

QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH COMPONENTS  
AND STRUCTURE OF A CURRICULUM-BASED  
MENTORING PROGRAM AT THE  
MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

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December, 1996

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
December, 2006

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The term *mentor* is grounded in Homer's *Odyssey* and laden with expectations of a tradition of guiding care and wisdom. In Homer's tale of the adventure of Odysseus, the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athene, is responsible for mentoring young Telemachus while his seafaring father Odysseus is away. Disguised as mentor, a loyal friend of Odysseus, Athene aids and guides the young man. She acts as trusted friend and counselor in all aspects of the boy's life. Thus originates the English word mentoring (Stalker, 1994).

*Mentoring* has also been popularly captured in such figures as Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda in George Lucas' Star Wars film series. The mentoring process has also been mentioned in Sophocles' words: "The reasonable thing is to learn from those who can teach" (Bell, 1996). Records from as far back as the Renaissance period have shown that mentoring was a commonly accepted method of educating young persons.

*Mentoring* from the Greek word meaning "enduring" is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and adult or older peer. Through a continued involvement, an adult or peer offers support, guidance, and essential assistance to the younger person. Good mentors help anchor the promise of the future as they guide the younger generation. As young adults are beginning to think critically about self and world, mentors give them



crucial forms of recognition, support, and challenge. Whatever the challenge or situation, good mentors know that knowledge is truly a transforming activity.

Looking up the term mentoring in the dictionary, one will find that it means “trusted guide,” “provider of wise counsel,” and “confidant.” Throughout history mentors have emerged as advice givers. Long before formal schooling or workplace training came into existence, these individuals served as a primary source of knowledge. Mentors accepted the responsibilities and challenges of preparing their young protégés by sharing with them their expertise and practical knowledge gained through their own experiences (Dortch, 2000). Mentoring occurs through friendship, teaching, guiding, coaching and helping. A mentor extends support, in part, through consistent recognition and affirmation of every manifestation of a person’s potential. Mentors are supportive in a host of ways, including serving as advocates, guides to resources, sources of comfort, and sometimes sources of healing.

### Statement of the Problem

At the onset of this study, the researcher was acquainted with work done in the area of mentoring and tutoring, such as occurs in business, supervisory roles in teaching and education, and after-school tutoring programs. Little to no information was found in which the processes of mentoring take place within the school setting, during the school day hours. No such programs were discovered, where mentoring is offered as an elective course, in which students take part in mentoring and leadership as they earn class credit. During the researcher’s investigations, few programs were found dealing with

mentoring/tutoring (one-on-one) done in original context and setting during the school day. No studies were found in which middle school students take core classes and could self-select a mentoring program for which they could receive credit. The researcher's main objective for this study was to remain immersed within the school setting and view the mentoring program firsthand. The researcher inquired about curriculum for the program, components of the program, and student placement in this curriculum-based middle school mentoring program.

Through a detailed search of current literature, there was little to no evidence of research conducted in this area of mentoring in schools. Programs are in place in the business arena, religious circles, and realm of education where mentoring is used to lend the expertise of mentors to less experienced or new workers in a variety of situations. Educational programs including mentoring as part of the core curriculum, in which students can enroll and earn school credit, are new and innovative. Lack of data in this area can clearly mark the need for a study to be conducted concerning such a program. Perhaps inclusions of a curriculum-based mentoring program in schools today can help middle school students develop into effective leaders, guides, and exceptional helpmates working closely alongside younger students who may desperately need older students' support and guidance.

## Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and define components and structures of a curriculum-based mentoring program in a middle school setting. A second purpose of the study was to determine specific traits and characteristics of eighth grade mentors, which were reflected through their work in the mentoring program.

In this study, the researcher completed observations, conducted interviews, and arrived at conclusions and definitions to describe the structure of a mentoring program at the middle school level. This study focused on a paired grouping of 8<sup>th</sup> grade mentors, working alongside their younger counterparts. The researcher sought to identify traits and characteristics exhibited by the participating mentors. The methodologies used to collect data for this study are presented in Chapter III, and data results are presented in Chapter IV.

Through methodologies such as surveys, questionnaires, participant observations, and personal interviews this research study sought information about components and the structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. During the course of data collection, the researcher observed mentors exhibit respectful behaviors. The researcher also observed student mentors engage in conversation with teachers, in which they used a higher level of vocabulary and terminology. These students appeared bright, dedicated, motivated, and respectful.

## Importance of the Study

Accomplishments to be derived from this study might include future suggestions for developments of a public school curriculum to include peer mentoring as part of an entire curriculum package. Through the process of mentoring, young children who show a lack of guidance and leadership in their lives can benefit from working alongside a mentor. Middle school students can be afforded the opportunity to serve as role models for others while building character and leadership qualities within themselves.

## Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit?

Data were collected for this study through personal, individual interviews conducted on site, during the school day. Interviews were conducted at routine intervals, with each lasting approximately 25 minutes. Interviews were tape recorded for easier transcription. Teachers, administrators, and students were interviewed. Data were gathered through use of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and researcher observation. The researcher collected data during the mentoring process, and also spent time gathering information through other data collection sources. These other data collection sources included the compilation of memos, field-notes, and journals. The researcher spent time

in reflection and summarized ideas discovered in field notes, survey responses, and student interview answers. The researcher then created charts, tables, graphs, and other visual displays in order to organize and interpret the data. Through this method, the researcher sought common themes and identified several ideas using a color-coded, index card system. These data were then filed, studied, and discussed in Chapter IV and reflected upon in Chapter V.

### Qualitative Case Study Research

Case study research was the methodology and framework utilized in order to conduct this study on mentoring programs. Case study research is an explanation within what is described as a “bounded system” (Creswell, 1997). Case study research takes place within the original context and setting, is done over a long period of time, and uses multiple sources of data collection. Case study research can build a theory, include random or purposeful sampling, and include both quantitative and qualitative data. Case study research is categorized as descriptive research and its final product results in a “thick,” rich description of the case under study. The purpose of case study research is to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the individual, group, or event under study. There are no manipulations of behavior and variables are not easily identified. Case study research offers a positive, successful avenue for investigating complex situations with great potential for understanding the phenomenon. Case study plays a valuable role in adding to the existing knowledge base, especially in the field of education (Merriam, 1988).

Traditional mentoring within communities has shown evidence of success, yet for the past two decades there has been an increasing trend of bringing outside, older student and adult mentors into the schools (Hawkins & Stafford, 1998); (Goodman & Rylander, 1993). School-sponsored mentoring is one strategy that can be used to help young people develop self-esteem and cultivate leadership skills. Mentoring can build on students' strengths, talents, interests and goals. Over time mentoring can increase a young person's self-confidence and help the protégé in other relationships and activities. Mentors dance an intricate two-step, as they practice the art of supporting their younger counterparts and challenging both themselves and their charges more or less simultaneously. Mentoring becomes highly relevant within a school setting when younger students need the guidance, direction, and leadership which peer mentors can provide.

#### Definition of Terms

Curriculum - all courses of study, which are offered by an educational institution.

Inclusive - taking of everything into account, including everything, totally comprehensive.

Elementary - of, involving, or introducing of the basic or fundamental concepts.

Secondary - second in ranking, not primary, one step more advanced from the first.

Mentor - a wise and trusted counselor or teacher, advisor, wise man/ woman, mentor.

Pedagogy - the act or profession of teaching.

Pedagogue - teacher or mentor.

Student -one who attends a school.

Perception -a mental image, concept, awareness of specific or given elements.

Esteem - to set a high value on, high regard.

Care - a feeling of interest or concern.

Leadership - the office or position of a true leader.

Chapter I of this research study has provided an introduction and an overview of mentoring. Mentoring has been defined as the process of serving as a guide, leader, and confidant. The problem statement, purposes, and need for the study have also been presented, and methodologies by which the researcher collected data were introduced. The research questions were presented and a brief overview of case study research was discussed. Chapter 2 will present the background information which formed the basis of this research study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Overview

The purpose of this research study was to discover characteristics of a middle school mentoring program. Several types of mentoring programs are discussed in the chapter two literature review; however, none of these programs share the same program characteristics as the one presented in this particular research study. The researcher's mentoring study is unique, in that, it is a program which includes eighth grade students serving as mentors during their school day, and the mentoring course is offered as part of the entire school curriculum.

At the beginning of this study, the researcher was acquainted with work done in the area of mentoring in business, in the supervisory roles of teacher/administrator, and after school tutoring/mentoring programs. The mentoring programs presented in this research revealed the success mentoring programs have in these areas. Several of the programs presented here deal with mentoring focused on encouraging young people and helping them attain academic success. No such information was found available in which the process of mentoring takes place within the school setting, is offered as part of the core curriculum, and its participants receive academic credit for their service as mentors.



The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit?

The researcher's main objective for this study was to remain immersed within the school setting/mentoring program, to view the program firsthand, and to inquire about the guiding curriculum, student placement, course guidelines and assessment procedures. One of the purposes of this study was to discover what characteristics eighth graders exhibited as they participated in the mentoring program.

In chapter two of this study, related research is presented in three specific sections. This chapter begins with a presentation of studies related to adolescent development. This is a key issue for the current study being conducted, as the participating mentors are adolescents. In this portion of the chapter pertinent information is given to provide a framework for better understanding the development process of adolescents. The next section of chapter two presents general information on mentoring programs. These mentoring programs are effective in a variety of ways; however, the mentoring programs presented were not part of a school curriculum and carried out during the school day. Within the third section of this chapter, information on school-related mentoring programs is presented. This portion of research shows ways mentoring can be and is being used effectively in school-related areas. The mentoring program in

this study is unique, and was conducted because of its inclusion within the daily academic middle school curriculum.

The research design and methodology of case study research is presented in this chapter. Case study is a piece of descriptive research and was used in this study to explain, in detail, the picture of an effective mentoring program at the middle school level.

### Presentation of Related Studies and Theories in Adolescent Development

The following studies provide information in the area of adolescent development because they represent pertinent information that provides a foundational basis for the reader to understand processes of adolescent development. Because the subjects in this study are adolescents, it is important to understand their level of development. A key question to be asked is: “How do individual and contextual processes relate in constituting the process of developmental change in adolescence?” Baltes’ & Baltes’ (1990) model of selection, optimization, and compensation provides a useful framework for addressing this question.

#### Selection, Optimization & Compensation Model of Baltes & Baltes

The Selection, Optimization, and Compensation model (SOC) provides a theoretical framework for understanding regulated development across different domains of function for adolescents (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). The process of selection, optimization, and compensation reflects how system relations occur and remain embedded in adolescent development. This theory defines how a youth decides what “to

do,” or how he or she “does” what is selected, and how he or she decides either to maintain that procedure or identifies alternative routes to maintain healthy functioning in the face of either failure or loss. Selection, optimization, and compensation therefore denote processes of goal selection, goal pursuit, and goal maintenance alternation.

*Selection* gives direction to development by directing and focusing resources (means to attain goals) on certain domains of functioning and preventing diffusion of those resources. To achieve high levels in the selection domain, organization needs to take place. *Organization* denotes the process of acquiring, refining, coordinating, and applying goal-relevant means and resources to selected goals. In situations where youth seek to identify and pursue goals, optimizations are the acquisition and training of specific goal-related skills and persistence in goal-pursuit. *Optimization* describes a process addressing the growth aspects of development. Optimization is geared towards achieving higher levels of functioning. Throughout a life span, both growth and decline can characterize development. When loss or decline in goal pursuit threatens one’s level of functioning it becomes necessary to invest additional resources or apply other means geared towards attaining or maintaining goal-success (Staudinger, Marsiske & Baltes, 1995). When efforts or pursuits fail, adaptive responses may include a re-structuring of one’s goal hierarchy.

Focus in SOC’s approach to developmental systems in adolescence focuses research on individual development in interactions with social constraints and opportunities. The SOC model raises interest in the organization of goals and strategies within a developing adolescent and suggests that in mid-adolescence personal goals

may not be well prioritized. Theorists hypothesized that a tension may exist between optimization and compensation. Compensation occurs when it becomes necessary for the adolescent to invest in additional resources or alter plans in order to continue achieving success. *Compensation* presents a challenge for adolescents for three distinct reasons. First, within their egocentric cognitive structure, it is difficult for adolescents to recognize they have to compensate their “personal fable” or view of their own specific capacities for achievement. They believe whereas others may have to compensate, they do not (Elkind, 1967). Second, many adolescents may “burn the candle at both ends,” and display a disproportionate amount of risk behaviors (Dryfoos, 1990). Finally, their goal is to do it all, to engage in risk, yet not succumb to it, not to give up even one iota of their social life prerogatives. Within this particular context, compensation may be regarded as failure rather than a strategy for personal attainment.

By the time most adolescents evolve into adulthood, however, they have succeeded in learning to select, optimize, and compensate. The basic abilities to regulate development and manage life more effectively develop during one’s adolescence. Across adolescence the extent of higher level goals increases to include both long term and life goals (Montangero, 1996). Adolescents also acquire knowledge and develop conceptual understandings of social and psychological mechanisms used to attain goals, especially long range ones. Increased understanding of social norms facilitates developing strategies for goal-success. A further understanding of people and a growing ability to retrospectively explain development in life narratives also enhances these strategies.

Knowledge of the social and psychological world helps adolescents anticipate multiple consequences of actions. Goals now become better prioritized, leading to a more stable goal hierarchy. Most research and applications pertinent to the SOC model have been focused on development during adulthood. Research using the SOC model during adolescence, by-and-large remains to be conducted thus this study modestly explored these ideas in the development of leadership skills within middle school students.

Contemporary Developmental Theory of Adolescence by Lerner and Castellino.

Lerner's and Castellino's theory describes the development of young adolescents as a connection to environmental and social contextual factors (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). Adolescents' individual characteristics, such as their physiological status and developmental attributes regarding characteristics of cognition, personality and temperament are not disconnected from a behavioral and social context. Inner and outer worlds of an adolescent are fused and dynamically interactive. The same can be said of a parent- in fact, the parent-adolescent relationship. Each of these foci is part of a larger, enmeshed system of fused relations along multiple levels that compose the ecology of human life. Both parents and adolescents are embedded in a broad, social network and each person has reciprocal reactions within that network. This occurs because adolescents and parents are more than just people playing only a single role in life. The adolescent may also be a sibling, peer and student; the parent may also be a spouse, worker, or adult-child. All these network relations are embedded within a particular community, society and culture.

An effect of an adolescent on a particular feature of his or her context may function, in a sense, like a small pebble thrown into a quiet lake; it can prompt a larger ripple. Of course, the reverse of this possibility can also occur. Influences on the quality of the adolescent-parent relationship can occur in conjunction with community resources such as after school care, social programs available in the region, or cultural values regarding families and family situations. The nature of parent-adolescent relations is influenced by both normative and non-normative changes, in other words by “evolutionary” or “revolutionary” historical changes. This system of multiple, interconnected fused levels constitute a complete depiction of an integrated organization of one developmental systems theory: developmental contextualism.

#### Developmental Stage Theory of Piaget

Piaget’s work, as reported by Miller, in the area of developmental psychology brings us to the term *genetic epistemology*, referring to the study of developmental changes within the process of knowing and the organization of knowledge (Miller, 1999). Piaget’s research belonged to an approach style entitled structuralism. Structuralists are interested in the organizational properties of what they are studying. Piaget’s theories state a set of mental operations underlie a wide variety of thinking episodes. Structuralists are concerned with relationships between part and whole, and between an earlier and a latter state. According to Piaget, the nature of mental structures changes as the structures develop. Piaget claims cognitive development proceeds throughout a series of defined stages (Piaget, 1971).

The following characteristics bind together the underlying philosophy behind Jean Piaget's developmental stage theory. First, a stage is defined as a structured whole in a state of equilibrium. At the end of each major period of development, cognitive structures are in a state of balance, or equilibrium. Secondly, each stage derives from the previous stage, incorporates and transforms that stage, and prepares for the next stage. This notion is in direct contrast to Freud's theory of stages, in which a person overwhelmed with anxiety may regress to an earlier stage (Miller, 1999). Thirdly, stages follow an invariant sequence. These stages must proceed in a particular order and no stages can be skipped. Generally adolescents in the age range 11 to 15 fall into the Formal Operational stage, but the age of the child is less important than his or her developmental stage. Fourth, stages are universal. Because of Piaget's interest in how humans adapt psychologically to their environment, he focused on structures and concepts acquired by humans universally. His crucial claim is that the same order is found in all developing humans. Finally, each stage includes a coming-into-being. There is an initial period of preparation and a final period of achievement in each stage.

Usually children ages 11 to 15 fall into Piaget's stage entitled the Formal Operational Period. Formal operational thought resembles the kind of thinking often called the scientific method (Piaget, 1971). The problem-solving process, rather than the correct answer itself, is what is of particular interest. Adolescents in the formal operations stage can imagine all possible determinants, systematically vary factors one by one, observe results correctly, and draw appropriate conclusions. An ability to consider abstract ideas, the future, and various possibilities is evident in the adolescent's world.

They dream about their future and can imagine themselves in various occupational and social roles. They are concerned with the world of existing ideas. They are able to debate various moral and political issues. They can consider issues from a number of different perspectives and see how issues are inter-related. There is still a lingering egocentrism. They feel that the sheer force of their own logic will move mountains. By achieving formal operations, adolescents complete their cognitive structures. Various concrete logical systems combine to create a tightly organized system of thought. Thinking continues to develop throughout adulthood as formal operations are applied to more content areas and situations. Egocentrism continues to decline as people broaden their experiences in the world of work and social relationships.

#### Kohlberg's Moral Character Dimension

The following information on moral character provides the reader with a foundational basis for understanding moral character and the ways it may be attained in the development of adolescents. The theory of the Moral Character Dimension evolved from the writings of Greek philosophers Socrates and Aristotle and provides us with the foundational understandings of moral character (Kohlberg, 1969). Writers have focused on dispositions which cause individuals to make choices between right and wrong. Since that time many scholars have built upon the initial Greek philosophies and suggested developmental models for moral character.

Kohlberg's (1969) three-stage model provides useful insight into moral character development. Kohlberg's model does not specifically address spirituality; however, it does focus on "common good" at the highest level and parallels moral density in a



leader's spiritual journey. At the most basic level of Kohlberg's moral development model, leadership is concerned with the disposition of rewards and punishment. This level is more closely related to transactional leadership. Kohlberg's second level, conventional, ties leadership as it is concerned with social obligations and adherence to established norms. This level is more closely associated with transformational leadership.

The post-conventional, or third level, is the highest level of moral development. This level suggests that leadership should be guided by an internalized set of principles universally recognized as right or wrongs (Hughes, Ginette & Curphy, 1999). Leadership at this level places more value on internal principles than on external and social laws, and is most closely related to the concept of transcendental leadership. Ryrie (1984) contends that leaders with a highly developed sense of heart or moral character are likely to possess a unique set of values and virtues; that the essence of spiritual experience for leaders is evident when they identify with higher levels of values. These writers suggest a leader's capacity to make moral choices is related to their level of spiritual development. Moral character is argued to be the essence of spiritual experiences. We associate development along transactional, transformational, transcendental leadership hierarchy with the development of this dimension of spirituality. This leads us into proposition two-as leaders develop along the transactional, transformational, transcendental hierarchy continuum- the moral character dimension of spirituality-leadership becomes more refined and developed.

## Mentoring Programs

### Save The Children

The ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program, as part of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, represents many characteristics which may be identified in the researcher’s investigations for this study (Save The Children Organization: Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, 1988). This mentoring program was developed to address the needs of children who lacked a caring, guiding mentor/role model. This program focus continues to encourage young people to stay in school, pursue goals, reduce school drop-out rates, bring about a drop in youth crime rates, and offer support and help for youth defined as “at risk.” This mentoring program’s aim is very similar to that of many other programs, including the mentoring program on which this researcher’s study was conducted. This program, however, is very different from the current case study defined here, as ‘Save The Children’ is not currently conducted as part of a school curriculum included in middle school student’s school day activities.

The ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program has functioned for over 65 years and the program goals include encouraging students to stay in school, setting and achieving goals, and learning how to avoid unsafe activities. The following statistics are presented in order to show some of this mentoring program’s success.

Statistics from the ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program show students who regularly met with mentors were 46% less likely to begin using drugs and 27% less likely to use alcohol. These students who were mentored were 52% less likely to skip school and 33% less likely to be involved in gangs and violence. These statistics provide proof

and evidence that the ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program is successful in many different areas. Big Brothers’/Big Sisters’ ‘Save The Children’ Organization program goals continue to create a structure in which children, along with caring mentoring adults and peers, make commitments to work together and learn from each other. There are connections between the ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program and the researcher’s study being done here. Both programs serve to partner older youth, or adults, with a younger tutee, in situations where tutoring/mentoring serve to bring success for the younger student. Several components of ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program are very similar to program components of the researcher’s study on mentoring.

A major reason for the design and implementation of the ‘Save The Children’ mentoring program, was a decline of the family structure, a lack of caring individuals in the lives of young people, and missing positive role models for today’s youth and young people. This information can be related to the researcher’s current study presented in this paper. A major purpose of the researcher’s study was to discover traits and characteristics of participating middle school students in a peer mentoring program. Within this current study, eighth grade students serve as mentors during the course of their school day in an elective mentoring class. The mentoring program in this middle school is included within the existing curriculum, which makes this program unique.

#### Volunteers in Probation - VIP Program

Volunteers in Probation, known as VIP, is another mentoring program, developed in conjunction with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Organization of America (Roman, Moore, Jenkins, & Small, 2003). This very special mentoring program provides early

intervention for first time juvenile offenders by matching them with a big brother/big sister mentor with the VIP program funding provided by various law enforcement agencies and the Supreme Court. Volunteer mentors for the program may be teachers, coaches, or counselors. These mentors serve in guiding, leading, and working with the younger tutee to improve family and peer relationships. These mentors also help by guiding their young tutees in making more positive choices and staying out of trouble. This program is activated by referrals from Juvenile Court. The primary goal of the VIP program is to reduce the return rate of court-referred juveniles by half, from 32% to 16%. The current VIP program functioning in Phoenix, Arizona, has exceeded its program goals. Out of 117 children the agency has matched with mentors, only 4% have returned to court for second offenses. Thirty-nine percent of the youth participating in the VIP program reported improved relationships with parents, teachers, siblings, and peers. Over twenty-seven percent have avoided any further contact with any type of law enforcement. There are also reported significant drops in student alcohol abuse, marijuana abuse, and school truancy rates. A current VIP program currently running in Prescott, Arizona, consistently continues matching over 20-25 peer pairs per year.

#### International/Multicultural Mentoring Program

In this next section, a program targeting the plight of children in the Philippines will be discussed. Filipino Integrated Learning Through Mentoring, Inc. (Fili Mentoring, Inc. 1994) was formed with a focus towards developing motivation and encouragement for Filipino street children to stay in school. Mentoring schemes and activities are some of the components utilized within this program.

There is a growing awareness and concern for the plight of children all around the world today. Included within the ratification of the 1990 United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child, much pressure was exerted on governments and societies to secure and protect the rights of children around the world. In the Philippines statistics on human rights violation have been recorded and reach far beyond our normal understanding. Within a Philippine government agency, from the year 1991 – 1998 there were reported over 18,542 incidents of child abuse. The rights of children to a decent life and adequate education, provision of care and guidance, have not been given emphasis or due recognition (Fili-Mentoring, 1994).

A large number of Filipino children are caught in a vicious cycle of abuse, exploitation, cruelty, conflict, neglect, abandonment, delinquency, and parental negligence. The urgent need to restore and protect these basic children's rights cannot be ignored. Although several institutions and organizations have already begun to make initial contributions to provide these children with decent homes, educational opportunities, and proper formation and guidance, the dilemma still exists.

Realizing the need for continuous voluntary community service to address this problem, "Fili-Mentoring, Inc." (Filipino Integrated Learning Through Mentoring, Inc.) was conceptualized and established to motivate and encourage street children to pursue higher education (Fili-Mentoring, 1994). This is Fili-Mentoring's way of assisting these children by helping them to help themselves. In reply to the obvious needs of the young people, in the year 1994 "Fili-Mentoring, Inc." was formally introduced as a nonprofit and voluntary organization involved in propagating mentoring schemes and developing

supplemental learning particularly for the Filipino street children. “Fili- Mentoring, Inc.” was created with a vision of providing young children with adequate skills in enhancing their innate talents, at the same time monitor and guide their academic progress. “Fili-Mentoring, Inc.” also seeks to assist other institutions and government or non-government agencies involved with street children in setting up mentoring programs that could result in the establishment of a national forum for research on effective mentoring schemes and programs. This type of program would employ teachers, counselors, and other local volunteers to participate in the mentoring process. “Fili-Mentoring, Inc.” intends to strengthen and expand its membership base to encourage other government or non-government organizations to adopt and develop mentoring as a solution to the problems of street children. This program also serves as a vital link between education and the community. This program initiates and promotes a wide range of activities for children in all areas of education and skills development. Ultimately, the mentoring program projects are all geared towards the same common aim, which is transforming and molding young children to become successful, confident, growing in self-esteem, self-reliant, and independent adults. Participants in the program report they continue to experience many benefits brought about by the Fili-Mentoring program.

#### Mentoring Programs for Academic Success

Mentoring programs today are increasingly advocated as a means of promoting academic achievement in students who may be at risk. One such program continues to bring success for many students at Rainer Beach High School in Seattle, Washington. Community for Youth was founded in the year 1985, and volunteers launched the Steps

Ahead Mentor Program in 1990 in Seattle, Washington's Rainer Beach High School (Community for Youth, 1985). This program is a specialized, unique one-to-one program for high school students who are at risk of academic or social failure. Adult volunteers work with young people to improve their social skills and academic progress. These volunteers include parents, teachers, counselors and coaches. Mentors arrive and often remain with students in an after-school setting in order to tutor young people in academic areas. Volunteer mentors also counsel and work closely with ninth graders, assisting students as they make the transition into high school. This school term alone, mentors and volunteers will contribute over 20,000 hours.

Students within the program learn to choose their future, independent of current life circumstances. Participants are trained in the meaning and applications of commitment, problem solving, life choices and possibilities, as well as trust and team building. Students gain valuable practice in ways to handle mistakes more responsibly and move forward with their contracts and agreements. The Steps Ahead Mentoring program assists ninth grade students making successful transitions into high school, therefore reducing the chances they will drop out of high school. Attendance improves, grades improve, and behavior problems are less serious for the Steps Ahead students. Steps Ahead students have 10 per cent better classroom attendance and 25 per cent fewer failing grades. They also have 15 per cent fewer dropouts, expulsions and long term suspensions. School counselors, teachers and parents all report a remarkable improvement in attitude and cooperation from students. After the freshman year, students

may continue in the mentoring program to focus on community volunteerism, while building individual and team leadership skills.

### Mentoring for Leadership Development

The following section will take a look at mentoring in a different light and presents information that deals with the support of mentoring concepts as they connect to the development of leadership in the armed forces. The United States Marines are recognized around the world for its exceptional leadership development programs (Maggart & James, 1999). The current leadership “buzzword” in the United States Marine Corp is “mentoring.” Throughout the past few years, numerous Marine Corp Gazette articles have been written supporting the concept of mentoring (Broughton, 1999). Such articles recognize the need for comprehensive review and analysis of current mentoring programs, which will culminate in the development of a mentoring handbook for the United States Marines. This mentoring handbook will provide Marines with several leadership tools which can be used to establish formal and informal mentoring programs within their immediate command. The Marine Corp describes mentoring as a formal or informal program that links junior Marines with the experience of senior Marines. Currently, there is no Marine Corp order in place that mandates a formal mentoring program. Mentoring may well be the key, critical element in the development of strong, effective successful leaders. A mentor can greatly help a subordinate grow into an outstanding and strong leader. Mentoring is also self-perpetuating. Leaders who have been well mentored tend to become good mentors themselves. Bonds of trust and confidence built from a close mentoring relationship can last a lifetime. Mentoring



provides a unique opportunity for young leaders to have a permanent, personal link with experienced senior officers who have demonstrated competence, outstanding leadership and technical abilities.

#### Hawkins-Stafford School Improvement Act

The next section of this chapter will cover information about college-based mentoring programs and ways they may assist disadvantaged children. A study was conducted in which college students were paired with younger children in a mentoring situation. The following results show the outcome of this program which was aimed at assisting students who were defined as “at risk.”

In January 1989, the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. requested a study of college tutoring and mentoring programs in which college students were paired with younger students deemed to be “at risk.” A survey was requested and designed at the request of Congress in the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendment of 1988 (Hawkins & Stafford, 1988). Within this amendment, Congress expressed concern about the need to extend benefits in the area of remedial education for students who may not be receiving adequate services under existing Federal programs. College-based mentoring programs were seen as possible ways to assist disadvantaged children. This study was conducted to assess ways in which mentoring programs might be implemented to address the many needs of elementary and secondary students.

This program was developed, in particular, to target elementary and secondary students who may be “falling through the cracks.” The key focus remained on school

students that were economically disadvantaged. The study was organized to partner pairs of college students (graduate or undergraduate) with a pre-school, elementary, or secondary student. Throughout the duration of the program, college students worked with younger children to help them improve academic skills and motivate them to continue their education. The study included aspects that concentrated fully on mentoring. The program included not only direct academic focus, but was also designed to provide successful role models and help improve student self esteem. Possible activities included a recreational or friendship focus rather than a strictly academic one. The college students participated in the mentoring program as part of a course requirement, as volunteers, or as paid employees. The study was conducted in order to observe and evaluate characteristics of the mentoring program itself. Program goals and outcomes included improving basic skills, preventing dropouts, providing, and improving student self esteem. The study also sought to provide information on the effectiveness and outcomes of mentoring for both college students and elementary/secondary students.

Results from the study report the statistics on the percentage of the actual mentoring program in which tutoring took place within the elementary/secondary school setting was only 14%. The percentage of programs having large group tutoring sessions more frequently for the elementary/secondary sites was 23%, and for college and university, 51%. The percentage of university programs having required participation in the mentoring program in connection with elementary/secondary program was 81% and the success rate for students in elementary and secondary schools was 53%. The average percent of time spent on basic skills and academic remediation for elementary/secondary

students was 15%, and for college/university students was 27%. The percentage of time in which mentoring programs were found to be successful in meeting student needs in the small group setting for elementary/secondary students was 64%, and for college/university students was 84%. The percentage in which the mentoring program was found successful overall in meeting program goals and outcomes in the area of academics and basic skills for the elementary/secondary participants was 68%, and for college/university participants was 80%. The percentage in which the mentoring programs were found successful overall in meeting program goals and outcomes in the area of preventing dropouts among elementary/secondary students was 40% and for college and university students, was 54%.

This mentoring program reported a 64% success rate for elementary and secondary students who participated in the program in small group settings. This small group-mentoring program was 84% successful for participating college and university students. These statistical results give concrete evidence this mentoring program is highly successful in the small group setting. Overall success of the program, in the area of improving academics and basic skills, reported a 68% success rate for participants in elementary and secondary; and 80% for participating college students. These numbers strongly indicate the success and effectiveness of this mentoring program with goals aimed towards improvement in academics. With an overall 40% success rate for elementary and secondary students and 54% success rate for college students this program is now proven greatly successful at meeting the goals of preventing drop-outs, improving student skills, and meeting student needs.

## Effective After-School Tutoring Programs

Many after-school or extended school-day programs share many similar qualities and goals of other types of mentoring programs. These goals can be predominately academic in nature and may additionally contain recreational, cultural and social aspects as well. Attendance in after-school programs provides children with supervision during a time when many might be otherwise engaging in antisocial or destructive behaviors. When the school bell rings, many young children go home to empty houses, many others “hang out” on the streets until their parents return home. Children left unsupervised may fall prey to deviant behaviors harmful to them, to their schools, and to their communities (Brofenbrenner, 1986; Furby & Beyth-Marom, 1992; Galambos & Maggs, 1991; Steinberg, 1986).

These activity-based programs which incorporate mentoring themes can provide enriching experiences to broaden children’s perspectives and improve socialization. For children who face academic or behavioral obstacles to success in schools, after school programs can provide additional opportunity to eliminate these barriers and improve the education of the whole child. In addition to providing supervision, after school or extended school day programs are now seen as a means of improving academic achievement, providing opportunities for academic enrichment, and a way of providing social, cultural and recreational activities (Boyer, 1987; Burns, 1992; Campbell & Flaker, 1985; Fashola, 1998; Halpern, 1992).

### Success For All Reading Program

The 1995 Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis has developed an extended day tutoring program for use in public schools. The program was piloted in Memphis, Tennessee, with a goal of improving reading performances for students in grades 2-4 by mentoring children during after-school hours. The program focused on academics using materials adopted by “Success For All” (SFA) reading program (Slavin, Madden, Dolan & Wasik “et al” Ross, Smith, & Dianda, 1996). Students were selected for the study based on their need for additional instruction and those enrolled in the program attended tutoring sessions from one to four hours each week. The study was set up such that half of the students participated in the program and half did not. Students were randomly selected and matched on the basis of scores, attitudes, behavior, grade and age. The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program test scores administered at the end of the program became the summative evaluation. For the study, a treatment group consisted of students who attended the program 80% of the time. Two groups, treatment and control, were compared in various ways using pre-and posttest reading scores. Students in the third grade attending the tutoring program 80% of the time were more likely to do significantly better than their counterparts in the control group. The total increase in National Curve Equivalent (NCE) points for students in third grade was 8.5. Outcomes for the control group did not show as significant of gains as did the treatment group.

### The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program

The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, or VYP (Cardenas, Montecel, Supik, &

Harris, 1992) established in 1991, was designed to increase self-esteem and school success for at-risk middle and high school students. This program is an example of a cross-age tutoring program, which places middle and high school students in positions of responsibility as mentors of younger elementary students. The Intercultural Development Research Association of San Antonio, Texas, originally developed the program. Implementation of the program was funded by the Coca-Cola Company, and established in five school districts in the San Antonio area. The study took place from 1984-1988 and involved approximately 525 high school mentors and their 1,575 elementary tutees.

The over-arching goal of the program was to reduce the rates of dropouts for at risk students by improving their self-esteem and academic skills. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program attempted to develop students' sense of self-control, decrease student truancy, and reduce disciplinary referrals. Tutors worked with three elementary students at a time and the total time spent mentoring averaged about 4 hours a week.

Evaluation of the program compared 63 VYP tutors to 70 students in a control group. Students in four San Antonio schools were selected on the basis of age, ethnicity, reading test scores, and self-concept. Remaining students were placed into the control group. Nearly all students in both groups were Latino and limited in English proficiency. Two years after beginning the program, 12% of the control group had dropped out, but only 1% of the VYP students had dropped out. Reading scores were significantly higher for students in the VYP group. VYP students scored higher on tests measuring self-esteem and student attitudes toward school. The Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program has been widely replicated throughout the Southwest. In 1991, Coca-Cola provided

additional funding for similar programs in California, Florida, New York, and Texas.

Currently the mentoring program is being used in schools in Idaho, Oregon and Montana.

### Hands On Science Outreach

A mentoring program with a strong focus on academics is the Hands On Science Outreach program which is an after school program developed to encourage minority and low-income children in grades pre-K to 6 to have fun learning science. Hands On Science Outreach (HOSO) aims to improve problem-solving skills and to increase students' confidence in participating in science and science activities (Gallegos, 1995; Wilbur, 1995). Schools adopting HOSO are provided with an adult mentor, training activities, and materials young students are able to take home. Activities are divided into grade levels pre-K, K-1, 2-3, and 4-6 and are carried out in 8-week sessions each year.

Sierra Research Associates (Goodman and Rylander, 1993) evaluated Hands On Science Outreach in 1993. The evaluation investigated the effects of the science program on young peoples' attitudes and understanding of science based on their 8-week session participation. The evaluation consisted of 51 HOSO participants and 39 control group participants. Participants were not randomly selected, but were matched with control group students on the basis of grades. Assessment of the program included interviews and questions about scientific inquiry and student recollection of what they had learned during the 8-week session.

## Help One Student To Succeed (HOSTS)

Help One Student to Succeed (HOSTS) was a program created to develop a mentoring program for at-risk students (Gallegos & Wilbur, 1995). HOSTS provides one-to-one, usually after school, mentoring services for Title I students in elementary through high school who are performing below the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile. The program includes limited-English proficient students and those who have been retained or are in special education classes. HOSTS have training programs for volunteers from businesses and the community, as well as cross-age mentors, to serve as tutors.

Evaluation of the HOSTS program was done by measuring student success through test scores. The evaluation looked at gains in the National Curve Equivalent (NCE) scores, and the number of students who passed at grade level. In a cross-state study conducted with the HOSTS program, students in grades 1, 2, and 3 made substantial NCE gains (15%, 25%, and 25% respectively). Students in other grades who had participated in the HOSTS program also made significant NCE gains. In a California evaluation which involved second, third, and fifth graders who were 95% Latino, the HOSTS students had NCE gains of 11.4, 9.5 and 9.9 respectively. These NCE gains exceeded those of the school and the state. Since the implementation of HOSTS in Vancouver, Washington, in 1972, HOSTS has involved over 150,000 students and 100,000 mentors in more than 4,000 programs nationwide.



## “No Child Left Behind”

A new program in the field of education is now providing tutoring/mentoring in schools and often takes place in class during the school day. “No Child Left Behind” educational law includes individual tutoring and small group or one-on-one work with students in the areas of math and reading academic improvement. The “No Child Left Behind” educational law mandates many new strategies currently being utilized in the field of public education (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. PL 107-110). This program stipulates that teachers must hold one-on-one tutoring sessions or small group work daily to address academic concerns for young students who may be falling below certain standards academically. All schools nationwide are currently implementing this program, as part of a three-year plan, at the end of which test scores will be examined to establish the success of the program. Here we see a connection to the researcher’s current study in the area of mentoring. The mentoring program in the researcher’s study includes the processes of tutoring and mentoring which is done during the course of a school day. Because of mandates and requirements of “No Child Left Behind,” more one-on-one mentoring can and does take place in this same school-day setting.

## Establishment of Need for the Study

At the onset of this study, the researcher was acquainted with work done in the area of mentoring. Mentoring has been popularly represented in the areas of business, administrative roles, and after school programs. The researcher’s background is one having served over twenty years in the area of public education. In this capacity, she has

been familiar with a variety of mentoring programs such as YMCA tutoring programs, after school extended-day programs, and more recently, one-on-one tutoring based on the mandates of the “No Child Left Behind” educational law. While researching findings of previously conducted studies, little to no information was discovered in which mentoring programs are being carried out as part of a core inclusive, curriculum program held during the school day.

The likelihood of discovering meaningful, relevant information in this study is excellent. Due to the researcher’s extensive case study, descriptive research, data collection and analysis will clearly display meaningful, relevant information about this middle school mentoring program. This new information will add to the current knowledge base in the field of education. This newly discovered information in the area of mentoring can be a valuable curriculum tool by placing this type of program in middle schools. Such programs can offer middle school students academic credit, as students serve as positive role models for others.

### Methodology and Theoretical Framework

Case study research was the theoretical framework and methodology utilized to conduct this study. Case study research involves situating of the case in its original setting, and multiple sources of data are collected over a long period of time. Case study, often referred to as descriptive research, is an effective method when seeking answers and thorough explanations, when it is not feasible to manipulate behavior and variables are not easily defined. The purpose of case study research is to characterize something as it

is, the researcher simply “takes things as they are” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). Case study seeks holistic description and explanation. A case study remains focused throughout the duration of study, on a particular individual, group, or event. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the event, and what it may represent. Case study is defined as descriptive research, in that its final product is a rich, “thick” description of the event under study. Case study offers a positive, successful avenue for investigating complex settings with a great potential for understanding a phenomenon. Case study plays a valuable role in advancing the research knowledge base. Due to many of its strengths, case study is a successful and popular design for study in the field of education.

### Conclusion and Summary

Chapter II has presented information regarding adolescent development and mentoring programs. A look into adolescent development provides a foundation, as this study involved adolescents in a middle school setting. Much of the work in the field of adolescent development stresses the dynamics of contextual relationships such as growth, which can occur through the process of an adolescent serving as a mentor. During the course of this study, the growth and development of middle school students was observed as mentors participated in the contextual relationship of peer mentoring. The middle school students involved in this study fall within the Formal Operational period in Piaget’s developmental theory. Chapter II has given an overview of this theory.

Chapter II also provided information on a variety of mentoring programs and their goals. Mentoring was viewed in after school programs, the military, college-based

programs, and an international program in the Philippines. This current research study looked at a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level within the environment of the school setting. The researcher's primary focus in this case study was to identify and define components and structure of this mentoring program. A secondary focus for this research was to define specific traits and characteristics exhibited by the eighth grade students who participated in the mentoring program.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Overview

This research study was conducted to discover the characteristics of a middle school mentoring program. The primary purpose of the study was to look at a curriculum-based mentoring program to identify and define the program structure. The researcher has identified the program structure through investigations involving administrative buy-in and characteristics of parental involvement and support. Understanding and identifying this program structure was also done through the discovery of characteristics in teacher/staff involvement, as well as student involvement. An additional part of program structure identification was to define and present specific program characteristics. Characteristics presented included student selection, mentoring placement sites, activities of mentors and their tutees, and mentoring program requirements and evaluations. A second purpose of the study was to view ways the program structure and characteristics lead to emerging themes in the demonstrated qualities of the participating mentors.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit?

### Research Methodology and Approach

Case study research was the framework utilized to conduct this study. Case study is defined as an exploration of a “bounded system.” Case study research takes place over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources. Context of case study research involves situating the case in its original setting. Cronbach has stated that “all social scientists are emerged in case studies” in that, individuals take account from context and relevant forces inside and outside the unit being studied (Cronbach, 1982). Case study can build a theory, include purposeful sampling, and include both quantitative and qualitative data. Case study, as a part of descriptive research, is conducted when seeking answers and explanations, when it is not feasible to manipulate behavior, and variables are not easily identified. The purpose of this type of research is to characterize something as it is, there is no manipulation of treatments, and the researcher “takes things as they are” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). Case study research seeks holistic description and explanation in an attempt to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the group under study. Case study focuses on a particular event or situation making the case itself important for what it reveals about the event and what it

may represent. Case study is referred to as descriptive because the end product is a rich, “thick” description of the event under study and also relies on an interpretation of meanings of the descriptive data in terms of “norms, community values and deep seated attitudes and notions” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

### Uses of Case Study Research

Case study research may be appropriate when trying to eliminate erroneous conclusions, so that one is left with the most compelling interpretation of the data. When it is necessary to convey a holistic, dynamic and rich account of a program, case study research is the best approach. One would select case study research design due to the nature of the research questions. Case study offers a positive, successful avenue for investigating complex settings with great potential for understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988). It is the best avenue for answering questions. Case study plays a valuable role in advancing the research knowledge base. Due to many of its strengths, case study is a successful and popular design for study in the field of education.

### Defining a Research Problem In Case Study

Throughout case study research, there is no clearly defined set of procedures that a researcher must follow. There are guidelines, but researchers face the fact the correct way to proceed may not always be obvious. This lack of structure is the appealing nature of this type of research. This lack of structure allows the researcher to adapt to unsuspected events and make changes if necessary. Getting started in case study research involves

defining the research problem. For Dewey, “a problem is anything that perplexes and challenges the mind so that it makes belief uncertain” (Dewey, 1933, p.21). Case study research problems can arise from a number of sources such as personal experience, deduction from theory, related literature, current social situations or common sources of research problems. Deductions from theory can often lead to good research problems. In 1978, while studying male psychosocial development, Levinson discovered that having a mentor was a crucial factor in men’s realization of their adulthood dream and being successful at midlife (Levinson, 1978). The mentor was 15-18 years older and the mentoring relationship lasted for two to three years. It eventually became necessary for the protégé to end the relationship in order to be his own man. A case study of a successful midlife man could be conducted to test Levinson’s theory of mentoring.

In the identification of a research problem, one would move from general interest about a situation to a specific statement of the research problem. This paves the way for defining the case to be studied. In deciding upon a case to be studied, an issue is selected and a bounded system is chosen. The case is identified from this bounded system. The best example of a bounded system is one in which boundaries have an obviousness.

### Sample Selection and Data Collection

The most appropriate sampling strategy in case study research is the most common form, which is called purposeful sampling (Patton, 1980). Purposeful sampling is based on the idea the researcher’s purpose is to gain new insights; therefore the sample should be selected so that the researcher can discover the most information from data.



Participant observation is a major avenue for data collection in case study research. This data collection gives a firsthand account of the event being studied. When used in combination with other data collection, observation can present a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being studied.

Field-notes are an important aspect of data collection in case study research. The researcher should be able to shift from wide-angle lens to a narrow angle lens, focus on a single person or event. At this point it is wise for the researcher to maintain focus and record key words and remarks that stand out. The researcher should also mentally play back specific remarks while recording notes (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Actual contents of field notes may include verbal descriptions, direct quotations and observer's comments.

Interviews are also a source of data collection in case study research (Merriam, 1988). Several things should be included in effective interviews. The researcher should make clear his motives and purposes for the research study. The respondents should be protected through the use of pseudonyms. The value of interviews depends on the interviewer's knowing enough about the topic to ask meaningful questions. The most common way to record interview data is to tape-record the interview. Occasionally interviews are videotaped. Also researchers take notes during the actual interview process. Researchers may often write their own reflections immediately following the interview process. Verbatim transcription of recorded interview responses provides the data base for analysis.

Appendices can be found at the end of this research document. Appendix A represents Administrator and teacher interview protocol. Appendix B presents a list of questions for student interview protocol. Appendix C lists the student survey questions. Appendix D represents the parent information letter for students who participate in the study, and Appendix E represents the parent consent form. Appendix F is the student information letter for participating students, and Appendix G is the student assent form.

### Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis are simultaneous processes in case study research. Analysis begins with the first documentation read. Emerging insights direct the next moves in further data collection. This leads to data refinement and reformulation of questions, if necessary. Analysis of qualitative data is inductive. The large amounts of data are sifted through, combined, reduced, and finally, interpreted. While data analysis is on-going, the researcher must take care to narrow the study, so as not to end up with an overwhelming amount of data. At this juncture, the researcher should take care and remember to formulate analytical questions during data analysis. During data analysis the researcher should try out ideas and themes on subjects. A good strategy is for the researcher to begin exploring literature while in the field (Bogdan & Biklen, 2000).

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) suggest qualitative data analysis begin by the researcher's review of the study proposal. Review of the research study proposal reminds the researcher of the audience for which the study is being written. A complete compilation of the organized data should then be read thoroughly from beginning to end.

While reading, it is important to take notes of the most outstanding aspects of the data. These notes serve to create the beginning of organizing, integrating, and synthesizing the data in order to describe the phenomenon to others. These notes are developed into a system of classification in order to sort data more easily. The researcher seeks patterns or themes. Items of information can be placed on index cards according to categories representing emerging themes. Speculation is the key to developing theory in qualitative research. Speculation permits the researcher to move beyond the data and make assumptions as to what may happen in the future. Development of themes is what gives meaning and interpretation to the data.

### Validity and Reliability

Internal validity refers to how one's research findings match real events. Validity must be assessed in terms of interpreting the researcher's experience. Ratcliffe concludes there is no universal way of guaranteeing validity; there are only "notions of validity" (Ratcliffe, 1983). What is observed in qualitative research are people's constructions of reality, how they understand the world. Case study research attempts to capture and portray the world as it appears to the people in it. Judging the validity of a study rests upon the researcher's showing that he or she represented constructions and re-constructions that were discovered during data analysis.

Reliability refers to the extent a researcher's findings can be replicated. Reliability is based on the assumption there is one single reality. Lincoln and Guba

(1981) suggest thinking about “dependability” or “consistency” of results obtained from the data.

External validity is concerned with the extent to which data results can be applied to other situations. This issue centers on whether one can generalize from a single case. As referred in Lincoln & Guba (1981), a case study researcher can improve generalizability of findings by the following:

1. Provide thick, rich description so that others have a base of appropriate information
2. Describe how typical the event is when compared with others which are similar. This enables readers to draw their own comparisons.
3. Conduct a cross-case analysis.

#### Data Collection Procedures and Selections of Subjects

Procedures for this study began with the researcher filing an IRB and receiving clearance to conduct the study (See Appendix H). Initial phone contact was made with administrators in the school where the study was to be conducted. An appointment was made to make a first visit, in which the researcher obtained permission from the school administration to conduct the research study. During first visits into the school setting, permission slips and information letters were given to all subjects involved in the study. Informative letters were presented to familiarize students and parents with the researcher and allowed the researcher to explain the intent and purposes for conducting the study.

Permission forms were obtained for the researcher to gain proper consent from research subjects in the data collection through observations, surveys, and interviews.

### Population Description

The population for this study included all those in Saturn Middle School, which are involved in the mentoring program. Saturn Middle School was the pseudonym used for naming the middle school in this research study. This population included administrators, teachers, and students. Procedures for interacting with the population included an initial interview with the administrator, Mrs. Randolph, the principal at Saturn Middle School. These procedures also included researcher observations of the mentoring classroom teacher in her classroom setting. An initial interview was also done with Mrs. Spencer, the mentoring classroom instructor. The researcher also interviewed three other teachers at Saturn Middle School. These three teachers have daily interactions with students who are involved with the mentoring program. Eighth grade mentoring students were observed in their classroom setting as well as at their mentoring placement sites. All eighth grade students in the mentoring class were administered a survey and individual student interviews were conducted with a select group of students.

### Sample Description

The administrator interviewed was the school principal Mrs. Randolph. This was a purposeful sample selection. The principal was purposefully selected because she was the initial school contact, and it was through her, that permission was granted to conduct

the study. Purposeful sample selection was made of the mentoring classroom instructor, Mrs. Spencer. The majority of continued researcher contacts were arranged through Mrs. Spencer. Mrs. Spencer daily instructs the mentoring class, assigns work projects, as well as makes placement site arrangements and scheduling. A sixth grade mathematics lab teacher and a seventh grade history teacher were also selected as part of the teacher sample. These teachers were purposefully selected due to their daily contact and interaction with students in the mentoring program. These two teachers were not the only staff who had daily contact with mentors. This specific teacher sample was drawn due to mentoring classroom instructor's recommendation, based on their support and close work with students and the mentoring program. Not all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade instructors wished to sign up for mentor student placement within their classrooms.

Student sampling included twenty-two students enrolled in the mentoring program. This was a purposeful sample selection of students who were currently enrolled in the class. The researcher administered a survey to all twenty-two students enrolled in the mentoring class. From these twenty-two students, the researcher tracked, or shadowed two mentoring pairs consisting of one eighth grade male and his tutee, and one eighth grade female and her tutee. This also was a purposeful sample selection, as these students were referred by the classroom teacher as individuals who had been in the program for three years, confident in their techniques, and exhibited dependability and responsibility. These two mentoring pairs were observed both in the mentoring classroom setting and during mentoring sessions at placement sites with other students. The researcher also conducted individual interviews with the one eighth grade male

mentor, and the one eighth grade female mentor. The younger tutees in the mentoring program were observed only, no interviews were done.

### Instrumentation

The interview protocol for administrators and teachers is attached to this study as Appendix A. Appendix A shows the eight established questions used when the researcher conducted initial interviews with administrators and teachers. Prior to these interviews, the researcher informed administrators and teachers the purposes of the research study. The researcher also requested administrators and teachers to share some specifics about the middle school in general, and give an informative background about the mentoring program and its curriculum. Interview participants were instructed to share their knowledge and expertise in revealing unique characteristics of the mentoring program and its participants. Responses to these questions provided a framework of the mentoring program and some of its unique characteristics.

The researcher observed the mentoring classroom instructor to gain information in specific areas and to understand class scheduling procedures, course syllabus, and techniques for student mentoring placement. These observations provided pertinent information on the student level of expertise, course requirements and course assessment procedures. The questions listed in appendix A were also used to interview Mrs. Little, sixth grade mathematics lab instructor, and Mr. Harris, seventh grade history teacher. The researcher also used further open-ended questions related to traits, which may be demonstrated by the eighth grade mentoring students.

The student survey questions in Appendix C were administered to the twenty-two students enrolled in the mentoring program. Prior to administering the student survey, the researcher spoke to the entire mentoring class. In this address, the researcher introduced herself and described the purpose and focus for the research study. The students were instructed to share as much information as possible about student placement and activities of the mentoring program. The students were instructed to respond to survey questions about any specific ways participation in mentoring may bring benefits to them. Students were instructed to share any information about structure and outcomes of their participation in the mentoring program and the mentoring process. These survey questions focused on the discovery of students' overall view and perspective of the mentoring program.

The student interview protocol in Appendix B, was administered to one eighth grade male mentor and one eighth grade female mentor. Prior to conducting individual student interviews, the researcher met with the eighth graders and agreed to conduct the first interviews in the school cafeteria during the students' lunch period. The setting and atmosphere were conducive to creating a comfortable, relaxed environment for the interviews. This first interview lasted twenty minutes. These student interviews were continued and completed in the school office and library. The second and third interviews lasted thirty-five minutes each. Each individual student was instructed to share any and all information they wished relating to the mentoring program.

Appendix B consists of the seven established individual interview questions. During these interviews, the researcher tape-recorded student responses. To insure validity and



correctly report data, the researcher returned to the middle school for member checking where she met again with the students who were interviewed. This member checking was done in the mentoring classroom, before and after class time. Member checking occurred three times with each interviewee, with each visit lasting twenty-five minutes. The researcher also tracked and shadowed the same mentoring pair to observe the mentoring process at mentoring placement sites.

Further data were collected for this research study through the process of informal, unsolicited response. The researcher gathered these responses during informal visits and interacting with the students. These interactions took place during visits in the lunchroom, hallways, libraries, or near student lockers. Results from these informal visits will be reported in chapter IV.

Observations of the eighth grade male mentor and his tutee and the eighth grade female mentor and her tutee took place at several different mentoring placement sites. These observations were done to view firsthand what events take place during mentoring sessions. Observations were scheduled to take place in a sixth grade mathematics lab. The eighth grade student mentor was seated at his sixth grade tutee's desk as they worked one-on-one on math assignments. Other students were attending to assigned seatwork in math. The Math lab class is centrally located in Saturn Middle School and is a small classroom with ten to twelve students each lab session. Mentoring placement sites for mathematics lab last approximately thirty minutes. Several other observations at different placement sites were conducted, including in English and history classes. Most of these observations were done in the original classroom setting. This type of observation was

done in small groups, or a one-to-one setting. The classroom instructor was engaged in lesson instruction, or in a supervisory role, as students completed seatwork on an individual basis. These classroom observations of the mentoring process lasted 45-50 minutes per visit. The researcher also observed students in the mentoring program in hallways, office, library, and lunchroom.

### Analysis of Instruments

During the administrator and teacher interviews, the researcher hand recorded responses to questions in the form of notes and memos, to identify characteristics of the mentoring program. The researcher analyzed and interpreted the data recorded from administrator interviews to explain the mentoring program basic structure. The researcher sorted and organized discovered information to present a basic framework of the middle school and the mentoring program.

In analysis of the mentoring classroom teacher interviews, the researcher re-read, reflected, and made further notes regarding class placement, course syllabus, and course objectives. This facilitated a clear presentation of mentoring program guidelines, the curriculum, student placement and course requirements. Notes and memos were also made during interviews with other teachers on staff at Saturn Middle School. Results were analyzed and organized to report traits and characteristics seen in mentors who participate in the program.

The researcher conducted careful analysis of student survey responses. The researcher collected all survey questionnaires and student responses. The researcher used

poster board and labeled headings according to specific student response. The researcher read and sorted student responses into categories, placing similar responses in the same category. The researcher cut and pasted the sorted responses onto the poster board under the appropriate headings. This process allowed the researcher to precisely organize student responses to view the vast amounts of data. In viewing the data, the researcher compiled like data and worked them into emerging themes and ideas presented in Chapter IV.

Analysis of individual student interviews began with careful transcription of tape-recorded interview sessions. The researcher transcribed each interview session, writing down all student verbatim response. The researcher organized the responses by listing them on large index cards, matching each response with its corresponding question. This process allowed the researcher to systematically present the interview data in Chapter IV.

Analysis of observations began with the researcher re-reading and sorting through observation field notes. For each written page of notes, the researcher cut out the most pertinent pieces of information and laid them out in columns on a display board. This process continued until, over time the researcher had carefully sorted through all memos and notes and they were pasted on the display board. The researcher began the process of matching emerging traits and characteristics from observation data to all other collected data. These matches were lined up in columns. By spreading all pieces of data flat across the floor, the researcher narrowed and refined the data, by matching similar concepts and ideas from each data source. These matched concepts were color-coded by placing colored tabs as headings for each research source. The researcher re-read pieces of data

including interviews, surveys, and observations while color highlighting key concepts. The researcher carefully made sure these concepts were aligned in columns under the matching color tab headings. The researcher placed the newly organized and combined data onto a new display board.

### Limitations of the Study

IRB approval for this study allowed for researcher interview and tape-recorded transcriptions of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students only. This allows the study to present data from the older student mentors' perspective only. No information was gathered from the younger children who may have received many benefits from participation in the mentoring process. This research study did not include parent interviews. Parental support and involvement play a large part in the success of this mentoring program. The researcher conducted data collection during the student school day. Parents were not available for interview during this time frame. Case study research does not allow for valid generalizations to the population from which the sample was drawn. Case study is vulnerable to subjective bias.

### Summary

To begin Chapter III, an overview of the research study was presented. This study was conducted to discover the characteristics of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. This study identified and defined the mentoring program structure, as well as emerging themes relating to the demonstrated qualities of

participating mentors.

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring students exhibit?

Background information was presented on case study research, which is the methodology and framework utilized for this study. A description was given of the population and sample for the study. Instrumentation techniques and data collection were presented, as well as the process used to analyze all collected data.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Overview

This research study was conducted to discover the characteristics of a mentoring program at the middle school level. The primary purpose of the study was to look at a curriculum-based mentoring program to identify and define the program components and structure. A second purpose of this study was to determine ways the mentoring program structure and characteristics are reflected by eighth grade students. The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit?

#### Framework and Research Methodology

Case study research was the framework utilized to conduct this study. The purpose in this type of research is to characterize something as it is, the researcher simply “takes things as they are” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). Case study focuses on a

particular event or situation. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the event, and what it may represent. The case the researcher focused on during this study was a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. In this instance, case study offered a positive, successful avenue for investigations into the mentoring setting, and holds great potential for understanding the phenomenon of mentoring.

### Research Procedures

Research procedures for this study began with the researcher filing an IRB and receiving clearance to conduct the study. Following initial phone contact with the school administrator, the researcher began making visits into the middle school setting. During these early visits, an interview was conducted with the middle school principal, informative letters and permission forms were sent home to obtain parent and student consent to participate in the study. The population for this research study is defined as all those in Saturn Middle School, which are involved in the mentoring program. Procedures for this population included administrator and teacher interviews. Researcher observations were also conducted in the mentoring classroom setting, observing the mentors along with their instructor. The researcher also conducted interviews with two other instructors at Saturn Middle School. Eighth grade students were observed during the mentoring sessions and administered a student survey. Individual student interviews were also conducted on site at the campus.

## Data Findings

The Interview Protocol for Administrators and Teachers (see Appendix A) was the research data instrument utilized to collect information during initial teacher and administrator interviews. The interview protocol used with the administrators and teachers included eight established questions. The first interview question asked the school principal to share information about the school in general. The interview response was as follows, “Saturn Middle School was established in 1976. It moved in 1986 to its present location. The school has an enrollment of 950 students and a faculty of 75. We are a school that emphasizes and encourages reading with students, parents and teachers. We have an extremely supportive parent group and the importance of communication is emphasized in all areas.”

The second interview question asked for the principal to briefly describe the school-mentoring program. The interview response was as follows, “The mentoring program was established as an opportunity for students who are contemplating a career in teaching or a related field. Students offer their services to the staff.”

Interview question number three asked the principal to describe some unique characteristics of the mentoring program. The response was as follows, “Mentoring students are given placement sites to which they attend during the week. They are also given class assignments in which they plan developmentally appropriate activities for younger students. They prepare tips on baby-sitting, plan kids parties, etc. The students also visit elementary sites where they read and do other activities with younger students.”

The fourth interview question asked if the principal saw improvement



academically due to the students' participation in mentoring. The interview response was as follows, "The grade point average of students enrolled in the mentoring program is above average."

The fifth interview question asked if students who participated in the mentoring program show more positive attitudes towards school in general. The principal's response was, "Yes, definitely! They take pride in their work and thoroughly enjoy working with children."

The sixth interview question asked of the principal was, do the participating eighth graders develop leadership skills through participation in the mentoring program? The principal's response to the question was, "Yes, they are placed in leadership roles and step up to the responsibility that goes with the role of a mentor." When asked if young Day Care students enjoy time spent with their mentor, the principal replied, "Yes, very definitely. They recognize their mentors at lunch or when walking through the hallways and always call out to them."

The last interview question asked, does the mentoring program seem to help "at risk" students? The principal's response was, "These students are able to grasp a new understanding and appreciation of disabilities of others. They gain a new respect for those who are less fortunate."

The same set of interview questions was utilized to conduct the interview with Mrs. Spencer, the mentor classroom instructor. The following statements are a list of her responses to these same questions. Her response to question one was, "Saturn Middle School houses grades 6, 7, and 8. Currently the enrollment is over 900 students. Each

grade level has two teams of core teachers. Core subjects are English, math, science, social studies, reading/writing workshop, and Spanish. During the day students take five core classes and two electives. Students are predominantly white middle class students although there are African-American and Asian students as well. There are students from the highest economic level to the lowest economic level.”

When asked for further information about the mentoring program, Mrs. Spencer responded, “The Corporation for National Service began the mentoring elective class in 1996 as a Learn and Serve America Program, and was put into place in Saturn Middle School after grants were awarded. Students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades have the opportunity to enroll in this one semester elective class. There are several different volunteer opportunities available when enrolled in the mentoring program. All students enrolled in the program, regardless of their volunteer site choice, participate in activities designed to develop leadership, communication, interpersonal, and group skills. They also participate in a series of activities designed to build self-esteem, to learn what it means to help (and teach), and to build a vision of a professional future that might include teaching.”

Mrs. Spencer described some of the unique characteristics of the mentoring program as follows, “The mentoring program gives middle school students opportunities to use the skills learned in their language arts and math core classes by allowing the students to use these skills while doing peer tutoring with other middle school students and reading to elementary students.” Mrs. Spencer replied that no data has been kept as to how the mentoring program affects the students’ academic skills in other classes. Mrs.

Spencer also replied, “Through service to other students, the students enrolled in the mentoring program have the potential to build a group of dedicated and committed young people. The young people will be dedicated to building a better school environment for students with problems. The ultimate goal of this class is for the students to become successful teachers when they reach adulthood. Students enrolled in the program develop the social, personal, and intellectual skills necessary to make a positive contribution to our middle school. Students use classroom skills to solve real life problems. Students also maintain a positive attitude, confidence, and competence in classroom situations. Students become more motivated toward learning based upon the needs experienced while participating in teaching activities. Students demonstrate good verbal skills, mathematical skills, and appropriate behavior when working with Head Start children, special needs students or other middle school students.”

For the next interview question, Mrs. Spencer replied, “Students assume as much leadership as possible at their placement sites while staying within the guidelines set up by the classroom teacher. Students learn to work well with others in a classroom setting. They learn to try new experiences, to accept new challenges, and to explore new and unfamiliar roles. Students learn to be a positive role model for others in a school setting.”

For question number seven, Mrs. Spencer replied, “Because the mentoring students demonstrate caring to the Head Start students while enabling them to develop the ability to care for themselves, the Head Start students look forward to interacting with the middle school students. When the Head Start students see their mentoring partners in the cafeteria, or in the hallways, you will see them smile and wave at their mentors. When

the eighth grade mentors leave the Head Start portables at the end of class, hugs will often be exchanged.”

In response to the last interview question, Mrs. Spencer replied, “Any student may choose the mentoring program as an elective class. Therefore, we have students enrolled from the alternative school, from the severely emotionally disturbed classroom, from the moderate special education classes, and the mild special education classes. This class gives these students an opportunity to grow academically and socially and to be of service to others. The mentoring process helps “at risk” students within a classroom to have individual help, which is of great benefit to them both academically and socially.”

#### Structure and Components: Curriculum-Based Mentoring Program at the Middle School Level

##### The Middle School

At the time of this study, Saturn Middle School was one of the first public schools in its region to offer and include peer mentoring as part of the regular course of study. The middle school continues to experience great success in its existing peer mentoring program. Students are offered the mentoring course as an elective and can, if they so choose, enroll in the program all three years during sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

The middle school has a warm and friendly atmosphere; visitors are greeted in a large, comfortable office and are required to sign in upon arrival. The school is new, extremely clean, offers unusually wide hallways, hundreds of student lockers, and the beautiful Art and Home Economics classrooms are found just inside front doorways. In addition, school grounds include an on-site day care center located directly behind the

main building in portable classrooms. Students participating in the mentoring program often peer tutor these young day care children.

Enrollment at the middle school totals over 900 students. Students are required to take five core classes and two electives. Students represent a mixture of low, middle, and high social-economic status. The middle school houses a total of 310 eighth grade students, with 37 receiving free lunches and 11 receiving reduced lunch prices. Eighty percent of the students attending the middle school are Caucasian, although there are also African American and Asian students represented. The school has an extremely supportive and active parent group who recognizes the importance of school/community communication.

The parent group plays an active role in the middle school with parents offering assistance during library book fairs, serving as test monitors, and helping in a variety of musical presentations. These parent volunteers also offer their assistance in the Home Economics and Art programs. Parent volunteers help transport students in the mentoring program to elementary schools where eighth grade students read to younger elementary students. Parent volunteers also work closely with teachers as they plan, develop, and carry out a variety of service projects, which connect middle school students to their surrounding community.

## Development of Curriculum

Due to an interest in service learning projects, a former principal of the middle school organized a committee of teachers to write a grant to support student service learning projects. In 1996, a grant entitled *Learn and Serve America* was awarded to the school by the Americorp Corporation, based in Washington, D.C. The *Learn and Serve America* program provides educational funding for institutions such as public schools, Job Corp, and the Peace Corp. This educational funding allows schools to develop and implement service learning projects into its existing curriculum. Service learning projects offer students personal growth in areas such as citizenship skills, communication skills, career exploration, community understanding, and personal awareness and development.

After being awarded this grant, the teachers' committee began compiling information on a service learning component for the middle school curriculum. The entire process took just over one year. The current peer-mentoring program in this research study is the direct result of the work done by those teachers serving on the grant committee and the curriculum they developed.

Among the curriculum guides and resources used in developing the mentoring program ideals, the committee of teachers also received a resource entitled *Learning by Giving*. This resource guide was written and published by the National Youth Leadership Council and President Bush's Points of Light Foundation. This document was very useful in the development of the mentoring curriculum because the instructional framework of these materials emphasizes the creation of innovative and effective service learning activities for students in public schools. The foundational basis guiding the

*Learning by Giving* curriculum is an ethic of service, a characteristic of student learning that is gaining much popularity and attention throughout our nation's schools.

#### Guidelines for Application and Program Goals

The peer-mentoring program includes a well-defined set of program goals. These program goals were designed to help students develop leadership, communication, interpersonal, and group skills. The mentoring program goals seek to build students' self-perception and self-esteem. This program also offers eighth graders an opportunity to experience what it is like to teach and to lead. Program goals allow student mentors to assume as much leadership as possible while working within classroom guidelines at placement sites. Mentoring program goals are also designed to help students cultivate responsibility, helpfulness, respect, and growth as positive role models for others. Additional focus is on refining student organizational skills and providing students an opportunity to assist teachers and other school staff in the educational process.

During the initial implementation of the mentoring program, decisions were made as to which specific classrooms and teachers would have peer mentors working with their students. As the mentoring program became an active part of the entire middle school curriculum, class scheduling was designed which would allow eighth grade mentors to serve as tutors for the teachers who were interested in collaborating with the mentoring program. In addition, all sixth, seventh, or eighth grade teachers were eligible to request a student mentor to help tutor in their classrooms. The mentoring instructor designed a schedule, which places a mentor in each of the cooperating teachers' classrooms for one hour each day.

Prior to assigning these students' placement sites, students request their top three selections of classrooms in which they wished to serve as a mentor. As much as possible, the instructor assigned the mentors to their first selection. Eighth grade students report to the classroom, attendance is taken, and then mentors are sent out to individual placement sites. Students serve in their respective placement sites every day except Friday. Friday has been the designated day for students to remain in the mentoring course classroom for group discussion and written work. Placement sites remain the same for each student for a period of one month. The classroom instructor assigns new placement sites at the beginning of each month on a rotational basis. The application process for this mentoring program encourages all sixth, seventh, or eighth grade students to enroll in the class as an elective.

### Classroom Activities

This service-learning project is comprised of three steps: 1) preparation and planning, 2) action and implementation, and 3) evaluation. As part of the activities required within the mentoring program, students enthusiastically participate in all three of these phases of the service learning project. For preparation and planning, students can identify and analyze school and community issues and needs. Students may research topics, invite in guest speakers, or visit other school sites. Individuals and groups may then narrow selections and brainstorm ideas about which specific projects will be carried out in depth. In the action and implementation phase students implement the project in sequence. Students then modify the project and make adjustments as necessary. Finally, students complete the project and report on their efforts.



A necessary component of any service learning activity is evaluation. Some of the highest quality learning occurs during this period of reflection and analysis. Evaluation of projects begins when students record their observations of the project as it is being implemented. Students also analyze the effectiveness of planning and the process of implementation. Students share their impressions of the project and the way in which it was received. Students then examine their personal growth and celebrate their success with the rest of the students.

One of the activities in which students in mentoring may take part is working in a Head Start classroom located on the middle school campus. Additional opportunities are available for students to volunteer to help with breakfast, lunch, or stay after school for two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays to assist with tutoring programs. Another opportunity for student mentors is to visit other elementary schools and help tutor younger students in those schools. All students enrolled in the mentoring program visit at least one elementary school classroom each month. During these visits, student mentors read to elementary students. These stories may be original stories written by the mentors themselves or stories read from library books. During this assignment, mentors also have the opportunity to write and illustrate their own children's stories.

Another opportunity for student mentors is working with students with special needs, particularly those in self-contained settings. Mentoring students may read to students in these classes, listen to students read, help students study spelling words, help students complete workbooks and worksheet assignments, or play games with the

students. Peer tutoring is also a volunteer opportunity for mentoring other middle school students.

Any core teacher at the middle school may request a mentor for students experiencing difficulty in a core class. These peer tutors may assist in science labs, provide students with extra skills practice, or help students who have been absent to make up missed work. Mentors may also assist limited English speaking students in expanding their vocabularies and improving conversational and verbal skills. Student mentors also have opportunities to assist in the preparation of materials and displays for bulletin boards and other classroom materials.

Whether in the classroom or at other placement sites students have many opportunities to learn the necessary skills to successfully perform acts of service. Students are afforded opportunities to refine communication skills, take part in letter writing activities, develop collaboration skills, and learn to be effective in problem solving and role modeling. Students serve in roles of leadership, fine tune mathematical skills, take part in research, and take on additional student responsibilities.

The instructional phase of the mentoring course is conducted in a very professional manner. The classroom instructor acts as a facilitator and guide. She acknowledges the maturity of her students and treats them with respect. This instructional phase includes class session time every Friday in which the teacher guides and prompts students' discussion about their job as mentors. The classroom teacher provides written materials, learning logs, and written assignments for students to complete. All course materials are kept in a class notebook. The class time serves as an

important opportunity for reflection and evaluation of the mentoring process itself and is a key aspect of the course evaluation process.

### Topics for Discussion

During Friday class sessions, students spend the hour in small group discussion, self-evaluation, written assignments, writing in student individual journals, and completing weekly learning logs. Class discussion topics center around new experiences, comments, problems, and suggestions for improvement of the mentoring process. These discussions allow the students to learn from each other and work together to solve problems. Each Friday, learning logs are completed by the students in class and handed in. These learning logs give the students opportunities to write about their experiences with children. Each week different questions are posed based on the specific situation in which students have been serving. The questions vary in number from one to ten. Students respond in written format on the learning log. One such learning log question asked the students to share ways they can help younger counterparts improve their self-image. Another question asked for mentors to explain how they were helping the younger students build a future. Other questions require mentors to share the strengths they feel help them to serve as effective role models and leaders. These learning logs always conclude with opportunities for students to self-evaluate about this role as leader and mentor.

### Student Training for Mentoring

The peer-mentoring program on which this study was based includes a specific set of goals aimed at cultivating characteristics of leadership in middle school students. To help students become successful in their roles as leaders, these young people take part in student training sessions during the beginning of each school term. Student training begins with a course introduction and handouts, which include the specific program goals and guidelines. During initial class training sessions, the instructor clearly outlines rules and appropriate behaviors for participants. This set of rules states that the students be prompt to class and be responsible for keeping their work area clean. They are also held accountable for maintaining a class notebook complete with all class written work. Students are to show respect to all teachers and staff members and work within individual teacher guidelines at placement sites. These responsibilities may include helping younger students in academic areas, running errands, or making copies for teachers. Training sessions include a discussion of the variety of service projects available. The training sessions also inform the students of assignments and written work required for the course. For student mentors to experience a variety of situations they may encounter, role-playing is also done in the student training sessions.

### Course Requirements and Assessment

The mentoring course in this study functions as part of a middle school curriculum and is aimed at building leadership skills in middle school students. Specific course requirements are outlined and clearly explained to participating students. Course requirements include keeping an individual student folder complete with class notes,

learning logs, and any other written assignments. The mentoring course requirements state that each participating student must select and read at least one book to a younger student each semester. These stories may be read to students within the same middle school or completed during a visit to another elementary school in the area. Students participating in mentoring are also required to write and illustrate at least one children's short story. During visits to tutoring sites or elementary schools in the area, mentoring students often read the stories they have written and illustrated to the younger students.

Students in the mentoring course are required to attend class on a regular basis, and actively participate in class discussions and group demonstrations. These class discussions include a variety of current topics in the field of education. Demonstrations serve as avenues to actively engage mentors in role playing and sharing of their own ideas. Each mentoring student is required to maintain his/her log of activities completed at the individual placement sites. The students are also required to discuss and self-evaluate their own learning experiences at placement sites. The classroom instructor states this self-evaluation process is extremely important in creating effective mentors.

Students in the mentoring program are required to locate at least one education-related newspaper article and give an oral summary of the article to the class. This activity is aimed at keeping students aware of current events in the field of education. The mentoring students are required to actively participate in small cooperative learning groups and activities to cultivate effective communication and collaboration skills. Students are required to complete and hand in all written assignments on time. Students

involved in the mentoring program are expected at all times to set a good example and serve as a positive role model for others.

### Grading and Assessment

As a part of the mentoring program, the classroom instructor follows a set of guidelines and practices for assessment of student behaviors and learner outcomes. These assessment procedures award students grades and credit for successful completion of course standards and requirements. Grades are given for organization and completeness of individual student folders or notebooks. Daily attendance and class participation grades are given. A weekly grade is given to each student for written learning logs being completed and turned in on time. Each student receives a grade for the oral summary report of an education related newspaper article. Credit is given to students for their own reflection and analysis of their service as a leader and a mentor. Student grades are given for maintenance of notes from their own observations during tutoring and special projects. Students are also given credit for active participation in planning and carrying out special events.

### Description of Collected Research Data

#### Classroom Settings and Mentor Teacher Observations

One of the observations took place one morning in the school hallways between eighth grade mentor participant Paul and his sixth grade tutee. During this observation, the young sixth grade male was making inquiries of Paul about where he buys his clothes. I was to observe later, the same sixth grade boy appeared in school, wearing clothes very

similar to his mentor's. Paul later informed me that on one occasion this same young boy appeared in school wearing a pair of shoes very similar to his mentor's. Younger students are curious about where their mentors buy their clothes. They wish to make this discovery to duplicate the look in their own clothing. Young students actually search out specific stores, make purchases, and arrive at school wearing clothing much like the older mentor whom they obviously admire a great deal.

The researcher also observed this same pairing (Paul along with his sixth grade tutee) as the sixth grader attempted to purchase a bracelet Paul was wearing. The researcher also observed the young sixth grade student often seeking his mentor's advice before asking the classroom teacher. While observing and speaking with Paul, the researcher observed that this eighth grade mentor is keenly aware that younger students look to him as a role model. These observations make it clear younger students view their mentors as role models and wish to be like them. Through these observations the researcher concluded younger students view their older counterparts as leaders and role models.

During the course of observations done in the mentoring homeroom class, it was easy to see the qualities of care, helpfulness, and kindness that are cultivated within student mentors through actions and behaviors of their instructor. The researcher observed several occasions in which the classroom instructor took extra time to visit with student mentors who appeared to be having a "bad day." She was always caring and open to her students as they could easily approach her for assurance, encouragement, and support. The researcher found students treating each other respectfully, as she observed

helpful acts and kind words exchanged between teacher and student, as well as among students. From daily conversations with various school staff, as well as other students within the school, the researcher learned the kind and caring nature of student mentors was contagiously handed down from teacher to student. While observing within the mentoring homeroom class, the researcher had occasions to observe eighth grade mentors speak with words of kindness and respect for one another. The researcher also observed, as students would ask others, with care about loved ones and family members.

The researcher also observed several times during class hours, eighth graders' willingness, even requests to offer help, and any kind of assistance to their classroom teacher. The researcher observed eighth grade mentors as they planned special activities designed to be treats for young students in Day Care or Special Education programs. These parties and activities were not mandatory projects for mentors, but additional projects designed to show even more clearly the obvious care they feel for others. The researcher also observed one particular female mentor respond quickly and offer help to little Day Care students who needed help tying shoes or just a tissue for a runny nose. The researcher also observed one specific eighth grade mentor during lunch as he went to retrieve a lunch tray and milk for a young student in Day Care. The researcher was to later find out this was just something this eighth grader wanted to do to be helpful. The classroom mentoring teacher commented, "The entire school shows a much more caring atmosphere towards other students due to examples of care and kindness from the student mentors."

While observing mentors in a setting with various staff members, teachers, or the



principal, the students replied respectfully with “ma’am” or “sir.” All these examples offer evidence to the fact these young mentors feel that a sense of values and ethics is important as they mentor and lead. While visiting with these students about the mentoring process, they revealed the importance of ethics and respect for others in mentoring and good leadership. They also voiced the opinion that individuals whom they have admired as great leaders show these qualities of values and ethical principles.

Through early observations within the “I Teach” mentoring classroom, the researcher observed the classroom instructor showing respect for her students. Mrs. Spencer spoke with kindness and respectfully treated her eighth graders more like the adults they are quickly becoming. Everything including her words, body language, and classroom demeanor, consistently revealed respectful treatment of her eighth graders. In passing conversations with several students, it was revealed they hold a very high value on having respect for others; it is lived in the example of their teacher on a daily basis.

The researcher assumed much of the respect observed in the eighth grade mentors is taught by the respectful examples handed down from teacher to student. These mentors told me they enjoy being treated with respect, and they make great effort to pattern their own behaviors after those of the instructor and, by so doing, show respect to the young people they mentor and lead on a daily basis. The respectful demeanor was observed on several occasions as the researcher accompanied eighth grade mentors to their placement sites. The researcher observed student mentors approaching their placement sites, stop, then knock and wait for classroom instructors to appear at the door. While observing during mentoring sessions, the researcher observed eighth grade mentors treating their

young student counterparts with the same respect and kindness they have experienced from their own classroom instructor.

### Survey Data

Questions for the Student survey Appendix C, was the data collection instrument utilized to collect data from mentor class survey responses. One of the major purposes of this study was to discover certain traits and characteristics which eighth grade mentors exhibit who participate in the program. The sample of 22 students enrolled in the mentoring program were administered the survey. Participating students were instructed to share as much information as they wished for each answer. The researcher's purpose to discover traits participating mentors exhibit as they take part in the mentoring program was clearly explained.

We begin with the survey responses reported by the majority of student participants. Over 73% of student survey responses included the fact that serving as a role model and setting positive examples for others is a must in effective peer mentoring. A large number of student mentors also reported that a sense of personal responsibility and the ability to take charge of situations is a very important component of serving as a highly effective mentor. Student mentors who feel they are most effective and successful report they are career oriented and maintain focus on showing care and consideration for others. Also, the majority of student responses (65%) stated a higher developed sense of values and ethics is essential if one is to be effective in the mentoring process. Students also report that showing respect for self and respect for others is also necessary when serving as role models, mentors, and leaders for others. A fascinating fact, which evolved

while the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data results, is that many student responses in the surveys and interviews used the terms mentoring and leadership synonymously. Clearly, this mentoring program is quite successful in producing student leaders who handle responsibility extremely well.

Within the following portion of this chapter, the researcher will give each survey question asked of the population of 22 students participating in the Saturn Middle School mentoring program. Included with the survey questions will be most of the representative examples of students' survey responses.

Here are samples of the students' responses to the first survey question: How do you become eligible to participate in the mentoring program here at Saturn Middle School?

Response A: You just have to choose it as an elective. It helps if you really like to work with people.

Response B: You really don't have to be a straight A student, you just need to have mentoring as "your thing." It helps if you like children, and if you like helping teachers...and you have to be willing to work hard.

Response C: Almost anyone can get in the class, but you have to have all of your I Teach work in on time to go to placement sites.

Response D: I think you have to be a person who wants to help others and wants to be a role model for other kids.

Representative responses to survey question #2- What are some of the specific activities

you participate in as mentors?

Response A: Some of our activities are helping teachers get all their work done.

Sometimes we make our own children's books.

Response B: At placement sites, I help kids with their math. In our mentoring class, we fill in learning logs. It's about stuff we do in class and at our placement sites.

Response C: I work as a teacher assistant, and help teachers and kids in the Special Ed. Classes. I also get to go work at Head Start Class...you get to teach and help with little kids between the age 3 and 4.

Response D: One of the big things we do is teach children who are younger, not at our level, or peer tutoring its called. These are called our placement sites.

Response E: The I Teach students get to run errands for teachers or help out the kids in the Day Care Class.

Response F: We read newspaper articles on education. On special occasions we plan and host parties for kids in Head Start.

The most frequently given responses for survey question #3- Are there any ways participation in mentoring has improved your academic standing are as follows:

Response A: No, not really. I have always gotten good grades.

Response B: Yes, a little bit, because on tests now I feel more confident in myself to do

better.

Response C: Actually no, my grades haven't really improved...just because of the mentoring.

Response D: Yes, my grades were D's last year and this year they are A's and B's. I think it helps by showing you that you need to slow down and take your time.

Survey Question #4- What would you list as specific traits and characteristics of eighth grade mentors, had the following responses:

Response A: Well, for sure one would be...being helpful, liking to do things for other people. Also, a big one would be, setting a good example for other people.

Response B: I think responsibility would be one, and its important to work hard and be really, really organized.

Response C: I would have to say respect...respect is the most important one of all.

Response D: Well, the trait of care...caring about other people.

Response E: Setting that positive example for other people, one of the most important things we can do is, be a good role model.

Response F: I think you have to be a caring and helpful person.

Response G: This class is perfect for people who love helping others.

Response H: Ethics, being an ethical person, we do the right thing even when no one else is looking.

Response I: It's important to show others right ways to interact with each other, to be respectful. I can show them an example of doing the right thing, even if no one else is, and to teach them about differences. Differences are good.

Response J: Honesty, caring, sincerity, a sense of ethics, choosing and doing the right thing.

Response K: Caring, just being caring. Mentors are care givers by being really good friends to the little Day Care and special needs students.

Response L: Responsibility and leadership.

Response M: Being honest, responsible and dependable. Mentors need self-confidence, they need to be kind and caring. They should set good examples for other people. They should show respect for themselves and others.

The responses to survey question #5- How has the mentoring program helped you serve as a role model or leader, include the following:

Response A: It has really helped me develop leadership skills. When I'm with friends, I kinda lead the way. I would like to be a good leader.

Response B: It really has helped a lot...because in the Head Start class, Halie and I started the game of "cluck, duck, goose."

Response C: I'm not really a leader, so I don't believe my leadership skills are improving.

Response D: Yes! It helps me...like...when I'm at Head Start, I deal a lot with little kids. That even helps me at home with my little brother.

Response E: In my role modeling little kids look to me for encouragement, care, giving, and positive influence.

Response F: I am a role model. I do the right thing because I'm nice to them. I'm being an example and a role model by acting right when I'm around them"

Response G: I can be a role model by talking with students and teaching them, through setting good examples.

Response H: One big way of doing it (being a role model) is by being with younger kids and telling them right from wrong.

Response I: I try really hard at being a good role model. It feels good being in that role model position.

Response J: We get to have time in charge. We help teach. It's really fun, especially if you like kids a lot.

Response K: I see myself as a role model because I try to set good examples for other people.

The responses to survey question #6- Can you list some special benefits the mentoring program has brought to you, include the following:

Response A: It has made me feel more confident in myself.

Response B: It's made me realize I need to work a lot harder. It's a good thing to work hard.

Response C: Mentoring has helped me quite a bit develop my leadership skills. I have learned how important it is to follow the rules.

Response D: I now have more respect for teachers. I see all the things they have to do.

Response E: I am a better listener. I listen to people's ideas and hear what they have to say.

Students also revealed on their survey responses specific goals they had set for themselves as they led and mentored younger students. On more than one occasion, students responded they wished to do their very best work, be a role model for others, show helpfulness and kindness, and to present themselves respectfully to others.

### Student Interviews

The interview Protocol for Individual Student Interview (see Appendix B) was the data collection instrument used to collect this interview data. This section of data



presentation reports information gathered through individual student interviews. These interviews were conducted to discover what common traits eighth graders exhibit who participate in the mentoring program. Interviews the researcher conducted with eighth grade mentors revealed these students feel that being a positive role model is a common trait in their mentoring. When Ty was asked how his mentoring helped him serve as a role model, he replied “Well, I guess, probably some 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders may think of me as...kinda like a role model. The day care kids look at us like somebody they might want to be more like. They really like it when we come to their class. I am being a leader by being respectful to the other kids...which is being a role model, that’s definitely a leader.”

Interview Question #1: Can you please tell me more about the mentoring program here at Saturn Middle School?

Ty: “Any and all students here can take the mentoring class...it’s an elective class, just like band and art...that kinda stuff. A lot of what we do is learn how it would be to teach, you know, stuff that the teachers do. Our teacher really gets us involved in so many service projects, it’s fun.”

Melissa: “Well, I know it’s been here quite a few years (the mentoring program). Mrs. Spencer, the teacher, is really neat! She’s a great leader. She has us doing projects where we get to serve others, I like it.”

Interview Question #2: Could you explain some specific traits and characteristics of mentors in the program?

Ty: “Well, I think probably some of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders think of me as a role model. The Day Care kids look at us like somebody they might want to be like. I am a leader, I guess, you know by acting respectful to the other little kids. Our teacher is a super example of that...you know, respect. I would have to say that is the most important trait to remember about. I would say caring, yea its like...if you don't even care about your own work being done you shouldn't worry about trying to help someone else get their work done...it's responsibility too. One big part in mentoring is ethics. It's just helping out, always thinking about doing right, being able to help someone else get better at something. Yea, being caring and hard working too, but you gotta always try to choose right, and do right.”

Melissa: “I am more aware now...this class is building me into a really good role model. I feel good about myself for that! I think more now about other people...the fact they are looking up to me. I Teach makes you be hard working and positive. It puts you in places where you get to be leaders, like...when teachers let us be in charge of stuff some times, its cool. It's a good class for getting to be leaders, we get to do a lot of helping too. Yea...also, it's important to do the right thing, I would say that is the most important thing...is to show others making right choices. I guess its so much leadership, setting a good example...teaching little kids right from wrong. I know I have a pretty big impact

on the little kids. You also have to really care about other people. If you don't, you really shouldn't be in this class."

Interview Question #3: What are some of the activities mentors participate in?

Ty: "Well, of course we've talked a lot about our placement sites...like out at Day Care, and I do the Special Ed. Classes too. Anybody that's in the mentoring classes can volunteer to help out with the breakfast and lunch... like for the littler kids and stuff. One thing that everybody does is go to these other elementary schools and volunteer. We like...read to little kids and stuff. One of my favorite things is running copies and doing errands for teachers! In our class we fill out journals and learning logs."

Melissa: "Well, we do all kinds of stuff in the classroom. Our teacher Mrs. Spencer...she has us do reviews of news articles all about education and things. That's just one thing we do. We get to plan out parties and special events for kids in Day Care and Head Start. And like...when I go to the Special Ed. Classes, I usually listen to them read or help them out with their spelling words. Sometimes I watch, or help when they are finishing their workbooks and worksheets. There's lots of cool stuff."

Interview Question #4: Can you tell me some ways mentoring helps you serve as a role model?

Ty: "This class really makes you be hard working and positive, and puts us in positions to be role models...be somebody other kids can look up to. This class does a lot of cool things for leadership...it's good being a role model. I have also learned to be more

responsible. It's important for role models to be responsible. This class...and mentoring...shows me I can do right even when others aren't, it gives me the ability to stand up and do right, to lead by example...that's a good role model. Yea, I'm a role model. We (the mentors) have a big impact on the little kids. I just really love the big smiles they get on their faces when I walk in."

Melissa: "I am so much more aware now, that I really am a role model...it makes me think about the way I act, I know others are looking up to me...and now I see too, that I can be a role model other places besides just here in class and school...I like that. Yea, I feel like I really am a role model...I have some of those qualities I see in people I think of as role models...and it makes me feel good that somebody looks up to me."

#### Informal Unsolicited Student Responses

The researcher also gathered information about the mentoring program from informal unsolicited student responses. The researcher collected various forms of data through informal conversation with students inside and out of the classroom setting. Taylor offered this statement, "Playing with the 4-year olds, helping them on the swing-sets...and on the playground...it's one way I can show I care and want to help." Taylor went on to say, "I am a care giver because I am kind and patient with the little 4-year olds...and especially the Special Education students...they love having us big kids around to play with, that's what they really want...not things." Brent offered this statement, "I can show I care...sometimes, I go and get a lunch tray and milk...just to help the little kids out...I know I don't have to...I just want to...I like doing it. I can show I care...I always try to give the little kids extra time and attention." Alex stated he

often helps hang up the little kids' artwork and paintings for them in class. Anthony shows he cares by giving his younger tutees extra time and attention. He tries to be a special friend and help with whatever they say they need.

During informal conversations with students Tiffany offered this statement, "I have opportunities to do right, make positive choices, and especially to do the right thing even when others aren't looking." Kathryn offered this comment, "I can be an effective mentor and leader by setting good examples for others...by being with others and showing them right from wrong. I realize I am having a big impact on kids' lives...I think so much more now about making right choices, I know others are watching me...looking up to me."

During further informal conversations with Anthony, this statement was made, "Working and teaching little kids... I realize I'm a leader, and it's important to show respect to others." Ty offered the following comment, "Mentoring, and being a leader has taught me understanding, especially for young people, and how important it is to respect them, and to respect yourself." Kathryn made the following statement, "being a mentor and leader, is to be a person who has respect for others...its really important."

While speaking with Ty about his mentoring, several very special comments were made. During our informal visit, Ty brought it to my attention that one eighth grade student mentor this semester happened to be a young lady from the special education program who, herself, had been tutored by students in the mentoring program while she was a sixth and seventh grader. I was especially interested in this comment, and asked Ty if he would share a little more with me. He commented how the mentoring program had

been a wonderful source of developing self- confidence and growth for this young lady this year. Ty also told me it was wonderful to see how the student mentors in the program show such kindness and respect to each other and how important this had been for this young lady.

An interesting conversation took place one afternoon between the researcher and Dillon. Dillon offered the following statements, “Yea, I know how much of a role model I can be. This one little kid saw me at the zoo, and another day he saw me out in my driveway at home. When he came back to school, all he did was talk about it, how he saw me over the weekend. That really made me think. He kinda looks up to me, like a role model.”

The researcher also gathered other pieces of data through informal conversations with teachers and staff. The course instructor, Mrs. Spencer, revealed: “they (eighth grade mentoring students) role model by accepting responsibility so well. My mentoring students learn to be really wonderful positive examples for others. When the little kids see them in the hallways, you can see them smile and wave to each other... sometimes hugs are exchanged.” Mrs. Everett, an eighth grade teacher, commented, “I ask specifically for assistance from students in the mentoring program. They are great role models and leaders. They are wonderful examples for my students to be around.” The Saturn Middle School principal stated, “mentoring students are placed in leadership roles and step up to the challenge of being a role model.”

In more informal conversations with students, the researcher asked for more information about traits and characteristics they demonstrate throughout the mentoring

program. Ty replied, “Well...I have a big impact on these kids- they really love it when we come in the room. I think I’m a care giver by helping out on the playground and in the classrooms. I show I am a care giver by helping them learn things like... shapes and numbers...learn how to count or tie their shoes.” Noel stated, “The little kids always smile and wave at me...I know their names and can call them. I think they know how much I care. I think I’m one of those people...mentors and leaders, they’re people who care and are always helpful, no matter what the situation.”

During the researcher interview with Ty, he told me he places a great deal of importance on being respectful. One of his statements was as follows, “you’ve gotta be respectful...teach them about differences, differences and respecting ‘em is important.” He also stated his teacher lives wonderful examples of respect with her students every day. Ty feels it is especially important to give respect to the students he mentors and comments that part of this spills over in showing little ones ways they can learn to be respectful with each other in class time or game time. During one conversation with Ty, the researcher asked him what he thought was the most important characteristic of a leader/mentor? Ty’s responded, “I would have to say respect, yea... respect, is like, really big. If you can’t have respect for them (person you are mentoring) I doubt they will learn to have respect for you.” Anthony replied, “Working and mentoring the little kids... makes me really realize I’m a leader. It’s always important to show them respect... and to have respect for myself.” Mrs. Everett’s interview produced this comment, “a lot of the reasons I request working with Austin from ‘I Teach’...he always shows respect and empathy for students and all the teachers.” While responding to an interview question

which asked respondents who they look to as leaders, one such reply was, “our teachers...our teachers are because they set really good examples...they stay positive and they give us respect...yea, respect is really important in that.”

The purpose of this study was to identify and define the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. In seeking answers to research questions the data collected includes researcher observations, survey responses and student interviews.

Data for this study was collected over a four-month period within the contextual setting of a middle school. The researcher, throughout the duration of the study, remained within the bounded system of the middle school mentoring program. The researcher collected data within the classroom, as well as alongside eighth-grade students as they served as mentors and leaders.

### Data Results

The data reported in Chapter IV has presented data, which has identified and defined the structure and components of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. Data was presented seeking to answer the guiding research question. Data results were collected in the form of researcher observations, interviews, and surveys.

Mentoring students’ own words reveal their conscious effort to choose right from wrong in order to set positive examples for young students they mentor and lead. Leadership and role modeling are manifested in this program as teachers and other staff members place student mentors in positions of guidance and leadership for other, younger



students. These mentors believe in their leadership abilities. Mentors report having confidence in themselves, as they take charge of various situations in the classroom and the school.

This research study was conducted to discover the structure and components of a peer-mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose of the study was to discover what traits and characteristics participating eighth grade mentors exhibit. Chapter IV reported data in three specific sections. In the opening portions of this chapter, a profile of the middle school and its existing mentoring curriculum was given. This profile included how students enroll in the mentoring program and how they are trained to participate in leadership and mentoring. Mentoring program guidelines, goals and expectations were also listed.

Within the second section of chapter IV, the researcher provided data supporting the original guiding research questions. This study was conducted in a suburban middle school setting, located in the central portion of the United States. The researcher remained within the context of the school setting for a time period of four months as she collected data about leadership and mentoring.

In Chapter V, the researcher will analyze and interpret data findings from Chapter IV. This analysis will either support or refute various studies reported in the Chapter II review of literature.

During these interpretations, two questions began to be answered:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What common traits and characteristics do the eighth grade mentoring students exhibit?

The researcher will seek to report the foundational essence of student responses about mentoring and will focus on the most significant statements and theories, and finally on ways this work may direct further studies in the field.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Brief Overview of the Study

The term mentor is grounded in Homer's *Odyssey* and laden with a tradition of guiding care and wisdom. Recorded writings of mentoring date as far back as the Renaissance period, and have shown mentoring as a commonly accepted method of educating young people. "Mentoring," from the word in Greek meaning "enduring," is defined as a sustained relationship between a youth and adult or older peer. Mentor, in the dictionary, means "trusted guide," "provider of wise counsel," and "confidant."

#### Statement of the Problem

Through a search of current literature, several examples of mentoring programs were found and presented in settings other than school-curriculum based. Many instances were mentioned of mentors being useful in the workplace and business arena; however, little to no information was found in which the process of mentoring takes place during the day within the school setting. No programs were discovered in which mentoring is offered as an elective course with participating students take part in active role modeling and leadership as they earn class credit. Through a search of current literature, there was little to no evidence of research conducted in the area of mentoring within the standard

school curriculum. Lack of data in this area clearly marks the need for a study to be conducted about such a program.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and define the structure and components of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose was to define the characteristics and traits the middle school mentors who participate in the program exhibit.

### Importance of the Study

Accomplishments derived from this study include the development of a public school curriculum package to include peer mentoring as an avenue for building leadership skills in participating mentoring students and the ability to provide positive role models for those being mentored. Middle school students can be offered opportunities to serve in leadership positions and earn school credit as they guide and tutor younger peers.

### Methodology and Research Framework

Case study research was the methodology utilized in order to conduct this study on mentoring programs. Case study builds theory, includes random or purposeful sampling, and includes both quantitative and qualitative data. Case study offers a positive, successful avenue for investigating complex situations with great potential for understanding phenomenon. Case study plays a valuable role in adding to the existing knowledge base, especially in the field of education.

## Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?
2. What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participant's exhibit?

## Brief Summary from Chapter II

Chapter II began with an overview of the existing literature, in which the purpose of the study was presented. This purpose is connected to work found currently in the field, shows the reader what was discovered, and presents clear reasoning and needs for the study to be conducted.

## Theories on Adolescent Development

This portion of chapter two began with work entitled the Selection, Optimization, and Compensation model of Bates and Bates (Staudinger, Mariskse & Baltes, 1995). This theory provides the reader a theoretical framework for understanding the regulated development across different domains of function for adolescents. Also in this section of literature, works of Lerner & Castillo, Contemporary Developmental Theory of Adolescence, were presented (Montagero, 1996). This theory describes the development of young adolescents as a connection to environmental and social contextual factors. The developmental stage theory of Piaget was also presented. Piaget's theory states adolescent development is a set of mental operations, which underlie a wide variety of

thinking and developmental episodes. Piaget claims cognitive development proceeds throughout a series of defined and structured stages (Miller, 1999). The Moral Character Dimension of Kohlberg was presented next. Kohlberg's theory is a 3-stage model which provides readers insight into aspects of moral character development in adolescents (Miller, 1999).

### Mentoring Programs

The 'Save The Children' organization, a facet of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America is an example of an outstanding mentoring program, which continues to have success throughout the world. This program has over 65 years of experience and was developed to address the needs of individuals lacking a caring, guiding individual in their lives. This program encourages young people to stay in school, works to reduce high rates of student drop-outs, works to lower high crime rates among our nation's youth, and works to meet the needs of students defined as "at risk." Program goals remain to create a structure in which children along with adults or older peers make commitments to work and learn together.

Volunteers in Probation (VIP), a collaborative mentoring program integrated with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, is a mentoring program which provides early intervention for first time juvenile offenders, matching them with a big brother or big sister mentor. This program is funded by various law enforcement agencies and the Supreme Court. The program is activated by referrals through the juvenile courts system. The primary goal of VIP is to reduce the return rate of court referred juveniles in half, from 32% to 16%. A VIP program in Phoenix, Arizona, has exceeded the program goals.

From 117 children the agency has matched with mentors only 4% have returned to court for second offenses. Thirty-nine percent of youth participating in the program, reported improved relationships with parents, teachers, siblings, and peers. Twenty-seven percent avoided any further contact with law enforcement. Drops in alcohol abuse, marijuana abuse, and school truancy were also reported. The VIP program running in Prescott, Arizona, consistently matches 20-25 mentoring pair each year.

Fili-Mentoring, a multicultural mentoring program in the Philippines was conceptualized and established to motivate and encourage Philippino street children to stay in school and pursue an education. This program was established with a vision of providing young children with adequate skills in enhancing their innate talents, and at the same time, monitor and guide their academic progress.

Community for Youth is an academically focused mentoring program achieving great success with young students involved in the program. Community for Youth is a specialized, unique one-on-one program for high school students who are at risk of academic or social failure. In this setting, adult volunteers work with young people to improve their social skills and academic progress.

The United States Army is recognized around the world for its exceptional reputation in developing leadership skills. The current leadership “buzzword” for the U.S. Military, is *mentoring*. Throughout the past years, several articles have been written and published supporting the outstanding positive results in leadership training that have come about through its mentoring program. Such articles have shed light on the need for a review and analysis of current mentoring programs, which will now culminate in the

development of a mentoring handbook for the United States Army, and the United States Marines. Mentoring will be the key, critical element in the further development of strong, effective and successful leaders.

### Model Programs

#### Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendment

In January, 1989, the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. requested a study of college tutoring and mentoring programs in which college students were paired with younger students deemed as “at risk.” Within the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendment, Congress expressed concern about the need to extend benefits in the area of remedial education for students who may not be receiving adequate services under existing Federal programs. College-based mentoring programs were seen as possible ways to assist disadvantaged children. This study was conducted to assess ways in which mentoring programs might be implemented to address the many needs of elementary and secondary students.

Results of this college tutoring and mentoring program revealed that the program was successful 64% of the time in meeting student needs in a small group setting, for elementary and secondary students. This same program was proven successful 84% of the time, in small group settings for participating college students. The percentage of time in which the mentoring program was found successful overall in meeting program goals and outcomes in the area of academics, for elementary and secondary students, was 68%. The same success was reported in this area for college students 80% of the time.



This tutoring and mentoring program reported 40% success rate for meeting overall program goals of preventing dropouts in elementary and secondary students. The program reported 54% success rate in preventing dropouts in the participating college students.

#### After School/Extended Day Programs

The 1995 Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis has developed an extended day tutoring program for use in public schools. The program was piloted in Memphis, Tennessee, with a goal of improving reading performances for students in grades 2-4 by mentoring children during after-school hours. This program focused on academics using materials and curriculum adopted by “Success for All” SFA reading program ( Slavin, Madden, Dolan, and Wasik, “et al” Ross, Smith, & Dianda 1996).

The Coca Cola Valued Youth Program, established in 1991, was designed to increase self-esteem and school success for at risk middle and high school students. This program is an example of a cross-age tutoring program, which places middle and high school students in positions of responsibility as mentors of younger elementary students. Implementation of programs is funded by the Coca Cola Company, and implemented in five school districts in the San Antonio, Texas area. The study took place during 1984-1988 and involved approximately 525 high school mentors, and 1,575 elementary tutees.

Hands on Science Outreach Program (HOSO) is a mentoring program with a focus on academics. This after-school program was developed to encourage minority and low-income children in grades pre K to 6 to have fun learning science and focus on

academics. HOSO aims to improve problem-solving skills and to increase students' confidence in participating in Science and Science activities.

### No Child Left Behind

The recently implemented educational law, No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. PL 107-110) mandates many new strategies currently being utilized in today's field of public education. This program stipulates that teachers must hold one-on-one tutoring sessions, or small group work sessions on a daily basis when students fail to perform at grade level or who may be falling below certain academic standards. Many schools who are currently implementing this program have shown great gains in the areas of reading and math, as reported from data regularly collected through Benchmark testing. All public schools must now implement a tutoring program as part of the *No Child Left Behind* focus in educational reform.

The above information has given the reader a brief overview of the research presented in chapter two. This literature review presents a cross-section of information on topics of adolescent development and successful mentoring programs.

### Discussion of the Research Questions

Through methodologies of case study research, as outline previously in chapter three, and the data collected and reported, it is the opinion of the researcher that the research questions for this study have been successfully answered. In the following paragraphs, data will be presented and briefly analyzed in answer to research question

one: What are the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level?

### Mentoring Program Structure and Components

Saturn Middle School began the mentoring elective program as a *Learn and Serve America* program under financial support of grants that were awarded by the Corporation for National Service Learning in 1996. Incorporation of service learning and mentoring was priority for staff and teachers at Saturn Middle School and this desire led them to write a grant, which was awarded for implementation of the current mentoring program. The service learning learning/mentoring program included in the existing curriculum, offers students opportunities for growth in citizenship skills, career exploration and community involvement. The Saturn Middle School peer mentoring program is offered during the course of the school day, as an elective, and students earn class credit for participating in the mentoring process. This is an important aspect, which sets this program apart from other work done in the field of mentoring.

All students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades have the opportunity to enroll in this one semester elective class. All students enrolled in the program, regardless of their volunteer site choice, participate in activities designed to develop leadership, communication, and group-dynamics skills. They participate in a series of activities designed to build self-esteem, to learn what it means to help (and teach), and to build a vision of a professional future that might include teaching. The peer mentoring program provides young people with opportunities to use the skills learned in language arts and math core classes when peer tutoring other middle school students or reading to

elementary students. Core subject integration is a popular teaching strategy for many middle school educators. This aspect of being able to integrate subject content area offers avenues for participating students to see the value of integrating their own subject knowledge.

While participating in peer mentoring, and through service to other students, young people in the mentoring program have the potential to become dedicated and committed to the calling of serving others. Students enrolled in the peer-mentoring develop the social, personal, and intellectual skills necessary to make positive contributions not only to the middle school, but also to the community in which they live. Students become more motivated towards learning based upon their experiences of working with others while participating in teaching activities.

### Curriculum

After being awarded the grant, a committee of teachers in Saturn Middle School began writing and compiling information on a service learning component for the middle school peer-mentoring program to be included within the curriculum. Among curriculum guides and resources for the program, Learning by Giving served as the instructional guide and framework for development of the program. This resource is written and published by National Youth Leadership Council and President Bush's Points of Light Foundation. This instructional framework emphasizes the creation of innovative and effective service learning activities for students in public schools. The foundational basis guiding the Learning by Giving curriculum is an ethic of service, a characteristic of student learning that is gaining popularity and attention throughout our nation's schools.

## Guidelines for Application and Program Goals

Saturn Middle School's Peer Mentoring Program includes a well-defined set of program goals. This program's structure, design, and implementation has been monitored and carried out by an outstanding group of dedicated individuals and educators. Teachers and staff have devoted many hours of time and efforts, ensuring the service learning/mentoring program offer student participants quality opportunities. Program goals include helping students develop leadership, communication, group dynamics and interpersonal skills. These goals encourage student participants to act and serve in positions of leadership as much as possible while staying within program and school guidelines. The mentoring program goals are designed to help students cultivate responsibility, helpfulness, respect, and growth as positive role models for others. There is an additional focus on refining student organizational skills and providing students an opportunity to assist teachers and other school staff.

As the peer mentoring program became an active part of the entire middle school curriculum, class scheduling was designed which would allow eighth grade mentors to serve as tutors for the teachers who were interested in collaborating with the mentoring program. All sixth, seventh, and eighth grade middle school teachers were eligible to request student mentors. The classroom instructor for the mentoring program designed a schedule, which places a mentor in each of the cooperating teachers' classrooms for one hour each day. Prior to these assignments, participating student mentors have been allowed to make requests for specific mentoring placement sites. On a daily basis, students in the program report to class, attendance is taken, and then mentors are sent out

to individual placement sites. Placement sites remain the same for one month. At the end of the one-month period, the classroom instructor compiles a chart assigning new sites for each mentoring participant. The application process for the middle school mentoring program encourages all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students to enroll in the course as an elective.

### Opportunities For Mentoring

One of the mentoring activities in which students in the mentoring program may take part is working in a Head Start classroom located on-site at the middle school campus. Additional opportunities are available for students to volunteer to help with breakfast, lunch, or stay after school to assist with tutoring programs. Another opportunity for student mentors is to visit other elementary schools and help tutor younger students in those schools. All students enrolled in the program visit at least one elementary school classroom each month. During these visits, student mentors read to elementary students. For this assignment, student mentors have the choice, if they wish, to write and illustrate their own children's books and stories or to choose materials from the school library.

Participating student mentors also are afforded opportunities to tutor and work with special needs students, particularly those in self-contained classroom settings. Student mentors may read to the students, help these students study spelling words, help students complete math assignments, or help students with homework and other class assignments. Peer tutoring is also a volunteer opportunity for mentoring other sixth or seventh grade Saturn Middle School students.

Any core teacher (language arts, science, social studies, or mathematics) at Saturn Middle School may request student mentors to be involved with their classes. Peer tutors may assist in science labs, provide other students with extra skills practice, or help students who have been absent to make up missed work. Mentors may also help limited English speaking students in expanding their vocabularies and improving conversational and verbal skills. Student mentors also have the opportunity to assist in preparation of bulletin board materials and other classroom aids and materials.

### Classroom Activities

The instructional phase of the mentoring course is conducted in a very professional manner. The classroom instructor acts as a facilitator and guide and she acknowledges the maturity of her students and treats them with respect. The instructional phase includes the class session time held every Friday in which the teacher guides and prompts students' discussions about their roles as mentors. The classroom instructor provides written materials, learning logs, and written assignments for students to complete. All class materials are kept in students' course notebooks. The class time serves as an important opportunity for student self-reflection and evaluation of the mentoring process itself and is a key aspect of the course evaluation process.

One of the classroom activities completed by the students enrolled in the mentoring class at Saturn Middle School is a service learning project. This project is comprised of three steps: 1) preparation and planning, 2) action and implementation, and 3) evaluation. These components are service-oriented and encourage students to be involved in school and community needs. Preparation and planning require students to

actively engage in projects aimed at improvement of the school and community. In the preparation and planning stage, students identify and analyze school and community needs and issues. During the action and implementation stage, students are involved in taking the initiative and responsibility for putting their ideas into action.

Students have opportunity to research topics, invite guest speakers, and visit other school sites. Individuals and small groups may then narrow selections and brainstorm ideas about which specific projects will be carried out. Students can modify the project and make changes if needed. Finally, students will complete their projects, report their efforts and findings, and evaluate their success.

Some of the highest quality learning takes places during reflection, and the process of evaluation. Participating mentors' self-evaluation is not only a requirement of this course, but weighed heavily by instructors and other school staff. All teachers and staff at Saturn Middle School believe that consistent and on-going program evaluation will bring about continued success for a quality mentoring program. Student evaluation is a key aspect of this step in the process. Throughout the course, the classroom instructor reminds student mentors the vast amount of knowledge one can gain from reflecting on self-evaluations. The program goal of developing reflective students is taken seriously by teachers and student mentors.

Evaluation of projects begins when students record their observations of the project as it is being implemented. Students also analyze the effectiveness of planning and the process of implementation. Students share their impressions of the project and



the way in which it was received. Students then examine their own personal growth and celebrate success with the rest of the students.

### Discussion Topics

Friday, in-class sessions include small group discussions, time for students to complete written assignments, individual time for reflection and self evaluations, assignments to write in weekly journals, and completion of learning logs. Class discussion topics center on new experiences, comments about their mentoring experiences, problems mentors have encountered during the week, and suggestions for ways they can improve the mentoring process. Learning logs give student mentors opportunities to write about their experiences with the younger children, and other middle school students they mentor. Each week different questions are posed by the instructor, based on specific situations students have encountered where they have been serving. Questions may often require student mentors to reflect on the strengths they feel help them serve as effective role models and leaders. The class concludes with opportunities for students to reflect on their roles as leader and mentor and to evaluate their progress during the week.

### Student Training for Mentoring

To help students be successful in their roles of mentoring and leadership, participating students enrolled in the program take part in a training session at the beginning of each term. Student training begins with course introduction, a discussion of the class syllabus with the list of requirements, and a review of handouts that include specific program goals and guidelines. During the initial class training sessions, the

instructor clearly outlines rules and appropriate behaviors for the mentors. This set of rules states clearly that students will report promptly each day, be prepared for class, and keep their work and study area clean. Participating mentoring students are also held accountable for maintaining a class notebook complete with all written course work, special assignments, journals, and learning logs. Students are expected to show respect for all teachers and staff members and work within individual teacher's guidelines at individual placement sites. Responsibilities of the mentors may include helping younger students in academic areas, running errands for teachers and staff, or making copies for teachers. Training sessions include a discussion of the variety of service projects available for mentors to complete during the semester. These training sessions also inform the mentoring students of assignments and written work required for the course. To prepare student mentors for a variety of situations they may encounter, role-playing is also done in the student training sessions.

#### Course Requirements and Assessment

The mentoring course in this study functions as part of a middle school comprehensive curriculum and is aimed at building leadership skills and other traits of positive role modeling in participating middle school students. Course requirements include keeping an individual student folder complete with class notes, learning logs, and all other written assignments. Mentoring course requirements state that each participating student must select and read at least one book to a younger student or other middle school partner each semester. Many times, student mentors prefer to write and illustrate their own stories to share with their younger counterparts.

Students in the mentoring program are required to attend class on a regular basis, and actively participate in class discussions and group demonstrations. These class discussions include a variety of current topics in the field of education. Demonstrations serve as avenues to actively engage mentors in role playing and sharing of their own ideas. Each mentoring student is required to maintain his/her log of activities completed at the individual placement sites. The students are also required to discuss and self-evaluate their own learning experiences at their placement sites. The classroom instructor states this self-evaluation process is extremely important in creating effective mentors. Students enrolled in the mentoring class are required to locate at least one education-related newspaper article and give an oral summary of the article to the class. This activity is aimed at keeping students aware of current events in the field of education. The mentoring students are required to actively participate in small cooperative learning groups and activities in order to cultivate effective communication and collaborative skills. Students are required to complete and hand in all written assignments on time. Students involved in the mentoring program are expected at all times to set a good example and serve as positive role models for others.

Assessment procedures award students grades and credit for successful completion of course standards and requirements. Grades are given for organization and completeness of individual student folders and notebooks. Daily attendance and class participation grades are given. A weekly grade is given to each student for written learning logs being completed and turned in on time. Each student receives a grade for the oral summary report of an education-related newspaper article. Credit is given to

students for their own reflection and analysis of their service as a leader and mentor. Student grades are given for maintenance of notes from their own observations during tutoring and special projects. Students are also given credit for active participation in planning and carrying out special events.

The previous section of chapter IV has reported data to answer research question number one. There are many components which formed the design of the peer mentoring program presented in this study. An effective curriculum lies at the center of Saturn Middle School's peer mentoring program. This curriculum maintains its foundational basis in an ethic of service. This curriculum focus is to create innovative and effective service learning activities for participating students. Saturn Middle School's mentoring program includes a well-defined set of program goals. These goals are clearly and effectively communicated to the students by dedicated and professional individuals and educators. During classroom activities, the classroom instructor leads by examples of kindness, respect, and professionalism. She acts as a facilitator and guide, acknowledging the maturity in her students. Emphasis is placed on student self-evaluation. Written journals and learning logs serve as avenues for students to reflect on their own learning and evaluate their own progress as mentors. Once students have selected the mentoring program, they undergo a training session in which they are presented a specific set of course goals and guidelines. The instructor clearly outlines the rules for appropriate student behavior. The students are given a course outline and a list of responsibilities. Saturn Middle School's mentoring program structure is well organized and strongly supported by staff, parents, students, and community. Many

activities are planned which connect the school to the community. This program runs effectively with the involvement of a supportive parent group. The teachers and mentors believe in the program and find successes daily. These components along with the combination of an effective curriculum, dedicated staff, community support, and positive attitudes of the students create the structure of Saturn Middle School's peer mentoring program.

### Traits and Characteristics of Student Mentors

The second question addressed by this study is: What specific traits and characteristics do the eighth grade mentoring students exhibit? The researcher's time in the field for this study included collecting data through observations, student surveys, individual student interview sessions, and interviews with teachers and administrators. Through a compilation of these data sources, the general traits and characteristics exhibited and expressed by student mentors are: responsibility, leadership skills, patience, a sense of ethics, caring and kindness, respect, and serving as a positive role model.

22							
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	Responsibility	Leadership	Patience	Ethics	Acts of Care	Respect	Role Model

Figure A. Number of Survey Response for Characteristics of Student Mentors

During the course of this research study, student survey responses were tallied, analyzed, and revealed the following information when questioned concerning what student mentors saw as the benefits of the program for them personally.

Figure A displays the results of the analysis of the survey responses. Six out of twenty-two survey respondents replied that better time management and having a greater sense of dependability and responsibility were valuable traits to evolve from their participation in the mentoring program. The researcher’s belief is that students respond in this manner because the mentoring program is successfully meeting its guidelines and goals. Listed in the mentoring program goals is the focus on the development of students’ cultivation of a sense of responsibility and dependability. As has been previously mentioned, the classroom structure is such that the teacher acts as guide and facilitator. She acknowledges the maturity and sense of responsibility her students show.

This is a key factor in the students' abilities to grow and continue cultivating the trait of responsibility they show in their leadership and mentoring. Also noted, from the early beginning of the student training they are informed that acting responsibly is a requirement for participating in the course. Students must show responsibility in prompt daily class attendance, keeping work areas clean and orderly, having all journals, written work, and assignments turned in neatly and on time. Students are also responsible for completing tasks for various teachers and other school staff. Once students enroll in the mentoring program, they have a clear understanding that they must act and conduct themselves in a responsible manner. One student's reply on the survey, "it's really helped me learn how to handle more responsibility," offers evidence these student mentors acknowledge this characteristic is cultivated through their service in the program as mentors. Another student responded similarly with, "I find myself being more responsible."

Eight of the twenty-two responses on the survey replied a trait, and positive characteristic they feel they exhibit as mentors is an ability to stand up, and take better charge of situations. One student responded on the survey with the following words, "Now, (because I am in mentoring) I have a lot better confidence in myself, and my abilities... I know I am better at stepping up... taking charge of things when I need to."

A common trait reported that is shown through the students' actions and cultivated by the instructor, is that of ethical actions, showing a sense of values. Resources and guidelines for the program were written and published by the National Youth Leadership Council and President Bush's Points of Light Foundation. The major

guiding resource material for this mentoring program is entitled *Learning by Giving*. The foundational basis guiding the *Learning by Giving* curriculum is based on an ethic of service, the idea of placing others' needs before self. The researcher's conclusion once again is that students exhibit ethical qualities, and speak of ethics as a trait evolving from this program.

Successfully placing the students in situations where they can lead and serve is a strength of this curriculum-based mentoring program. Components of the program are extremely service oriented. The researcher concludes that this service-oriented nature of the program is the reason so many students surveyed replied that ethics and ethical acts are characteristics of being effective mentors. In the responses from the surveys, fourteen of twenty-two students listed this important mentoring characteristic. One student's response is as follows: "It (mentoring class) shows me I can do right, even when others aren't looking." Another student responded, "this (mentoring class) gives me the ability to stand up... stand up and do right, lead by example... its very important to do that." These two statements both mirror the same feeling from the students. Through their participation in mentoring, they feel they are growing and cultivating the characteristic of having values and ethical principles as part of their academic experiences. Another student, when asked about characteristics of effective mentors, replied with this statement, yea...its when you're able to do something good, then help others do right and good things too." All of these student mentors spoke openly to me, and reinforced the fact they see an outstanding example of ethical behavior evidenced daily in the actions of their instructor. These students report they feel this trait is essential if they are to serve as



an effective mentor. Kathryn's response was, "I try to lead the little kids, by telling them right from wrong."

Ten of twenty-two students surveyed included the characteristic of leadership in the process of mentoring. Brent's response was this, "I have even been able to serve as a leader outside of the class and school... I know how to teach kids stuff. It makes me think and act like a teacher...its leadership." Anthony responded, "Working and teaching little kids...I realize I am a leader."

Eighteen of the twenty-two survey responses listed the trait of care and kindness as a quality of their own student mentoring. Again, many of the participating students reported they see evidence of care and kindness as an example daily in their classroom teacher. During classroom observational times, the researcher often had opportunities in which she first hand witnessed acts of care and kindness by the classroom teacher. Often the classroom instructor was observed spending extra time and effort (outside of class, above and beyond regular call of work time) with her students. As the researcher made many observations both in the mentor program classroom and at placement sites, often times students were seen acting with this sense of care, especially when working in the onsite Day Care Center or when tutors assisted with special needs students. Through data analysis, the researcher concludes by offering these examples in which participating students can mentor, they are afforded opportunities to demonstrate the traits of care and kindness. Taylor's specific response was, "when I am playing with the 4 year olds...like, helping them on the playground, the swing sets, its just one way I can show I care." Another student replied very similarly, "I show I care...sometimes I go and get the little

kids their lunch trays and milk, just to help them out. I know I don't have to do it, I just want to. I really like doing it. I always try to give the little kids extra time and attention.” Again, another similar response, “yea, in the mentoring...you don't have to be an A student, you just have to honestly care about other people.” Kaitlyn offered this comment, “Mentors are kind care givers by being really good friends and helpers to the little Day Care kids, and the special needs students.”

Sixteen of twenty-two students on the surveys listed the characteristic of respect in their service as mentors. Anthony's response says it well, “it's really important to be respectful...mentoring, and being a leader has taught me more understanding of other people, especially for young people, how important it is to respect them...and to respect yourself.” Survey responses also revealed these comments, “Being a mentor and leader is being a person who has respect for others, its really important. You've gotta be respectful, teach them (other students) about differences and respecting differences, that's really important.” In conversations with Ty, he reports it is especially important to give respect to the students he mentors. He commented that parts of this action spill over in daily actions, by showing little kids they should learn to be respectful with each other in class time or game time.

The largest number of responses, twenty of twenty-two, report the most important trait of a mentor is that of service as a positive role model. One particular statement recorded from student surveys, speaks very strongly to this point, “I remember my pastor, at church talking to us about how all of us have an influence on others...whether we realize it or not. That really made me think about the things that I do...that I really do

have an influence on others. I realize I am in a position to lead by example, I am a role model.”

Many times the researcher observed student mentors as they were approached in hallways and near lockers by those they mentored. Younger students, often younger students who these mentors tutor, would come up to their mentor, make inquiries about jewelry they may be wearing, or where they buy their clothes. The researcher also witnessed younger students appearing in school actually wearing clothing very similar to that of their mentor. Clearly these younger tutees admire and respect their mentors, they even have a desire to dress like them, and look like them. Seventy-three percent of student survey responses refer to the fact serving as a positive role model and setting positive examples for others is necessary in mentoring. Alyssa reported that she considers herself very lucky to act as a positive role model. Brent comments how much he enjoys the position of positive role model; he states he is very proud that teachers put their trust in him. Perhaps Ty’s response sums it up best, “We, mentors, have a big impact on these little kids. I just really love to see the big smiles on their faces when we walk in the room.” Other qualities the student mentors thought they demonstrated through their work were being well organized, hard working, determined, honest and self-confident.

The previous section of this research has been presented in response to research question two: What specific traits and characteristics do eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit? Through the data collected and presented, student mentors who participated in the program felt strongly that qualities of role modeling and being

respectful were needed in service as a mentor. Showing care and having a sense of ethics was listed by many students on survey responses as qualities they felt necessary to be an effective mentor. Having leadership skills and being responsible were also reported by student mentors as traits they felt important in the service of being a good mentor.

Though evidence presented in this research study in chapter two, tutoring/mentoring programs are proven effective. Successful outcomes have been presented from such programs as VIP (Volunteers in Probation), Bib Brothers/Big Sisters of America, and the Fili-Mentoring, Inc., These programs all share many of the same components and structure as the ones in this study; however, the mentoring program in this study is unique, in that it is a part of a core curriculum package, which includes a mentoring class that middle student can self-select and earn class credit.

This study has identified and defined the structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. Through these discoveries educators, administrators, and teachers will be able to copy to structure and components in order to implement similar programs in other middle schools.

#### Overview of Data

The research for this particular study was conducted in a middle school in the mid-western region of the United States and was one of the first schools to offer mentoring as a class elective. This middle school is well known in its state as an exemplary model of a mentoring program offered within the existing curriculum.

The mentoring curriculum was initiated in 1996 after the school was awarded a service learning grant through an educational organization entitled Learn and Serve America. Guiding materials for the mentoring program include a publication entitled Learning by Giving, which was published by the National Youth Leadership Council and President Bush's Points of Light Foundation. Program goals include the development of student leadership, communication, inter-personal and group-dynamics skills. These goals were designed to cultivate students' sense of responsibility, helpfulness, respect, and to assist them in becoming positive role models for others.

Program guidelines require that all students actively participate in service learning projects. Students enrolled in mentoring identify and analyze school and community issues and needs and respond through special projects. They then work towards problem solving and implementing programs to meet these needs. Mentoring students peer tutor younger students in the Head start program. These mentoring students visit, volunteer and tutor in various elementary schools in the area. Student mentors peer-tutor in Special Education classes, as well as other 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. These students act as aides and helpers for teachers and other support staff.

Mentoring program requirements also include regular class attendance, and for students' daily active participation in discussion and activities. During the course of researcher observations, and participant observations these students were observed on a daily basis in regular class attendance. The researcher also had many opportunities to enjoy listening to class discussion and plans to implement special programs, activities, and service learning projects. Students enrolled in the mentoring program are also

required to keep weekly class learning logs and journals from their placement sites. The researcher had opportunities to view student learning logs and journals, several of these documents are included in the appendices.

During several class periods, the researcher also listened and observed as students took part in required self-critique and self- assessment procedures. The researcher, on several occasions, observed students as they presented education-related newspaper articles to the class. During in-class session time, the researcher was often able to observe and briefly participate in student small cooperative-group sessions. These sessions served as avenues for students in the mentoring program to plan, implement, and carry out special activities and required service learning projects. Students were often observed, as they handed in written assignments in a timely manner. At all times of researcher's observance, these students were seen setting positive examples for others and serving as effective role models.

### Outcomes of the Study

To begin, we return to chapter one and the statement of the problem. A priority issue in the problem statement is the fact that absent role models for today's youth may be a huge contributing factor in a failing educational system. In today's educational setting there is a lack of programs focused on development of leadership skills and qualities of effective mentoring in participating students. Through analysis and interpretations of the data collected in observations, surveys, and interviews the researcher has also concluded the eighth grade mentors effectively set positive examples for others. These mentors

serve effectively as excellent role models for others. The researcher has also concluded the eighth grade mentors demonstrate the qualities of caring and helpfulness to the young people they mentor and lead. Through the same avenues of data analysis the researcher concluded that participating eighth grade mentors effectively guide and lead with demonstrations of ethics and a strong sense of values. The researcher also concluded the mentoring program in this study cultivates young people who lead and guide by showing respect for themselves and others.

This study has been conducted to discover the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose of the study was to discover common traits and characteristics eighth grade mentoring students exhibit. A major outcome of this study is that it may lead to developments in curriculum, which include mentoring programs to build strong leadership qualities in young people. A curriculum including mentoring could successfully employ older students to serve as positive role models for younger children. Middle school mentors would have valuable opportunities to serve as leaders, while further building character in themselves. Younger students in a peer mentoring program would benefit by spending time with a caring guide who shows concern for their well being. Younger students could benefit as well, academically, as older mentors would be available to offer them assistance and support. These mentors can fill the role of the missing role model and caregiver for younger students who need positive examples and guidance.

From the findings in this research study, several important ideas have evolved which could help educators interested in school based mentoring programs. Findings in

this study have revealed traits the mentoring students feel are important in service as positive role models. These traits include responsibility, helpfulness, caring, respect for self and others, and a sense of ethics. The mentoring program in this study was shown effective in continuing the development of these qualities in participating students. Through findings in this study, educators will have the design and structure needed to implement such a program within an existing curriculum. Through student participation in this type of mentoring program, students will find opportunities to serve in their school and community while continuing to develop effective traits such as responsibility, helpfulness, and respect.

#### Ideas for Continuing Research

As has been stated earlier in chapters one and two, there has clearly been a lack of research concerning public schools that include curriculum-inclusive peer mentoring programs. More specifically, the researcher also found a lack of research available currently on mentoring programs aimed at the development of leadership skills and qualities of adult-like behaviors in middle school students. In further research, new studies could be conducted in the area of effective mentoring programs. Since the middle school that has been the site of this study is in a higher social economic bracket, it would add to the body of research to conduct a similar study in a different social economic setting and compare data results. Further research could also be developed in which the researcher conducts a follow-up study of the mentors in this study as they progress through high school. Questions to be considered in the study could include: Do these



young people continue to participate in activities and service in which they exhibit traits such as responsibility, respect, caring, and serving as a positive role model? If so, how much of their service could be contributed to their cultivation of these adult-like behaviors through participation in eighth grade mentoring?

An aspect only slightly touched upon within this study is that of academic performance in mentors and how mentoring programs may help lower drop out rates in young adolescents, both for mentors and those they mentor. These areas are important in the field of education and new studies, which could uncover answers to these questions, would be highly valuable indeed.

Another area to be considered in further research is to address the question: Does the mentoring program help retention rates, both for mentors and their charges? Mentors could be paired with students in danger of becoming or being labeled “at risk.” What kind of results would the study yield? Would the mentors grow into strong leaders? Would the mentoring program decrease drop-out rates, and help the academic standing of the younger students who were at risk?

### Concluding Statements

The majority of students who participated in this study were seen by teachers as excellent students. Through informal conversations with teachers and staff, the researcher discovered many of these students held top academic standing at the time they elected to be in the mentoring program. Many teachers reported several of the students in the program had previously exhibited qualities of respect, responsibility and leadership.

Several of the participating mentors had previously been involved in service projects and served in positions of leadership in other areas. This study's results are based on these statements. Very different findings could be discovered if participating students were "at risk" or struggling academically.

This research study was conducted to identify the structure of a middle school program. The researcher has been able to outline a well designed, effective peer mentoring program. Through the information gained about this program, the researcher now has the knowledge needed to implement a similar program in an existing middle school curriculum. The researcher's own educational practices have been positively impacted. Evidences of daily success in this mentoring program reveal ways the researcher could include this type of program within existing middle school curriculum.

It is the researcher's belief, as the older students teach and mentor younger students, the older mentors cultivate qualities of responsibility, dependability, and service as a positive role model. The researcher, a teacher, has often searched for effective ways to build such qualities in her own students. Saturn Middle School mentoring program continues to enjoy successes in this area. The researcher feels confident implementing this same type of program would facilitate the development of the same positive qualities in many middle school students.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATOR/TEACHER

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



The following interview protocol represents questions used during staff and faculty interviews. These basic questions were used during initial researcher visits to find out more detailed information about the mentoring program.

1. Tell me about the mentoring program here at the school.
  
2. What are some of the unique characteristics of the mentoring program?
  
3. Is there evidence that students involved in the mentoring program are highly successful academically?
  
4. Do the eighth grade participants show evidence of leadership traits?
  
5. Do the Day Care students enjoy the time spent with their mentor?
  
6. How does the mentoring process help address needs of special needs students?

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## APPENDIX B- STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The following interview protocol represents the questions, which were used during individual student interviews. These questions were formulated to discover the structure and components of the middle school mentoring program. The questions were also designed to discover traits of the participating mentors, as experienced by the student mentors themselves. The researcher requested that the interviewees share any and all information they felt was important about the mentoring program. They were allowed to add any additional information about the school, and mentoring activities.

1. Can you tell me more about the mentoring program here at Saturn Middle School?
2. Can you explain to me the specific traits and characteristics the mentors in the program exhibit?
3. What are some of the activities mentors participate in?
4. Can you tell me some ways mentoring helps you serve as a role model?

APPENDIX C  
STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

The following student survey questions were administered to all participants in the eighth grade-mentoring program. This survey was given early in the study, and used as a tool for the researcher to gain valuable background information about the mentoring program. Prior to administering the survey, the researcher instructed the students to give full, complete answers sharing all information they wished for each question.

1. How do you become eligible to participate in the mentoring program here at Saturn Middle School?
2. What are some of the specific activities you participate in as mentors?
3. Are there ways participation in mentoring have improved your academic standing? If so, how?
4. What would you list as specific traits and characteristics eighth grade students exhibit, as they serve in this program as mentors?
5. In what ways, if any has the mentoring program helped you serve in roles of leadership and role modeling?
6. Can you list some special benefits the mentoring program has brought to you?

APPENDIX D

PARENT PREAMBLE: MIDDLE SCHOOL

MENTORING PROGRAMS

Dear Parent or Guardian, Saturn Middle School,

I am currently a graduate student at Oklahoma State University, college of Education, who is interested in learning more about student mentoring programs at the middle school level. I would like to interview some students to find out their opinions about mentoring. There are no possible risks involved with this study. Students will be afforded the opportunity to see what research is like, and reflect upon relevant and important educational issues.

With your permission I would like to interview your child one-on-one for 30 minutes in a public area of the school such as cafeteria, classroom, or main office. This interview will take place at a time during the school day that does not interfere with classroom instructional time. If given permission, I would like to tape record interviews for easier transcription. Names of all participants will be kept confidential and locked in a secure place. The student's names will be changed in order to ensure confidentiality.

I do hope you agree to participate in this study. You will get a chance to learn more about conducting research, and be able to share your thoughts and feelings about important education issues.

I have read and fully understand this consent form; by signing it, I give permission for my child to participate in the study. A copy of this consent form has been given to me. If I have any questions, I will contact Colleen Golightly at 405-533-7716 or Sharon Bacher, Executive Secretary, Institutional Review Board, 415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074 at 405-744-5700.

APPENDIX E

PARENT CONSENT FORM: MIDDLE

SCHOOL MENTORING



I \_\_\_\_\_, authorize Colleen Golightly to perform the following procedure:

Procedure- Each individual who participates will be asked specific questions about mentoring and English language acquisition. Each individual has the right to choose not to answer questions at any time during the interview. Each participant will have the opportunity to examine interview transcriptions to make changes, if they choose.

Confidentiality- Names will be changed in final documents. Only the researcher will have access to actual names of the participants. Tape-recorded interviews will be transcribed. Any parts of the interview you do not want included in final documents will be omitted. All data records will be burned and destroyed within six months after the completion of the study.

Possible Discomfort- No questions of personal nature will be asked. Participants may decline to answer questions at any time.

Benefits- Benefits of this study include possible future developments for public and private schools and their core study curriculum, to include curriculum-based mentoring within the structure of their school. Older students serve as leaders and role models, while younger students can reap many benefits working alongside an older peer or adult.

Purpose- The purpose of this study is to identify and define components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose of the study is to identify specific traits and characteristics middle school mentoring students exhibit.

I have read and understand this consent form. A copy has been provided for me.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

I have included all elements in this form for the subject to read before requesting signature.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX F

STUDENT PREAMBLE: MIDDLE

SCHOOL MENTORING

Dear Student,

I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. I am a middle school teacher, who is now currently conducting research in the field of Education, representing OSU. I am interested in learning more about your school, and your mentoring program here at Saturn Middle School. I will be conducting observations and interviews for the next several months to collect necessary data for this research study. I may be meeting with several of you for interviews on an individual basis also. I am interested in gaining your perspective and insights into the process of mentoring, as is done at this school.

I will be asking the same questions to every student that participates. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to. Interviews will last 30 minutes per interview. At the beginning of the interview I will ask for your permission to tape-record our interview session. This makes the transcription process much easier for the researcher later. Your name will be changed to protect your confidentiality. You will not be interviewed until your parent or guardian signs a consent form also. You may stop the interview at any time you wish. If at any time you do not want to be a part of the study, tell the researcher or your parents, who will then notify the school.

I do hope you agree to participate in the study. You will get a chance to learn more about conducting research, and be able to share your own thoughts and ideas about important school issues. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Colleen Golightly at 405-533-7716, or Sharon Bacher, Executive Secretary, Institutional Review Board, 415 Whitehurst Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078 (405-744-5700).

Thank you,

Colleen Golightly

APPENDIX G

STUDENT ASSENT FORM: MIDDLE  
SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAMS

I \_\_\_\_\_, authorize Colleen Golightly to perform the following procedure:

Procedure-Each student who participates will be asked questions about Saturn Middle School, and the mentoring program. Each individual has the right to choose not to answer questions at any time during the interview. Each participant will have the opportunity to examine interview transcriptions to make changes if they choose.

Confidentiality-Names will be changed in final documents. Only the researcher will have access to actual names of the participants. Tape-recorded interviews will be transcribed, verbatim. Any parts of the interview you do not want included in final documents will be omitted. All data records will be burned and destroyed within six months after the completion of the study.

Possible Discomfort-No questions of personal nature will be asked. Participants may decline to answer questions at any time.

Benefits-Benefits of this study may include possible future developments for public or private school curriculum to include mentoring programs as part of their entire educational plan. Students will have the opportunity to serve as leaders and role models for younger students.

Purpose-The purpose of this study is to identify and define components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose of the study is to define certain traits and characteristics the eighth grade mentoring participants exhibit as they take part in mentoring.

I have read and understand this assent form. A copy has been provided for me.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

I have included all elements in this form for the subject to read before requesting signature.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX H

IRB APPROVAL FORM

**Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board**

Date : Tuesday, September 07, 2004

IRB Application No ED057

Proposal Title: Leadership Development in Middle School Students Through Curriculum Based Peer

Principal  
Investigator(s) :

Colleen M Wehr  
2425 W Lakeview, Foxfire #7  
Stillwater, OK 74075

Dr. Patricia Lamphere-Jordan  
247 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Pending Revision

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There are revisions to your application to the IRB, which must be completed satisfactorily before your protocol will be approved. They are listed on the following page.

Please submit a revised IRB application incorporating and HIGHLIGHTING the changes listed. You may address very minor revisions in a memo. If any changes are required to your consent form, you must submit a new consent form incorporating the changes.

This material containing your revisions should be returned to the IRB Office, 415 Whitehurst Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078. These revisions will be reviewed by the IRB Chair and/or the review committee of the IRB. When all outstanding issues have been addressed satisfactorily, you will receive an approval letter from the Chair of the IRB.

You may not begin this research until these revisions have been made and the IRB has granted final approval to conduct research using human subjects under this protocol. You will be allowed 60 days to respond satisfactorily to the revisions required by the IRB. After that period of time, your protocol will be CLOSED.

If you have questions or wish to discuss the reviewers' comments, please contact me at 405-744-5700 or via e-mail at [colson@okstate.edu](mailto:colson@okstate.edu).

Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board  
Reviewer Comments

Date : Tuesday, September 07, 2004

IRB Application No ED057

Proposal Title: Leadership Development in Middle School Students Through Curriculum Based Peer

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Revisions to the content of the application are adequate.

The preamble letters continue to be confusing. Some of the elements of consent are presented in the preamble, and some are on the consent form. All of the elements of consent must be on the consent form, as this is what will be signed and retained by the parent/student.

The parent/student consent form still do not fully describe what the child will be asked to do as part of the research. You must include that they will be taking a survey, that they may be interviewed and that there may be follow-up interviews, and that you will be observing. Your response to question 2(a)(4) can be reworded and included in the parent form. The child assent form language will need to be simplified.

You have two "purpose" discussions on all the consent forms. These should be combined into one discussion at the start of the forms.

Signature :



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Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Tuesday, September 07, 2004

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Date



VITA

Colleen Marie Golightly

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH, COMPONENTS AND STRUCTURE OF A CURRICULUM-BASED MENTORING PROGRAM AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on October 4, 1955, the daughter of Jesse P. and Margaret Golightly; one daughter, Afton, age 21; earned Private Pilot License, December, 1997.

Education: Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma, May, 1981; received Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, December, 1996.

Experience: 1981-1982 Music instructor for grades 1-12, Crescent Public Schools, Crescent, Oklahoma; 1982-1990 classroom teacher for second grade in Guthrie Public Schools, Guthrie, Oklahoma; 1991-1998 classroom teacher for accelerated program, Guthrie Public Schools; 1998-2000 classroom teacher, third grade, Guthrie Public Schools; 1998-2004 instructor for University of Oklahoma Sooner Flight Academy, Norman, Oklahoma; 2000-2002 middle school Math, and Language Arts teacher, Guthrie Public Schools; 2002-2005 instructor for middle school Science, Math, Reading, and Accelerated Language Arts; 2005-2006 instructor for Accelerated Program Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

Professional Memberships: GACT Staff Development Committee, Guthrie Public Schools, Phi Kappa Phi Educational Honor Society, Oklahoma State University, Kappa Delta Pi, Oklahoma State University.

Name: Colleen Marie Golightly

Date of Degree: December, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY RESEARCH COMPONENTS AND  
STRUCTURE OF A CURRICULUM-BASED MENTORING  
PROGRAM AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Pages in Study:

145

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Scope and Method of Study: The primary purpose of this study was to identify and define the components and structure of a curriculum-based mentoring program at the middle school level. A second purpose of this study was to define traits and characteristics exhibited by participating eighth grade mentors. Participants in this study program included a population of 25 middle school students enrolled in a peer mentoring program. From this population, a purposeful sampling of two mentoring pairs was chosen to be “shadowed” as data were collected and later analyzed. Data collected for this descriptive case study included observations, survey responses, and student interviews.

Findings and Conclusions: The structure of the curriculum-based mentoring program in this study includes a strong, supportive parent group, dedicated group of teachers and staff who were responsible for writing a grant and compiling a mentoring curriculum, and exceptional eighth grade students. The mentoring program offers opportunities for participating middle school students to serve in positions of leadership and as role models. These eighth grade mentors also were afforded opportunities to mentor and assist younger students in the academic setting. The following four themes have emerged through the collection and analysis of the data: (1) Mentoring supports the development of leadership skills as students set examples and serve as role models; (2) Mentoring supports the development of a caring and helpful character; (3) Mentoring supports the development of a sense of ethics and a strong sense of values; and (4) Mentoring supports the development of self respect and respect for others. Results and findings reported from this study show there is value and worth in conducting future studies in this area.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Patricia Lamphere-Jordan