more; even the teacher
> has noticed that. I can't directly associate it with mentoring, but I hope that
> has something to with it.

Ms. L referred to R coming "out of his shell" and further elaborated:

> He is willing to occasionally have a say about things, state his opinion,
> where he used to just go with the flow. He tuned out things that people
> said, we would talk to him, and he would never respond. Now he will
> respond, he will say this is how I feel about it, he interacts more with the
> scenery.

The changes noted in his academics included;

> He seems to take his homework more seriously; it used to be such a hard
> thing. You still have to work with him to his work, but he actually strives
> to do better, it never meant anything before. School meant to R not so
> much as a video game to him. He never thought if I don't do this, I will get
> this result, and I will not do well, that never mattered to him. Now he does
> care about that, he brings home A's, and for him A's really matter now. I

think it is good for him, a lot of time in class, he is the type of kid that needs longer to do certain assignments. He does it well, but for him he has to do it a certain way, the teachers don't always have the time to give him for that. When he goes to the mentor she sits with him, and goes through the paperwork, the things he doesn't get done, he has the time in his own time, and for the mentor to give him the pointers he needs. It has worked well for him.

The suggestions for changes, or alterations, were:

I didn't get to meet the mentor, and I could have requested that, and I haven't. The main thing is to make sure they really like him. That would be the main thing. Sometimes a child and an adult don't necessarily click, and to go to a person each week and they don't feel comfortable. R likes his mentor really well, so that is good, and I think he would tell me if he didn't, and for him that would definitely be a chore.

Initially, R's impressions and feelings about his parents completing the paperwork

on mentoring in the affirmative were met with:

He didn't want to do it. But, that is normal for him. Just like with the Gifted Program, that they thought he should go into help stimulate him a little bit, he didn't want to do it. He didn't want me to sign any of the paperwork.

Ms L signed R up with the understanding that he "try it." She said, "The teacher

was going to monitor it too, if he didn't like it. He never came home and said he did not

want to." Ms. L went on to say:

Like I said when we occasionally ask, and he will talk about it. The teacher said he is a clock-watcher during that day, so I know he is anxious to go, he is not on his assignment because he is looking forward to going.

Other information that came to her mind included:

I think it is a really good program. R wasn't initially excited about it, and may be even now he wouldn't admit to being over enthused about it. But, for children like him, that need extra support, sometimes growing up you can feel very insecure, and sometimes another adult to speak with, to push him in another direction is a good thing. I think it is a very good thing.

The last statement dealt with whether she felt R was more comfortable making friends. She answered: "Yes, I think so. He has made a lot more friends. The teachers comment on that too. I can't link it for sure, but those are changes we have noticed, and the teacher that he goes to also."

After I turned off the tape recorder, Ms. L mentioned that R did not speak at all until he was three years old. She reiterated that he was academically gifted, but socially delayed. The positive feedback from the school this year that R has been making friends and doing better socially had understandably reassured her.

Parent Eight – Ms. K (P-8)

Ms. K was the only parent interviewed who also happens to be a teacher at the school. She came "on board" mid-year, was a single mother with one son, T, in fourth grade. Ms. K explained that she understood the program to be one-on-one with her son. She was asked if she would prefer a male or female and she requested a male.

Once T started the program, Ms. K "peeked in myself once, just to see. He asked me to come over. I introduced myself and we talked a little bit." Ms. K went on to say that her son's father has never been involved in his life at all. She wanted a male role model and stated that there had been very few in his life. Initially, she said "I was reluctant when she [the classroom teacher] first talked to him about going.

When asked about her hopes for T from participating she answered, "My son is a little bit slow in reading, so he does reading with him. The one-on-one with a male." She

went on to say that she was more interested in the role model aspect, "although the reading doesn't hurt."

We talked about the play part of it since the mentored students do not have recess with their peers on that day. Her reaction was, "So he gets to play and have interaction with a male. Which I think is great."

The question about the feedback from T was answered with, "He loves it. After the first day he came running into my room. He was just ecstatic. He thought it was the best thing in the world." In terms of talking about what was going on in his life and whether, or not, T was good about sharing this information at home, Ms. K responded:

> Yes, because there is just he and I, especially if he is excited. He is exuberant and expressive about his excitement. I ask him from time to time how it is going, how he felt about it. He really enjoys it. He told me yesterday, he really didn't mind missing recess and that the man was going away TDY for 2 weeks, but then bring my son back something back from whatever location he is at.

Ms. K's feelings and impressions about the program were:

> I think it is wonderful. I met the man. He is very nice. He was trying to connect with him from the very first day, and I thought that was really nice. It makes my son really happy. I like to see my son happy. There is a little extra reading going on, which makes me happy as a mom. We want our kids to succeed academically, and he gets the one on one with a male, which is really important for him particularly.

Ms. K initially could not think of anything to change about the program and felt, "For what I want out of it, he is getting that. He is getting a role model and extra reading." As an afterthought, Ms. K stated it would be helpful to have had it twice a week. Her feelings about more involvement between teachers and mentors, and/or parents and mentors were:

That would be nice. I felt awkward when I popped in that day, like I wasn't supposed to be there. I wasn't sure how the connection was supposed to be between the parent and the mentor. It would be nice to get a little feedback from the man as to what his perception of my son is, how he is behaving. It would be nice to hear some feedback. I don't know how they could expect them to come more than once a week though, that's the only thing.

Specific changes in T's behavior were difficult for Ms. K to pinpoint. She said:

That is hard to say. He is happy when Tuesday comes around, as he knows that is the day he gets to see the mentor. That is one change I have noticed. He doesn't want to miss Tuesdays. I guess there is a connection between him and that gentleman which is important to him. It is hard to say about the reading, as I have also hired a tutor that works with him a couple of days after school, and I work with him at home. So it is hard to gauge that. It obviously has some positive effect for him. He was sick one week and he really didn't want to stay home on Tuesday. I can't say any specific change.

Ms. K answered whether T was more confident with his reading or making friends and getting settled in a new environment with:

I'm sure it has, because he was having difficulties at the beginning. The teacher wanted him to have a mentor, as he wasn't making friends quickly. He was very shy, wasn't asking questions in class, he was just really quiet. He would come in and sit, and his teacher came to me and suggested the mentor, as she was worried about him. He was so withdrawn, and I think that must have played a part in that.

She commented, "Yes, he has friends, and has gone the other extreme." She added that he has become "Really sociable." Ms. K finds his personality to be more like it was before he left the states. Although, she did not think his basic nature was particularly outgoing. She noted:

He was really shy as a youngster when he first started school, but I took him to acting classes, that helped some. This was a big move, a new country, it was a lot for him to handle. Plus, we had already started the school year somewhere else. I pulled him out of there. There were a lot of changes for him. I think in his case he needed the mentoring.

Ms. K remarked, "I am hoping that will continue, as it is important to my son. I think it is a great program, and I have never seen it in the two different school districts he has been in, anything like this."

She concluded the interview with, "I think it is a wonderful thing. I can't say enough about it. I am very positive about it. My son is very happy about it. It seems to have helped him a lot. I think it is a wonderful idea."

I concluded the interview by giving Ms. K the history of the mentoring program at our school. I explained that the program was continued in the fifth grades, but not at the middle and high schools. Her enthusiasm and spirit were infectious. I found her attitudes and beliefs about mentoring echoed those of the other parents interviewed.

<u>Summary</u>

The parents, like the teachers, determined that from their vantage point, mentoring was a worthwhile experience for their mentored child. The positive outcomes and recommendations that they had in common with the teachers were many. Some of those interviewed would like their children to have more time with their mentors each week. No one mentioned inviting more children to participate, although everyone stated that it was a good experience for the children involved.

All of the parents had noticed positive changes in their mentored children. Comments included examples such as the children had settled down, had a sense of belonging, were happier in school, had better attitudes, understood cause and effect, cared

more about school, made friends and came out of his/her shell. A couple of parents also mentioned the positive role model aspect noted by a few teachers.

Everyone hoped to see the mentoring program continue at the elementary and intermediate levels where it is currently in place. Several parents expressed interest in seeing the program implemented in the middle and high schools.

Additionally, parents would like more contact with the mentor. They thought information from the mentors in the form of correspondence, or meetings, might be useful.

The parents all believed that the success of the program was born out of the caring one-on-one, unique relationship that the child developed with his/her mentor. This was thought to improve self-esteem, confidence, and performance – socially, behaviorally and academically. The emotional and social aspects were highlighted.

Parents found that the mentoring program helped their child. They did not feel that the progress could be measured. Both groups were definitive in their praise of the program and the perceived results.

The only significant difference that emerged between the teachers' and parents' findings was about mentor participation in the classroom. Several of the teachers wanted to bring mentors into the classrooms. The parents felt that the mentors should not go into the classrooms. Their rationale was that the mentored children would feel less "special" if they had to share their mentor with other children.

Summary

The data presented included the participants' feelings and impressions, suggestions on how the program might be altered, and any noticeable changes in the mentored students. The data gathered from the teachers and parents overlapped with similar findings. I found the mentoring program to be holistic in nature. It was impossible to determine, in many cases, what came first in the change process. Teachers and parents reported improved attitudes, behaviors, social skills, confidence, self-esteem and academics. One element could not be teased out from another. They appeared intertwined and interdependent. The terms personal attention, one-on-one, spotlight time, and TLC were synonymous to represent the bond of friendship that developed between the child and mentor which formed a unique, helping relationship.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

The education of young adolescents must, of course, be an integrated venture; physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development are intertwined and interactive. To rank one dimension above the others, to try to separate them out, is to misunderstand the nature of the ten-to-fourteen-year-old (Lounsbury, Middle School Journal, 1991, p. 11).

In the introduction to her book, Crossing the Tracks: How "Untracking" Can Save America's Schools (1992), Anne Wheelock highlights the importance of social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of young people from approximately ten to 14 years of age. She also calls attention to how these dramatic changes collide with their academic achievement. Her opinion echoes the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's report, Great Transitions (1995) which argues that children ages ten to 14 are society's optimum and final opportunity to prevent social problems. These students are in the process of forming the basic hypotheses about society and their role within it. Mentoring programs are being used to facilitate young peoples' journey into successful adulthood via concerned and caring role models (Furstenberg, 1993: Werner & Smith, 1992: Rutler, 1987: Garmezy, 1985).

The purpose of this study was to apply the outcomes identified in the Tierney, Grossman and Resch's (1995) quantitative design with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998) to the evaluation of a mentoring program. This chapter will address the questions:

How did the findings of this study compare to those identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995)? In what ways did the findings enhance, or alter their outcomes of mentoring programs?

Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) identified three elements as successful outcomes from mentoring relationships: 1) improvements in relationships with family and friends, 2) improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance, and 3) decreased anti-social behaviors.

In this chapter, I analyzed the data using the mentoring outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995). The data were then organized and presented using the categories that emerged from their study. The evidence in this section also linked the findings to the literature.

The teachers and parents interviewed in this study were unanimous in their appreciation and praise of the mentoring program under study. Most of the participants expressed some uncertainty as to whether the positive changes they noted in the mentored children could be directly attributed to their participation in mentoring. It was generally agreed that measuring the outcomes of this experience was difficult, at best. Although, both the teachers and parents shared many positive results, they believed that the students were beneficiaries of productive growth that they attributed to their involvement and participation.

The teachers identified improvements in the areas of: attitude, behavior, academic gains, relationships with friends, and social skills. There was clearly some overlap in these categories and all the domains were noted.

Improvements in Relationships

All teachers and parents discussed the value of relationships. These positive relationships began between the children and their mentors. Many of the teachers and parents referenced children who described mentors as their friends. These relationships appeared to generalize in many cases to family, teachers, and peers. One participant (T-2) stated, "The children benefit from the interactions they get with another person, and the emotional time with that person." P-5 explained that her son "is better with her" since he began the mentoring program. P-7 noticed that her son was "more comfortable making friends. He has made a lot more friends. The teachers comment on that too." She felt reassured that he was "doing better socially." T-5 reminisced about the little girl who had difficulty making friends. This child's mother told the teacher that "for the first time in her whole schooling she has a friend, and has been invited for a sleep over." T-7 referred to the mentors as "someone to talk to" and "for friendship and playing games." Parents and teachers reported improvement in the students' ability to express their feelings. P-8 stated, "He is exuberant and expressive about his excitement. He really enjoys it. He loves it." P-4 found that his daughter had "come out of her shell a little bit more and has become more outgoing." Students trusted their mentors and looked forward to working with them. T-7 stated, "The mentors are really excited about being with the

kids. The kids sense that and know that they genuinely care." T-1 told me that when he queried his mentored students about their definition of a friend they answered, "It is someone you look to, a friend, someone who is special that is not a parent, or a teacher. Someone who is very special. Someone you can go to if you have a problem."

Schlecty (1997) puts forth the argument that schools are students' workplaces. Students should benefit from opportunities for collegiality in the workplace, if the lessons of organizational research are correct. It would appear that mentoring offered a social aspect to life, and school experience, that would not have otherwise enjoyed. Connell and Wellborn's study (1991) looked at the relative significance of peers and adult educators and found that students' relationships with peers and adults made independent contributions to engagement. This study showed the support relationships in school with adults had more impact on students' psychological state than support from home.

Ryan (1991) reminds us that autonomy does not mean detachment from people, but rather relates to the person's sense of self-determination in a social context. Children who feel autonomous will see themselves to have options and a connectedness between their actions and personal goals (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). The psychological needs are integrated and basic, meeting one need reinforces and supports the other needs (Osterman, 2000). Ryan explains it as, "The experience of relatedness and mutuality that derives from authentic contact with others appears to play a crucial role in connecting individuals to social tasks and promoting an internalization of valued goals" (Ryan, 1991, p. 119).

There are some motivational researchers who contend that relatedness is one of three basic psychological needs that are critical to human development and growth, along with competence and autonomy (Cornell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991; Ryan, 1995). Relatedness entails the desire to feel connected to others in the environment and to feel deserving of respect and love. The requirement for relatedness is the desire to feel belongingness or sense of community. The fulfillment of these affects psychological development and the general feeling of health and well-being, even if the person is not aware of them (Ryan, 1995). When the child's requirements are not fulfilled in the educational settings, Deci et al. (1991) anticipate decreased motivation, impaired development, poor performance, and alienation.

These sentiments run through the interviews with both the teachers and the parents. The book, <u>Showcase, 2000</u> has a poem written by an eighth grade student from Kaiserslautern Middle School that I feel sums it up from many of the mentored student's perspectives:

<div style="text-align:center">A Special Friend</div>

A special friend will . . .
Accept all of the things that you give
Believe in who you are as a person
Check if you are feeling okay
Do anything that makes you happy
Envision the qualities you have
Forgive your mistakes
Give unconditionally
Help you with anything that seems impossible
Invite you to his home
Jump for joy when you have good news
Keep you within his heart
Love you everyday
Make a difference in your life

Never do anything that will hurt your feelings
Offer support whenever you are in trouble
Pick you up when you fall
Quarter you if you need a home
Raise your spirits
Say nice things about you
Try to be your best friend
Understand everything that you do
Value everything you create
Walk beside you during your unjust trial
X-plain things that you do not understand
Yearn to learn your desire
Zap all of your fears away. (B. J. De LaCruz, p. 58)

Improved Attitudes, Behaviors and Academic Performance

It seems logical that the bond that develops between the children and their
mentors engenders a sense of connectedness in them. Solomon, et al., (1996) purports
that this feeling of belongingness, community, and experience of acceptance affects ego
orientation, task orientation, preference for challenge, academic aspirations, expectations,
and intrinsic academic motivation in students from grades four, five, and six.

The comments of both teachers and parents indicate improvements in the
children's attitudes. T-7 found that one child demonstrated improved self-esteem by
being "more successful in little things." The examples included: not being frightened to
raise her hand anymore, volunteering, and making eye contact. This teacher observed that
the girl did not do these things before she went to mentoring. P-4 related the results of
his daughter's participation in mentoring to be; personal attention, one on one time, and
being able to discuss any personal problems she might be experiencing with her mentor.
He also mentioned that she is happier about school. P-4 indicated a better attitude in his

daughter that might have come about as a function of having "another friend" and someone in whom she can confide. Parents and teachers noted that the children did not want to miss mentoring day (Tuesdays) and often watched the clock on those days. One child convinced his mother to allow him to attend school on a Tuesday, even though she believed he was ill. P-6 was not clear about observable changes in her daughter, but surmised that her improved expressive enthusiasm to do well and increased feelings of accountability could be traced back to the mentor as a good role model, and another person who was holding her accountable. The mother, teacher and mentor worked in concert to encourage this positive growth and improvement.

Improvements in behaviors were observed by both parents and teachers. P-2 remarked that his son was "a lot better off than he was before." He mentioned that his behavior had been "totally out of control" and since mentoring his child had "become more focused and educated." The father believed that the program made it easier for him to deal with school. Dad was getting fewer calls from the school about behavior problems. T-7 discussed a student whose behavior improved when he assumed responsibility for his work. This same young man started showing his mother what he was doing at school. T-7 attributed those improvements to his one-one work with the mentor and her communication about those improvements with his mentor. Other adjusted behaviors were also noted. Changes in her daughter's behavior noticed by P-7 included not being scared to raise her hand anymore, volunteering and making eye contact. Mother said that the girl would not do those things before she went to mentoring. P-7 discovered the outcomes for her son to be a release from the pressures of school. She

felt that when he was stressed or upset he had "a friend" in whom he could confide. She also observed, as did his teacher, that he had "come out of his shell more." He shares his opinions, feelings and responds and "interacts more with the scenery."

Academics were usually cited by teachers and parents as being less of a priority than the social/emotional and behavioral gains from mentoring. Although, academic was noted by remarks such as the following from P-7 who shared that her son:

> . . . seems to take his homework more seriously, it used to be such a hard thing. He actually strives to do better. It never meant anything before. He never thought if I don't do this, I will get this result, and I will not do well, that never matter to him. Now he does care about that, he brings home A's, and for him A's really matter now.

This same teacher found that her mentored students' "grades had gone up and they have been able to open up to peers, as well as adults." P-3 found that her daughter "can handle math better and thrives on the one-on-one time that is lacking in the classroom." T-5 recalled a child who liked to do homework with the mentor. She said, "She is turning in homework and makes sure she gets it in. That is an improvement in that area." T-7 mentioned the boy who had previously not been motivated and then went from an "F" average to "C" to a "B" average. P-3's mother sees "more self-confidence and an increased enjoyment from learning." On an academic level, P-7 thinks her child is taking his homework more seriously and "strives to do better." According to his mother, her son never considered, "if I don't do this, I will not do well." Apparently, it did not matter to him. There appears to be more academic interest and motivation coupled with an increased awareness of cause and effect. Although, T-2 clearly sees the social and emotional aspects as paramount, she noted one child's strength in math improved.

The mentors play a vital role in the school's "We Care and Respect Everyone" (CARE) and School/Home/Community Partnership themes, Solomon et al., 1996 studied the effects of sense of community, program status, and their interactions. In regard to academic attitudes, they discovered a substantial relationship between sense of community and enjoyment of school, achievement motivation, and intrinsic academic motivation. The most notable relationship across the grade levels was between sense of community and enjoyment of school.

Organizational researchers such as Johnson (1990), Lieberman (1998), Little (1982), and Rosenholtz (1989) found collegiality to be one of the most significant organizational qualities in determining teachers' professional commitment, sense of efficacy, and performance. I believe this information could be extrapolated to include students, their feelings of friendship with the mentor resulting in a sense of efficacy, commitment to school and increased performance.

<center>Decreased Anti-Social Behaviors</center>

Students participating in the mentor program developed improvements in social behaviors through game playing, talking, sharing, and socializing over lunch. In many cases, this included improved table manners, making eye contact, staying on the topic of conversation and using appropriate tone and volume, and staying seated. T-6 believed that the students she sent to mentoring were able to "settle down in class a little bit more" and made it easier for her to teach. P-7 noticed her child was more withdrawn before he participated in the mentoring program. She believed his social skills improved

as a result of his participation. T-1 noticed one mentored boy's recess problems vanished while another student named his mentor as his best friend. T-1 also finds the program to be a confidence building experience for the participants and provides them "another outlet."

Teachers shared many opinions as to why they thought the mentoring program was successful in decreasing anti-social behaviors. T-2 found the greatest benefit of the program to be the individual attention and sitting down to play a game. She opined that children learn to socialize and get along with others through playing games. T-2 talked about talking, chatting, and being informal as the things everyone used to do before we had video games, videocassette recorders, and lots of television. T-4 contended that social skills were improved through playing board games, learning about winning, losing, and having a conversation while engaged in a game. T-2 opined that the greatest benefits are the social interactions the children derive from another human being and the emotional bond created with that person. She believes that this goes "hand in glove" with the individual attention and the socialization that results from playing games and visiting. This carries over into learning about good sportsmanship, following rules, taking turns and learning how to carry on a conversation. T-2 thought the "positive praise" from the mentor made the difference.

From the above, it can be concluded that the teachers believed that it was the positive interactions with the mentors that brought about the positive changes. What the teachers have informally observed is what the following experts and research support. Most of the children referred for mentoring had problems with impulse control, anger and

self-esteem. These negative emotions tended to block good problem solving techniques. Moving on, or past, a hurdle can appear impossible to the individual with a defeatist attitude. The ability to regulate emotions is another skill in the social-emotional domain that helps children succeed in their everyday lives and academically. Everyone will face failures and disappointments in goal attainment. The student's resilience is significant and dependant on the degree to which they can control feelings of hopelessness and negative thoughts (Dweck, 1996). Children who cannot control their feelings sometimes confront inevitable setbacks with anger or feelings of depression. Dealing successfully with these "demons" led to improvements in school performance.

The participants shared perceived improvements in the social/emotional, behavioral and academic areas for those individuals with impulse control problems, anger issues, self-esteem deficits and those who were academically gifted while socially delayed. Their findings matched those of Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) and others. The gains appeared to be strongly linked to the child's feeling of "connectedness" and security with the mentor. One of the mentored students had been diagnosed as being depressed, anxious, having Attention Deficit Hyper Activity (ADHD) disorder and his IQ is in the superior range. His schoolwork did not reflect his superior intellect. His mentor was his best, and only, school buddy. He, as well as some of his mentoring contemporaries, displayed impulse control problems. The acting out behaviors were not evident in the mentoring environment. Some of the teachers and parents witnessed improvements in these children along the same lines. One of the mothers of one of these children had this to say about her son's experience with his mentor:

He deals with things case by case; talking to a mentor is totally different than talking to somebody else. He knows that person, and he doesn't like Mr. H [Assistant Principal] at all. He doesn't think that Mr. H is on his side at all. It is hard for him. He knows that his mentor is nice to him. He can get along with her. He has his own perceptions.

Young people who demonstrate better impulse control have proven to be more academically and socially capable, more keen to learn, and had higher scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) than those who could not exercise delayed gratification strategies (Shoda, Mischel & Peak, 1990). The SAT scores correlated more closely to a child's ability to control his impulses at age four than to his IQ (Peake, as cited in Golman, 1995). Children who are depressed or anxious, even those who are academically gifted, get lower grades, score lower on achievement tests and are more apt to be retained (Kovas & Bastiaens, 1994). Research in the cognitive sciences tells us that our learning, memory, attention and decision-making abilities are all closely tied into emotions (Committee for Children, Spring, 1999). Children's memories are also more accurate and they are more about to verbalize past occurrences when the affective domain is attached to those circumstances (Fivush, 1997). Children speak and write in a more accurate, coherent and detailed manner when activities or stories with emotional messages have preceded the event (Liwag & Stein, 1955; Risenbug & Zimmerman, 1992).

T-3 saw an improvement in the child's self esteem as being the most valuable rationale for having a mentoring program. She believes the increase in self esteem rises out of "one adult taking an active interest in the child." This sets the stage for providing a "security base" and an avenue to "tell personal things." In her opinion, the "needy" children she sends to the program do not have the opportunity to share personal

information with anyone else in their lives. She stated that the classroom does not provide that type of forum, because there are too many children. She believes that families are often too busy.

I believe that increased self-esteem leads to increased feelings of self-efficacy. Confidence results in being able to try new things, take risks, have the confidence to "fall down" knowing that you can get back up again. This holds true for social, emotional, behavioral and academic situations.

T-4 also verbalized the importance of improving children's social skills through "board games, learning about winning, losing, and having a conversation while engaged in a game." She speculated the results included: increased self-esteem, being able to vocalize to the teacher about the program providing a "fresh start" with the mentor and having "someone to listen to them."

The outcome that consistently came through everyone interviewed was the opportunity to share, and having someone to listen to the child one-on-one. This collective venture of involvement and support both dealt with students' psychological experience that could be labeled as "belongingness," "relatedness," "support," "acceptance," "membership," or "sense of community" as explained by Osterman, 2000.

The other girl in the program enjoys doing homework with the mentor. T-5 reported getting more assignments from her and believed there has been an academic improvement. She also noted that this girl has a better attitude towards school and the teacher thinks these gains are "somewhat related to mentoring."

T-6 found that one of her mentored boys had improved socially in that he had been quite a bit more open with her. The academic component was addressed somewhat when she commented that the extra attention, and time to talk, made it possible for these individuals to "settle down in class a little bit more." Her remark that this settling down behavior made it "easier for her to teach" would lead one to the conclusion that it also facilitates listening and learning on the children's part.

T-7 stated that her mentored students grades had improved, they were better behaved, more motivated, more apt to share information with their teacher, parents and peers. She was convinced that when the mentor, teacher and parent synchronized their efforts to be more accountable, this created the impetus for the improved attitude and academic achievement. T-7 discussed improvements in self-esteem in one girl, in particular. She thought this was because the mentor could "pull things out" that the teacher could not address given the 26 other children in the class. She saw this girl as being more "successful in little things" like being able to raise her hand, volunteer and make eye contact. This fell into the areas of attitude, behavior and academics.

T-8 found one of the major outcomes to be the pleasure the students got from participation. She believed that the mentored children benefited from extra reading practice and that it gave them an avenue to tell someone how they felt. T-8 described these benefits as "a boost" and "something quite positive." She reminisced about a female from her room who had gone to mentoring and had "come out of her shell." This improvement in social skills was demonstrated on several occasions. T-8 cautioned that the more confident behaviors that she cited were not necessarily "the result of one

particular thing." She contended it was "all part of the school experience." Mentoring was one part of that child's school experience.

As a rule, the experience of relatedness or belonging is linked with better attitudes toward self and others. Students who experience acceptance, and where the norm values and promotes supportive interaction, these same students are more apt to be supportive of others (Osterman, 2000). The helping, consideration and acceptance of others becomes more prevalent in the school.

In terms of beliefs about self, research links different strands of belongingness with self efficacy and self esteem (Battistich et al., 1995; Bishop & Inderbitzen, 1995; Ryan et al., 1994); detailed need for belongingness and general ideas about the quality of life (Green, Forehand, Beck & Vosk, 1980); anxiety (Ludd, 1990), emotional distress (Resnick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1998) and loneliness (Sletta, Valas & Skaalvik, 1996; Solomon et al., 1996; Solomon et al., in press).

Parents had varying opinions as to the outcomes, and reasons for those results, that ranged from academic attention, establishing rapport, confidence building and a combination there-of. The parental perspectives seemed to parallel those of the teachers.

P-1 believed her son was not getting the individual attention that he craved from the classroom teacher. He was also having trouble settling into a new school. The outcomes that she noticed included; her son "loves it," "has settled down better in class," "looks forward to the visit," and views the mentor as a "friend and support" to her child. This boy does not have close friends in class and his mom reported that his one close friend lives in another country.

P-2 thought that his son was "a lot better off than he was before" mentoring and that he had "become more focused and educated." He believed that his participation made it "easier for him to deal with school." This resulted in dad receiving fewer calls from the school about behavior problems. P-2 theorized that his son "allowed himself to become more educated." It appeared that improvements observed by this boy's father were primarily of a behavioral nature. The educational aspects were vague, although better behaviors and attitudes can certainly lead to academic gains.

P-3 found mentoring to help her daughter "handle math better." She thought this academic improvement was the result of one on one time doing math projects and that was lacking in the classroom. She believed that building rapport with the mentor helped her child "build confidence in learning." This has led to more self-confidence and increased enjoyment from learning.

The self-confidence that resulted from developing rapport with the mentor is part of the belonging model. Baumester and Leary (1995) completed an exhaustive review of literature to find out whether there was enough empirical evidence to determine that the need to belong is a basic human motivation. This need was explained as a "pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (p. 497). They argued that this basic motivation should apply to everyone, operate in a multitude of environments, and affect the cognitive and emotional areas.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) contend that "the weight of evidence indicates that lack of belongingness is a primary cause" (p. 511) of a variety of behavioral and

psychological problems. In their opinion, "the desire for interpersonal attachment may well be one of the most far-reaching and integrative constructs currently available to understand human nature. If psychology has erred with regard to the need to belong, in our view, the error has not been to deny the existence of such a motive so much as to under-appreciate it" (p. 522).

P-5 found her son to be better behaved with her at home after participation in the program. His behavior at school with his mentor had been consistently good and P-5 noted that the program gave her child; something to look forward to at school, someone he could trust and to whom he could turn, and an enjoyable outlet for one on one time. This particular student had become disenfranchised from the school environment on the whole. He spent a lot of time in the classroom for the Emotionally Impaired (E.I.) and carried the E.I. label himself. The other children at his grade level clashed with his inappropriate attention getting behaviors. He knew how to get negative attention, and he was at the receiving end of often reciprocated unkind remarks and gestures. This child did not have any friends apart from his mentor. It was apparent in his demeanor, attitude and behavior that she was his "port in the storm" at school.

The following poem written by 9th grader, David Suguri from Hanau High School in Germany seems representative of his feelings about their friendship:

What is a Friend?

A friend is one who understands our silence,
A friend is one who multiplies joys, divides grief,
And whose honesty is inviolable.
A friend is a volume of sympathy bound in fabric.
A friend is a watch, which beats true for all time
And never runs down.

> But the true definition of a friend,
> is one who comes in
> When the whole world has gone out. (D. Suguri, <u>Showcase, 2000</u>, p. 68)

Osterman (2000) writes that research ties the experience of belongingness to significant outcomes in education. These include (1) the development of rudimentary psychological processes vital to student success, (2) academic motives and attitudes, (3) personal and social attitudes, (4) participation and involvement, and (5) academic achievement.

P-6 had not witnessed all these changes in her child, but touched on academic, personal and social attitudes. The increased accountability lead to some additional participation and involvement in class.

P-8 outlined the outcomes for her son as being; an easier transition to a new school and country, a positive male role model, reading help, connection between her son and the mentor which is important to him and becoming more social. This increased confidence and socialization skills led to making friends and being happy in his new environment.

Weiner (1990) stated that the desire for belongingness is significant. He contends that there is a need to gather momentum and investigate students' motivational needs in the area of schools:

> Belongingness must be brought in play when examining school motivation. This has been explicitly recognized and studied. In sum, school motivation cannot be divorced from the social fabric in which it is embedded, which is one reason that claims made upon motivational psychology to produce achievement change must be modest. There will be no "person in space" for the field of classroom motivation unless there is corresponding social changes. (p. 621)

The results of this study also touched on the mentor facilitating a transition period, and acting as a role model in a single parent situation. The transition period was often in reference to being new to the school or moving away. Rutter (1979) and Werner (1989) describe these as turning point events. Mentoring can offer at-risk children the chance to develop in ways not previously possible for the child (Katz, 1994).

The at-risk students in schools are often those with low academic achievement, poor attendance, learning problems, low self-esteem and low socio-economic status (Frymier, 1992; Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989; Waxman, de Felix Anderson & Baptiste, 1992). Most of the children participating in this mentoring program had learning/behavior problems, low self-esteem and low academic achievement.

Protective factors in schools to increase the resilience of these children, such as mentoring, is potentially powerful (Christiansen, 1997). According to Joseph (1994), a resilient child is "responsible, positive, self-reliant, committed, and socially skillful" (p. 33). Resilient children will usually take a proactive approach to problem solving. Their problem solving techniques will enable them to effect positive changes as they interact with their surroundings and keep a strong sense of self (Gabarino, Dubrow, Kostenly, & Pardo, 1992). This leads to better self-esteem, feelings of self-efficacy and positive feedback (Joseph, 1994).

The role model aspect of mentoring is a built-in given, in my opinion. Mentors serve as role models, offering support in academic and social development, guidance, friendship, and stability (Bandura, 1977). They demonstrate a loyalty to values, help build a sense of personal worth, enable self-realization, help broaden horizons, and

facilitate making intelligent choices (Dondero, 1997). The mentor demonstrates a belief in the child, raises the bar, and provides the chance for the student to meet the higher standards. There are studies that indicate that caring adults do impact the lives of vulnerable youth in significantly positive ways (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982; O'Sullivan, 1991).

The subjective phenomenon of belongingness is an inherent component in the mentoring process. Belongingness is a broad concept that takes in sense of community, sense of school membership, relatedness, acceptance and support (Osterman, 2000). Bauermeister and Leary suspect that maladaptive school behaviors could be interpreted as "desperate attempts to establish or maintain relationships with other people or sheer frustration and purposelessness when one's need to belong goes unmet" (Bauermeister & Leary, 1995, p. 521). Their research implies that the experience of belongingness is paramount at all ages and every grade level from pre-school through high school.

Enhancing or Altering Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995)

The results of this study support the research of Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995). The mentoring program produced positive growth in the domains of reduced anti-social behavior, improved relationships with family and friends, improved behaviors, improved attitudes, and improved academic performance. In addition, this study identified positive outcomes in several more domains which enhance the previous research. The mentors empowered children through giving them a sense of "belongingness" (Osterman, 2000), acted as role models especially in single parent situations, strengthened students by helping them become more resilient (Christiansen, 1997), and promoted a unanimous "Feel Good Factor" among students.

Summary

The data in this chapter were analyzed to address and answer the questions: How did the findings of this study compare to those identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995)? In what ways did the findings enhance or alter their outcomes of mentoring programs? The results of this study clearly confirm the outcomes of prior research. Both teachers and parents through informal, anecdotal evidence supported the formal postulations of the Tierney, Grossman, and Resch research. This study also identified additional gains identified in other studies.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, BARRIERS,

RECOMMENDATIONS, AND COMMENTARY

The majority of mentoring programs have not produced significant documentation

of increased student achievement to justify their continuation, based on traditional

academic assessment measures. Despite this reality, mentoring programs continue to

receive support and proliferate as necessary ties and vital partnerships important for the

improvement of school communities and students (Carmola, 1995; Stuchen & Porta,

1997). This study investigated the outcomes of a mentoring program in an elementary

school following six months of participation. This chapter includes the study summary,

conclusions, recommendations, implications and perceived results gleaned from

interviews with the participants.

Summary of the Study

This study included eight fourth grade teachers and eight parents of students

participating in this *Evaluative Study of a Purposeful Sampling of Fourth Graders*

Participating in a Mentoring Program. Data collection, presentation, and analysis

focused on exploring the three elements identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch

(1995) as successful outcomes from mentoring relationships: (1) improvements in

relationships with family and friends, (2) improved attitudes, behaviors and academic performance, and (3) decreased anti-social behaviors.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to apply the outcomes found in the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) quantitative design with a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998) to the evaluation of a mentoring program. The following questions were answered:

1. What did teachers and parents identify as the outcomes of mentoring? Why? How?

2. How did the findings of this study compare to those identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995)? In what ways did the findings enhance, or alter their outcomes of mentoring programs?

3. What other realities were described?

4. How useful were Tierney, Grossman and Resch's identified outcomes in determining the success or benefits of mentoring programs?

The outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman & Resch (1995) were used as the lens to focus this study.

Data Needs and Sources

The perceptions of mentoring outcomes from parents and teachers of the participants were necessary to complete this study. The site was an elementary school with approximately 1,000 students on an Air Force base located in Europe.

Data Collection

Data were collected through audiotaped interviews and document review. The semi-structured, open-ended interviews (Merriam, 1998) were used to glean perspectives about the results of the mentoring program. The questions (Appendix A) took into account the perceived changes in student behaviors, attitudes, self-concept, relationships and academic performance. They were grand tour in nature (Merriam, 1998; Spradley, 1980). Follow-up interviews did not prove to be required for clarification and verification.

Data Presentation

The data collection was preceded by an extensive literature review. This literature was woven into the study throughout the process and augmented as new relevant information came to light. Data collection was a continuing element in the research process. Demographic information about the participants' history, biases, personality and role (teacher or parent) were explored and shared. The researcher's background and biases were detailed, as well. The outcomes of this research underscore and augment the results gleaned from the Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995) review of the BB/BSA study. Their analysis identified reduction of antisocial behaviors, improved relationships with family and friends, improved academic performance, and improved attitudes as positive outcomes. The teachers and parents also noted that the mentoring experience contributed to an increased sense of belongingness, general feelings of well-being and happiness, resilience, and confidence in the children.

Data Analysis

The information was first analyzed with a view toward linking similarities to the findings obtained from the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) outcomes found through the Big Brother/Big Sister (BB/BA) mentoring program. The purpose was to apply these outcomes from a quantitative design to a qualitative approach (Merriam, 1998) to the evaluation of a mentoring program. Subsequent data analysis uncovered themes, patterns and categories derived from the participants' perspectives.

The themes from Tierney, Grossman and Resch's (1995) research on the BB/BSA mentoring program put forth some guidelines for comparison (Yin. 1994). This aided in sorting data and comparing outcomes (Merriam, 1998). The parent/teacher interviews and document reviews were cross-checked to secure a more exhaustive view. Member checks were used to study interpretations gleaned from interviews. Colleagues and teachers completed peer examination by critiquing the data as it materialized. Data collection, interpretations, and the decision making process were documented on an on-going basis with an audit trail that produced authenticity of the study.

This study confirmed and augmented the prior research in that both teachers and parents saw positive changes in their students and children as a result of the mentoring program. They also observed that the mentoring experience contributed to a sense of belongingness, general feelings of well-being and happiness, resilience, and competence in the children.

Conclusions

The conclusions will be organized according to the purpose of the study. They include the positive outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) and other realities. Although, Moustakes (1969) found decreases in creativity, increases in conformity, and decreased independence with a mentoring program for a "gifted" student population as a negative outcome. The findings of this study resulted in positive results without negative repercussions. The participants' perceptions in this study could be interpreted as them viewing increases in conformity and decreased independence as positive outcomes. Students participating in the mentoring program demonstrated increased conformity to school rules and social behaviors with peers and adults. Their conformity to the school/family environments helped them to become more successful group and family members. Moustakes could view this social conformity as a loss of independence.

Outcomes Identified by Tierney, Grossman, and Resch (1995). Results obtained through interviews and document analysis found the three successful outcomes identified in the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) research. These included (1) improvements in relationships with family and friends, (2) improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance and (3) decreased antisocial behaviors. Improvements in relationships with family and friends were described as being able to trust others, express negative feelings, and being able to more effectively relate with others. In addition, in the Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) study, young people were less likely to lie. Participants

demonstrated improved relationships with their family members, particularly their mothers, and with peers. Improved attitudes, behaviors, and academic performance included better school attendance, being less likely to be sent to the principal's office, and less likely to engage in risky behaviors. They showed improved school performance, and better attitudes toward schoolwork. Decreased antisocial behaviors included being less likely to initiate drug and alcohol use, skip school, and hit someone.

Improvement in Relationships with Family and Friends. All teachers and parents discussed the value of relationships. These positive relationships began between the children and their mentors. Many of the teachers and parents referenced children who described mentors as their friends. These relationships appeared to generalize in many cases to family, teachers, and peers. One participant (T-2) stated, "The children benefit from the interactions they get with another person, and the emotional time with that person." P-5 explained that her son "is better with her" since he began the mentoring program. P-7 noticed that her son was "more comfortable making friends. He has made a lot more friends. The teachers comment on that too." She felt reassured that he was "doing better socially." T-5 reminisced about the little girl who had difficulty making friends. This child's mother told the teacher that "for the first time in her whole schooling she has a friend, and has been invited for a sleep over." T-7 referred to the mentors as "someone to talk to" and "for friendship and playing games." Parents and teachers reported improvement in the students' ability to express their feelings. P-8 stated, "He is exuberant and expressive about his excitement. He really enjoys it. He loves it." P-4 found that his daughter had "come out of her shell a little bit more and has become more

outgoing." Students trusted their mentors and looked forward to working with them. T-7 stated, "The mentors are really excited about being with the kids. The kids sense that and know that they genuinely care."

Improved Attitudes, Behaviors, and Academic Performance. It appears plausible that the bond that develops between the children and their mentors engenders a sense of connectedness in them. Solomon, et al., (1996) states that these feelings of belongingness, community, and experience of acceptance affects ego orientation, task orientation, preference for challenge, academic aspirations, expectations, and intrinsic academic motivation in students from grades four, five, and six.

Both teachers and parents noticed improvements in the mentored children's attitudes. They believed that the positive, observable changes such as: making eye contact, volunteering thoughts, ideas, and making friends could be attributed to the mentor as a good role model and friend to the child. The participants felt that these improvements also resulted from the students developing better self-esteem, self-efficacy and increased feelings of accountability.

Academics were usually cited by teachers and parents as being less of a priority than the social/emotional and behavioral gains from mentoring. Although, academic gains were noted by remarks such as the following from P-7 who shared that her son:

> seems to take his homework more seriously, it used to be such a hard
> thing. He actually strives to do better. It never meant anything before. He
> never thought if I don't do this, I will get this result, and I will not do well,
> that never matter to him. Now he does care about that, he brings home
> A's, and for him A's really matter now.

Decreased Antisocial Behaviors. Improved table manners, the ability to make eye contact, staying seated during class, "settling down" and being "easier to teach" were cited as some of the social gains believed to have been accomplished at least partly through participation in the mentoring program. The game playing, sharing and socializing were thought to be crucial to the improvement in social behaviors, according to the parents and teachers. The withdrawn children seemed to "come out of their shell" and "make friends" while the acting out students seemed to experience fewer problems with their peers and parents.

Other Conclusions

One of the most profound themes that emerged from this study were improvements in social/emotional development and how this often carried over into academic growth. Specific to this were an increased sense of belongingness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and general improvement in quality of life. Decrease in anxiety, emotional distress, and loneliness issues also came into play. This social-emotional learning introduces new skills and provides opportunities to children who may often "fall through the educational cracks." We understand that social relationships and feelings are a powerful part of life. The educational challenge is to harness the power in the service of children in their learning. The learner must have time to reflect upon and put into use new skills and concepts in order for the learning experience to be complete. The mentoring session affords children an opportunity to reflect and share.

Some excerpts from the participants that illustrate these cases in point for the increased sense of belongingness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and general improvement in quality of life include:

<u>Belongingness:</u>

- The mentor makes it easier for him to deal with school. It gives him "feeling of belonging" and an opportunity "to focus on the things he did well." P-2

- She mentioned that she felt that mentoring let the children know they were special, and that they were part of something bigger than the classroom. T-5

Elementary school students demonstrate a keen desire to connect emotionally with the adults with whom they interact in the school setting. Establishing a relationship and rapport clearly gives the child a feeling of security and confidence from which to function from this sense of "belongingness" (Osterman, 2000). The importance of connecting emotionally, and forming strong bonds between children and adults in schools, indicates that mentoring programs should be initiated and orchestrated in our elementary schools.

Adults can have a crucial impact on how students relate to others. Children who feel supported and cared about are more emotionally connected to their work (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Research now indicates that a decline in students' academic aspirations and curiosity after they begin secondary school correlates to their beliefs that teachers are less caring and friendly (Wigfield, Eccles, & Rodriquez, 1998), and are more apt to drop out of high school (Asher & Gabriel, 1989). It would seem to make sense, given these types of findings, that mentoring should be carried out in our middle and high schools.

Self-Esteem/Self-Efficacy:

- This year since he has been here, he has come out of his shell more; even the teacher has noticed that. Now he will respond, he will say this is how I feel about it, he interacts more with the scenery. P-7

- The examples she cited included not being scared to raise her hand anymore, volunteering and making eye contact. Ms. A said that the girl would not do those things before she went to mentoring. T-7

General Improvement in Quality of Life:

- He explained that in the past when his daughter was having trouble in school she would become more withdrawn and now she was " just happier in general." P-4

- She felt that the mentor was a good incentive for this boy. She thought that when she told him that he was going to see his mentor that day that it helped him focus. "It's not just me, not just mom and dad to be accountable to. There is someone else who is pushing for him and wanting him to be successful." T-7

Decreased Anxiety, Emotional Distress and Loneliness:

- She viewed the mentor as a friend and support for her child because this boy did not have close friends in class and his one close friend lived in another country. P-1

- He loves it. After the first day he came running into my room. He was just ecstatic. He thought it was the best thing in the world. P-8

- He noticed one boy's recess problems disappear and another mentored student mentioned that his best friend was his mentor. T-5

- For the first time in her whole schooling she has a friend, someone that invited her for her first sleep over. She has a friend that comes over. T-5

Osterman (2000) identified an increased sense of belongingness or relatedness that research links with improved self-esteem and self-efficacy (Battistich et al., 1995; Bishop & Inderbitzen, 1995; Ryan et al. 1994); stated need for relatedness and general

feelings of life's quality (Green, Forehand, Beck, & Vosk, 1980). Anxiety, (Ladd, 1990), emotional distress (Resnick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1998) and loneliness (Sletta, Valas, & Skaalvik, 1996; Solomon et al., 1996; Solomon et al., in press) are also decreased when students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness.

Students gain from social-emotional learning models that work to encourage empathy, problem solving, emotional-regulation, and impulse-control skills (Gottman, Katz & Hoover, 1997; Grossman, et al., 1997). Children with exceptional social skills do better academically than their peers who lack social skills. Students who cannot read emotional clues, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, are not as successful as their intelligence quotients (I.Qs) would suggest. Research reveals that low empathy levels are connected with poor school achievement. It is probable that a more empathic child will get higher grades than his less empathic peer with the same IQ (Norwicki & Duke, 1992). This research supports the rationale for the importance of the social/emotional outcomes of mentoring contributing to better achievement and academics.

A further conclusion in this study that enhanced those in Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) study was the outcome that I labeled the "Feel Good Factor." Every single participant made reference to the child enjoying, liking, loving the experience. The teachers made comments such as:

- They seem to enjoy the one-on-one attention and always remind me when it is time to go to mentoring. T-1

- The children know when it is time to go for mentoring and are excited about it. T-2

- The mentored students "watch the clock" and tell me when it is time to go to mentoring. It gives them a "fresh start" with the mentor. T-3

- It was important to him to have another influence in his life and a man with whom he could talk. T-4

- The children do not want to miss mentoring so they are good about remembering the day and time to go. T-6

- The student would "sit and watch the clock the whole day" on mentoring days and say, " Is it time for mentoring?" T-8.

The parents' comments included:

- I know he enjoys it, he looks forward to the visit. When they don't occur, he will mention that. P-1

- I think it makes the kids feel good, because it is the one person they have that nobody else in the room has on Tuesdays. They know that this is my person that I go to. P-6

- D talks about it at home in a positive way and relates to her family that "she enjoys it" and "likes going to the mentor." She has more self-confidence and an increased enjoyment of learning. P-3

- She benefits from a little bit more one on one, to talk about any personal problems in any area that she was having, just personal attention. She is "just happier in general." P-4

- He enjoys the time. He likes spending time with other people. It's one on one time with other people. It's one on one time. I think it is good for him. P-5

- The teacher said he is a clock-watcher during that day so I know he is anxious to go. P-7

- He is happy when Tuesday comes around, as he knows that is the day he gets to see his mentor. He doesn't want to miss Tuesdays. I guess there is a connection between him and that gentleman which is important to him. After the first day he came running into my room. He was just ecstatic. He thought it was the best thing in the world. P-8

Research also demonstrates that feelings are critical for rational decision-making. Injuries that hamper the brain's ability to process emotions, renders the injured person incapable of making sound decisions, even in the event that their cognitive intelligence is not damaged (Damasio, 1997). It appears to be a myth that emotions hinder good judgment and rational, sound decision-making. On the contrary, emotions seem to form a critical underpinning for those decisions.

Recommendations

This study points to several avenues for further investigation. The theory could be further developed through studies in different settings and with different age groups. Currently there is a dearth of instruments that can be used to study the outcomes identified in this mentoring research. One recommendation for the future is to develop tools by which these outcomes could be quantified. Another area for extension would be to interview the student participants in a longitudinal study that compares them to a control group. Longitudinal studies could investigate the status of students who participated in mentoring programs every five years. Post secondary education, employment, criminal record, salary, citizenship, and social relationships could be explored. The personality variables that might make some children more apt to benefit from mentoring programs could be tapped.

Teachers and parents, while reporting that the current mentoring program was very successful, provided several suggested ways to improve the program. Practice could be influenced by increased communication among the parents, teachers, and mentors. It

might be helpful to match evaluation process to individual student needs identified in the referral.

Improved communication among parents, teachers and mentors was frequently mentioned.T-8 believed that the mentoring program would be enhanced by the classroom teacher meeting individually with the mentor to have a few minutes to talk about the mentored students in confidence.

P-2 felt the program would be enhanced if the parents were more involved and were aware of "what was going on." He thought that could be accomplished with monthly, or quarterly, notes from the mentor to the parents. He mentioned becoming "familiar with the person who is having an emotional attachment to your child." P-3 would welcome "a time when the parents do meet the mentors" and "correspondence in how the mentor is working with the child" versus only hearing from the child about the experience.

Another common theme was that the program should be expanded to include more children. It was thought to be such a good experience for all types of children that all children would benefit from participation. T-1 would like more children to participate. T-2 suggested that mentoring be offered to more children to create a "better mix." She talked about servicing children who are not quiet, withdrawn, at-risk, in need kids, but rather "regular children" to stimulate and provide role models. P-3 shared that she found mentoring to be a "good, positive experience for kids on the whole." P-5's feelings and impressions about the program were that it is a good thing for all children.

Almost everyone mentioned continuing mentoring in fifth grade, middle school and high school. T-1 hoped that the mentoring would continue at the elementary school, as well as continuing on into intermediate, middle and high schools. T-8 expressed an interest in seeing the program continue. P-3 talked about wanting to see the program in the years ahead. P-8 would also like to see mentoring in the fifth grades, middle and high schools. Many of the parents and teachers also mentioned increasing mentoring time each week. T-1 would like mentoring to be offered more than once per week. T-5 expressed an interest in seeing mentoring done twice each week instead of once. P-3 and P-6 both stated that they would prefer for mentoring to happen twice per week.

The teachers and parents did not agree in terms of the mentors participating in the classrooms. Many of the teachers felt it would be beneficial to involve the mentors in some class activities. The parents did not want to see the mentors going into the rooms. They expressed the concern that it would interfere with the special, one- on- one bond between the child and the mentor.

Implications

Research, to be significant should: (1) supplement existing theory or make it more understandable, (2) contribute to the knowledge base and (3) inform practice (Yin, 1994). This study provides possibilities for augmenting the mentoring paradigm, enhancing practice and contributing to the research base.

Theory

The successful outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) derived from mentoring relationships in the Big Brother/Big Sister program were helpful. The benefits came in the form of: identifying, locating, categorizing, and analyzing the outcomes of this qualitative research to a quantitative study. The Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) results served as a lens that helped label, process and analyze the new data. It also provided some definitions and methods to operationalize the process and findings. The existing theories illuminated various categories, patterns and themes.

Research

Research in mentoring has been focused primarily on 10 to 14-year-old persons who are in the process of forming basic assumptions about the world and their place in it. These assumptions are created through observations of, and interactions with, adults in their world. Another reason to further, and continue, mentoring is the reality that if caring adults and role models are assessable to the young, they will be far more apt to develop into successful, healthy adults themselves (Furstenberg, 1993: Rutter, 1987: Garmegy, 1985). The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development's report, Great Transitions (1995) argue that the ages 10-14 are society's best and last opportunity to prevent social problems. This study dealt with nine and ten year-old children in fourth grade participating in a mentoring program. The outcomes from this study suggest that participation in a mentoring program is a valuable and positive experience for children on many levels. More information would be helpful regarding the usefulness of mentoring

for younger and older age groups (Guetzloe, 1997). There appears to be an information gap in this area.

This study has extended mentoring research to include a Department of Defense Dependent School on a large overseas base. Previous research on mentoring has not included this population.

Practice

The findings of this study appear significant to educational practice by underscoring the positive outcomes identified by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) and establishing other important results that are substantiated in other studies. The implications of this research linking the beneficial consequences of fourth graders participating in a mentoring program to a plethora of personality and behavior components is considerable. The results of the study clearly demonstrate that mentoring is a worthwhile endeavor on many levels for elementary age children. The study is well documented in terms of definitions, explanations of the process and how it was analyzed. This study furnishes an exhaustive literature review that establishes the merits, and challenges, of mentoring programs.

Valuable connections to the support structures our young people require are enhanced through school initiatives that accelerate and add to the time students, community members and staff interact. Collaborative community and school programs are yielding hopeful results for participating students. This connection to the community can be significant. The security of mastery, warmth and protection in supportive school

surrounding can sustain a sense of hope (Rockwell, 1994). Mentoring rich (Freedman, 1995) situations can and should be incorporated into our schools.

The 15 successful programs detailed in Smink (1990) display categories highlighted by Gray (1988) as successful development and maintenance components. Young people who participated in well-managed mentoring programs showed substantial growth in program-specific goals such as academic achievement, self-esteem, self-management behavior and self-confidence (Rockwell, 1997).

It is important to study the successful resources and structures already in place in our schools. Freedman (1995) tells us that it is possible to create mentor-rich situations. The belongingness (Ostermann, 2000) aspect and resistance factors (Joseph, 1994) play important roles as offshoots of mentors vital and powerful relationships with youth.

Barriers to successful implementation of mentoring programs as detailed in Howell (1995) and Freedman (1995) include: (a) insufficient numbers of mentors available (b) keeping the mentors and students (c) difficulties in defining a target population of possible protégés, (d) insufficient mentor support and training, and (e) unresolved social distance concerns between students and mentors.

The economic and social climate make it harder to build-in chances for students to link up with possible mentors, despite the research that establishes the value of continuing to develop and implement mentoring programs (Smink, 1990; Crockett & Smink, (1991); Freedman (1995).

Rockwell (1997) cites single-parent households, longer workweeks for the average American employee, funding cuts, fear of violence and less trust and camaraderie

as some of the socio-cultural changes that have diminished the number of adults available to children. She (Rockwell) also noted that mentoring programs invite those who are considered the most successful in our culture. These folks are not as plentiful in the areas of the youth seen to be most at risk, and they are prone to having such busy schedules that they are often not available during the time they are most apt to be needed. Smink (1990) discussed the restrictions of planned mentoring in the lives of at-risk individuals and stresses the significance of collaboration amongst institutions and community agencies.

In spite of its advantages, planned mentoring should not be looked upon as an independent intervention. As those in dropout prevention know all too well, there is no immediate cure or single approach to resolving this crisis.

Mentoring should work in conjunction with other programs, ideas, and strategies for helping students in need. Cohn states that a mentoring program on its own cannot compensate for a disadvantaged educational background, family problems, poverty, drug abuse, or a variety of other difficulties that force students to leave school before graduation (p. 12).

Commentary

The results of this study appear significant in that they connect the mentoring outcomes with the results found by Tierney, Grossman and Resch (1995) to other studies and research that links the social/emotional and behavioral aspects to learning and achievement. The literature review for this project provides a convincing, rich, thorough,

far reaching and powerful argument for the implementation and continuation of mentoring programs in our schools, because of the benefits. Some of the benefits are far reaching and subtle, while some are an act of faith, because they are not always evident, or obvious, at the moment.

The reality of measuring mentoring success with traditional academic assessments continues to be elusive. This might mean that we are trekking down the wrong road when we approach measurement from the academic assessment model. It appears "that dog don't hunt" successfully in that territory. The more meaningful, helpful guide seems to be the one that searches for more emotional/social and behavioral gains and celebrates those improvements.

There are a number of school-based interventions in place to increase students' chances to form authentic relationships with school personnel, peers and other members of the community (Rockwell, 1997). She also detailed structures that are in place and waiting to be initiated.

> The most effective way to achieve right relations with any living thing is
> to look for the best in it, and then help that best fit into the fullest
> expression. (Allen J. Boone, Quotes on Friendship, 2001)

Blankensteinput (1996) the mentoring movement in perspective when she wrote:

> Perhaps one of the things we should be saying to people is 'What would
> you do if this was your child?' To personalize it in that kind of way may
> get through to some people, because we still tend to have the "us and
> them" syndrome. But the people we talk about as if they are statistics are
> not statistics. They are somebody's child. (p. 59)

The most difficult and troubled individual is indeed someone's child. Schools have been impacting the lives of our youth for a long time. Life continues to pose even

challenges for today's youth. I believe it is incumbent upon our educational institutions to provide what Freedman (1995) describes as mentor-rich environments.

Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan (1996) reiterate the sentiments of many educators and researchers who contend that "one of the most fundamental reforms needed in secondary or high school education is to make schools into better communities of caring and support for young people" (p. 77). This notion of "community" is employed in various forms in literature, but the idea of belongingness is a thread that runs through many of the definitions (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi; 1996). The general qualities of organizations that make up communities are not always agreed upon. Furman (1998) defines community as the stakeholders enjoying feelings of trust in others, belonging and safety.

The mentoring experience enhanced the children's feelings of well-being and greater happiness This protective community had built-in support, caring and high expectations. Mentoring could be seen as being analogous to a well designed, and built rudder in the child's life ship. The protective community, support and caring that this one-on-one relationship provides could be seen as the rudder that helps steer and guide the child through life's calm and rough waters.

I believe that the relationship that develops between the child and mentor engenders a sense of security, trust, belonging and safety in the child. These feelings, in my opinion, are generalized to give the child a sense of community within the school

environment. This sense of community arises from adults taking the initiative to support,

help, guide and care for today's youth predicated on the supposition that: "It takes a

village to raise a child."

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I will first:

1. Introduce myself
2. Explain that I am studying mentoring.

I will next ask the following grand tour question:

1. Please tell me about your involvement in the mentoring program.

2. What are your feelings and impressions about the program? Why?

3. Please tell me about your students in the mentor program?
    Follow up question could include:
    Have you noticed any changes? If so, what?

4. Is there anything you would change or alter? If so, what?

5. What else would you like to tell me?

APPENDIX B

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

_____Elementary School
Mentoring Program Coordinator

Time Commitments: Initial Training Program
                   On-going 1 hour per week (Tuesdays, 12:00 to 1:00)
                   Introductory meeting with student and parents
                   Paperwork to Medical Exam Bldg 926 M-TH
                   1-3 p.m. Then to Security Police: SGT.

Requirements: A commitment to working with children
               Completion of background check
               Compliance with the guidelines of the program (guarding the confidence
               of the student, reporting any issues that may be of harmful nature to the
               child, always meeting the student in common areas, staying in
               communication with the program director, contacting the school if you are
               unable to keep an appointment.

If you are interested in making a difference in the life of a child, please consider
volunteering as a mentor to the students at _____ Elementary School.
Contact.

_____Elementary School
Mentoring Program Fact Sheet

What is "Mentoring"?

The word "mentoring" comes from a Greek word meaning "enduring." It means "a sustained relationship between a student and adult." The adult provides support, guidance, and assistance to the student.

What are the types of mentoring?

One type of mentoring, "natural" can be ordinary friendships, coaching, or counseling. The other type of mentoring, "planned" is structured. Adults and students are selected and matched through a formal process. Our school endorses PLANNED mentoring.

Are mentoring programs popular?

Mentoring programs are gaining popularity because students and adults benefit from them. Gaining personal satisfaction from helping others or being helped, enduring a crisis, or gaining a role model are just a few benefits.

How does mentoring work?

Adult volunteers are screened (background checks) and matched with students. Both are matched according to academic interests, hobbies, recreational activities, or special academic strengths. Adult volunteers are military and civilian representatives from the Military Community.

How can mentoring help a student?

It can improve overall academic achievement. Mentoring can also help students to improve communication and social skills, provide guidance for decision-making or problem solving.

When does mentoring take place?

Mentoring will take place on Tuesday's from 12:00 to 1:00. Mentors and students will have a chance to eat lunch together.

Where does mentoring take place?

Mentoring takes place in the Parent Center at _____ Elementary School

What will a mentor session involve?

Mentors and students will eat lunch together, spend some time working on the student's schoolwork, and spend some time playing games and talking.

MENTORING MIGHT BE JUST WHAT YOU NEED!

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPATION LETTER

_____Elementary School
Office of the Principal

Dear_____,

We are please to inform you that your child, _____, has been recommended for a mentoring program by their teacher. Children were selected for various reasons. Students will have the opportunity of one on one interaction with a positive role model and the chance to share a special interests or hobbies. The program will include academic as well as social activities.

The program will provide your child the opportunity to work with a volunteer mentor on hour each week. Class time will not be missed because students will meet with their mentors during the lunch hour.

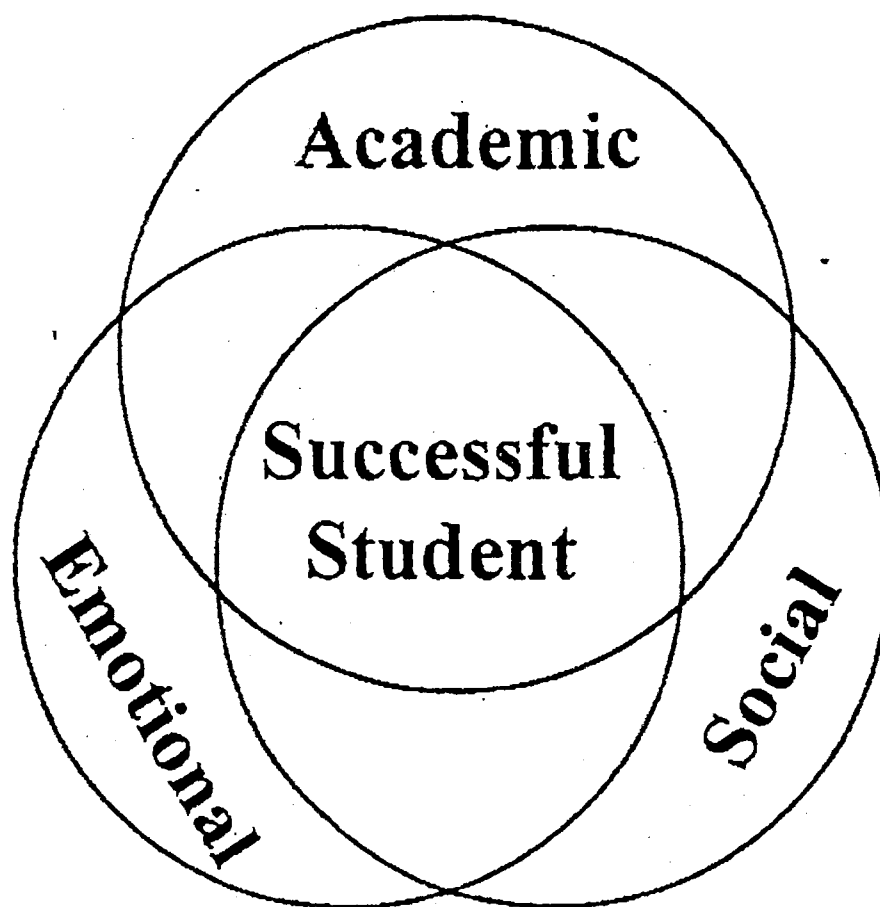Please contact_____ if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Principal

APPENDIX D

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

VIN DIAGRAM

Mentoring Program

Academic

Successful Student

Emotional

Social

APPENDIX E

PARENT PERMISSION

_____Elementary School
Parent Permission Form
Please Print

Student Name_____Grade_____

Parent's (Guardian's) Name_____

Phone (Duty)_____(Home)_____

E-mail Address:_____

The mentoring program will provide your child (dependent) with a volunteer
Mentor. The community will complete a background check on the mentor and he/she will
be briefed on roles and expectations. We are hoping that the mentor will be seen by your
child as a role model, resource person, motivator, teacher, and friend.

The _____ Elementary Mentoring Program is primarily an in-school program. Any out
of school activities or contact between the mentor and your dependent will require your
additional specific permission.

For Additional information, contact
I grant permission for my dependent named above to participate in the   Elementary
Mentoring Program. I understand that the school system will not be liable for any contact
between the mentor and my dependent which is not a school or district sponsored
activity.

_____   _____
Parent Signature   Date

APPENDIX F

MENTOR SECURITY CLEARANCE

DODDS CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT
INSTALLATION RECORDS CHECK NOTIFICATION

Reference: DODI 1402.5, Subject: Criminal History Background Checks on Individuals in Child Care Services, dated 19 JAN 93

Subject: Local Records Check for _____
(Full Name and Social Security Number)

In accordance with the reference, this office must obtain installation record checks (IRC) for newly-hired employees responsible for a child or with access to children on a frequent basis with the Department of Defense Dependent Schools in foreign countries (i.e. Germany). This record check must include:

      Local Military Police Records Check (base and/or military police, security office, criminal investigators, or local law enforcement).

      Family Housing (PLEASE FILL OUT THIS PORTION OF THIS FORM)

      Alcohol/Drug Abuse Check (PLEASE FILL OUT THIS PORTION OF THIS FORM)

      Service Central Registry Check (Medical Treatment Facility for Family Advocacy Program)

A Condition of Employment shall be a notification of the employer's obligation to require a record check. The employee has a right to obtain a copy of the criminal history report made available to the Department of Defense Dependent Schools. The employee has a right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the report. No staff shall be hired without an IRC having been completed.

You must answer the following question:
"HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ARRESTED FOR OR CHARGED WITH A CRIME INVOLVING A CHILD?"

If YES, a description is required of the disposition of the arrest or charge, (write description on the back of this notification.)

"I declare (or certify, verify, or state) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct." (28 USC 1746). This application is being signed under penalty of perjury; the punishment for perjury is to be fined, imprisoned not more than five years, or both. (18 USC 1621).

_____

Applicant's Signature (please sign in ink)   Date Signed (please sign in ink)

From: _____ (indicate name and office)

To: DoDDS Personnel Office, _____

The records have been checked and there is:

____ NO adverse information.

____ Information that may be of concern. Please see attached or contact
_____ for additional information.

_____
(Signature and date)

APPENDIX G

DISCLAIMER FORM

_____ Elementary School
Mentoring Program

Disclaimer:

I understand that any activity that my student and I schedule during off-school hours must be arranged through the student's parents or guardians.

Further, I understand that the school system will not assume any responsibility in the event of an accident or other problem during an activity that takes place during off-school hours.

_____
Printed name of mentor

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX H

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

_____Elementary School
Mentoring Program
Student Information Sheet

For the mentoring program to be successful and the most beneficial for your child, we want to match your child with a mentor who has similar interest.

NAME:_____

AGE: _____

CLASSROOM TEACHER:_____

What are your favorite things to do in your spare time?

_____

_____

What are your hobbies?

_____

_____

What is your best subject in school?_____

What is your least favorite subject in school? _____

What do you want to be when you grow up?_____

APPENDIX I

MENTOR INFORMATION SHEET

Mentoring Program
Mentor Information Sheet

Please fill out the survey below. We will review the information and use it to match you with a student from our school

1. NAME:_____ MILITARY RANK:_____

2. UNIT ADDRESS:_____ CIVILIAN: YES___NO___

3. DUTY PHONE #:_____HOME PHONE #:_____

4. HOBBIES, INTERESTS, EXPERIENCES WITH CHILDREN?

_____

_____

_____

5. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: (Please check the highest level:
   High School_____   Technical School_____
   Associate Degree_____   BA/BS Degree_____   Grad School_____

6. WORK EXPERIENCE OR SPECIAL SKILLS?

7. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A STUDENT IN OUR SCHOOL?

8. Because of the nature of my potential volunteer experience with the   District Mentoring Program, I consent to the release of information required by the community for a background check.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX J

OUTCOME MEASURES

Antisocial Activities

  Behavioral Conduct

  Initiated drug use

  Initiated alcohol use

  Number of times stole something in past year

  Number of times took something from store in past year

  Number of times damaged property in past year

  Number of times hit someone in past year

  Number of times did "risky" things in past year

  Number of times sent to principal's office in past year

  Number of times cheated on test in past year

  Used tobacco in past 30 days

Academic Outcomes

  Scholastic Competence

  School Value

  Grades

  Number of times skipped class

  Number of days skipped school

  Number of visits to a college

  Number of books read

  Number of trips to a library

  Weekly hours spent on homework

  Weekly hours spent reading

Family Relationships

  Inventory of Parent & Peer Attachment (IPPA)

    IPPA Communication Subscale

    IPPA Trust Subscale

    IPPA Anger and Alienation Subscale

  Number of times lied to parent in past year

Peer Relationships

  Intimacy in Communication Subscale

  Instrumental Support Subscale

  Emotional Support Subscale

  Conflict Subscale

  Inequality Subscale

Self-Concept

  Global Self Worth

  Social Acceptance

  Mastery & Coping Subscale

Social and Cultural Enrichment

  Weekly hours in sport or recreation programs

  Weekly hours in volunteer or community service

  Weekly hours in art, music or dance lessons

  Weekly hours in school clubs or organizations

  Weekly hours in youth groups

  Number of times attended sporting event in past year

  Number of times attended professional dance performance in past year

  Number of times attended music concert in past year

  Number of times participated in an outdoor activity in past year

  Number of times visited a museum in past year

  Total weekly hours spent in social and cultural activities

  Total attendance at social and cultural events in past year

From "Self-Perception Profile for Children" (Harter, 1985)

Adapted from "School Value Scale" (Berndt and Miller, 1990)

"Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA)" (Annsden and Greenberg, 1987)

From "Features of Children's Friendship Scale" (Berndt and Perry, 1986)

Adapted from "Self-Image Questionnaire for Young Adolescents" (Petersen et al., 1984)

APPENDIX K

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 4/1/02

Date : Wednesday, April 11, 2001   IRB Application No   ED0185

Proposal Title: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF A MENTORING PROGRAM
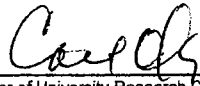
Principal
Investigator(s) :

Tamara Gregoire   Adrienne Hyle
PSC 41, Box 1117   314 Willard Hall
APO AE,   09464   Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Signature :

Wednesday, April 11, 2001

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance   Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications
to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office
MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited
and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX L

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY

PERMISSION FOR STUDY

October 6, 2000

Ms. Tamara Gregoire
PSC 41 Box 1117
APO AE 09464

Dear Ms. Gregoire:

Your research, An Evaluative Study of a Purposeful Sampling of Fourth Graders Participating in a Mentoring Program has been approved by the DODEA Research Committee

Approval of you research allows you to proceed with the research as described. It is not an endorsement and does not compel any personnel of the DoDEA system to participate. Parent, student and staff participation is strictly voluntary, and informed consent is required before any data can be collected on students.

Please contact me at (703) 696-4385 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Boyer

Dr. Charles E Boyer
Research and Evaluation Specialist

APPENDIX M

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form

1. Authorization

I,_____, hereby authorize Tamara Gregoire, the researcher, to perform the following procedure.

2. Description
You have been asked by Tamara Gregoire, a doctoral student in the College of Education at Oklahoma State University, to participate in the research study, An Evaluative Study of a Mentoring Program. As a participant, you will be interviewed about your views of the outcomes of this mentoring program.

This interview is being conducted as a part of Ms. Gregoire's dissertation research study. Information from the interview will be used by Ms. Gregoire in the preparation of her doctoral dissertation, a required component of the doctoral program in Education Administration. Information from the interview also may be used by Ms. Gregoire in scholarly publications and presentations dealing with evaluation of a mentoring program.

The interview should last from one to one and one-half hours and will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures. All subjects in this study will be asked the same questions which have been reviewed and approved by Ms. Gregoire's advisor at Oklahoma State University. Each interview will be recorded and Ms. Gregoire will prepare the transcripts of the interview for analysis. All tapes and transcripts will be treated as confidential materials. Information will be maintained and used in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Finally, no interview will be used in this study without a signed consent form.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this interview or the study of which it is a part, you may contact Ms. Gregoire' academic advisor, Professor Adrienne Hyle, School of Educational Studies, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, IK 74078. Dr. Hyle's telephone number is 405-744-9893 and her e-mail address isaeh@okstate.edu. You may also contact Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, Oklahoma State University, 203 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078: telephone number 405-744-5700.

3. Voluntary Participation
I understand the participation is voluntary and that I will not be penalized if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end participation in this project at any time without penalty after I notify Ms. Gregoire (1638-552129) or Professor Hyle (405-744-9893).

4. Consent

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

Date:_____ Time:_____(a.m./p.m.)

Signed:_____

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it.

Signed:_____
              Researcher

VITA

Tamara Lee Gregoire

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF A PURPOSEFUL SAMPLING OF FOURTH GRADERS PARTICIPATING IN A MENTORING PROGRAM

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Portland, Oregon on April 24, 1949, the younger child of Harold and Leila March. Married to John Gregoire since 1997 and have two adult children from a previous marriage.

Education: Graduated from Lake Oswego High School, Lake Oswego, Oregon in June 1967; received a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Education, and a Master of Education degree with a major in Special Education from the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon in June 1971 and August 1976, respectively; received a Master of Science degree with a major in Counseling from Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon in September, 1988. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree specializing in Administration and Supervision at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 2001.

Experience: Raised in Portland, Oregon, younger of two children; employed as a baby-sitter, ticket seller, tour guide and dormitory counselor during my high school and college days, respectively. Employed by the Oakridge School District in Oregon from 1971-1976 as a Special Education teacher; employed by the Bend-La Pine School District in Oregon as an Individual Education Program Developer (1976-1986) and as a Counselor (1986-1989). Employed by the Department of Defense Schools (DoDDS) from 1989 to present in the United Kingdom as a Guidance Counselor.

Professional Memberships: National Education Association, Phi Delta Kappa.