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MENTORING ACTIVITIES AND INTERACTIONS

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Introduction

There is perhaps no more common experience than the mentor of a youth asking himself or herself, “When I see my mentee today, what should we do together?” The answer to this question is likely shaped by obvious characteristics of the mentor and the mentee, such as age and gender, but also by where they meet. A male mentor with a male mentee meeting in the community is more likely to engage in sports than might a female pair meeting in the same context; yet matches of both sexes are more likely to engage in sports in a community-based mentoring relationship than in a workplace or school context. So context and mentor/mentee characteristics play a central role in determining what pairs choose to do together.

Less obvious personal characteristics as well as program-specific goals, however, also play an important role in shaping the nature of the chosen activities or focus of mentoring interactions. Where programs prescribe activities, it is easy to link activities to outcomes. But where personal choice enters the equation, youth and mentor characteristics may cloud a clear interpretation of both what leads to a given choice of discussion or activity topic and how any particular activity or mentoring topic may be associated with outcomes. Matches are often created based on common interests, and (regardless of whether this information is ever shared with the mentor and mentee specifically) matches are likely to gravitate to those activities in which they both share an interest. In addition, characteristics of the youth, such as his or her being at risk for flunking, struggling with peer relationships, and engaging in risky behavior,

may lead a mentor to stray toward discussions or activities intended to help the youth. Such conversations, however, may instead “cause” the negative outcomes they were intended to prevent (but which were already in the making). For example, as we discuss later, the use of academically focused interactions in schools are more likely to occur when mentees are struggling academically. In such a case, would research that correlates “helping with homework” and improvement in end-of-quarter grades (or attitudes toward school) suggest the improvement was caused by the help with homework? We state this problem up front because this chapter reports on a lot of research, virtually all of which is quasi-experimental or simply correlational at best, and from which no indisputable links between activities and outcomes can be made. For example, although some research studies we review report negative correlations between helping with homework and grades, correlation does not imply causation. We do not know if the homework help is causing decreased grades, or whether decreasing grades over the year led to mentors helping more with homework. Similarly, we do not know whether both the decrease in grades and the increase in homework help could be caused by a third factor. So please read this chapter with a critical eye.

Program participants often have unstated or implicit assumptions, expectations, or beliefs that influence the activities chosen or the interactions that occur during a given meeting. For example, the elementary-aged mentee may view the relationship as a context for fun, while the mentor views the relationship as an instrument to help the child succeed in school. Conversely, the mentor

may expect to focus on building a relationship and having fun in the match, while the teenage mentee may believe they should focus on completing tasks and getting something done (Spencer, 2006). The mentor and mentee also may bring to the match beliefs—about the nature of adult-youth relationships and about who has authorship in adult-youth interactions—that have as their nexus the individual’s own experience in families, schools, and other intimate vertical (imbalanced in power) relationships (see Keller, 2005). We believe programs will be more effective when they address these influences on activities and conversation choices in training, setting program goals, developing recruitment advertisements, matching adults with youth, and providing match support.

We wrote this chapter to help program staff and mentors think more clearly about the ways in which less obvious characteristics that mentors bring to their relationships can shape how decisions get made about what matches should do together. In the first section, we present a series of theoretical lessons and principles, born both from the larger fields of psychology as well as out of focused studies of youth mentoring relationships, to set the stage for a framework that we then present. This framework interrelates three important dimensions of mentoring interactions—focus, purpose, and authorship—in ways that explain the two predominant styles of effective mentoring relationships found in the youth mentoring literature: the developmental and instrumental relationship styles (see Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

In the second and third sections of the chapter, we summarize mentoring research and highlight youth mentoring program practices to illustrate the utility of this framework. We examine the empirical support for the three dimensions in prior mentoring research and describe how various programs prescribe certain forms of structure to achieve their objectives in ways that are consistent with the framework. One goal we have is to consider the role of context (e.g., community vs. school setting), mentees’ and mentors’ genders, and age of mentee to generate testable hypotheses for what types of activities are best for what kinds of youth under what circumstances. Finally, we address the framework’s limitations in its ability to fully explain the diversity of influential youth mentoring research findings and program practices. These limitations suggest the frontiers along which additional work is needed to better capture what we know about how mentoring activities and interactions scaffold and buttress effective youth mentoring relationships.

Theory

More than 10 years ago, DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, and Cooper (2002) identified in their meta-analysis of youth mentoring program effectiveness that providing structured activities is a mentoring best practice. Yet to date there has not been any one source covering the vast literature on youth mentoring activities and interactions. This chapter attempts to provide such a resource. In this section, we introduce a few theoretical principles from outside the youth mentoring literature and a new integrative framework specific to youth mentoring. We include theories outside the field of youth mentoring to illustrate the parallels between youth mentoring interactions and interactions in other domains, such as psychotherapy or youth friendship. When possible we provide models and findings for both structured relationships as well as spontaneous or naturally forming ones to consider whether the framework developed in this section applies equally well to natural as well as program-based mentoring relationships.

Understanding Help-Intended Communication: We’re Not There Yet

We begin this section by suggesting where the field of youth mentoring *is not* at this point in time regarding our understanding of the kinds of youth mentoring interactions that are most helpful. Unfortunately, we’ve forgotten the lessons provided by the first (and, to date, best) study of the nature of mentoring interactions on program outcomes: Goodman’s study, *Companionship Therapy: Studies in Structured Intimacy*, published more than 50 years ago. When Goodman (1972) published his findings, there was no field of youth mentoring research to build upon his findings or to share lessons learned with programs to improve mentoring practice. For example, his study preceded by 25 years Grossman and Tierney’s (1998) study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, which many view as the first rigorous study of youth mentoring.

One of the products from Goodman’s research was a detailed analysis of the types of help-intended communications that were most and least beneficial in youth mentoring. The six-type framework covered the major pieces of language any helper could use. It has been used extensively for training and research on help-intended communication around the world, but because there was no youth mentoring field to receive Goodman’s findings, his work was published in psychotherapy journals and lives on to this day. Goodman and Dooley (1976) wrote

“A Framework for Help-Intended Communication” for paraprofessionals (i.e., mentors and other helping volunteers). Their framework has since been refined and extended by multiple researchers.

Goodman’s framework detailed the uses and benefits of the following six response modes or “talk tools” that paraprofessionals use with their clients (i.e., mentees): questions, advisement, silence, explaining (interpretation), empathy (reflection), and self-disclosure. It is unfortunate that no mentor training (of which we are aware) includes information on these talk tools or help-intended communication responses that could provide important helping skills to mentors for use in their interactions with mentees. Field-tested analyses of these micro-level communication techniques could advance the mentoring field greatly.

Mentoring as an Activity Setting

Mentoring interactions can be viewed from a much more macro- or meta-perspective as well. Another mentoring research pioneer, Cliff O’Donnell (see Fo & O’Donnell, 1974; O’Donnell & Williams, 2013), introduced the concept of activity settings to help explain the ways in which community interventions work (O’Donnell & Tharp, 2012). In activity setting theory, “the context is integral to the nature and duration of the activity and provides purpose, resources, and constraints. These units of contextualized human activity are referred to as ‘activity settings’” (O’Donnell, Tharp, & Wilson, 1993, p. 504). Key elements of activity settings are the people in the activity, their social positions, the physical environment in which the activity occurs (e.g., school or community), time involved, funds and symbols associated with what is happening, or what purpose(s) the interactions serve.

Collaboration in activity settings as a development catalyst. O’Donnell et al. (1993) suggest that shared decision-making and collaboration are central to relationship maintenance in activity settings and that it fosters development and growth among participants. “When there is a common goal or product, people are said to be engaged in a joint activity. Activity settings in which people do not share a common goal or in which they are always in conflict are likely to be disbanded. To be productive, joint activity requires some cooperative interaction, which facilitates learning, relationships, and individual, family, and community development” (p. 505). O’Donnell calls this joint productive activity (JPA).

Reciprocity, mutuality, and intersubjectivity. One essential element of JPA is *reciprocal participation*,

meaning each person assists and is assisted during the activity, and through the interaction, individual and group (dyadic) competencies emerge. According to O’Donnell et al. (1993), a common result of this synthesis of competencies is the development of unique approaches to an activity or a problem, and “when this occurs, the cognitive development of each participant is facilitated (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)” (p. 505). They suggest it also fosters an interdependence that is motivating, heightens productivity, and ultimately yields what they call intersubjectivity:

Intersubjectivity refers to the similar basic ways that a group of people think, experience, and describe the world. Intersubjectivity develops through meaningful and often intense discourse over time (dialogism). To the degree that intersubjectivity is present, values and goals are more alike, more cooperation is possible, and greater harmony and partnership exist at some level. This intersubjective dimension of joint activity serves as a reward to its members and motivates their continued participation. (p. 506)

Our question, then, is whether these elements of activity setting occur within youth mentoring and, if so, what role do the processes of reciprocity (both partners contribute, direct, and self-disclose), mutuality (both partners benefit, partly from knowing they benefit one another), and intersubjectivity (a sense of similarity and kinship that results from JPA and works to foster relationship maintenance) play? To assess the utility of activity setting theory, we later look for the presence of reciprocity, mutuality, and intersubjectivity in youth mentoring research.

Advocacy: Going beyond the match (old wine, new bottles). Finally, a new horizon in research on mentoring activities has emerged, and this horizon is at the edge or beyond the immediate interactions of mentors and mentees. Emerging research suggests that when mentors advocate for the youth, by helping the youth communicate with adults in other contexts; help youth seek out or secure employment or educational opportunities; or otherwise act on the youth’s behalf outside of the match, the youth may improve more than when such efforts at advocacy do not occur. This is not surprising. Consider Mentor’s work with Telemachus—in the initial story of mentoring—and how Mentor helps the youth set sail on a voyage to find his father. The way he helps Telemachus is by looking outside the relationship at what the boy needed. But, as we discuss in this

chapter, most research on youth mentoring activities has looked at what happens just within the match.

Hierarchy of Interventions

We can talk about “what happens” in mentoring relationships at many levels. To better organize the variety of happenings, we present a framework for thinking about modes of responding by mentors to youth. It is based on Wampold’s (2001) hierarchy for understanding the elements of psychotherapies. This *hierarchy of interventions* in youth mentoring includes program approaches or mentor styles, strategies, techniques, and mentoring micro-skills (see Table 5.1).

At the top of the hierarchy are general mentoring approaches or mentor styles, like the “developmental style” or “instrumental style” described later. These reflect “theories of mentoring.” Below mentoring approaches and mentor styles are the

strategies that define them. Under strategies are the techniques that constitute the strategies. These are more concrete (and observable) rather than abstract (and inferred), such as “played basketball,” “went to the museum,” “helped with homework,” “talked about family.” Within any of these techniques will be a range of mentoring micro-skills (e.g., questioning, reflection, disclosure).

Each theory or style reflects a set of essential strategies, most of which are not exclusive or *unique* to any one style—they are *incidental* strategies added by the mentor or youth. The strategy of giving relationship-building priority early in the match is essential to the developmental approach and is unique because it is proscribed in the instrumental style—if it happens, the approach is no longer instrumental by definition. Some strategies are *common* across mentoring approaches and are *essential* to each. For example, the strategy of fostering youth choice or being “youth focused” is

Table 5.1 Hierarchy of Interventions: Youth Mentoring Styles, Strategies, Techniques, and Acts

Hierarchy of Response Modes for Mentoring Interactions	Unique (U) and Essential (E) to a Specific Approach or Mentoring Style		Common Factors That Are Either Essential to (E) or Incidental for (I) Most Effective Mentoring Approach or Mentor Style
Program Approach or Mentor Style	Developmental mentor style (Morrow & Styles, 1995; 1998)	Instrumental mentor style (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992)	Most approaches or mentor style with empirical support
Mentoring Strategies	Relational focus initially in match (U); Playful purpose (E); Problem/goal focus emerges over time after relationship is consolidated (U)	Goal-directed focus initially in match (U); Future-oriented purpose (E); Relationship takes on increasing importance over time (U)	Youth-centered or collaborative approach (E); Fostering reciprocity, mutuality, and intersubjectivity (I); Encourage youth (E)
Mentor Techniques	Discuss matters related to youth’s family and friends (E); Express concerns and empathy for the youth (E)	Teach skills, or set goals (E); Discuss how mentoring activities relate to future goals (E)	Teach skills, or set goals (I); Express concerns and empathy for the youth (I); Discuss future goals (I); Game play (I)
Mentor Micro-skills (“Talking Tools”)	Silence (E); Reflection (E)	Advise (E); Question (E)	Self-Disclosure (I); Interpretation (I)

Note: Consistent with Wampold’s (2001) characterization of psychotherapies as having common curative factors and specific factors (unique to a given approach), here we list what elements are essential (E) in an approach, which are unique (U; found only in one or a few approaches), or incidental (I, acceptable but not necessary). (See also Frank & Frank, 1991.)

common to both the developmental and instrumental approaches *and* is essential to both. Fostering mutuality and reciprocity and engaging in advocacy are strategies that are common across developmental, instrumental, and other mentoring approaches, but they are *incidental* (i.e., not essential to either nor proscribed).

At the bottom of the hierarchy in Table 5.1 are mentoring micro-skills. Goodman's talk tools (1972; Goodman & Dooley, 1976, p. 106) reflect such micro-skills, the most basic units of communication. Goodman and Dooley suggest that these skills are easier to teach, train, observe, and rate than language acts reflecting intentions. (Intentions tend to inform *strategies* that include *techniques*, both of which we assign to the middle levels in the hierarchy.

From this point on, we do not discuss language acts because the research at this level of detail in youth mentoring started and ended with Goodman's (1972) work. Instead, we focus on approaches/styles, strategies, and techniques that have been associated with particular outcomes. As we discuss research that examined elements of this hierarchy, keep in mind that any given technique or strategy may be common to multiple effective mentoring approaches or styles. This concept is not new, but rather is consistent with a long line of psychotherapy research.

Common Factors vs. Specific Ingredients: Psychotherapeutic Parallels

It would be difficult to argue successfully that how we came to view youth mentoring relationships—both their form and function—was unrelated to how we have come to view psychotherapy in the 20th century. Mentoring relationships, like therapy relationships, include a helper with heightened status, an interpersonal exchange of some sort, and a meeting that typically occurs for a prescribed time period and often in a specific context (e.g., increasingly, site-based mentoring relationships meet for 1 hour, as do psychotherapy sessions).

In the field of psychotherapy, two primary theoretical models have emerged that may be appropriately described as “meta-theories” (i.e., theories about theories, see Wampold, 2001). In the medical model meta-theory, specific problems are identified for a given client and the appropriate remedial action is prescribed. For example, if an individual's depression appears to reflect the presence of distorted (say, overly exaggerated) fears or beliefs, then cognitive therapy is prescribed to address these symptoms. In the absence of any specific (theoretically relevant) cognitive or emotional symptoms, psychotropic

medications might be prescribed. In the medical model, two concepts are central. First, the problem is diagnosed. Second, based on a theoretical model or assumption, a specific remedy is prescribed. The quality of the therapeutic relationship is of minimal importance, typically relevant only to the degree to which it facilitates or impedes the implementation of the prescribed remedy or procedures.

The alternative to the medical model meta-theory is the common factors meta-theory of psychotherapy effectiveness, which others have already brought to bear to explain mentoring relationships (Frank & Frank, 1991; Spencer & Rhodes, 2005). In this approach, the essential ingredients of the medical model (accurate diagnosis and the appropriateness of the remedial procedure) are viewed as secondary to the nature of the interpersonal relationship that forms between therapist and client. A meta-analysis of psychotherapy studies conducted by Wampold (2001) revealed that the choice of remedial procedure (i.e., the psychotherapy approach chosen) made virtually no difference once relationship, therapist, and client factors were taken into account. Most important were the strength of the therapeutic relationship (alliance), the therapist's belief in his or her theoretical model (allegiance), the therapist's ability to apply the model (adherence), and the client's hopefulness about the possibility of change. The extension to mentoring might be to suggest that it matters less whether a program is goal focused, relational, educational, or recreational. What matters most is the mentor-mentee relationship, mentors' consistency and communication skills, and the mentees' belief in the value of mentoring.

Rogers's Client-Centered Approach: Conditional and Unconditional Support. The exemplar of the common factors approach to psychotherapy is Rogers's client-centered approach. Rogers (1957) proposed three necessary and essential conditions for psychotherapeutic change. These include the therapist's empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. A fuller explanation of this approach and its relevance to youth mentoring can be found in Spencer and Rhodes (2005). What we highlight here is how these three elements relate to mentoring interactions.

Unconditional positive regard is the consistent responding by one individual to another in a way that implies that regardless of what you say or do, you are valuable, worthwhile, and important. In the case of mentoring, a youth might have broken the law, gotten into a fight, or failed a class, but ultimately that youth remains important and worthy of affirmation nevertheless. Such unconditional affirmation does not need to deny the failings or

misbehavior of the child, but rather it places them as secondary to the goodness of the youth.

Communicating *conditional* positive regard occurs when mentors focus primarily on the youth's successful completion of a task (e.g., class grade, completion of a project, demonstration of a specific skill). If youth feel their performance is what the mentor cares most about, or if youth feel that their mentors are most concerned with completing a task or getting resolution to a youth's problem, then the problem, not the child becomes the focus of attention. For youth to feel affirmed, they feel compelled to demonstrate competency of some kind. In this way, the establishment of goals or the need for the youth to demonstrate mastery of a goal can be antithetical to the provision of unconditional positive regard and, thus, counterproductive.

Problem-Behavior Theory: Conventional vs. Unconventional Interactions. Adults and youth bring in different views of the world, both because of developmental differences (see Noam et al., this volume, Chapter 7) and because the adult represents and typically espouses the conventions of adult society and culture, whereas youth typically embrace the more playful prerogative of youth and peer culture. As a result, what often happens is that competing purposes for the pair's interactions emerge. In a pair with a middle-aged mentor and a preteen mentee, it's not uncommon for the mentor to want to engage in an activity intended to prepare the youth for his or her future. Conversely, the child may simply want to play and have fun now. Attention to the distinction between playful and serious interactions has a long history in the literature on problem behaviors. Jessor and Jessor's (1977) problem-behavior theory suggests that youth trapped in a cycle of delinquent behavior tend to underemphasize the importance of conventional activities, such as those that meet the expectations adults hold for youth and that serve a society-maintaining function. Conversely, unconventional activities, while often destructive in nature (e.g., substance use, delinquent misbehavior) reflect activities and commitments that are driven by the immediate needs of youth to have fun in the moment, to affirm one another's status, and to demonstrate each other's social competence in the present. However, being playful does not mean being delinquent, and having fun need not be destructive in nature. In fact, Erik Erikson wrote in the later years of his life that the youth who can help an adult relearn to play can help that adult achieve psychological integration and wholeness. So, in this sense, being playful can serve an important purpose for adults.

The TEAM Framework: Integrating Focus, Purpose, and Authorship

In this chapter, we focus on the mentoring strategies and techniques reflected in the Theoretically Evolving Activities in Mentoring (TEAM) framework that we use to organize the rest of the chapter. The TEAM framework integrates Rogers's conditional and unconditional support, Jessor's problem-behavior theories, and Benson's "Voice and Choice" approaches by revealing their interrelationships with regard to the strategies of focus, purpose, and authorship.

Focus. Since the term *mentor* was first used, in the story of the Odyssey, there have been two primary manifestations of mentoring—through relational and goal-directed interactions. When King Odysseus left his homeland to engage in the Trojan War, he asked his friend and confidant Mentor to watch over his dominion. Retellings of this story have suggested the king gave specific instructions to provide guidance and structure to his son, Telemachus. The adaption of this story has likely come about as a result of the need for us to think about the roles associated with youth development, as if Odysseus saw Mentor as someone who could provide the paternal functions of guidance and structure in his absence. A close read of the story, however, reveals that Mentor's most important work was to nurture and support Telemachus. (Of course, these functions were provided by the Goddess Athena in the guise of Mentor, implying these reflect a maternal function; see Karcher & Herrera [2012].) So from the very beginning we are left to wonder whether a mentor's role is more to nurture the youth through a close, supportive relationship or to provide guidance, instruction, and direction through effective apprenticeship.

In more recent developments of program-based mentoring in the latter half of the 20th century, two different program types emerged. Some programs were more structured and goal oriented, reflecting the mentee-as-apprentice model (e.g., Hamilton & Hamilton, 1992), whereas others were far more relationship based, in which the supportive functions of an older sibling or friend were emulated (e.g., Big Brothers Big Sisters; Morrow & Stiles, 1995).

In the Big Brothers mentoring movement, the founders viewed the formation of a close relationship as pivotal and primary, while other forms of material support, training, and even advocacy were secondary to the mentoring enterprise. "In all this work of the Big Brothers, personal relationship has

been the kingpin. Its whole success has been due to the personal equation as expressed between the man and the boy” (Coulter, 1913, p. 268). This observation and its veracity were confirmed later by Morrow and Styles (1995), whose research is described below.

A mentor whose focus is relational is one who conveys an enduring interest in the mentee—interest in what is happening in the youth’s life, in what the youth values, and in spending time with the youth. Having fun; asking about a mentee’s family and friends; exploring a mentee’s interests, hobbies, and competencies all convey an unconditional affirmation of the youth. This approach says to the youth, in effect, “regardless of what you do or how successful you are in school, I will find you interesting, of value, and a pleasure to spend time with.” This is consistent with Rogers’s unconditional positive regard approach.

A mentor whose focus is goal directed typically views the accomplishment of a goal, the completion of a task, or the achievement of a skill as the primary reason the relationship has been formed. This belief may result from the program’s prescribed use of a curriculum, the suggestion by other stakeholders in the child’s achievement (parents, teachers), or the mentor’s own beliefs about what youth need to be successful. Goal-directed interactions are not inherently bad, but they do increase the likelihood the mentor will act in prescriptive, unilateral, top-down ways that hinder rather than help relationship formation. In fact, it is so important that mentors approach goals effectively that this *Handbook* includes an entire chapter covering the topic.

Purpose. The purpose of an interaction reflects the needs of the individuals involved and the reasons why each person thinks he or she is interacting. Purpose takes on two dimensions, a temporal one (now or future) and a values one (adult, societal conventions or playful, fun, youthful). A conventional interaction serves to help the youth to become better able to make a useful contribution to society. Typically, this means the interaction serves a future purpose, when the youth enters society as an adult. Conversely, if the purpose is simply to have fun and enjoy being together, then the purpose has a more playful (youthful) orientation and is more immediate—it does not specifically serve some behavior, attitude, or skill that will be useful in the future.

Note that a conventional purpose and a goal-oriented focus are not always synonymous, although they often accompany one another such as when the goals to be achieved are related to learning to write a resume, succeed academically, or interact more maturely in relationships. By contrast, learning to shoot basketballs is goal focused but with a playful purpose.¹

Over the course of a relationship, and perhaps even during every youth mentoring meeting, a balance of both types of activities—future-oriented, adult-purpose-serving activities and present-oriented, youth-purpose-serving, playful activities—seems most likely to leave both parties feeling heard and validated. It also conveys that this relationship is neither *just to have fun* nor *just to learn something*, but a balance of both.

Authorship. The degree to which each member of the mentoring relationship guides the evolving narrative of their story or time together conveys the authorship of the interactions. When youth make decisions—acting as authors—empowerment occurs. When both collaborate, connection deepens. When mentors alone drive the decision making, mentees can feel invalidated, interchangeable, along for the ride. The sense of feeling validated is powerful. Therefore, the youth’s feeling of being an equal partner in the relationship is critical to cultivate, regardless of whether the relationship has a relational or goal-directed focus, and a playful or conventional purpose. The instrumental and developmental styles, which each began with a very different focus, were highly effective in part because in both styles the mentors were youth centered. In both cases, mentors focused on the expressed (and sometimes not expressed) interests, concerns, desires, and suggestions of the youth. In the emergent field of positive youth development, this approach has come to be called giving the youth “voice and choice” (Lerner et al., this volume, Chapter 2). By putting the youth at the center in all decisions made about what the match will do, the youth is likely to be more invested in the activity, making it more meaningful or, in the language of common factors, instilling hope in mentoring.

We find useful Selman and Schultz’s (1990) definition of collaboration as the hallmark of effective mentoring interactions. As one mode of authorship, collaboration must be distinguished from impulsive, unilateral, and cooperative interactions.

¹ As youth age, their personal concerns gravitate toward conventional purposes—they want to graduate and get a job, for example—while the adult mentor may want to have fun in the match. In this way, conventional vs. playful is not synonymous with adult oriented vs. youth oriented.

When either person asserts his or her point of view and determines the course of action, the interaction is unilateral (such as militarily, when one country attacks another unilaterally). The deliberate, often verbalized intentions of unilateral actions differentiate them from impulsive interactions, which lack any thought at all. More mature still is when the needs, interests, and desires (i.e., perspectives) of two people are coordinated through cooperation (e.g., turn taking). But when each considers the interests of the other and tries to flex or accommodate so that they can both find meaning, satisfaction, and purpose in their interactions, then they have collaborated and created something altogether new and unique to their relationship. *Mentoring relationships that collaborate—where each participant is satisfied, feels heard, and is pleased with the outcome of the negotiation—empower and strengthen the relationship and convey an affirmation of the other person and his or her perspective.* Whereas relationships that are unilateral or coordinated (e.g., use turn taking), they may not be as effective as ones that are collaboratively guided.

Research

Using the TEAM framework to organize this section, we examined youth mentoring research in terms of the five key elements (relational vs. goal-directed focus; playful vs. future-oriented [conventional] purpose; and collaboratively made decisions). We conducted literature searches using PsycINFO (including the ProQuest Dissertations Database) unrestricted by participant ages, publication dates, or document type. Each search looked for the term *mentor* in the title, and either *youth* or *children* in the abstract. Then additional terms in abstracts were sought for each of the five elements of the framework (the number of unique references identified is noted in brackets): relational/ship or psychological/social [14]; goal or directive [20]; play or future [15]; collaborate/tion or interaction [6]; discussion or activity/ies [146 total; kept 34 scholarly articles]. This approach yielded 57 unique articles. Of these, 7 were excluded as referring to other forms of mentoring (e.g., new teachers), and of the remaining 50 that were reviewed, 11 were dissertations. In addition, regular searches of new youth mentoring articles in other databases also were conducted between 2009 and 2011, which yielded an additional 54 relevant articles.

In our review of the research, we identify whether the outcomes reported in a study, or the

outcomes we choose to highlight, reflect proximal outcomes (e.g., relationship quality, duration of match)—those presumed to lead to or enable distal outcomes—or the actual distal outcomes that programs aim to affect and that program stakeholders tend to care more about (e.g., grades, attendance, behavior, self-esteem; Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, & Taylor, 2006). Some research reports present associations between activities and key outcomes, like grades; others report associations with those proximal outcomes thought to lead to these distal outcomes.

Developmental vs. Instrumental Mentoring Styles

Developmental Style. Many think the mentoring research began with the Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program, though we've found research that predates this report by 25 years. Morrow and Styles's (1995) research, which was the qualitative arm of P/PV's dual qualitative-quantitative approach to studying the BBBS program, is one of the best reports on the importance of relational interactions in establishing strong mentoring relationships. They collected observations and interviews with 82 community-based matches over 9 months and coined the term "developmental mentors" to convey a style of relating with youth that focused on relationship formation, and that became the hallmark approach espoused by BBBS worldwide.

We use the Morrow and Styles study to illustrate the difference between a mentoring approach or mentor style and specific strategies or techniques. Many people have written about the "developmental style" as if it was a single strategy—focusing on the relationship. But, in fact, it is a true example of a mentoring style in that it includes at least three essential strategies. These strategies are forming a relationship (through the techniques of talking about family, friends, and other concerns), taking a youth-focused approach (allowing the youth to guide or co-lead), and changing over time from largely relational to more goal directed once the relationship is formed:

These relationships were given the label "developmental" because the adult partner in the match focused on providing youth with a comfort zone in which to address a broad range of developmental tasks—such as building emotional well-being, developing social skills, or gaining straightforward exposure to a range of recreational and cultural activities. Developmental volunteers responded flexibly to their youth, adjusting to any preconceived notions as to the

reality, circumstances and needs of their younger partner. Furthermore, these volunteers intentionally incorporated youth into decision-making about the relationship, allowing them to help choose activities and have a voice in determining whether and when the adult would provide advice and guidance. (Morrow & Styles, 1995, p. 19)

The preceding excerpt reveals two essential strategies of the developmental style—taking a relational focus and coauthoring their story, with youth’s needs given priority. The excerpt that follows reveals the strategy of establishing a rapport and relationship with the youth, allowing problems to emerge, and then shifting from a relational to a goal-directed, problem-solving focus:

[A]fter relatively extended and pacific periods primarily devoted to relationship-building—that is, to establishing trust and partnership, and enjoying activities—the majority of youth in developmental relationships began to demonstrate a pattern of independent help-seeking in which they voluntarily divulged such difficulties as poor grades or family strife . . . once their relationships were crystallized, nearly three-quarters of the developmental volunteers were successful in involving youth in conversations or activities that targeted such key areas of youth development as academic performance and classroom behavior. (Morrow & Styles, 1995, p. 20)

This style, present among matches that lasted longer and reported greater satisfaction, was contrasted by the authors with a style they called prescriptive. The prescriptive style included among its strategies a problem focus from the beginning and a mentor-driven approach that was top-down, lacking collaboration. Unfortunately, this style has been confused with the strategies of being goal directed, overly serious, and nonrelational. Fortunately, there are examples of effective programs that include a goal-directed focus, which is important because older youth often prefer such approaches (Noam et al., this volume, Chapter 7, elaborate this point).

Instrumental Style. In their study of a workplace apprenticeship program, Hamilton and Hamilton (1992) also used a combination of qualitative observations, interviews, and outcome data to identify more and less effective mentoring styles. Unlike the BBBS study by Morrow and Styles (1995), which focused on children in elementary and middle school, Hamilton and Hamilton’s program

provided apprenticeship mentoring to older youth that included, by necessity and design, a goal-directed focus. But what they called the “instrumental style” also included two other strategies, including a youth-centered or coauthorship strategy and a shift in focus over time from being goal directed (skill development focused) to more relational in nature.

In contrast to the BBBS study with younger children, Hamilton and Hamilton’s work with teens found that those mentors who saw their primary purpose as developing a relationship with their mentees at the start of their relationship were *least likely* to meet regularly, whereas “the mentors who seemed best able to overcome the frustrations of their task were those who combined the aims of developing competence and developing character” (1992, p. 548). It is for this reason, they suggest, that for high-school-aged youth, mentoring is more appealing and more effective when “it occurs in the context of joint goal-directed activity” and when “the relationship develops around shared goals and actions more than purely social interaction” (2005, pp. 352–353).

In terms of the TEAM framework, as shown in Table 5.2, we see that the developmental style is reflected by the middle position of the second row, whereas the instrumental style reflects the middle position on the third row. The middle position reflects the collaborative, youth-focused approach taken. The developmental style starts on the second row (more relational focus) and moves to row three (more goal focused over time), while the instrumental style does the opposite.

The Importance of Balance in Interaction Focus, Purpose, and Authorship

Two other studies, one in school and one in community settings, reveal the importance of a mentoring style that balances the strategies of focus, purpose, and authorship. The 1998 BBBS impact study by Grossman and Tierney, which followed Morrow and Styles’s qualitative studies, included several measures of mentoring interactions to allow researchers to further study interaction styles in the BBBS community-based mentoring program. Langhout, Rhodes, and Osborne (2004), in their secondary data analyses of the 1,138 youth (mean age of 12, or 6th grade), identified four distinct types of relationships: moderate, unconditionally supportive, active, and low-key. They found the most effective type of relationships were those labeled moderate, which included the strategy of “moderate levels of structured conversations around goals” and involved engaging in “slightly fewer activities with their

Table 5.2 TEAM Framework Presented in Terms of Strategies (and Techniques) and Roles

TALKING		PLAYING	LEARNING
<p>Behavior (Discuss youth's behaviors that were related to problems with peers, teachers, adults, specifically misbehavior. Some attention paid to relationships but largely the mentor's view of what or where the problems are.) <i>(Acts like preacher or principal)</i></p>	<p>Casual conversation (Discuss sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, fun things to do in the community, neighborhood. Omits talk of very personal matters, but both talk about relationship with parents, friends, and the like.) <i>(Acts like a peer)</i></p>	<p>Banter (Engage in joke telling, silly play, goofy unstructured games, or other nonrelational [impersonal] but light, funny, or entertaining interactions or conversations.) <i>(Acts like a comedian)</i></p>	
<p>Conversation on social issues (Mentor discusses news, poverty, local events, religious or cultural issues that relate to the youth. Mentor tries to foster attitudes that will help the youth. May use prevention activities to reach goals.) <i>(Acts like a role model or counselor)</i></p>	<p>Listening and learning (Discuss mentee's hobbies, interests, feelings. Mentee shares personal and important information while mentor listens, is empathic, affirms, and sometimes volunteers own similar personal experiences.) <i>(Acts like a developmental mentor)</i></p>	<p>Creative activities (activity) (Engage in relationship-strengthening conversations while doing youth-suggested or fun tasks like sports, board game play, drawing, arts and crafts, reading and writing for fun, etc.) <i>(Acts like a playmate)</i></p>	
<p>Academics (Discuss grades, school, testing, etc. or engages in preplanned academic support activities like reading or tutoring on a topic not initially proposed by mentee.) <i>(Acts like a teacher or tutor)</i></p>	<p>Future focus (Youth-initiated discussion about college, careers, jobs, goals, dreams, etc., or shared problem solving that may include mentor advocating for youth outside immediate match.) <i>(Acts like an instrumental mentor)</i></p>	<p>Indoor and outdoor games (activity) (Play board games, cards, chess, Uno, checkers, computer games, or puzzles inside, or catch, basketball, or soccer outside.) <i>(Acts like a teammate)</i></p>	
<p>Attendance and "stay-in-school" discussion (Conversations initiated by mentor about topics of concern mostly to adults.) <i>(Acts like a vice principal or parole officer)</i></p>	<p>Learning, school, or job skills (Future-oriented, youth-initiated learning such as in job, computer, reading, or writing skills; taught by and practiced with mentor.) <i>(Acts like a master journey person)</i></p>	<p>Sports, athletic, or outdoor game (activity) (Mentor teaches or coaches basketball, soccer, tennis, etc., or other in-the-moment activity of interest to youth.) <i>(Acts like a coach)</i></p>	DOING

mentors than did other groups" (p. 299). Youth matched with unconditionally supportive mentors (what the Rogerian model described earlier would suggest) did not see benefits and reported increased parental alienation.

Similarly, Keller and Pryce (2012) examined mentoring relationships in a BBBS school-based mentoring program using both qualitative and

quantitative data involving 26 matched mentee/mentor pairs. They identified four distinct types of mentors: teaching assistant (main strategy: tutoring), friend (main strategy: engaging), sage (main strategy: counseling), and acquaintance (main strategy: floundering). Only the latter style of relationship, the acquaintance, was unsuccessful. In terms of the TEAM framework, this style was

impulsively or unilaterally (not collaboratively) “authored” and lacked both a goal and relational focus.

Goal-directed matches in schools are not uncommon, as Keller and Pryce (2012) illustrated. The teaching assistant mentors were in a school program that encouraged mentors to provide academic support (tutoring strategy) and saw this as the mentors’ critical role. These mentors focused on providing academic help, and their relationships were goal directed in nature. Difficulties in some of these relationships emerged when the expectations of the mentee (e.g., for a more relational focus, fun purpose, or collaborative interactions) did not match the mentor’s academic focus. However, some mentees appreciated the homework and tutoring assistance. Our guess, however, is that these mentors (who fall in column one, row three of Table 5.2) were not ultimately viewed as mentors, *per se*, by youth unless they included a relational focus and become more reciprocal or collaborative in their decision making over time (i.e., moved up a row and to the center column in Table 5.2).

The friend mentors were relational in focus and directed their energy toward building a relationship and connecting with their mentees. Some achieved a more balanced focus by doing some homework or tutoring, or by assisting the youth with other problems, but the majority of the time was spent on relational activities (the developmental or playmate style in row two, columns two and three).

Sage/counseling mentors were similar to the friend category; however, they were the adults in the relationship and were more likely to offer advice to their mentees, and their mentees were more likely to share verbally. Youth matched with the sage/counseling mentors reported the strongest relationships, along with the strongest outcomes. However, note that the study was small and only 6 of the 26 mentors were classified as sage mentors. These similar findings underscore the importance of balance—a strong relationship is important, but youth also need guidance and structure for the relationship to be effective in terms of outcomes deemed important to funders and communities.

Focus: Relational, Goal Directed, or Balanced

Karcher, Herrera, and Hansen (2010) tested the relative contributions of goal-directed and relational

activities on relationship quality in school-based mentoring using data from 568 mentees who participated in Herrera et al.’s (2007) study of the BBBS school-based mentoring program. The activity data were drawn from mentors’ self-reported mentoring activities and conversations at end of year, using the SMILE log (Karcher, 2007), which measured each of the types of mentoring techniques illustrated in the 12 cells in Table 5.2. The authors found that both relational and goal-directed conversations were positively associated with mentor-reported relationship quality; however, the relationship between relational conversations and relationship quality was three times larger than for goal-directed conversations, suggesting relational interactions made a bigger contribution to mentor-reported relationship quality than did goal-directed interactions but that both were important.²

Use of the same activity log within the Communities in Schools (CIS) mentoring program with 456 Latino youth revealed similar findings about the usefulness of relational interactions, but also suggested negative effects of academic-goal-related conversations and a developmental trend suggesting such goal-directed activity may be more likely to occur in conversations with older youth and for boys (Karcher, 2004). In another report from the CIS study (Karcher, 2007), 224 mentors completed the activity log weekly, and midway through the spring of the first year of the study the mentees completed a relationship quality scale, which included the scale “Feels valued by the mentor.” The CIS study, unlike other recent school-based mentoring studies, which focused on younger youth, included a sample with over half of the mentees in high school. Karcher reported an increase in goal-oriented mentoring activities from elementary to middle school and high school, and a concurrent decrease in mentees’ reports of feeling valued. Boys, who received more goal-directed activities, particularly in high school, reported feeling less valued than did girls at all age groups.

Despite the evidence of the importance of a relational focus in establishing strong relationships in schools and community-based matches, there has been a move toward greater inclusion of structure and goal-directed activities in youth mentoring programs. This shift may be partly the result of DuBois, Holloway et al.’s (2002) meta-analytic

² This study focused on goal-directed and relational interactions but cannot speak to the relative utility of the developmental and instrumental approaches because we cannot tell whether relational or goal-directed interactions predominated early in the relationships. Without assessing this strategy, we cannot suggest that this research supports the use of the developmental style in schools. To do so would require evidence that relational interactions came before goal-directed activities.

finding that programs that included structured activities had an increased overall effect size of .22 (compared to .11 for programs without structured activities). For example, at least three programs targeting girls in particular have incorporated activities aimed at helping girls address the demands of peer relationships, think about career opportunities, and foster “voice” and leadership skills—all within the context of (or in conjunction with) a close, ongoing relationship with an older female mentor, such as through Cool Girls, Inc. (Kuperminc, Thomason, DiMeo, & Broomfield-Massey, 2011) and GirlPOWER! (DuBois et al., 2008), which we describe in the Practice section. One possibility is that practice evidence may have led to the creation of goal-focused mentoring programs for girls, who tend to be more comfortable with relationship-focused interventions but who may benefit most from goal-setting interventions.

Purpose: Playful Doing vs. Serious Talking

The activity log used in these two studies was built on the early work of Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, and Povinelli (2002), who found that activities were more predictive of positive outcomes than were conversations among young mentees. The authors collected data on 50 matches monthly for a year in a community-based BBBS program. These were young mentees (7–14 years; average, 4th grade), suggesting that the developmental style (which Morrow and Styles also found with young mentees) should be best. Parra et al. (2002) assessed four conversation foci (behavior, relationships, casual conversation, social issues) and three activities (sports, recreational, educational/cultural). From the perspective of the mentees, the best predictor of the relationship continuing and of youth benefiting from the match was playing sports. Both mentors’ and mentees’ ratings of how often they engaged in the other two activities (recreational, educational/cultural) predicted youth’s reports of benefiting from the match. All but one of the correlations between discussion topics and youth outcomes were not statistically significant, though mentors felt that discussing relationships predicted youth benefiting from the relationship. Thus, some evidence suggests that a relational focus best predicted outcomes. By far the strongest finding in this study was that for young mentees, “doing” (bottom right cell in Table 5.2) beats “talking” (top left cell).

Hansen (2005) examined 201 peer mentoring relationships as part of a larger study of effective school-based mentoring practices. The mean age of

mentees was 10 years (78% were White). Hansen found that 64.2% of high school matches in programs that focused primarily on relational activities continued on to the following school year, compared to only 18.5% of matches that focused on goal-directed activities. This same pattern was not found for adult mentors. The expectations of engaging in relational activities, for both the mentors and the mentees in peer mentoring programs, may be particularly strong. When this expectation is not met, matches may become disengaged.

Other research on activities and discussions looked at the interaction of the two and revealed that for many youth, *doing* is an important element of effectively being relational. Hansen and Corlett (2007) examined weekly activity reports by mentors in a BBBS school-based program in which adults met weekly with children for about an hour. The study involved 324 youth (half were White) with a mean age of 10.7 years (i.e., 4th graders). The mean age of the mentors was 23 years, 70% were female, and 77.4% were White. Six measures were used to measure relationship quality, including positive feelings and negative feelings rated by both the Bigs and the Littles, premature closures (closing before the end of the school year), and match continuation (matches that continued into the following school year). Their goal was to assess the correlation between these indicators of relationship quality and activities (talking and doing something). One of the activity log record options for mentors to mark was “just talked.” Mentors who reported that they just talked as an activity and did not also report engaging in a specific activity had weaker mentoring relationships compared to mentors who reported engaging in specific activities while they talked. Hansen and Corlett (2007) then examined how relational and goal-directed activities related to relationship quality. Relational activities, such as playing games and working on craft projects, were more strongly associated with match relationship quality than were those that were goal directed in nature, such as spending more than half of their time on tutoring or working on homework.

Hansen and Corlett (2007) found the correlation between relational activities and match quality was moderated by gender and age. When female mentees engaged in crafts, it was linked to a stronger relationship, whereas male mentees engaging in craft projects had weaker reports of relationship quality. For elementary-age children, one-on-one games (involving just the mentee and mentor) and crafts led to stronger relationships, whereas cross-match activities (in which more than one mentee/mentor pair was involved) led to weaker relationships. In contrast,

cross-match activities, especially crafts, led to stronger relationships for middle school children.

Finally, consistent with the balanced approach hypothesis, Hansen and Corlett (2007) found that a balance of the types of activities moderated the activity–match quality relationship. Matches that spent more than half their time playing games had weaker relationships than matches that spent about half their time or less playing games. Here we find that overuse of activities may be too much of a good thing, possibly precluding relationship formation. This supports the finding by Langhout et al. (2004) and Keller and Pryce (2012) that mentors who balanced relational and goal-directed activities were the most effective.

Too little research has linked distal outcomes with activities serving different purposes. It is possible that fun activities predict relationship quality (or perceived benefits) but do not similarly predict distal outcomes such as grades, behavior changes, and conventional attitudes. For example, with a group of elementary school children whose age would predict the need for interactions with a playful purpose, Wyman et al. (2010) used “school-based mentors” to provide structured lessons and role modeling in social and emotional skills through the Rochester Resilience Project. Their results revealed the usefulness of the more conventional approach of role modeling mentors. Over 14 weeks, mentors of 226 students in kindergarten to 3rd grade used a conventional, goal-directed curriculum to teach social and emotional regulation skills aimed at improving peer relationships. Using multi-level modeling to account for dependencies in the data across schools, the effect sizes ranged from .31 to .47, nearly double the impact of most other school-based mentoring programs (see Wheeler, Keller, & DuBois, 2010). Thus, this project enlisted mentors in role modeling conventionally oriented skills and lessons, downplaying the relationally focused interactions, and yielded larger impacts than many other programs. Some observers may argue, however, that this was not really a mentoring program, and that larger effect sizes often accompany focused interventions whose outcomes are targeted directly by the intervention.

Depending on the context, the youth’s age, gender, and skills (academic and social), and the purpose of the program, a goal-oriented, conventionally directed program may be most appropriate, while for another constellation of context, youth, and program characteristics, a more relational, fun, and activity-based program may be most appropriate. The evidence seems to suggest that programs that achieve a balance of these characteristics do

best. As Nakkula and Harris (2010) found in their study of relationship quality and self-reported activity focus data from a BBBS program, where the focus is fun, the relationship-based match quality will be strongest, while programs with a focus and purpose that are more goal directed and conventional are strongly correlated with youth satisfaction with the match’s ability to help them achieve their goals. The question really boils down to, what is it that the youth wants and needs?

As in all relationships, mentoring appears to have a natural inclination toward playful, fun interactions, and such interactions appear to be relationship enhancing. Pedersen, Woolum, Gagne, and Coleman (2009) conducted a 10-year longitudinal study with 639 mentored children aged 4–18 years (50% White) from primarily low-income single-parent families. At the beginning, the matches were asked to focus their match on one of three different areas: *healthy lifestyles* (camping, biking, etc.), *academic enrichment* (library, homework, etc.), or *fun and friendship* (movies, pizza, etc.). During the match relationship, mentors completed activity logs that were then coded for the three different focus areas. Pedersen et al. found that the matches generally focused more of their time on their assigned areas than on the other two areas. But across all matches, when they deviated from their assigned activity area it was most often to engage in fun and friendship activities. Additionally, matches that focused on fun and friendship spent more time together than did those matches focused on the other two areas.

Authorship as Collaboration

In another study, only the matches with high school mentors ($N = 212$) were examined to test the associations between decisions about activity choice and relationship quality (Karcher et al., 2010). Collaborative choices were those in which the mentor and the mentee chose together; unilateral choices were made by staff, teachers, mentors, or mentees alone. Youth were given three relationship quality measures: youth-centeredness, youth emotional engagement, and youth dissatisfaction. Mentors completed the Relationship Quality Scale, Mentee Support-Seeking scale, and an Activity Log on which they indicated the selection approach (unilateral selection by mentor, mentee, or staff, or the collaborative approach). The majority of unilateral decisions in matches were made by mentees ($n = 47$) and program staff ($n = 49$); very few were made by teachers ($n = 3$) or mentors alone ($n = 9$). Therefore, only the “mentee chose” and “program staff chose”

categories were used in the analysis. Collaborative matches ($n = 87$) had higher relationship quality than unilateral matches ($n = 96$) on three of the five scales. Greater dissatisfaction was reported by youth in both of the unilateral matches (mentee or staff deciding). Collaborative matches had significantly higher relationship quality assessed by mentor report, and mentors in these matches also felt “mentees more actively sought out their support.”

It’s Finally Time to Consider the Lessons of Goodman’s Companionship Therapy Study

In 1972, Gerald Goodman published the findings from his study of mentoring, which he called “Companionship Therapy.” In his study, 100 5th- and 6th-grade boys met twice a week for 3- to 4-hour visits over an 8-month period (average length of relationships was 141 hours). Many of the lessons learned about the impact of mentoring “companionships” foreshadowed debates and research only now being conducted. As just a few examples, more troubled boys gained more than less troubled boys, and Black youth benefited more than White. Outgoing mentors—those who were assessed as more open and less guarded—and those who sought out more training had bigger impacts on their mentees, partly, Goodman surmised, because these mentors used more self-disclosure (mentoring talk tool). Goodman also identified the characteristics of mentors that suited some youth best. The four dyad types he studied varied in terms of mentor and mentee outgoing versus shyness. Goodman found mentors who were more outgoing, less quite, and less rigid had mentees who benefited more from the program (Goodman, 1972, p. 241). “Outgoing boys with quiet counselors gain considerably less, but the group lowest in improvement was the double quiet sample” (p. 198). All of these lessons seem to put us right where we are now as a field—ready to understand for whom mentoring works best, with what mentors, in what context, and for what outcomes.

Most relevant for this chapter, however, is research on the mentoring process—those activities and conversations that occur over time in more and less successful matches. After each session, the mentors (called activity counselors in the Goodman study) completed a Visit Report form. This not only tallied the activities and conversation topics that occurred (as in Hansen, 2005; Karcher, 2007; and Parra et al., 2002), but also assessed interpersonal-closeness. The mentees/“boys” and their parents provided similar information at the end the companionship. Goodman examined patterns in closeness and interpersonal feelings at early, middle, and late

in the relationships. He found that match attrition was highest (a) with quiet mentors, (b) when the range of activities the match engaged in was more restricted, and (c) when less personal activities (e.g., movie watching) occurred frequently and less personal activities (e.g., sharing a meal) occurred infrequently.

Goodman’s findings regarding collaboration, self-disclosure, and intimacy are perhaps most relevant to our framework and this chapter. Although Goodman’s approach was client centered and the program encouraged collaboration, evidence of the importance of collaboration, particularly early in the match was pronounced. Early phases of the relationship focused heavily on deciding what to do, and so cultivating collaboration early may be critical. Conversely, Goodman found that intimacy took six or more weeks to establish; before that time, open conversations by youth about their personal lives were minimal. For these mostly fatherless boys, conversation about their feelings about their father was less helpful than conversations about their current interactions with their mothers. Regardless, key to the youth’s openness was the counselors’ self-disclosure. Goodman learned “disclosure begets disclosure” (personal communication). He also found mentors were more open to and honest in their self-disclosure when they had received training on how to perform this mentoring talk tool.

Additional Mentoring Strategies: Advocacy, Empowerment, Mutuality, and Reciprocity

Certainly other interaction elements have emerged in the research literature that are not covered explicitly in the TEAM framework but that deserve attention. These elements deserve attention, given the critical roles researchers have found that they play in youth mentoring. One of these, advocacy, goes beyond the mentoring relationship and sometimes happens outside of the dyadic relationship. As such, one might not consider it to be a mentoring interaction, but rather a mentor’s intervention beyond the context of the immediate relationship. Another function, mutuality or reciprocity, reflects variations on the purpose and authorship dimensions of the TEAM framework and deserves some attention, even though to date little is known about the role of these constructs in youth mentoring outcomes

Advocacy (and Empowerment). DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine’s (2011) second and most recent meta-analysis reported fewer

statistically significant program practices that were reported in the first meta-analysis. This change may be a function of the increasing use of best practices by most programs. One practice not examined in DuBois, Holloway et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis is advocacy, one definition of which is the mentor's efforts to help the youth bridge important worlds (e.g., school to work, family to school, friends to work; see also Cooper, 2011, for examples). In the 2011 meta-analysis, DuBois et al. found that programs that included an advocacy/teaching role had larger effects. This finding is worthy of further study: If mentors who systematically try to intervene and assist youth outside the matches have better impacts, then mentors should be trained in how to do this. A similar finding emerged in the qualitative research conducted by Ahrens et al. (2011) with 23 adults who were formerly children in foster care. One of the facilitators of an initial connection was the mentor's willingness to go beyond the prescribed relationship, such as by helping the youth to find a job or a place to stay or by assisting through making calls to people outside the relationship.

Several programs, like Blue Ribbon Advocates and Youth Advocate Program, explicitly engage in advocacy. In other programs it sometimes happens naturally. As one example, a recent article described the efforts of a Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor to help raise funds for her Little's medical and educational needs (Davis, 2012). Yet the research literature has only recently identified the importance of advocacy in mentoring. This is probably because advocacy takes a more ecological perspective that goes beyond the dyadic or relational one usually associated with mentoring. Yet it should not be a new contribution to the literature. Decades-old programs for youth involved in the criminal justice system have long understood the importance of mentors providing strategic interventions to help youth of greatest need, such as the Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.

It is worth noting, however, that in the DuBois et al. (2011) meta-analysis, the functions of teaching and advocacy were confounded (they were assigned to the same variable). As a result, the effects may really be a function of teaching rather than advocacy, or it may be that when programs teach certain skills, they use outcomes of those skills as measures of program impact (which can increase the size of these specific program effects). Had such programs been evaluated using a broader range of outcomes, as are typically used in evaluations, the overall effect size could have been considerably smaller.

It may be that research that has looked at the strategy of empowerment reflects a form of advocacy in the shape of direction and encouragement provided by mentor to youth to move beyond a comfort zone and into new relationships, work or educational contexts, or activities that could help a child achieve his or her goals. Some would argue that empowerment is exactly what good teaching is. More work should be done on this strategy, but we may use as a starting point Liang, Spencer, Brogan, and Corral's (2008) finding that role modeling was a critical element of effective natural mentoring relationships. This may serve as one mode of empowerment. In their qualitative study of mentoring relationships among youth from middle school to early college age, they observed, however, that the forms of empowerment that youth felt were most important differed between childhood and late adolescence. Older youth were more open to receiving direction from the mentor than were younger youth, who appreciated general support more.

Mutuality (Reciprocity). Liang et al. (2008) also found that the kinds of reciprocity and mutuality youth found most helpful differed developmentally. Older youth were more concerned about establishing reciprocity in the relationship than were children or early adolescents, perhaps because the older adolescents were more interested in looking like an adult to the mentor than in looking like a child. This may help explain differences in the value of role modeling by mentors for mentees of different ages.

From Goodman's (1972) early work identifying the importance of self-disclosure in helping relationships to more recent studies, we also find that reciprocity—the perception that both mentor and youth benefit and get their needs met through the mentoring relationship—is important. In Ahrens et al.'s (2011) qualitative study of graduates of the foster care system, mentors who sincerely disclosed their own experience and struggles with their mentees were better able to establish this initial connection.

Practice

In this section, we draw attention to programs that employ practices in the areas of focus, purpose, and authorship that seem noteworthy, and we make suggestions for practitioners based on the theory and research described above, which we summarize in Table 5.3.

Putting the TEAM Framework Into Action:
Integrating Focus, Purpose, and Authorship

Focus: Relational, Goal Directed, or Both. The decision about what a program should focus on—relational or goal-directed interactions—is not an either-or proposition. We should not ask how much, but when? Most effective programs seem to balance both types of interactions, which reflects the balance hypothesis of the TEAM framework. When each type is emphasized may be the first critical question to ask. When a program gives initial priority to goal-directed interactions, out of which relationships are cultivated, the program is more instrumental in nature. When the program is based primarily on relational interactions, but joint goal-directed activities are encouraged once the relationship has been established, then the program is more developmental. Being goal directed or relational is a strategy, but programs want to have an approach and mentors want to have a style that brings in multiple strategies to create their brand.

Some programs are heavily relational, and this appears to be their strength. Big Brothers Big Sisters is heavily relational, particularly when the mentoring is in community settings, but as Morrow and Styles (1995) showed us, BBBS couples this strategy with a youth-focused authorship strategy and an allowance for problems to become the focus of the match after rapport is established. Cavell's Lunch Buddy program (Cavell & Henrie, 2010), in which college mentors with little training meet twice weekly during lunch with elementary youth labeled by their school as aggressive, is heavily relational. The college mentors are just there to be a friend, and the mentor for the youth changes each semester. Although the program is relationally focused, what mentors discuss during lunch may take on a variety of focus, purpose, and authorship strategies. One of the program's additional strategies is for the mentor to engage in conversations in the present with the youth and his or her peers with the purpose of strengthening the youth's peer relationships and status.

Conversely, Drexler, Borrmann, and Muller-Kohlenberg (2012) describe a program, *Balu und Du* (Baloo and You), which has a strong goal-directed focus. Based on the characters from Disney's *Jungle Book* movie, this highly structured program trains and supports its mentors so that they can be more like Baloo (the friendly bear) than Bagheera (the prescriptive panther). Doing so requires a careful balance between fun and safety, relational and goal-focused interactions that are all the while collaborative (Karcher, 2009).

Cool Girls, Inc. (Kuperminc et al., 2011) is an after-school program that works to develop a positive self-concept, an academic orientation, a future orientation, and healthy behaviors in girls. The program is goal directed, using a specific curriculum focused on these areas. In addition, after 1 year of program participation, the girls are eligible to get a mentor (Cool Sister)—giving the program a more relational focus following the period of goal-directed activities, making this an excellent example of the instrumental approach. The after-school program was found to be effective in increasing scholastic competence, hope for the future, and physical activity. Girls with mentors had additional outcomes in the areas of social acceptance and body image and were more than four times more likely to report they would avoid drug use in the future.

Purpose: The Future and the Fun. We have tried to illustrate that considerable empirical evidence that mentoring relationships, like all relationships, thrive when fun takes place but also when a serious purpose connects the relationship in the present with the youth's success in the future. Balancing fun and future is a challenge, but several programs have tried to do this using a structured approach that integrates both systematically.

GirlPOWER! (DuBois et al., 2008, Pryce, Silverthorn, Sanchez, & DuBois, 2010) is a program that builds on the foundation of the BBBS program (e.g., infrastructure) but uses a curriculum that balances goal-directed and relational activities. The GirlPOWER! program provides 3-hour monthly workshops for girls focused on five different topics: pride, opportunities (for learning), women-in-the-making, energy and effort, and relationships. The authors found some evidence to suggest the program could be beneficial for the girls beyond the typical BBBS program, but they also found they needed to integrate relational activities because mentees felt less satisfied with the program when it felt too prescriptive.

The Take Stock in Children (n.d.) school-based mentoring program in Florida created a toolkit for mentoring in high schools. Their High School Mentor Toolkit provides rich sections with tips, ideas, and activities for supporting academic success through mentoring, fostering college readiness and career exploration, as well as conducting self-assessments. These activities would not work in elementary or middle school, but they are critically important topics for teens and in this way provide a way to address the potential problem of an overly relationally focused approach to mentoring in high school

that can be come too laissez faire and counterproductive (see Karcher, 2008). Of particular interest vis-à-vis the TEAM framework is not only that this toolkit provides guidance on how to be effective in using goal-directed activities, but early in the second section, the toolkit covers the importance of serving as an advocate for the mentee. In this way, this toolkit provides a needed and unique tool for mentors.

Authorship: Collaboration. When matches meet, they have to decide what they will do. Someone initiates the conversation, but at that point, the course of the conversation often gets shifted according to differences in beliefs about how adults and children should relate (based on cultural, gender, or developmental differences), different understandings of the meaning and purpose of mentoring, and different overall interests and comfort levels in engaging in specific activities or given activities in a specific context (e.g., it might be okay from the youth's perspective to get help on homework, but not in front of his or her peers at school).

Who is writing "their story" is a question we have regularly suggested program staff ask themselves, their mentors, and their mentees. That seems to make sense to them. They know that if the story of the match (as told by mentor, youth, or parent) seems to be all about the mentor's needs, goals, values, beliefs, or interests—such that any other child could easily be inserted into the story—then the mentee will soon become disconnected in the relationship. Because of the need for validation and the importance of reciprocity, the same happens to mentors if the story is all about the mentee or the program staff (e.g., the program's curriculum).

What happens in the match should be a unique combination of each party's needs, goals, values, beliefs, or interests. When that happens, it is collaboration, and it is good. Friends for Youth's *One + 1: Friendship Journal* (Kraemer, 2005) provides a unique way for mentors and mentees to document their relationship. This may be particularly useful for mentors of older mentees. It provides useful ideas about activities and discussions that matches can engage in across the first 12 months of their match. But most important, it provides regular prompts for the match to discuss and write about their evolving friendship. It is a graphically rich and visually appealing spiral-bound journal that may be especially appealing to teens. It provides an attractive keepsake journal that helps the mentor and mentee truly co-author their story.

The Cross-Age Mentoring Program (CAMP; Karcher, 2008) goes so far as to structure its peer mentoring interactions so that in every meeting the match works their way to some collaborative activity. Regardless of the content of the curriculum activity being used, the day ends with an integration of the mentor's and mentee's uniqueness in a way that results in something distinctively theirs, if only it is "their time" playing something they both enjoy doing together. But daily and quarterly reflections on the relationship, how they feel about the match, and what they have done that each enjoys or dislikes, also helps CAMP to foster collaboration. Finally, one curriculum activity, lasting 4–5 weeks, uses Selman and Schultz's (1990) developmental model and negotiation examples to teach the process of collaboration and perspective taking as a third way to foster mutual decision-making in the match.

Table 5.3 Checklist for Practitioners

Topic	Recommendations
Focus	Determine what the primary program focus strategy is, and whether this matches with the developmental needs of the children served. Identify specific (observable) techniques that exemplify that strategy, and coach mentors in the use of these techniques and specific talking tools (e.g., questioning, advising, silence) that match this focus.
Purpose	Determine where fun takes place in the program and how it is cultivated, and make sure this information is conveyed to mentors in training. Help mentors understand the ways in which serious, future-focused, skills-oriented activities are related to the youth's life and how to sell their value to the youth before using them.

(Continued)

Table 5.3 (Continued)

Topic	Recommendations
Authorship	<p>Help mentors understand the nature and value of collaboration.</p> <p>Help program staff understand the importance of mentors and mentees coauthoring their relationship.</p> <p>Help program staff identify signs that coauthorship or collaboration is not happening in a match and how to cultivate it.</p>
Hierarchy of interventions	<p>Train mentors in the value of specific techniques and strategies that make up different mentoring approaches, and consider mentors' skills, mentees' needs, as well as the program's espoused approaches to provide tailored training.</p> <p>Orient mentees to the approach(es) encouraged by the program so that they know what to expect and are more in tune with what their mentors expect to do.</p> <p>Train mentors in micro-skills or talking tools and show mentors how these different types of speech acts relate to program techniques and approaches.</p>

Conclusion

In this chapter we focused, not on the micro-skills or “talk tools” employed by mentors in moment-to-moment interactions, but on the macro-interventions such as whether matches played games or were engaged in more serious activities, whether they worked on goals or built a relationship, whether they were active and collaborative, or directive and sedentary. There is benefit in a micro-level of analysis, to be sure, but virtually no research addresses this issue, so it could not be a focus of this chapter. We implore researchers and practitioners to try to build in the lessons Goodman offers us about the importance of mentor's micro-skills, too.

Our goal was to present a framework of strategies that can be used to understand different mentoring approaches that programs take (e.g., Recreational Mentoring and Lunch Buddy) and different mentoring styles (e.g., developmental or sage style). With a framework for breaking down mentoring approaches and styles, program staff can more effectively design programs and training materials. By identifying the techniques used for each strategy that reflects a program's chosen approach, program staff can determine better what interventions are essential, unique, common, or proscribed. These efforts should help to clarify mentors' job descriptions and should help program staff to know what skills their mentors need to possess or acquire to be effective in their program. Ultimately, this should help mentors have greater confidence in what they are doing, boosting their allegiance to the program's approach and adherence

to correct strategies and techniques. It should also provide a more consistent experience for the mentee, whose better understanding of mentoring, resulting from the mentor's consistency and confidence, could help the youth to forge a stronger working alliance and cultivate his or her hope that this intervention and relationship is worthwhile. All of these are likely the mentoring common factors that are responsible for impactful matches.

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