

**THE IMPORTANCE AND IMPACT OF SCHOOL BASED
MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS**

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The Importance and Impact of School Based Mentorship Programs

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the very first group of grade 11 and 12 students at Rick Hansen Secondary who supported my passion and ambition to develop and implement a cross grade school based mentorship program for girls. That first group mentors not only surpassed my expectations in commitment, dedication and encouragement, they also provided insight, feedback and laughter while generating ideas, feedback for goals, activities and improvement. They are still the kindest, generous, compassionate, genuine group of youth people I had the distinct pleasure of working with outside of the classroom. They came in a week early from summer holidays for training, they adapted activities and events in accordance to needs, desires and even weather. They were there when I cried at the end of the first, very successful full day retreat. Since that first year the program I developed and implemented, the program, G.U.T.T.S., Girls Uniting Together To Succeed, has run every year except the current one. However, in recent years I have been troubled by its lack of success and overall participation. This paper not only cemented my beliefs in the power of a school based mentorship program, it helped me to evaluate and revise the program I developed almost eight years ago and also reignited my desire to see the program back at the school.

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Abstract

The research for this paper began with the purpose to educate and prepare its readers in order to guide and assist school counsellors in the development, implementation and evaluation of their own school based mentorship program. By presenting the numerous social, emotional and academic benefits of a school based mentoring program, this paper argues for the inclusion of mentorship programs in middle and secondary schools in which senior students become mentors for younger students. These mentorship programs would be established to assist and support the development of the whole child. By summarizing and highlight the most effective practices and outlining the necessary partnerships and roles of the school community including parents, school counsellors, administrators and senior management this paper provides an overview of research and foundational elements of a successful school based mentorship program. In its conclusion, the paper outlines and suggests first steps for building a successful school based program.

Keywords: mentorship, connectedness, impact, academic, social-emotional, effective practices, roles

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The Importance and Impact of School Based Mentorship Programs

Chapter 1: Introduction

Historical Background - Mentoring is Nothing New

The concept of mentoring can be traced back almost 3000 years to the time of Homer. Indeed, the earliest known record of the word “mentor” first appears in Homer’s *Odysseus* and referred to Odysseus companion, Mentor, with whom Homer entrusted the care of his young son, Telemachos to when he left for his long journey and the eventual Trojan war. Mentoring also appears in many other stories and cultures from around the globe. When considering successful personalities, many intellects, leaders and artists had mentors who cared about their growth and development. For example, Alexander the Great had Aristotle, King Arthur of England had Merlin, Chandragupta Muarya of India had Chanakya, the poet T. S. Eliot had Ezra Pound, Martin Luther King had Dr. Benjamin Elijah Mays, Beethoven and Mozart had Haydn. These close-knit, trusting relationships all share foundational components of a mentoring relationship; relationship cemented in trust, guidance, support and wisdom. This definition has, of course, evolved but the foundational elements of who and what a mentor is has remained the same.

More modern definitions of a mentoring relationship have formed out of the trades, business and health care communities in which a specific skill or set of related skills are taught and learned. This concept, also has a rich history which dates back to the pre-industrialized era in which craftsmen entrusted and taught their skill to an apprentice over the course of almost a decade. Today, in many private and public organizations numerous opportunities exist for participation in mentorship programs as employers and employees search for assistance in supporting, guiding and developing their professional goals and ambitions. It seems that there is

a widespread support and public belief in the importance of mentorship programs and its potential to elicit positive development (Rhodes and Dubois, 2006; Sipe, 2002).

Historically speaking mentoring was, “sparked by localized grassroots initiatives” such as the establishment of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program by Ernest K. Coulter in 1907. (Reference Here) Mentoring programs of the 21st century are now powered by nonprofit organizations, corporations, legislative initiatives and unprecedented financial contributions from national governments and international governing bodies, such as the National Mentoring Partnership which was established in 1990 (Dubois et al., 2005 and Belt 2002). It is however only in recent years that mentorship programs have peaked the interest of those in the educational field as a means to support, guide and positively contribute to the development of its youth (Dubois et al., 2005). Traditionally, schools offered some form of remediation only after children had failed academically and it took until the 1980’s to recognize and agree that these were programs were only, by the slimmest of margins, successful in reducing academic failure rates (Dubois et al., 2005). These realizations promoted the idea of developing more personalized prevention programs which was quickly supported by a large number of reports that called on schools and community organizations to collaboratively develop school based services to address the education, health and poverty needs of the children and families that it served (Dubois et al., 2005). Today, there are nearly 16 million young people in the United States want or need mentors (Belt, 2002).

In more recent years educators and school in both Canada and the United States have felt the devastating consequences of new laws and legislation such as the “*Leave No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*” or “*Bill 22 of 2002*,” both of which have resulted in cutbacks of resources and support programs while placing “increased demands on school to demonstrate satisfactory academic

outcomes through improved student performance on standardized tests” (Dubois et al., 2005. p.60). This increasing pressure was felt by students, teachers and administrators. The pressure to perform on school and standardized tests often resulted in the reduction of resources that was allocated to non-academic programs, such as mentoring programs which contributed, directly or indirectly to academic success of its participants (Dubois et al., 2005). Outside the school walls, the ever changing socio-cultural landscape has also placed increasing demands and expectations on schools, teachers, administrators and counsellors. Karcher (2002) points out that, as family roles diminish, family caretaking responsibilities are transferred to already overburdened schools thus creating a growing need for and demand of programs to support the learning, social and emotional development of its students. Schools represent a natural context and meeting place for establishing mentoring programs which could benefit from the structure, support, resources, supervision, and ease of access for both the mentee and mentor.

Development of School Based Mentorship Programs

As the demands on schools increase, school personnel are searching for programs, interventions and supports that will positively contribute to the development of their students on an academic, social and emotional level. As discussed above, schools already provide a natural meeting place where support, structure, resources and supervision are available. One major advantage of school based programs is that they cost about half as much per mentee to run when compared to community based programs. Herrera et al., (2000) found that the average annual cost of a school based program cost \$567 compared to a \$1369 to run the same program out of a community based organization. In 2001, Portwood reported even lower costs associated with a school based mentorship program, costing \$84 per student/mentee and \$211 per mentor (DuBois

et al., 2005). Another advantage is that mentoring programs in school may bring new resources to the school, as the adult mentors are available to contribute to and support both the children and adults in the schools. Classroom teachers in particular may benefit from having mentors additional help in their classrooms (Dubois et al., 2005). Successfully implemented school-based programs may establish and increase social support networks by opening its doors and bringing in caring adults from the surrounding community. Here lies the potential of establishing and building a mutually beneficial relationship for in which the school relies on the community for support and the community benefits from getting to know, understand and positively influence the youth of the neighbourhood.

Significance, Relevance and Potential in Schools

The growing research and enthusiasm in mentoring programs and initiatives illustrates society's optimism and confidence in the potential of positive mentor relationships between young children/adolescents and a caring compassionate adult (Karcher, 2002). Matching that research is the growing recognition that many youth are becoming more isolated from the larger community of consistent supportive relationships that are so pivotal to social and emotional development (Karcher, 2002). Given the increasing demands and pressures on the educational system it is no wonder that schools have sought programs, initiatives and volunteers from beyond the school walls.

Schools by their very nature provide a natural place for establishing, building and maintaining relationships. Many would argue that at the heart of the teaching is relationships. Teachers are the first to interact with students and are the key to establishing positive relationships with their students in order to help their students reach their full potential academically, socially

and emotionally. A well-structured, supported and supervised mentoring program has the ability to do the same. By placing relationships at the heart school-based mentorship program model, there is potential to support and contribute to the positive development of the whole child are limitless.

Despite the vast amount of research related to mentoring very little specifically discusses and analyzes data, impact and results of school-based programs and data that has been reported is categorized as having a small effect (Rhodes, 2006). McQuillin (2011) points out that it is important to remember that a small of effect that is delivered to a large portion of the population can still be regarded as successful. Rhodes (2006), also argues that the lack of data does not exist because of this limited effect but rather it is a direct indication that those creating and organizing the programs in schools are not researchers by nature and therefore baseline, midway and final data is not available for analysis. Furthermore, Rhodes (2006) advocates for “greater involvement of researchers in all phases of the process of designing, piloting, implementing, evaluating and disseminating interventions in the area of youth mentoring” (p. 13). To date, the role of researchers has been to evaluate programs once they've been developed, only after they've been disseminated widely.

Despite this large gap in research, there a growing body of evidence which provides significant and encouraging documentation that the benefits of high quality mentoring relationships. Properly structured and supervised programs have resulted in increased levels of connectedness, improved in relationship with adults, improved relationship with peers, improved academic achievement and confidence (self-efficacy), improved expression of feelings, higher levels of self-confidence and increased levels of trust for teachers (DuBois, 2005; McQuillin, 2011 and Rhodes, 2006).

In recognition of the need for more specific research on the potential impact of school based mentorship programs, this paper aims to analyze current research through an educational lens, by presenting the numerous and interdependence social, emotional and academic benefits of a cross-grade mentoring program to assist and support the development of the whole child. By summarizing and highlight the most effective practices and outlining the necessary partnerships and roles of the school community including parents, school counsellors, administrators and senior management this paper strives to encourage the inclusion of mentoring programs in middle and secondary schools. In the coming chapter, evidence regarding the benefits of a school-based mentoring program will be presented as well as a brief discussion and illustration of their interdependence. Next, will be a description of effective practices and discussion of their importance and impact and suggestions for program implementations will be discussed. Towards the end of the upcoming chapter, guidelines for participation and roles of the school community - teachers, parents, school counsellors, support staff, administrators and senior management - will be outlined.

Summary

Mentoring has a long, rich history and has played an important role in the human development. A mentoring relationship is a relationship based on trust that aims to counsel, shape, and model, teach and support the mentee. As school face cutbacks, pressures to perform academically and the ever changing socio-cultural landscapes of their community, school personnel have looked for solutions and support beyond the walls of their school. A well-structured, supervised mentorship program, according to the vast research collected in the past 25 years, has the ability to support children and adolescents improving their social, emotional and academic skills and mindsets (Dubois and Karcher, 2005). As schools are being called on to teach

and support more than strictly academic curriculum, the positive, lifelong and life altering impacts that a mentorship program could provide make developing, implementing and maintaining a school based program a virtual necessity for education in the 21st century.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

According to the National Mentoring Partnership (2003a), “mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (as cited by Dubois, 2005, p.4) This relationship according to Rhodes (2002), has potential to be “a powerful emotional interaction between the older and younger person a relationship in which the older members trusted loving an experience and the guidance of the younger. The mentor helped shape the growth and development of the protégé” (as cited by Dubois, 2005, p.4). The interactions of well-structured cross-age mentoring program has the potential to influence and impact the social and emotional well-being of its participants. Brady et al., (2014) also argue that mentoring programs could help create a more positive culture in the school community. When one considers undeniable connection between a student’s social and emotional wellbeing and their academic success combined with a feeling of connectedness and positive school culture, it is no surprise that 62% of primary and secondary schools are using a structured peer support system (Brady et al., 2014).

There are numerous programs such as “Wizkids”, “Thrive”, “Youthfriends”, “Healthy Kids”, “Youth Launch”, “CAMP”, and hundreds of other programs uniquely developed by teachers and school counsellors to address the specific needs of their school community. As many programs as there are, there is probably triple the amount of research on mentorship programs, best practices and their impact. Despite the hundreds of studies, very little data has demonstrated significant, long lasting impact of the effectiveness of a mentoring program.

However, as McQuillian (2011) points out that it is important to remember that a small of

effect that is delivered to a large portion of the population can still be regarded as successful and it is for this reason that mentorship program continue to flourish. Small gains in self-esteem, self-confidence, social connection and connectedness are enough to support mentoring programs, as research indicates that “high self-esteem serves as a protective factor to youth involvement in risky health behavior is associated with high academic achievement, involvement in sport and physical activity, and development of effective coping, and peer pressure resistance skills” (King et al., 2002, p. 294). In addition, within “the school environment, high levels of self-esteem increase the likelihood that youth will connect positively to peers, teachers, and the school as a whole, important determinants of academic success” (King, et al., 2002, p. 294).

Combine these reasons with the more practical programming and operations considerations, such as low cost, built in staffing, accessible and safe location and ease of supervision and support, it is no wonder schools continue to develop, invest and deliver school based mentoring programs.

The Impact of a School Based Mentorship Program

Why We Need to Talk about Whole Child Development

In 2002, Micheal Karcher, a highly regarded expert in mentoring and mentorship programs, along with his fellow researchers highlighted three key interactions of a mentorship program: 1) mentoring likely support social and developmental changes in addition to prescribed academic goals simultaneously and interactively, 2) “mentoring is most likely a two-way street with neither specific academic achievements or psychosocial gains being more important than the other or functioning in isolation” and 3) we assume that connectedness led to academic changes but the reverse may be true, in that the academic support and skills gained during mentoring sessions may have increased school attitude, self-esteem and sense of care. An attempt to separate a student’s

social well-being, from their emotional well-being, from their academic performance and success, is a disservice to the student and grossly uneducated endeavour. Randolph and Johnson (2008) summarized Jean E Rhodes's 2002 research which focused on the interaction of social connectedness, emotional wellbeing and academic success, in which she concluded that "mentors influence youth development, by enhancing social skills and emotional well-being, by improving cognitive skills and by serving as a role model" (p. 183). It seems obviously these interactions are intertwined and inseparable and that should all be considered dependent on each other as well as of equal importance. Indeed, it is hard to ignore the notion that the more a student enjoys coming to school, the safer and more accepted they feel, the more likely there are to build positive connections and relationships that translate into academic engagement and success.

Social Development and Connectedness: The Impact of School Based Mentorship Programs

When we consider the social development of an adolescent, it can be described in their relationship with their peers, their school and their community; essentially we are referring to the level of connectedness a student feels and demonstrates. School connectedness is defined as the belief by students that adults, as well one's peers, care about their learning as well as about them as individuals ("School Connectedness Strategies," 2009). Factors of school connectedness include students who experience school connectedness like school, feel that they belong, believe teachers care about them and their learning, believe that education matters, have friends at school, believe that discipline is fair, and have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (Blum, 2005). Finally, research also indicates that youth participating in school-based mentoring programs are "more likely than non-mentored peers to report having a non-parental adult who they look up to and talk to about personal problems, who cares about what happens to

them and influences the choices they make” (Herrera et al., 2011, p. 356).

A mentorship program that is supported by the teachers, counsellors and administration within a building most definitely could provide a level of connectedness that would support the social connectedness, development and well-being of its adolescent participants. Sipe (2002), in her research revealed that students who participated in a high school mentorship program reported more positive relationships with friends and parents and had better attitudes towards school, their futures and their community. These results are supported by countless other studies that found that increased connectedness was the primary benefit for those who participate in school based mentoring programs (King, Vidourck, Davis & McClland, 2002; Lee and Crammond, 1999; Randolph and Johnson, 2008; Portwood et al., 2005). It is also believed that attendance rates are higher for students who are connected to their school community (Randolph and Johnson, 2008; Kearney, 2008).

The link between connectedness and school attendance is not to be overlooked in the vastness of research that exists. Kearney (2008), research summary illustrates, school absences are a risk factor for violence, injury, substance abuse, mental health disorders and economic deprivation. Furthermore, Kearney (2008), concludes that youth with chronic absenteeism and school refusal behaviour are at risk for delinquency and school dropout in adolescence and various economic, psychiatric, social and marital problem in adulthood and given the strong associations linked to excessive school absences it is encouraging to note that school based mentorship programs have a positive impact on the reduction of school absences which results in increased levels of school connectedness. Studies show that the mentorship programs that include an early and continuous focus on social activities between a mentor and mentee, as well as the school community as a whole are key in developing and maintaining a trusting relationship amongst the

participants (Herrera et al., 2000). When these activities occur in a positive peer group the impact is magnified and students who feel most connected to school also report having the most friends at school and having friends from several different social groups that are integrated by race and gender (“School Connectedness Strategies” 2009, p. 9).

Emotional Wellbeing: The Impact of School Based Mentorship Program

Emotional wellbeing is generally considered to be “a positive sense of well-being which enables an individual to be able to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life; people in good mental health have the ability to recover effectively from illness, change or misfortune” (Mental, Emotional and Physical Health, p. 10). As we know with the bombardment of social media, the demands of a competitive capitalist society combined with the ever present pressure to look, behave and think in a certain way, the young people of today are faced with very serious demands and challenges that many would argue are unprecedented. In today’s world being a young person carries many risk factors which may have a negative impact on a young person’s emotional well-being, which can slowly or instantly destroy one’s self-esteem, confidence, and efficacy. Sadly, any of these factors can have a profound impact on a young person’s self-esteem and their ability to learn (Mental, Emotional and Physical Health, 2010). According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (2016), as many as one in five children in our classrooms may be experiencing a psychological problem at any one time, which means in a class of 30 teenagers, six students or one fifth of that class is struggling with the mental and emotional health.

Self-efficacy, in the academic environment, refers to student’s beliefs in their ability to master new skills and tasks, often in a specific academic domain (Motlagh, 2011). The self-efficacy beliefs are important as it is through these beliefs the learning processes, motivations,

passion and selectiveness regulates the individual's engagement and success in different areas (Motlagh, 2011). Student learners obtain information to appraise their self-efficacy from their actual performances, their various experiences, the encouragement and feedback they receive from others, and their physiological reactions (Meral et al., 2012). Self-efficacy beliefs influence task choice, effort, persistence, resilience, and achievement (Meral et al., 2012). Compared with students who doubt their learning capabilities, those who feel that they are effective at learning or performing a task, participate in the development of academic self-efficacy more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties, and achieve at a higher level (Meral et al., 2012).

According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue (Pajares, 2001). Individuals tend to engage in tasks about which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not and “efficacy helps determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will be in the face of adverse situations (Pajares, 2001, p. 241). Therefore, we can conclude that the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience. Efficacy beliefs also influence the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience as they engage in an activity (Pajares, 2001). As a consequence, self-efficacy beliefs create a powerful influence on the level of confidence and accomplishment that individuals achieve, especially in the classroom.

Given that numerous studies have found that mentorship program positively impact the self-confidence and self-efficacy of its participants, mentees and mentors, it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between the activities, interactions, relationships, supports and connectedness a mentorship program provides and how one views themselves, their abilities, their

resiliency and their ability to be successful in school (Rhodes, 2006; Pajares, 2001; Herrera et al., 2000, Portwood and Ayers, 2005 and Karcher et al., 2002). The vast amount of research illustrates the connection between self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence and should be included in the discussion to use a mentorship program as a means to provide secondary support in a unique and safe environment which nurtures, assists and supports the healthy emotional development of a child that is essential for success in school.

Academic Success: The Impact of a School-Based Mentorship Program

As a future school counsellor, one cannot ignore the expectation and responsibility to guide, assist and support the academic success of the entire school population. Given that timetabling, counselling, scholarship applications and connecting with outside agencies takes up almost all of the time a school counsellor has, finding alternative ways to support students in meeting the academic requirements for high school graduation, is constantly near the top of a school counsellor's "To Do List."

However, unlike the research related to the positive social and emotional impacts of a school based mentorship program, the research on the impact of academic success is not as conclusive. Not that the impact is negative, but rather, some research indicates little or no gain in the area of academic grade points (Randolph, 2008). With that said, some studies, such as those reviewed in Herrera et al., (2011) found a positive association between school-based mentoring programs and academic performance, as well as self-perceptions of academic abilities. In their own investigation, Herrera et al., (2011) found that despite the short amount of time (five months) that the mentorship program ran, "youth experienced modest academic benefits" (p. 356). In addition, the Alberta Mentoring Partnership (AMP), reports increased high school completion rates and enhanced academic motivation and achievement amongst its mentored youth. The positive

impact and connection between academic success and school-based mentoring programs was also discovered in Belt's (2002) research which reported 58% of its participants received a higher grade in social studies, languages and mathematics.

In 2015, Bayer et al., conducted a randomized control evaluation involving 1,139 students from 71 schools which participated in the school-based mentoring program of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and found modest but statistically significant improvements in both teacher-rated academic performance and self-reported scholastic efficacy of program participants. In a follow up study to his 2011 research, McQuillin (2015) discovered that mentored middle school students had statistically significantly higher math grades ($d = .42$) and English grades ($d = .59$), and small, but not statistically significant effects in science ($d = .25$) and history ($d = .15$).

Despite the statistically small and relatively insignificant effects of school based-mentorship program have on academic performance, several researchers agree that the psychosocial outcomes related to school based mentorship program, such as "increased school connectedness and self-esteem, are interrelated to academic outcomes and over time will positively influence academic performance" (Maerz, 2015, p. 7). Many experts agree with Maerz's conclusion and believe that the positive effects of school-based mentorship program on academic performance likely result from the more direct psychosocial outcomes of increased school connectedness, self-perception, and self-esteem (Karcher et al., 2006; Karcher, 2008; Komosa - Hawkins, 2012). This supports the idea that self-confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem are related to one's academic success, in that the more positively a student views themselves and their abilities the more likely they are to be academically engaged and successful.

Given the vast amount of research on not only the positive impact of school based mentorship programs but also the inter-relational aspects of social connectedness, emotional well-

being and academic achievement it is not a surprise that mentorship programs continue to flourish. Indeed, more and more teachers, counsellors, administrators and communities are looking to mentorship programs as a way to connect to youth, connect the youth to their school and their community. In consideration of the dynamic nature of education and the multi-cultural communities the schools serve, mentorship programs that support all aspects of a child's growth and development should be considered as a means to provide the compassion, connection and care that children and adolescents need to be healthy, well rounded, positive, contributing members of society.

Effective Practices and Procedures of a School Based Mentorship Program

It is estimated that there are over 4500 mentorship programs serving more than 2.5 million youth in formal one-to-one relationships the United States (McQuillin, 2011). Among these 4500 mentorship programs are different goals, policies, practices and procedures. We, as educators, advocates and supporters of children and adolescents, have to cognizant and cautious, that we maintain the highest ethical and moral standards as well as establish policies and procedures that form, direct and govern school-based mentorship programs that are aligned with the most current research and best practices. This is no small undertaking, but it is however a necessary one. It is with this in mind that Dubois et al., (2002) set out to review policies and practices of 55 different mentorship programs, in order to prove and establish, that when school-based mentorship programs employ theoretically and empirically best practices, program effects are significantly enhanced.

As a result of their groundbreaking research, Dubois et al., (2002) established 11 essential components of a success school-based mentorship program which include, length of involvement, contact frequency, mentor screening, mentor training, matching, structured activities, individual

supervision, mentor support group, ongoing mentor training and formal parent involvement. Each of these key elements when present significantly enhanced the program effects, regardless of the variation in individual program goals (Dubois et al., 2002). These findings have been supported by the research and reviews of several other studies which aimed to test the impact of these elements as well survey the common elements of successful mentorship programs (Portwood, 2005, Herrera, 1999 and 2004 and King et al., 2002). Dubois's research is summarized below. Included are more specific details of implementation recommendations and resulting impact.

Table 1 - Effective Components of School Based Mentorship Programs

Essentially Component	Implementation Recommendation	Supporting Research	Resulting Impact
Length of Involvement	one year or longer	Rhodes and Dubois, 2006.	increased relationship connectedness; high levels of trust between mentee and mentor; note: relationships that last less than 6 months or relationships that are terminated early have been shown to have a significantly negative impact on the mentee
frequency of contact	once a week for 1-2 hours depending on activity	Sipe, 2002.	More frequent contact could be done on weekends or special trips/outings; being conscious of mentor time commitment is important as well as transport and ease of access to program for mentees; should consider summer activities
mentor screening	essential for safety of all participants; goals and motivations for mentoring should be discussed; compensation such as reference letter, certificate also discussed	Dubois et al., 2002.	establishing goals and reviewing commitment to the program to ensure that the potential mentor and program supervisor are aligned in their vision;

mentor training	focus on practices, behaviours and traits of an effective mentor; at least 6 hours of pre-match training	Rhodes and Dubois, 2006.	effective characteristics include: open and flexible, active listening, attentive, consistent; connect with youth social network including parents
matching	should focus on interests, but do not have to necessarily match races; gender matching is encouraged; an age difference of at least two years; voice and choice for all participants is encouraged	Sipe, 2002 and Karcher and Nakkula, 2010.	should be followed up by consistent and continual mentor supervision, contact and support; a interest and strength survey should be completed and included in a mentorship training handbook; the more the participants are a part of the matching process, the higher the engagement level
structured activities	highly structured sessions that open with large group activities, followed by individual time and closed with small group interactions	Portwood, 2002.	activities lead by staff and supported by mentors are recommended, as giving more experienced mentors opportunities to lead smaller group interactions
mentoring relationship; monitoring	single most powerful and important element; trust, empathy are key successful and effective mentoring relationship	Sipe, 2002.	most crucial element; building trust is essential.
mentor support group	include issues/concerns regarding mentee safety; general troubleshooting;	Portwood, 2002.	regular support and training is associated with longer lasting relationships; feedback on current practices and activities creates collaborative atmosphere
ongoing mentor training	at least once a month; could be online workshops	Herrera et al., 2000.	regular support and training is associated with longer lasting relationships
formal parent involvement	letters home; information night; parent sessions and parent feedback via survey completion	Dubois et al., 2002.	parent ambassador for the program; could ease nerves of mentees; mentors should be encouraged to develop a positive relationship with parents

program closing; prematurely ended relationships	program contract that outlines expectations, time commitment, goals etc; procedure to manage unexpected closure; written policy for rematching; exit interview with mentor, mentee and parents	Rhodes et al., 2015.	potential for most negative impact; mentees who had their mentoring relationships end prematurely reported feelings of “abandonment” and increased levels of negative self-image.
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In addition to the effective components described above, The National Mentoring Partnership developed, based on the work of Dubois and Rhodes (2005) along with many others, Core Principles of Youth Mentoring. Published in the “Elements of Effective Practices for Mentoring” these core principles are; 1) Promote the welfare and safety of the young person; Mentee and supervisors should avoid actions that may cause harm as well as follow reporting procedures as related to the concerns regarding mentee safety. Decisions should be made in the best interest of the mentee; 2) Be trustworthy and responsible; Mentors need to take their obligations to the mentee and the program seriously. They should take care to honor their commitments and assume responsibility for the quality and duration of their mentoring relationship, even when facing challenges; 3) Act with integrity; Mentors and program staff have an obligation to communicate with mentees and their families in ways that are honest, transparent, and respectful. Mentors must especially be attentive to honoring their time commitments and meeting schedules, while always carrying themselves in a way that reflects positively on the program; 4) Promote justice for young people; this principle starts with the notion that mentors must be aware of their own personal biases and histories and be mindful about not bringing their prejudices. Cultural competence and intercultural empathy and understanding are critical to a successful mentoring experience; 5) Respect the young person’s rights and dignity; this principle is rooted in notions of self-determination and empowerment. The mentor’s job is not to “fix” the

challenges that confront the mentee or their family, but to empower them to take the lead in the direction of their own lives while respecting the choices they make. Mentors must do this in a way that is free of judgment and respectful of the confidentiality of the mentee; 6) Honor youth and family voice in designing and delivering services; Mentoring programs must incorporate the values, ideals, and preferences of their clients into the design of their services and the ways in which participants experience the program; 7) Strive for equity, cultural responsiveness, and positive social change; This principle recognizes that mentoring does not happen in isolation, but rather that it takes place in communities, that increasingly seek to address issues of class, race, and systems of oppression. Mentoring programs should be responsive to the racial and cultural perspectives of its clients and stakeholders. Given the enormous impact and responsibility a mentorship program has following these well researched guidelines when designing and implementing a program is essential for program success, positive impact and enduring support from stakeholders.

Although previously mentioned, revisiting the importance of mentee/mentor matching and relationship building is worthy of additional discussion. Many would argue that the student-teacher relationship is the most powerful indication of academic success and student's social and emotional wellbeing. This holds true for the mentee-mentor relationship. According to Rhodes (2006) the key to a positive impact on the emotional well-being of a mentee appears to lie in the ability for the mentee and mentor to build a strong, positive, trusting relationship and it is here where we can see the role social activities and interaction are connected to the emotional development of the mentee. When these relationship develop an authenticity and sense of empathy favourable outcomes of 70%-80% have been reported (Rhodes, 2006). These results were mirrored in Pryce's (2012) research which showed that youth who perceived a higher level of trust,

mutuality and empathy in their relationship with their mentors experienced significantly greater improvements in social skills.

One of the most current practices, which still needs further research, is to ensure that all mentee-mentor relationships have a positive impact is to train mentors in attunement which is described as the ability to have an understanding or what is wanted or needed by someone else (Pryce, 2012). The concept of and skills associated with attunement can be taught, self-monitored and self-assessed. Skills such as active listening, maintaining eye contact, identifying and responding appropriately to verbal and nonverbal cues, being flexible in activities and plans as well as including mentees in choosing and planning activities can be modeled and practiced even prior to program commencement (Pryce, 2012). Affective attunement has proven to be crucial in the development of secure attachment as well as a positive, integrated sense of self (Pryce, 2012). Through brain imaging, attunement has also proven essential to relationship building and it assists individuals to see themselves in others, therefore creating a shared bond, connection and sense of empathy (Pryce, 2012).

Attunement skills assist mentors in being responsive to the attitude, emotion and engagement levels of their mentee. It also helps to open the door of conversation. For example, by simply saying, "I noticed that you keep taking deep breaths. Are you having trouble getting comfortable or perhaps you are feeling frustrated, anxious or stressed?" When mentee hears and feels a genuine and immediate response to their verbal or nonverbal communication, this is interpreted as empathy, compassion and care, which are three most important traits in a mentor-mentee relationship (Pryce, 2012).

There are many essential and critical components of a well-structured successful mentorship program. By adhering the elements of effective mentorship programs, following the

Core Principles of Youth Mentoring and training mentors in the skills of attunement a school counsellor would be well on their way to building a successful, enjoyable and engaging mentorship program. School counsellors should always consider the race, gender, cultural, and religious make up for their school and their school community and should strive to be inclusive and considerate of these elements when establishing procedures, protocol and practices. Remaining responsive and proactive to the ever changing nature of the social, economic, cultural and educational environment of a school is essential to ensuring growth, support and long term success of their mentorship program. By being inclusive and open in the planning process, striving to engage all stakeholders during all phases of the program and remaining diligent in seeking feedback from teachers, administrators, participants and parents, school counsellors will be providing an extremely valuable service to their school community.

Mentorship is A Partnership: The Essential Role of Partnerships at All Levels

Famous football player and coach Vince Lombardi once said, "Individual commitment to a group effort--that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work" (Anonymous, 2017). To that quote we should add, "a school work." As a school community, the adults and students are all united by their individual commitment to make the school a safe, caring, fun, innovative and collaborative place to learn that creates an inclusive, welcoming environment in which students, teachers, support staff, volunteers and administrators display their best efforts, kindest behaviours and strongest character. In the ever increasing demands that today's society places on school makes educators not only responsible for achievements in curriculum, but also responsible for teaching self-regulation, character and global citizenship and to do this all while volunteer coaching, organizing school activities and supervising lunchtime and after school clubs.

Fortunately, we have also realized that a student's GPA is not the strongest or most important indicator of their success in school. Enormous amounts of research have been conducted in this area. One of the largest investigations of over 6000 schools conducted by First Year Experience, concluded that the top five, or "Big Five" predictors of student success and increasing the likelihood of graduation (Elmore, 2012). Interestingly, four of the five top predictors are outcomes of effective school based mentorship programs. The greatest predictor of student success, according to Elmore (2012) is a student's ability to get connected to the right people; the second, possessing adaptability and resilience; the third, developing high emotional intelligence; the fourth, targeting a clear goal and lastly, making good decisions. Knowing what we know about learning and the Big Five, mentorship programs, graduation rates, engagement levels and success students, gaining support to fund, create, run and evaluation a school based mentorship program should be relatively easily.

Parental Commitment and Involvement

Previously mentioned was the importance of parental involvement in a school based mentorship program. It is one of Dubois's 11 elements of effective practices and can be achieved relatively easily. Taking the time to personally contact parents by phone, inviting them to an information night and including them in an activity or event as well as seeking feedback are easy and necessary ways to ensure parents are an active part of the program and that their voices are heard. Appointing a parent ambassador to assist in promoting the program as well as seeking the support of the Parent Advisory Committee at both the school and district level would assist in reaching the community as a whole, as well as strengthen partnerships beyond the school building. During Karcher's (2002) research, parents commented that the program kept parents and

their children connected by involving the families in events and by giving the mentees and their parents something to talk about. This is undoubtedly a positive outcome that pleased the parents who actively participated in the program.

The Role of Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers also play an important role in both the referral of a mentee and recommendation of a mentor. Classroom teachers would have the best, first-hand knowledge of a student that could benefit from a mentoring relationship. They would be able to provide basic background information of the mentee, as well as be a point of connection between the potential mentee, school counsellor and potential mentor. Classroom teachers also play a vital role in advertising and promoting the mentorship program with students and parents as well as informally conversing with its participants about the program once it has started. Seeking out and recommending potential student mentors with strong interpersonal skills and character, who also have variety of strengths and interests and have demonstrated consistent reliability and responsibility is perhaps the most important and meaningful role of a classroom teacher. Finally, teachers should be included in the feedback process which should include not only the observations related to individual mentees, but also their general perceptions, observations, recommendations and thoughts on the process, program and procedures as a whole. Without the insight, knowledge, recommendations and feedback of classroom teachers, school based mentorship programs would struggle to establish and improve themselves.

The Role of a School Counsellor

Staffing a school based mentorship program is not an easy task. Recruiting, planning, developing, implementing, supervising and evaluating a mentorship program requires the

dedication of an individual, who believes in the power mentoring programs and is willing to work alongside students, parents and administrators to ensure a positive experience for all involved. School counsellors by nature of their job are the most obvious choice to take on such an endeavour, but including social workers and youth care workers as supporting partners would bring a different level of insight and expertise to the program. They could be present to deal with child safety concerns, address the issues of confidentiality and provide deeper knowledge and connection to additional child, teen and family supports that are available in the community. Indeed, a group of dedicated, like-minded and goal oriented staff members who are united by a common goal and vision would be a powerful, knowledgeable group to oversee such a prestigious undertaking.

The Responsibilities of a School Administrator

School administrators also play a vital role in supporting the desires to develop a mentorship program. Giving staff members the support they need to explore an area of interest and passion is perhaps the greatest gift an administrator could provide to their staff. School administrators also have the task of financially budgeting for a mentorship program, which is relatively inexpensive. Herrera et al., (2000) found that the average annual cost of a school based program cost \$567 per student compared to a \$1369 to run the same program out of a community based organization. In 2001, Portwood reported even lower costs associated with a school based mentorship program, costing \$84 per student/mentee and \$211 per mentor (DuBois et al., 2005). In Portwood's 2001 report, the additional cost of to the mentor included printing and binding of the mentorship handbook, thank you gifts and the printing and framing of certificates. According to these reports a school based mentorship program could include 20

students and 20 mentors for approximately \$6000.00 per year.

In addition to funding the mentorship program, administrators would also be responsible for any training or professional development required or requested. Administrators would most likely take on an active role in distributing, tracking and analyzing data obtained through the program as a means to explain and validate their decision to fund the mentorship program to senior management. Showing an active interest in the participants, process, progress and activities of the program as well as engaging in conversation about, and even participating in social activities would demonstrate continued support of both the supervisors and the students.

The Role of Senior Management

Senior management has a small but equally important role as all the other stakeholders. More formal and in depth support that includes additional funding for program development, implementation and evaluation as well as connecting with community members, and contacting potential community partnerships would go a long way to ensuring the short and long term success of a program. Senior management should aim to attend more formal events, such as parent information nights, gratitude ceremonies for the mentors as well as support the development and evaluation of the mentorship program by qualified researchers. Once the program has been developed, tweaked and evaluated, promoting and distributing the program with a guide to implementation for other schools would also fall under the responsibility of senior management. Encouraging the creation of a district wide group of mentorship program supervisors could be a direct way to demonstrate support of mentorship programs and also those who dedicate their time and energy to running them. This group could troubleshoot together, share experiences, collaborate on events and activities while being a way for like-minded people to

explore the potential of school based mentorship programs.

Summary

As mentioned in the opening statement regarding the importance of partnerships, unity and teamwork, the more people who are involved and invested in the development, implementation and evaluation of school based mentorship programs the more likely the programs are to flourish. When a staff member is supported in their vision and passion at all levels, it only motivates them further to ensure program success. Seeking support and investment in a mentorship program should be relatively easy, as educators are in the business of caring about and supporting kids. Educators regardless of position, years of experience or subjects of expertise, are excited about inventing, creating, collaborating, connecting and implementing interventions, goals and programs that encourage the development of social, emotional and academically healthy and well-balanced child. As John Donne, famously declared, “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.” We are, as educators a part of a larger system in which we all have a vital role to play in guiding, encouraging and supporting the next generation of global citizens who will be asked to be active, engaged and mindful in their thoughts, words, actions and behaviours.

Chapter 3: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

Summary

Formal and informal mentoring relationships have existed within our homes, schools, businesses and communities for hundreds of years. Since Homer entrusted the raising of his son to Telemachos to the founding of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters in the early 1900's to the explosion of school based mentorship programs in the 1990's, we have been searching for ways to teach, model, influence and connect our youth to an elder. When a mentee-mentor relationship is formed and solidified it becomes a powerful relationship that creates a trusting bond and admiration where wisdom and experience are shared with hopes of supporting and shaping the mentee's early life.

There are, for today's youth, challenges that the previous generation never imagined and given the ever-growing demand placed on school, teachers and administrators it is no wonder why the grassroots movements such as Big Brothers and Big Sisters mentorship programs have more popular and mainstream. These once small programs have grown tenfold, been adapted to meet certain needs, certain clients and certain communities. In almost every industry, every corporation and every place of education, some type of mentorship program exists - for new students, new professors, new employees and new management. The popularity of mentorship programs speaks to not only the need for these programs, but also their effectiveness, low cost and long term impact.

Schools faced with cutbacks year after year, larger class sizes, greater diversity in student readiness, greater diversity in language acquisition, a push for inclusive education for all students regardless of ability and more and more students and communities relying on the schools for social support to health and wellness clinics, after school sports and art programs have left school

desperately searching for a way to meet the demands and challenges of education and the role of education in the 21st century. Students struggle not only with academic achievement, but also with social skill development and emotional wellness. As Rhodes (2002) states, “mentors influence youth development, by enhancing social skills and emotional well-being, by improving cognitive skills and by serving as a role model” (as cited by Dubois, 2005, p. 4). Her statements are backed by the research of many others who believe that the dependent relationship of academic achievement, social skill development and emotional health are inseparable and of equal importance. King (2002) agrees, stating, “high self-esteem is associated with high academic achievement, involvement in sport, and physical activity, and development of effective coping, and peer pressure resistance skills (p.294). We can easily agree that the more a student enjoys coming to school, the safer and more accepted they feel, the more likely they are to build positive connections and relationships that translate into academic engagement and success.

Schools by their very nature provide a natural place for establishing, building and maintaining connection and relationships. Schools have been the heart and at the center of communities as a place of meeting and connecting for hundreds of years. Similar to the function and purpose of a well-structured and supported school, a well-structured, supported and supervised mentoring program has the ability to cater to, support, connect and empower its participants so that they can see themselves as an important part of a classroom and school community.

With the explosion in the number of mentorship programs across the globe, it is important to note, as revealed over the course of research and discussion in this paper, that not all mentorship programs are equal. Dozens of studies have concluded that the most meaningful and influential school based mentorship programs share common practices. These specific practices that have proven to be effective and should be included in the development and establishment of a school

based mentoring program. In his pioneering study, Dubois et al., (2002) established 11 essential components of a success school-based mentorship program which include, length of involvement, contact frequency, mentor screening, mentor training, matching, structured activities, individual supervision, mentor support group, ongoing mentor training and formal parent involvement. Each of these key elements when present significantly enhanced the program effects, regardless of the variation in individual program goals. In addition to these 11 components, Dubois and Rhodes in association with the National Mentoring Partnership, (2015) published core principles of *“Elements of Effective Practices for Mentoring”* which are promoting the welfare and safety of the young person by being a trustworthy and responsible mentor who acts with integrity while promoting justice for young people, respecting the young person’s rights and dignities and honoring youth and family voice in designing and delivering program services which must strive for equity, cultural responsiveness, and positive social change.

If schools are so fortunate to find a dedicated individual who is passionate about building, facilitating, delivering and supervising a school based mentorship program that person should be given support by their colleagues, administration and school district. With each of these groups there are important roles, supports and jobs which need to be fulfilled to ensure the proper promotion and execution of a mentorship program.

This paper aimed to analyze current research through an educational lens, by presenting the numerous and interdependence social, emotional and academic benefits of a cross-grade mentoring program to assist and support the development of the whole child. Through its summary of the most effective practices, its outlining of the necessary partnerships and roles of the school community including parents, school counsellors, administrators and senior management the author of this paper hopes to teach, share, empower and encourage those

passionate about the potential impact of a school based mentorship program to pursue the implementation of a program at their local school.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the numerous studies that exist on the effectiveness and impact of school based mentorship programs more research is needed in the creating, building and developing a program to fit the specific needs of a school and its students. We know that there are programs out there that have been created from scratch or have been adapted from already existing programs. What we do not know is the success rate, statistics, impact and effectiveness of these programs. If one was to consider developing a school based mentorship program, seeking the input of an action researcher to assist in developing benchmarks, standards, evaluation processes and feedback formats and procedures would be recommended to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of a program. An action research consultant would also be able to assist in developing mentoring match questionnaires and processes, which a critical component of any program.

Long Term Impact on Mentee and Mentors

A long term study that re-evaluated program participants perhaps, three, five and ten years after program completion would offer additional information and insight into the impact of a mentoring program and mentoring relationship. We know that mentorship programs that last more than a year are most effective, but we do not yet know the impact of program participation over the long term. It would be helpful to learn about the program's importance with the assistance of maturity and reflection from both the participants and the mentors. Finally, addition research regarding the impact on the mentors of a program would be of interest, specifically addressing the

question “Do the positive impacts of mentoring last after participation in the program has ended?” Positive discoveries could be used as a way to promote and market the participation in a program.

Socio-Cultural Data

Additional research that included a cross-section of participants would be of interest. Rather than providing a single school based program out of one school, it would be interesting to see the interaction, impact and relationships that resulted in a multi-school program. Here we might see a greater measurable and therefore, comparable difference in school connectedness and academic impact. This type of research might include a selection of students from more diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds which is also an area which needs further research. It would be of interest to see the impact of the same school based mentorship program that serviced perhaps an inner city school, verses a suburban school verses a private or charter school. Also of interest would be assessing the benefits of mentoring programs on different subgroups, including age, gender, racial or ethnical backgrounds.

Aboriginal Research and Programming Development

Aboriginal mentoring, informal in nature, has a long history that has developed around shared social values. Klinck (2002), reports that prior to European contact, “First Nation people had tribal customary practices for providing mentor-like guidance for children and youth” and children and their upbringing was seen “community responsibility” (p.110). Lafrance (2003), argues that the Indigenous family structure has been disrupted by colonial administration and the intergenerational effects of residential schools have “hindered the physical, emotional, mental and

spiritual life of community members” (as cited by Klinck 2002, p. 113). When assessing the engagement, connectedness and achievement of today’s Aboriginal youth, one must look no further than the graduation rates. In 2011, the Assembly of First Nations reported that from 2004-2009 BC First-Nations graduation rates averaged 36 percent, which is almost 40 percent lower than the national average of 72 percent during the same period (Omand, 2015). Graduation rates in the past six years have risen steadily by about 25 percent, but are still well short of the national average which also increased to 84 percent (Omand, 2015).

Despite the enormous growth of mentorship programs across the globe, mentoring programs designed specifically for Aboriginal children and youth are still rare, as is the research in the area. The research and reviews conducted by Klinck et al (2002) is perhaps the one of the most comprehensive reports that worked in partnership with Big Brothers and Sisters, Alberta Children’s Services, Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development as well as the Alberta Mentoring Partnership. In their report, the researchers call for incorporating general knowledge of Indigenous history and culture and call for mentoring programs “to be developed with the sensitivity to the fact that people in Aboriginal communities are likely to differ significantly from non-Aboriginal perspectives on optimal ways of teaching and learning” (p. 114) and that work must be done to honor the local customs, traditions, needs, wishes and values of individual bands and communities. In addition, Aboriginal communities face unique issues with developing implementing and evaluating mentoring programs. Initial problems, such as screening potential mentees with the use of criminal records checks had the potential to reduce an already small selection pool were also noted (p. 123). Other issues such as following local protocol in initiating projects, the importance of community ownership and integration of programs already in place where other unique issues that were raised (p. 124).

As noted by Klinck et al., (2002) much more research in all areas associated with mentorship programs, from program goals, community connections, matching processes, program length and frequency, feedback methods are needed. We also have to ask the question that for this specific population, are school-based mentorship programs the most effective, accessible environment for today's Aboriginal youth. The Klink et al., (2002) also explain the importance of honoring the process of establishing trust with the community which takes both time and patience and this is something that must be planned for from the start.

Mentor Training and Mentor Relationships

Despite the several studies that called for the highly structured and supervised training of program mentors, additional research that outlines what exactly should be included in mentor training and the impact of specific skills that are taught in training is still needed. This research should also include a frequency and duration of training aimed at developing a tentative schedule that could be used as a guide for future mentorship program development.

We also know quite a bit about the importance of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Future studies should aim to develop a more in depth matching procedure as well as seek to discover the impact of certain qualities, such as similar interests and how those qualities impact and create a strong mentor-mentee relationship. There is significantly less research in this area that analyses and discusses what type of support mentors find the most helpful. We also do not know if a check-in is sufficient, if one large initial training or ongoing training is more effective or what training topics are most important and useful.

Finally, research about re-integrating a mentee after a failed relationship would also be of interest. This too could provide a guide that could inform future program supervisors.

Other Areas of Research for Future Consideration

There are many other important areas of school based program development that warrant addition investigation. These areas include: program duration and frequency as well as program timing, such as before, after or during school hours; specific studies that assess middle school mentorship programs as well as transitional programs that link elementary students with middle school students and middle school students with high school students; comparative differences of program impact based on age and gender; improved measurement indicators and methods of pre and post evaluations such as individual interviewing could be explored; increase Canadian specific content; more in-depth analysis of the impact of a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds; community and culture needs specific programming such as programming development for disabled, minority and immigrant students.

Conclusion

Mentorship programs have come a long way in their development and implementation, but there is still much more work to be done in order to ensure that those who need and seek the invaluable relationship a mentor can provide have access to a well-structured, community oriented, supervised program. We know that when students feel connected, safe and cared about that they are at their optimum for learning, succeeding and thriving.

In revisiting some of the most influential research on school based mentoring programs, not a single one has claimed that establishing and delivering a school based program is going to be the key to solving the problems and closing the gaps of our education system. Far from it actually. What research reveals is that, only programs that are well-structured, highly supervised, regularly evaluated and systematically supported are effective. That effectiveness is quite small,

but it is consistent across numerous investigations. Perhaps the greatest realization is that mentorship programs and all that they offer, actually have a small effect size. However, when we consider the hundreds of thousands of participants, a small effect size over a large population is still significant and relevant. If students can attend and participate in a mentorship program that builds confidence, self-efficacy, increases academic achievement, develops social skills and support the health emotional development of a child in even a minute way, the improvement of one of these has a domino-like effect on the others. This small impact is truly what teaching and counselling are all about.

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