

A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY ON A MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AND ITS
EFFECT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES FROM GRADES 9 TO 12.

By

Brian A. Simon

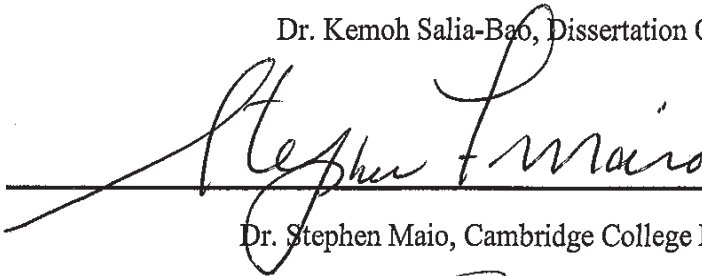
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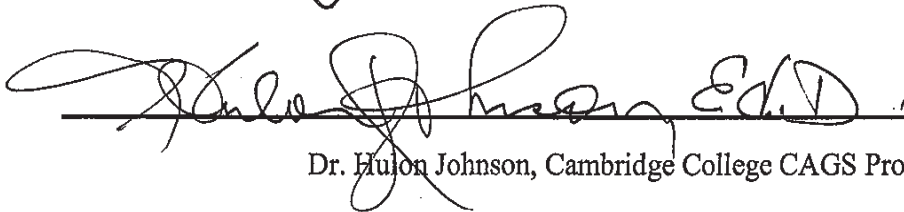
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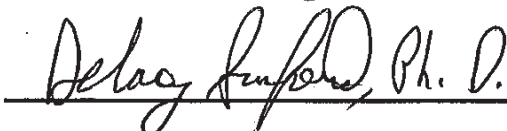
Dr. Kemoh Salia-Bao, Dissertation Chairperson



Dr. Stephen Maio, Cambridge College Doctorate Professor



Dr. Hulon Johnson, Cambridge College CAGS Professor



Dr. Delacy Sanford, Director of Upward Bound Edward Waters College

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BRIAN A. SIMON

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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Abstract

This dissertation focused on African-American high school male students in grades 9-12 who were involved in an established school mentorship program conducted by two African-American male teachers. Ten student participants selected for the study were nominated by their teachers because they demonstrated significant potential for dropping out of the school, which already had a high dropout rate of African- American males. The purpose of this qualitative study was to determine what influence the mentoring over time had on the students' persistence and academic success. Through carefully monitored privately and individually administered interviews with the students and teacher mentors, the researcher identified individual factors that appeared to hinder student academic success. The findings, which included evidence of higher student achievement and increased persistence, confirmed the value of a mentorship program. While this is one case study of a particular situation, educators faced with similar high dropout rates and low achievement of African-American male students may wish to consider establishing a long term mentorship program. The success of such mentorship programs may convince stakeholders, parents, teachers, school officials and taxpayers, that even in troubled economic times when all programs are considered for elimination, the value of a mentorship program should be carefully considered.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is a need to develop strategies for African American male students to be more successful at school and in life. In most aspects, the African-American male is the most oppressed group affected by the educational system in the United States of America. As a result, a major problem that teachers face today is how to increase the motivation of African-American male students, thus, helping them to do well in school, and to have positive feelings about their achievements. The question is how citizens can help African-American males (Barnes, 1992). As a result of the need to help African-American male students to succeed, mentorship programs have been created to provide one source of support to African-American male students. Mentors are teachers who try to establish a positive relationship with all students.

The goal of mentorship is to help African-American male students learn how to be successful in society. Sometimes it may take an activity, event, or organizational association to give African-American male students the motivation to be a sound performer in school and in the social atmosphere. The requirement to be a part of a mentorship program gives students some type of format for conduct. This format will hopefully result in better behavior, pride in completing a task, and the self-esteem that allows the student to become confident in himself. African-American males are associated with factors such as low school attendance, poor academic performance, premature sexual activity, lack of life goals, and lack of self-discipline. In addition, the dropout rate for African-American male students has become a major issue; negatively impacting the district in achieving required AYP scores (Annual Yearly Progress). School superintendents, principals, counselors, and teachers have all attended workshops

and numerous meetings centered on the kinds of programs that could best be implemented to retain these students at their respective schools.

Mentor programs have been deemed a method for improving the problem schools face today. Unfortunately, mentor programs have also often been identified as programs that could be eliminated on budgetary grounds. The elimination of mentor programs will not improve a school's performance. Mentorship programs can aid in improving education. According to Coach Kerry Demere (personal communication July 19, 2003), mentorship programs are an extension of the high school curriculum, and they prepare students to be productive citizens of society. The mentorship program also has instilled in students the qualities of leadership and social initiative. These qualities are essential in obtaining a job later in life. Demere asserted that mentored students possessed more of the qualities that have led to greater self-esteem, to sociability, and to a greater sense of personal growth.

This case study centered on African-American male students in a mentoring program at Ridgeland High School, in Ridgeland, SC, and its effects on African-American males at this school. The school housed approximately 582 students in grades 9 through 12. The majority of the school's population was African-American (78%). Many came from homes with single parents (56.9%), with most of the single parents being skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers. The participation in mentorship programs consists of 2% of the school's population. The research investigated vital information for African-American males being affected by the "negative label" that society has placed on them to succeed in school.

Research Questions

1. Does the mentorship program increase student achievement for African-American male students at Ridgeland High School?
2. Does the mentorship program increase the motivation of African-American male students to do well in school and to feel good about their achievements?

Significance of Study

The focus of the study was to research to what extent teacher mentoring strategies and school-sponsored mentoring activities impact students' achievement, thereby impacting students' behaviors and post-secondary success. African-American male students in schools need extra motivation. Mentors give their undivided time to make them productive citizens in our society.

The goal of the dissertation was to bring awareness to mentors and the faculty at large of the need to provide closer one-on-one mentoring assistance in supporting African-American males who were identified as potentially at-risk of dropping out of high school. Further, the aim was to monitor the effects of mentoring support.

Hopkins (1997) found that high school African-American males involved in supportive mentoring programs were less likely to be involved in negative, abnormal, in-school and non-school activities, including such behaviors such as drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse, or encounters with the legal system. As a result of these findings, there has been much discussion concerning finding traditions to inspire the African-American male student to perform well in school. Included in these discussions has been the subject of mentoring programs. Consequently, teachers have attended workshops and staff

development courses to better understand the African-American male students' academic development when they become involved in an organized mentoring program.

This study focused on the role and impact of mentoring programs in reducing the number of high school African-American male dropouts. Areas focused on in the study included building self-esteem, teaching character, promoting hard work, and instilling self-discipline. This intensive qualitative case study involved 10 high school African-American male students. Data was gathered on how strategies used by mentors would enhance the students' academic performance, thereby encouraging them to stay in school. Data also was gathered to explore how African-American male students would perceive the participation of mentoring programs as a motivational tool.

While the goal was to determine if the dropout rate of Black males is reduced through the mentoring program, its aim was also to chart the experiences of the participants in such programs, using a qualitative case study methodology.

According to Holzman (2006), the nation progressively distinguishes the emergent crisis upsetting the life probability of more than five million African American male students. Nationally, 52% of African-American males who enter schools in the 9th grade are graduating at the end of 12th grade. Inequity in special education and school discipline, among other effects, has shaped the kind of unequal statistics that illustrate an unsuccessful road to achievement. Public schools' African-Americans make up 17% of the student population and 41% of these are placed in special education. Most importantly, 85% of these special education students are boys.

According to the 2010 census, one of the leading causes of death between the ages of 15 and 24 is homicide for African-American males. At the same time, only 7% of

African-American males are represented in the population. Even more unfortunate is the fact that only 5% of African-American males attend college, while 32% of those of college age are incarcerated or on probation. African-American males represent 13% of all public school students, but they account for 18.67% of suspensions, which is twice the number of white males in suspension (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

In spite of the statistics presented, people in the community are insistent that academic achievements have been made. However, Wynn (1992) articulated that these stakeholders, parents, teachers, counselors, coaches, administrative leadership, and other community leaders, must assume an active role in protecting, encouraging, and nurturing African-American males from elementary school to college.

A compassionate understanding of these problems requires that educators truly have a desire to support the mentoring efforts. The socio-cultural environment which exists today automatically helps to shape the black culture. As a result, it is imperative that parents and teachers join forces and agree on their potential to help this population to achieve. Unfortunately, in today's culture, most African American males do not inspire other young men to work. Thus, the school is needed to step in to provide resources that are available to students during the required school hours. This is why school mentors are often teachers. They are resource persons who serve as great motivators for mental preparation. With the positive support of teachers and other school personnel, a strong relationship between mentor and participant can be fostered. Wynn cautioned that selected mentors, in instituting strategies, must possess familiarity, understanding, knowledge, and various levels of corrective expertise (1992).

Because the dropout rate of African-American males is so dire, the total commitment and full involvement of faculty is needed. There is no quick remedy for the achievement gap for African-American males; however, there must be consistency in assessing and implementing strategies, with teachers and staff addressing the problem. According to Wynn, conceptualizing solutions and clarifying the mission is a time-consuming, self-reflecting, hard task that cannot be avoided (1992). Proof that the participation of African-American males is underrepresented in gifted, honors, higher level mathematics, and AP classes further reinforces the idea that support is needed for African-American males.

Positive school culture and experiences are among the most influential attributes in contributing to behaviors promoting student success. All personnel, including the school bus driver, support staff, classroom teachers, coaches and parents are crucial for the African-American students during the school year if effective achievement is to occur.

The idea of African American males being potential failures can have broader implications. The inclusiveness of persons who might fall in the at-risk category could very well depend on the conditions that exist outside of school. The good fortune of public school success, however, could very well depend on the efforts and resources that are used to speak to the didactic requirements of the African American male student. Only when Black males are successful can the full school system be viewed as advancing towards success.

An understanding of the specific problems which contribute to and mold the attributes of academic failure among Black males must be backed up with empowerment

strategies which address the defined problems. It is crucial to home in on specifics since it has specifically been found that there is an overrepresentation of Black males on athletic teams, special education classes, and in disciplinary actions collectively; on the other hand, Black males are underrepresented in gifted programs, on the school's honor roll, and in college matriculation applications. The attitudes of student expectations are prevalent throughout the community.

In summary, this study has explored a student-teacher mentorship program as a tool for enhancing the achievement of African American males in grades 9-12. The results of this 10-person case study can provide strategies on how more of the school's failing population can be served.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature in the areas of mentorship programs in general, including mentorship programs for African-American Males, dropout rates, and African-American males' relationship perspectives. The focus will be on mentoring and its effect on the problems of educational underachievement of African-American males and the consequences for society.

Historical Background

Mentoring has been cited in history as far back as the ancient Greeks. Greek mythology introduced mentoring as a model to help youth develop successful skills. Most mentors have served throughout history as surrogate parents, assisting young people to become successful in adulthood (Quarles, Maldonado, Lacey, & Thompson, 2008). Mentoring has been viewed as a system of motivation and improvement. The process of mentoring is insightful, nurturing, and promotes individual growth. Several researchers from institutions of higher education have added different meanings of mentoring. One of the major points of the relationship has been the focus on the development of young people's comprehension abilities and skills. Shandley (1989) defined mentoring as a deliberate method involving dealings between two or more people. He noted that this process develops through the relationship with the protégé.

Paek (2004) explained that there are two forms of mentoring programs: formal and informal. In order to improve membership and keep minority students, formal mentoring programs have been designed. There are other characteristics associated with the formal process of mentoring. Paek stated formal mentoring is usually assigned by the organization. Although these forms of mentoring are of relatively short duration, they are

often highly structured (2004). According to Hansman (2001), formal mentorship programs have helped people to become acclimated to their environment. Furthermore, formal mentoring have enhanced learning experience through mentoring practitioners. This environment has also produced future leaders to fulfil diversity goals (Hansman, 2001). However, informal mentoring has been the common practice of most mentoring programs.

Theoretical Framework

An informal mentoring program has a unique association with two or more people for the advantage of the individuals concerned. Hansman (2001) noted that protégés are more closely associated with their mentors than other influential members of their family or friends, and are comfortable with communication. These two different forms, formal and informal attribute to different types of mentoring programs. Therefore, with the two different types of mentorship programs, one may want to understand the two styles of mentorship programs, which are one-on-one or face to face versus group mentoring.

Paek argued that group mentoring is becoming more of the common practice in today's society. The one-on-one process is becoming obsolete due to several modes of implementation for group mentoring. According to him (2004), group mentoring was associated and applies to the more strenuous issues that affect day to day operations in the business world. More factors are significant for the change to group mentoring. Group mentoring can enhance self-esteem, give a sense of identity, and provide insight into training needs (Paek, 2004). Moreover, group mentoring, instrumentally, can provide the essential motivation and inspiration for African-American males through teaching and modeling positive actions.

Budge (2006) explained that a strong sense of career advancement comes from and is provided by mentoring relationships. The major influence is attributed to the professional growth of both the mentor and mentee. She (2006) stated that mentoring was an important training and development tool which provided the necessary social skills in an organization.

Although there has been a small decline in college attendance for all students, the most serious rate of decline is in the case of the African American male students. In view of the fact that Afro-Americans males and other minority groups traditionally have viewed college completion as an important means for economic and social mobility, this decline becomes even more distressing. School staffs, particularly those of junior and senior high schools, need to recognize depressed aspirations about school continuance as a significant indicator of African Americans withdrawing themselves of going to college.

Mentoring African-American males is a cause for many broad conversations in most school districts. Most African-American males have a disdainful attitude toward school. According to Hall, structural disadvantages have had a negative influence on schooling (2006). He stated that academic underachievement, failure, and dropout for urban youth of color have been associated with a reduction in parental involvement.

Mentoring African-American males has involved taking the opportunity to understand the difference and diversity of male students rather than judging them based on their past (Hall, 2006). Hall went into further detail saying that the opportunity is a process that asks us to break from the complex images and representations (2006). One of the major concepts for mentors has been to connect with students whose vision is not focused on success. Hall mentioned true success in terms of mentors, teachers, parents,

school counselors, administrators, community workers, and policymakers who solely depend on the ability to change the course of peoples' lives and point to more of a true image for males of color (2006). As for establishing the relationships, African–American males have different perceptions on mentoring.

Most mentoring relationships are based on a specific period. Hall stated that mentoring possibly will expand more than a semester, and could go on for months, or even years (2006). There are several models of social collaboration. This opportunity normally gives the chance for the mentor and mentee to have a break from one another.

The classical form of mentoring is one of the oldest forms. In the classical form, the oldest, most experienced mentor motivates the younger, less experienced mentee by concentrating on the data as personal responsibility (Hall, 2006). Hall reiterated the objective is to serve as a professional helper or role model (2006). More often in this form, mentors have been involved with youth on several levels.

Several forms of mentoring have focused on the academic growth of youths. The major goal for this form has been to improve several dimensions of young people's lives (Hall, 2006). In an effort to connect mentees to someone in the school or community, it has been imperative for them to be with an individual who has that individual's best interests at heart. According to Hall, mentors have achieved good rapport with African American males in different ways, including being a guide, tutor, advocate, and a friend, to shape one's life in a positive manner (Hall, 2006). Furthermore, mentees have had a great opportunity in which specific models are incorporated in their daily routine.

Summary and Implications

Mentoring functions on several levels. Hall stated that there are two basic levels of mentor-mentee interactions that may have some effects on different levels of involvement (2006). Some of the first episodes of mentor-mentee interaction can be described as achieving a sense of “being related.” The first interaction finds the mentor having a connection of kinship or family relation (Hall, 2006). This has been noted as being similar to a relationship with an uncle or aunt, who might help shape the relationship with a mentee. According to Hall, these mentors have been very active in their lives, and have been familiar with the mentees families, friends, and even teachers (2006). Hall (2006) pointed to such relationships as providing a long-term bond.

The second most prevalent model has been a friend-like relationship. Hall stated that here the mentor spends less time with the mentee, and is not attached emotionally (2006). This role of the mentor does not offer interaction with the mentee on a day-to-day basis. As Hall (2006) reported, such mentors are not familiar with family, friends, or teachers. Hall stated, however, that mentors can still serve as an advocate, tutor, or guide in an effort to help the mentee (2006).

School- based programs are essential to the development to the mentee. Society presents several factors relating to the success of school-based mentoring programs. Hall noted that the general purpose of mentoring is to bolster young people’s self-esteem, advance their knowledge and skills, and expand their social network (2006).

School-based mentoring programs have been viewed as motivators to help mentees focus on survival in society. According to Hall, school-based mentoring programs have created significant experiences for students to develop career directions (2006).

Mentoring programs were cited as the earliest and most visible indicator of potential solutions in school (Hall, 2006). The researchers further asserted that the mentorship concept receives high accolades from a wide range of students. Mentorship has had global appeal and praise because it has worked, according to Hall(2006).

Effective mentorship programs can be constructed only if participants establish a strong and clear conceptual foundation (Burrell et al., 2001). The critical elements for effective mentoring are relationships, creativity, purpose and personal investment. Participants need a clear vision in conjunction with a structured mentoring program. Wood (2003) argued that participants should have a functional understanding of what their specific mentoring relationship should entail. This understanding is essential if the participants are to commit to the mentoring program willingly, execute it with sincere commitment to its success, and recognize and embrace its outcomes with confidence that promotes growth. Researchers have identified several qualities mentors should possess that would be both attractive and useful to the protégé. Secondary students who have experienced success in their educational programs can be expected to display basic qualities related to successful mentors (LaVant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997).

Mentoring programs have appeared to be effective in decreasing some of the most difficult behaviors of students while increasing their positive social contact skills and self-perception (LaVant, Anderson, & Tiggs, 1997). Additionally, the student protégés spent more time engaged in academic tasks. Optimistic outcomes, identified as benefits of tutoring and outcomes of other scholars, have been linked with mentorship.

Dropout rates and school continuation rates are closely linked. Hopkins (1977) said that the most salient and readily observable indicator of educational failure is the

dropout rate. Whereas problems of conceptualizing and measuring dropout rates are difficult for school officials, the concept provides a reasonably straightforward indicator of how well the educational system is doing. Clearly, given prevailing cultural and social perceptions of the meaning of a high school diploma, a decision to leave school before graduation can only be interpreted as a failure for the school district and the student and his family (Hopkins, 1997). The next step is the student's decision to continue to college. Hopkins (1997) contended in his study of youth that students are likely to stay in school if they are enrolled in a college preparatory program and expect to attend college. School staffs, particularly those of junior and senior high schools, need to recognize depressed aspirations regarding school continuance as a significant indicator requiring their attention.

There are several components that can deter students from dropping out of school. First, a winning dropout deterrence endeavor must be responsive to the precise state of affairs of the at-risk students. A school program, for example, that works with school-aged mothers will develop an intervention strategy to address needs that differ from the needs of youth whose poor attendance is a function of serious home problems.

In the category called positive interaction, Polite and Davis (1999) stated that at-risk learners manipulated their leisure completely and were significantly occupied in school. Active involvement in extracurricular activities at school and in other areas seemed to provide a refuge for African-American male students. This involvement did not leave students with much spare time. Additional activities, such as personal interest, games, and organization helped the growth of self-esteem according to Polite and Davis (1999). Hall (2006) added that being involved in an activity was considered special.

He believed that activity appears to increase self-esteem and the ability to succeed.

Accomplishments in these actions may have been significant in enhancing self-esteem by providing credit and a sense of achievement (Hall, 2006).

The last category is the school factor. The African-American male student seems to find support outside of the home environment. These students in general like school or at least tolerate it. Hall (2006) noted that school was more than academics for these students. Most African-American male students have been involved in at least one extracurricular event or activity, which became for them an informal source of support (Hall, 2006). According to Hrabowski III, Maton, and Grei, (1998), extracurricular activity not only amplified participation, belonging and self-esteem, it also supplied a set of connections for people. Mentoring programs, especially at school, seemed to mitigate the influential and widespread peer pressure for mentees to fail (Hall, 2006). Hopkins (1997) asserted that involvement in extracurricular activities maintained the African-American male student's positive engagement in school.

Tatum (2005) made note that these schools were also staffed with under-qualified personnel who could not address their students' literacy needs. We explore this problem because of teachers having low expectations about their students' ability to meet high academic standards. It has been shown that other poor ethnic groups, including Asians and whites, outperform poor black males on reading assessments (Hall, 2006). Black males have been perceived as academically inferior and intellectually incapable of handling cognitively challenging material (Tatum, 2005).

Some of the keys to success can be clearly defined from a number of factors related to parents. Hrabowski III, Maton, and Greif (1998) opined that there are five factors:

- Parents reading to their sons at an early age;
 - Parents viewing education as valuable and necessary;
 - Parents actively encouraging academic success; and
 - Tough parental attention in homework, and significant oral praise.
- Parents provide love, leadership, and sincerity for their sons success

The success of African-American males has also been attributed to the expression of love and caring from the parents. The attention received is replicated in the work of the African- American males in class (Hall 2006).

Other obstacles have caused African-American males problems in pursuit of academic achievement. Hall (2006) spoke about teenagers sharing different perspectives and other experiences when it comes to building one's character. Hall mentioned that teenagers fight internal forces such as puberty, egocentrism, sexual orientation and confusion, insecurity, disillusionment, and depression. Males of color, according to Hall (2006), have demonstrated problems with masculinity and racial awareness. Hall (2006) noted that these obstacles can be attributed to low academic achievement, delinquency, substance abuse, premature sexual activity, alienation, and acts of aggression and violence toward others.

African-American males have viewed school differently from their white counterparts. Hall (2006) stated that the views about schools are no different than they

are about any other institution that determines or undermines African-American males' culture or stance in society. He further explained that African-American males see schools as sites of intolerance, oppression and dehumanization.

Teachers take part as a highly influential person in the achievement of African-American male students. Caring, ongoing support, and instructional support are three emergent themes that have mentioned as necessities for African-American males to be successful (Murray & Narranjo, 2008). Both interpersonal associations and specialized competencies are important to African-American male students. The African-American male students mentioned the following qualities of a teacher: being gentle, giving and gaining respect as learners, listening without being evasive and providing support. African-American male students also looked at the importance of professional behavior.

Teachers, administrators, and counselors have to be educated and optimistic to provide classroom activities and classroom environments that stress elevated educational accomplishment to produce self-esteem and self-confidence in students. Teachers need to be conscious of the disparity between high expectations and high standards. High expectations reflect what students are capable of doing and attaining, although high standards do not unavoidably suggest those students can reach them. In addition, teachers need to be made available with training and encouragement to develop relationships that benefit African-American male students. These students need teachers who are courteous, thoughtful, sincere, enduring, open-minded, and trustworthy. African-American male students also need teachers who understand learning styles, expect positive results and recognize cultural norms and differences (Haynes, 2008).

For African American males in particular, it is necessary to feel safe and trust their teachers to protect them from violence, argued Haynes(2008).These needs can be described to be effective. The African-American male expresses himself as a student by developing a pivotal role in learning effective and adaptive problem-solving skills as alternatives to disruptive behavior (Haynes, 2008). This process enables students to focus on a positive school environment. Students in a mentoring program have an influence on other student's to have effectiveness and ambition on a positive vision of the future. According to Quarles et al.(2008), this belief of success in school, establishes individuals' judgments in reference to individual assets to manage and infuse mandatory goals of action that will develop preferred solutions. Children learn the extent of their choices as young adults during their teenage years to help mold their future. Therefore, resources for the disadvantaged youth have been neither attainable nor plentiful (Quarles, Maldonado, Lacey, & Thompson, 2008). However, the involvement of mentoring has continued to have positive influence on student development.

An organized mentoring program has encouraged a continuation of healthy psychosocial development. Taking part in a mentorship has been noted to reduce absenteeism and lower the dropout rate among high school students (Gensemer, 2000).It is imperative that one should set goals. African American males should experience a sense of pride if goals are reached or the feelings of anguish if goals are not reached. Once an individual becomes an adult, the same feelings should come into play with respect to jobs or careers.

Mentoring is a program under the school umbrella. The relationship of mentoring and school is like the relationship of parent and child. When the child does well in school

and the social arena, the parent accepts some type of credit in raising a good, hard-working child. So, when mentees do well in class, the school gets some type of credit in having good mentors and students.

Mentoring can also help schools in other areas with students. As stated earlier by Gensemer (2000), schools have needed to develop programs to reduce the number of dropouts. Mentoring can be a form of dropout prevention. According to G. Tinsley (personal communication, March 10, 2006), mentoring can aid or enhance African-American male students' performance academically, reduce discipline problems, encourage staying in school, and encourage African-American male students to attend postsecondary school.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology for this dissertation was a qualitative case study on mentoring focusing on 12 individuals. The type of qualitative case study conducted here was a collective case study. Collective case studies are used to illustrate an issue, but the inquirer selects multiple cases (Creswell, 2007). Abundance of data must be assembled in order for the researcher to analyze as well as theorize about the problem.

Participants

In this case study, there were 12 participants. The first ten participants were African-American male students. In addition, there were two African-American male teachers who randomly nominated the African-American male students. The criteria used included students identified as African-American males who were classified as students in high school, grades 9-12. The rationale for having only 10 African-American male students was to develop a focus group that could easily be contained for the investigation, and also to have a significant number of subjects available so that enough information would be available to produce revealing results concerning how the mentoring program affected the African-American male students.

Two African-American male teachers participated in this study, serving as mentors. These teachers were selected because of the critical role they would play in contributing to the students' success. They constituted the role models that would be vital for African-American males striving for success. Furthermore, they were responsible for the overseeing the school's mentorship program. The only criterion for this selection was that the teachers have knowledge of the students by virtue of teaching them as students

for at least one year. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity and confidentiality of the participants in the study.

The student participants were the target population. They were African-American male students at Ridgeland High School who were under the age of 18. They were required to give consent from parents to participate in the study.

Setting and Demographics

These African-American male students attended a rural public secondary school that has housed approximately 582 students in grades 9 through 12. The school was in southeastern South Carolina. The majority of the school population was African-American (78%). Many homes had single parents (56.91%) with most of the single parents being skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled workers. The participation in mentorship programs consisted of 2% of the school's population.

Researcher

The researcher in this study was a young African-American male educator. He was an administrator at a rural high school in the same district in which the study is being conducted. The researcher was a former high school athlete who participated in a mentorship program while living in a single parent home. As a result, a mentorship program also played a vital role in his life. The participation in a mentorship program helped him in teaching teamwork, building character, promoting self-esteem, and instilling discipline in his own life. While these are the same assets that the researcher's parent taught him, they were also repeated and reinforced through participation in a mentorship program. Consequently, the researcher grew to admire his mentors on almost the same level of admiration as he felt for his parent. As a result, to avoid other biases,

the researcher had no input or knowledge of the formation and structure of the mentorship program at Ridgeland High School.

The role of this researcher was to gather information on the established relationship of mentorship programs and the subsequent actions of participants. This researcher kept confidential all comments and opinions relative to the participants to avoid bias in recording the interviews.

Reflexivity

According to Johnson, reflexivity is one strategy that is used to promote qualitative research validity (1997). Reflexivity is a tool to dismantle the writer's power in the investigation or writing development. The concentration of this process can be displayed in various voices in order to give the participants an opportunity to enhance the content from the information. Reflexivity, in fact, gives the researcher the opportunity to be a part of the world studied. "It is a powerful and inescapable influence: what the interviewee says is always influenced by the interviewer and the interview situation" (Maxwell, 2005). Therefore, the researcher in this study was a participant in a mentorship program. The mentorship process started around the age of 12 years, and has consistently been actualized with the development of the researcher taking on duties and responsibilities as a positive and successful Black male figure in today's society. The opportunity of the researcher during his teenage years to participate in a mentorship program resulted in very rewarding experiences. The mentors established a bond which evolved into a strong relationship, where positive rapport remained as the researcher grew older. Additionally, the researcher was also a facilitator of a mentorship program earlier in his educational career while serving as a teacher and coach. As a result, the

researcher found reflexivity to operate both as a control for researcher bias, and as a tool for gaining strength in research. In the research process, reflexivity was used. Interview memos were written after each interview session. The interview memos provided insight with the researcher in order to find new resources on the given subject.

Procedures for Data Collection

The strategies for data collection in this study involved interviews, observations, and analyzing documents. Before conducting this study, the researcher received permission from the superintendent of Jasper County School District. The researcher also had to fulfill some requirements outlined in the superintendent's response letter. In addressing the superintendent's letter, the researcher disclosed the sample collection process that was to be used in the study with the two teacher participants. The researcher also made a correction on the consent form. After fulfilling these requirements, this researcher was given permission to conduct this study. As a part of the process, a consent form was given out by the mentors to the students for them and for their parent(s) or guardian(s) to sign. The forms were reviewed and returned with the signatures that were required for subjects to participate in the interview process. In addition, a parent letter was given to the participants of the mentorship program from the mentors. After the consent form was signed, the researcher interviewed the 10 African-American male students. The interviews were conducted privately and were one-on-one. Each interview took place in the conference room of the counselor's suite at the school. After each interview, the interviewees signed a form verifying that the statements given were correct and valid. The interviews took place on the same day. The interview questions for the African- American male students are found in Appendix B.

The interviews for each group mentors and mentees varied between 20 to 45 minutes. The researcher observed the African-American male student behavior around the school during the first nine week marking period, and continued the monitoring process during the school year.

Procedures for Data Analysis and Interpretation

The interview protocol consisted of a form of four to five questions with ample space to write responses to the interviewees' comments (Creswell, 2007). This researcher chose the interview guide approach to ask the same questions of all participants. Participants were able to express their opinions openly. Each group of participants was interviewed on different days. The data from the interviews consisted of direct quotations from African-American males and mentors about their experiences, opinions, and feelings about the influences of the mentoring program.

This case study was based upon a narrative analysis. According to Merriam (1998), a narrative analysis a research technique through which information is provided based upon stories about experiences. Mainly, the focus on this process stresses the importance of the stories that people tell and how the experiences are told. The accounts of the experiences are told in the first person. There is no significant form in which the experiences may be recorded. Moreover, examples of the narrative analysis can range from an autobiography to journals. Therefore, forms are collected to represent the subject's direct information.

This case study was conducted at the researcher's school. The researcher summarized the data, and made recommendations from the study back to the district as

deemed appropriate. It was essential for this researcher to use portions of raw data to substantiate the themes reported.

Interviewing is a very important method used in qualitative research. The purpose of interviewing subjects is to explore their minds to determine their thoughts and beliefs. As Patton (1990) remarked:

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. The issue is not whether observational data is more desirable, valid, or meaningful than self-report data. The fact of the matter is that we cannot observe everything. We cannot observe situations that preclude of an observer. We have to ask questions about things. (p.108)

There are many approaches to the process of collecting information from interviews. However, three basic principles are used in collecting qualitative data. Instrumentation, preparation, and conceptualization are the three principles that are involved with this process. The difference among these three dimensions of the same process is the way interview questions are organized and formatted before the interview process has been conducted.

“The informal conversational interview relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of interaction, typically an interview that occurs as part of an ongoing participant observation fieldwork” (Patton, 1990, p.111). The answers to questions asked in a conversational interview are spontaneous; the individuals interviewed will have different responses for similar questions. However, over a period, there should be some similarity in the responses. This researcher developed an interview guide to be used to gather information to answer the research questions. In

this study, if participants were concerned before, during, or after the research process, they could withdraw from the study. Their data would not to be used, and would be destroyed.

The standardized open-ended interview may be particularly appropriate when several people are to conduct interviews. The focus in producing open-ended questions is to limit the chances of a repeat effect on the response from the participants. The standardized open-ended interview is systematic. Interview analysis is not predetermined. Therefore, judgment is erased during the interview process. The standardized open-ended interview is more user friendly for researchers because it provides easier access to responses from the participants (Patton, 1990). This approach was used because this researcher conducted all participant interviews himself.

Validity

Data triangulation was used for the validity of this study. The major resources consisted of the participants in the mentoring group. The mentoring program stakeholders were identified during the research process. In-depth interviews were conducted to gain insight into the interviewees' perspective of the mentoring program on the program's outcome. The triangulation of the research consisted of the interviews, the interpretation of the interviews, and the analysis of the academic transcripts (Patton, 1990). Analytical memos were used as a form of reflexivity in this dissertation. Rather than just explaining what was observed, or what students reported in interviews, the investigator took all data, interpreted them, and analyzed them explicitly. The researcher also analyzed the participants' academic transcript reports and kept notes on student behavior which provides a visual sense of the process of the collection of data. It also provides the

validity of the research by showing several instances of the triangulation being performed during the research process.

CHAPTER 4: Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter, data from interviews, transcript analysis, and observations of behavior are summarized, and emergent themes are described. A total of 12 people were interviewed on the effects of a mentorship program for African American males in grades 9-12. These minority students and teachers responded in their own words to express their own personal perspectives from a set of interview questions prepared by the researcher (Appendixes E-F). Following are summaries from the participants' interviews. Some excerpts from their interviews are included. These are reported verbatim. The themes and supporting data are organized according to each question asked. Then, the themes are summarized.

Background of Mentees

John. John is a high school senior and comes from a single parent home. He is the oldest of four siblings. He is presently working part-time to help support his mother. John has had trouble focusing in class. His motivation for staying in school has come from his interest in trying out for the basketball team. However, his grades from his freshman year would not allow him to attempt this effort because of academic ineligibility. He has had several discipline referrals because of his frustration of not being able to comprehend assignments or to follow instructions by teachers.

Terry. Terry is currently in the 12th grade. He comes from a family where he is the only child. The sole parent is his mother. Terry's mother worked multiple jobs, and he

spends most of his time with members of his extended family. He has had some anger problems in the past as well as some behavior issues in and out of school.

Matthew. Matthew is part of a single parent home and his father is the head of the household. He is the middle son of four siblings. He is separated from one of his sisters and younger brother because they live in a city in the north. He has had a traumatic life as his mother died when he was 11. Currently, Matthew is in the 10th grade.

Joe. Joe comes from a middle-class family. He lost his father in a tragic accident in 2009. He was an honor roll student for most of his life. Since entering high school, his grades have dropped significantly. He is the younger of two brothers in the family. Joe's grief was demonstrated in the form of hanging around with the wrong crowds because of his father's death. He is constantly tardy to school, missing vital time in the classroom. His classes are mostly honor classes. Joe is in the 10th grade.

Tim. Tim is currently in the 11th grade. He is the middle son of five siblings. He has two brothers and two sisters. One of his brothers is incarcerated. However, the other brother graduated from college. He is from a single parent household and is being raised by his mother. His father is also incarcerated. He often reflected on his time with his brother when he was involved in illegal activities, stealing and selling marijuana. He has rededicated his life to his education and to his brother's support.

Bob. Bob is currently in the 11th grade. He is being reared in a single parent home, and rarely sees his father; nor does he have a true rapport with him. Bob has three "half-sisters" and one younger brother. Moreover, his mother is also providing shelter for his two aunts, two uncles, and three cousins. Bob works in construction to help the family survive. Bob has had the tendency to being lazy in class and not follow through with

assignments. However, he adopted a new perspective on his education; he wants to be the first in his family to attend college.

Tony. Tony comes from a household of three sisters and one brother. His grandparents are taking care of him. There is not much information on his mother's background or if his father has any connection with him or the rest of his siblings. His grandparents have raised him from the age of one. Tony motivates himself playing sports and has been on the marginal line of passing academically. His main focus in school has been only to play sports and chase girls. Tony is in the 10th grade.

Kevin. Kevin is presently in the 9th grade. Kevin is one of the more fortunate males in the mentorship program. He lives with both parents. However, his grades have been unstable, and he has had a nonchalant attitude toward school. His father is unemployed, but lives in the house. He has one brother who resides out of town and two older sisters. Kevin's attitude toward school has reflected in his behavior in school. Kevin has had several conferences with teachers, and has been assigned to ISS (In -School Suspension) several times during the first semester of school.

Keith. Keith comes from a single parent home with no true male figure in the house. He has three brothers and one younger sister. One of his brothers was shot and killed, another brother is incarcerated, and the last brother is unemployed. Keith is a student athlete who has struggled to be successful in class. He has to work full-time to support the family income. Prior to his participation in the mentoring group, Keith had been suspended, served ISS (In- School Suspension), and several teacher detentions. He has also skipped class several times. Keith is currently in the 9th grade.

David. David is being raised by his grandmother. Both parents are incarcerated. He has been working full-time since 9th grade in an effort to support the family financially. He has five brothers and one sister, and his major responsibilities are to take care of his siblings. His grandmother works at night; therefore, David must assume the position of “man of the house.” David is in the 12th grade, and was on schedule to graduate in June 2009.

In summary, there were major common themes in the background of these mentees. One notable theme was that these mentees’ grades were low prior to entering high school. They had to attend summer school to make up the classes they had failed. Another notable theme was that there were behavior problems prior to participating in the mentoring program. These mentees either attended after-school detentions, Saturday school, or were given in/out-of- school suspensions. The other notable theme was that these mentees experienced low self-esteem prior to being a part of the mentoring program.

Mentee Interviews

1. How has the mentoring program affected your academic achievement?

Most of the 10 responses were positive and were encouraging toward continuing the process of being a part of the mentoring program. The major theme was the knowledge that someone would be checking their progress while they were in the mentoring program. It was also noted that the young men had to remain focused during the grading period to continue meeting with a mentor. Question responses included the following:

Well to be honest it has elevated me...communication wise and letting my words flow freely, it actually, how it showed. I say this. Well to whatever my goal is to stick to words of my goal and don't let nothing stop me from anything because I know in life there will be obstacles and don't let people get to you.

It has me focused, after I finished the meetings, I am more relaxed, respect teachers and have become more mature, using the information as everyday thing. I listen more to teachers.

It helped.

It showed me a lot of good stuff. Let me know some things I never knew.

My grades basically stayed the same.

It kind of helped me mature, helped me grow up and do the right thing. Helped me to see things differently.

It helped me in school. Before I was in it, I was focused on girls and football and not school. Now, I am focused on school because of the information given. It has helped me to have a better perspective in school.

Half and Half. I pushed a little. It was kind of short lived because of the break we had to bring our grades up.

Really, it helped me get my mind right. It helped me look at the big picture and life period.

Knowing that you are going to check up on us motivated me to do better.

2. *How has the mentoring program affected your desire to stay in school?*

Mainly, the mentees' responses focused on their future aspirations of being successful. Some of them did not think about not finishing, but they did have a notion of just working and being successful. Their responses included the following:

It showed me ... well in the program especially among the fellas, some people, how should I put this... some people don't like school, as far for me- growing up

with my mom, she made me stay in my books. The program gave me an extra boost that I needed to make my right assortment and my right choices so I will not have to worry about it later on in life and say I regret me doing that, in so many words.

We will talk about getting a trade, hopefully one day I can make it better to live for my mom.

It is good for me.

It let me find what my goals were.

It gave me something to look forward to.

Made it like, for me to stay in school to get to college. Try to be the first in my family to go to college. I want to be a photographer or archeologist.

It affected me a lot, school cannot be for everyone, but like selling weed, you have to look over your shoulder and your back. So stay in school has helped me not to think on those things that are bad for me.

None really at all, I already wanted to stay in school.

It taught me, It helped me achieve goals I first failed on.

Well, when we had visitors to come talk to us, it motivated me to do better. It gave me some idea to stay in school to do better.

3 What has the mentoring program meant to you?

This response was quite sensitive to the question Not only were new friendships being established, but another level of respect for teachers was also being demonstrated.

One of the key elements in their group discussion was motivation. The responses included the following:

What it meant to me? Well among my skin color, a young black man can be successful and no other person in any other country can stop me for doing anything. Free country-freedom of speech.

It means alot;it kept me stronger in school. It kept me focused and on time.

It is great.

Well, it... led me in the right direction and in the right path. It gave me things I needed to know.

I liked it!

At first it was not that much, put then it showed me life lessons for me to learn from and something that I can do after high school.

It meant a lot, someone to think about me being apart of a group and concerned about my grades meant a lot.

Kind of gave me what I needed. Gave me advice other than my dad.

It meant for me to change from a young man to be a more mature man.

I really did not know anyone. I was able to make connections and hope to see the other members do good.

4. Tell me about your experience in the mentoring program?

The mentees mentioned the field trips that they participated in as well as the discussion on life lessons that were articulated and expressed to them. They also reflected on some life experiences given by guest speakers as it connected to their lives. Their responses included the following:

The mentoring program asked questions to use. Basically opening up and not holding things back. I was curious like, "Curious George"; so, when they came to us in a respectable way, I liked it!

My experience with the group helped me to understand life and how to survive.

I like it, if I was not in it, my grades would not be up to par. It kept me focused.

I can do better in class, stay away from following the crowd, I have learned to be my own leader.

Like when we went to the college. I just wished we had more meetings. I like the sessions, but our grades were down. I think we should keep it going.

This was like the first time someone said to me about going to college. I did not feel comfortable at first; it took me a while to understand about maturity. It helped me get along with other people that I did not get along with before.

Well, I see myself more focused. They think we were a bad group or we were in trouble, but it is something that we are trying to get better. Other people are now asking and want to join our group. This has me more focused on what I need to do and not to do. It has made me a better person.

Actually, I felt that I was a part of something. At home I feel like an outcast. I like the way people look up to me. I hope that we can do this again next year. I like to dress up. A few more field trips would be nice. I have that thought of being more professional.

Nothing I can really say.

It was school going to the college. I was able to meet some people. It was nice seeing young black men to be successful. Tripping and learning with members of the group.

5. *How would you feel if you were suspended from being a part of the mentoring program?*

All of the mentees reported that they would be disappointed. Others have expressed that if they were not a part of the group they will probably work more and not be so concerned about their school work. Their responses included the following:

I would probably feel hurt. Because I liked the program-not to just get out of class (smile-light laugh) at the same time I was part of the program.

I will do what I always do-move on.

Probably would be doing the same stupid stuff I was doing before I participated in the program.

Would be confused and wonder why I was not a part of the program. I would probably be hanging with the crew trying to get my work.

I would want to know what I did. I would be mad!

I would feel offended; it would not be my fault. I would probably be in class doing class work.

I would be mad; this program has done a lot for me, so it would make me mad. I do not know what I would be doing, probably working.

Truthfully, I will feel stupid; I would think it was my fault. I would try to avoid the situation. I would try to get a job.

I feel that I would have done all of this for nothing- I did not complete it. I probably be doing nothing.

It would be a blow; I look forward to talking with the group. I will try to get back in. I will still be in school, but it would be hard. I really did not know anyone before being a part of this group.

6. (a) Why did you participate? (b) What did you like most about the mentoring program? (c) What did you like least about mentoring program?

The major theme for this response was curiosity of being in the group. Most of them found nothing wrong with the groups. They mainly enjoyed the discussions that they were able to use for information and for mental growth.

I was asked, and also I was interested in it. I wanted to see what the program was actually about and wanted to know what I can get out of it. b) That you can express yourself freely no matter what anybody say. Your opinion was your opinion and nobody could change that and also we talked about MLK and how to get into his shoes so we can be acknowledged. c) Avoid that question, because there was nothing I did not disliked about it.

(No Answer) b) We had men from different backgrounds to talk to us about the same situations we were in and try to take us to the right route. c) I like everything about it.

I want to succeed. b) The discussions c) nothing

It showed what I need to do and to be doing and not what to do. b) I like how we went to places and other people talking to us on how we can make a difference. c) I don't know.

I wanted to see what it was like. b) The students in the group. c) nothing

In the beginning, it would help me to get notice, help me get into a great college.
b) When we got to talk about our problems and how to deal with our problems. c)
When we got yelled about failing our classes.

It would be a good program for me as a young black man to be focused on life. b)
I like the fact we were able to be with other men that knew our situation and was
able to give advice. c) Was nothing not to like about it. If they did not like it, they
did not understand the cause of what you were trying to do for us.

Because it would be fun, be around my own kind. b) Dressing up, being part of a
group, the conversation, being around the fellas. c) when we did not have the
sessions.

Trying to learn something, trying to help myself become a man. b) The meetings,
the talks coming from people with experiences. c) Nothing

Out of curiosity, I was able to meet people, go places and learn things. b) Getting
out class, the real talks we had. The positive energy. c) The fact we only meet
once a week.

7. *How did your mentor affect your success?*

Most of the young men attributed their success to a growth of maturity under their
mentors. Moreover, the gaining of responsibility contributed to their growth as men.

How did they affect my success? Basically they told me...I kept in my mind and
helped me make my mind and helped me make the right decision. And not to let
anything get to me because knowing me I am kind of hot headed (light laugh)
and since I was in the program, my temper has slowed down, actually stopped and
now I am a person of jolly-smiling a lot and the program has helped me a lot.
Act more mature now; he has changed me a little bit.

Affected everywhere, doing my work in class, paying attention, staying on track
in school and out of school.

All they did was telling us what to do; It would be my loss if I did not do it.

They helped me.

Well, there were the people who came over to help us in school, when the mentor yelled at us about our grades and Mr. T on how great we can be if we do better.

They came to us and were honest about life. It could help me out in school and where I am as a person.

It is a lot of ways it gave me good information. And to hear other things from someone else and not my father.

Um, it helps me to achieve and do what is right.

You motivate me, looking at the success of Mr. S and Mr. T in such a short time; it was a long time, Especially with Mr. T with his experience.

Interview with Mentors

1. What is your philosophy of high school academics?

Both mentors had similar concepts of high school academics. They felt that character and responsibility were and still are the keys to success. Also, they believed that developing a rapport with the students was essential to establishing an understanding of expectations of the mentors for students to be successful. Their responses were as follows:

High School Academics should prepare students to be thinkers and doers in the real world.

High School Academics in my opinion should be geared to preparing students for life beyond high school. So regardless of the content area, there should be some relevance as far as the next step to high school academics.

2. How has the mentees attitude changed toward school during their first year of high school? And how are their attitudes now toward school?

Both mentors felt that the mentees made significant strides with improving their attitude towards school. Their behavior changed, and the level of respect for adults was admirable, which showed an elevation in their level of maturity.

Initially, one kid I can think of in particular would have a lackadaisical attitude towards high school and could not see a reason for him being in school. He did not have a connection that relates to his future initially. The second part to the question, how has his attitude changed....He realizes the importance of high school and why certain guidelines were put into place for him. Now he is a productive citizen. I believe he is in the military.

There were a few that may have had a “don’t care” approach to high school or school in general. It did not matter to them rather to be in school or not. I would like to think that our mentoring program changed that. No, they seem to be more serious about being in class and being in school. If you say something to them about straying off the path, they will then say, “I got you” or “I understand.”

3. Is there anything else you would like for me to know about your experience

from being a mentor?

The mentors felt that they should continue this program, and actually expand it to include minority teachers. They also stated that the program should be implemented with high school females.

Well, one thing a lot of times, we don’t think that we have the time or I don’t think we have the time, but you will be surprised at the little time you really need to make a difference in a child’s life. Just for them to know they have an adult to go talk to.

Being a mentor taught me a little about myself. Being a new father, it has sort of focused me or refocused me on why I am here. So, I probably learned as much as the boys that I was mentoring.

4. What is the biggest change you have seen the mentees make in the mentoring program?

Both mentors concurred that the maturity level and the level of respect for teachers were the biggest changes in most of the young men. The mentors also noted there were signs of leadership skills being displayed during the sessions with the mentees.

Self-Pride. They understood the importance of why they should tuck their shirts in, why to be punctual and on time for class.... Self-reliance of themselves of self-worth.

Attitude is probably the biggest, um certain kids that may have had a temper or short fuse dealing with situations; they seem to calm down just by your presence in your area. There may be some eye contact-they will say that's my mentor and we have been working together; let me think about it a little more.

5. *What were your goals for the mentees?*

For the most part, the mentors wanted them to change their outlook on life. Basically, the mentors wanted to give them options concerning decisions that may affect their future.

Subsequently, the mentors wanted them to change their attitudes for the best with them .

Their responses were:

First of all for them, if they don't know themselves or don't know who they are, then they do not have a reference and they will not change. I wanted them to have some type of goal in life, have a plan to work toward and for them to begin executing their plan.

My main goal is to see their maturity level progress. For them to transition from being boys, mentally and spiritually, into young men.

6. *What is your goal for the mentees in a mentoring program?*

The mentors both agreed that the program is intended to produce young men who can be more responsible for their actions. The mentors wanted mentees to grow up and be men, take care of their families, and to have the utmost respect for women in our society.

Their responses were:

I... a lot of times we have a tendency to look at students who are already geared for success. I believe we should look for the students that are borderline- the student who could go either way and the student that are not normally recognize... um, your athletes that fit that mold, you have kids whom are influential, but should also look for kids that are not part of anything.

I will define a student participating in a mentoring program as one who is in need of a little guidance or little direction or even one who may be able to provide a little guidance or direction. I would like to see in our mentoring program not the kids that are just borderline or at-risk but some examples of what they should be working toward as well, so they will have some positive role models among their peers as well as someone they can be working towards .

7. *What are some strategies you used to help the mentees stay in school?*

Are there special strategies you have used with mentees?

The mentors used different strategies to get the best results out of the mentees. Both agreed on being honest and respectful to the mentees in an effort to grow their relationship with them. The mentors relied on their pasts to make relevant advice they gave to the mentees.

I use special events – like end of the year events that will be based on their academics and attendance that the mentees can attend. b) I try to apply the concept of coming to school is just like having a job. You don't go to work you don't get paid. You are missing valuable instruction that is going on through the course of the day. The more you stay out of school, the further you are behind. Attendance is 50% of your academics.

That one on one contact was probably the best one. Getting to speak to someone face to face and trying to relate to what they are going through to what you may have went through by experience or by a situation you may know that one on one contact is probably the best strategy. b) I try to be open with them and honest. I tried not to look like a “saint” may have done anything wrong or even if I have done it, was done well on the straight and narrow. I want to keep it real.

Academic Transcript Analysis

This researcher reviewed the mentees' academic transcripts. The results showed that each student made improvements in his average from their first semester of high school to the end of the second semester (Appendix E).

Terry's grades prior to the mentoring program were below average. He had failed three of the eight classes on his schedule. Prior to the program, Terry had a 66 average in Algebra 2 and a 68 average in Spanish. His first semester average was a 69. He was able to improve his grades tremendously. With his involvement in the program, Terry received

a grade of 76 in Spanish and 71 in Algebra 2. His second semester average was a 75. This improvement in his grades allowed him to be accepted to a four- year college.

During the first semester, John's average was below 65. He continues to have a weakness in Math and English Literature courses. Science was also a problem as he struggled in the courses. John was able to pass his English class with a 70. However, he excelled in ROTC with over an 85 average. John was able to bring his science average up to a 70 from an average of 60. His average is now 69. He knows that he has more work to do.

Matthew made steady gains in his overall average. During his first semester, Matthew's average was a 71. In the past, science had been a problem. His early grades reflected grades below a 70. However, during the second semester, he posted an 86 in Chemistry. Also, math was a difficult subject, but Matthew's grade in Geometry was an 88. Matthew's second semester average was 76.

Joe's grades mainly stayed the same. His first semester average was a 73. His math grade declined a little between first semester and the second semester. Joe also had problems with English and science courses. Joe's foreign language grade improved from 75 to 78. His second semester grade point average was a 76.

The biggest gain was Tim's. During the first semester, Tim's grade average was a 74. All his grades in the second semester showed a 10 point increase. Tim posted 88s in Geometry and ROTC. His foreign language average increased from 71 to an 82. Tim's second semester average was an 85, an 11 point gain.

Bob's first semester grade average also increased in the second semester. His average went from an 81 to 85 during the second semester. Bob's significant gain came

from Foreign Language and ROTC. During the first semester in his foreign language class, Bob's grade was an 80. During the second semester, his grade was an 88. Bob's science and math classes stayed consistent with his other grades.

Tony's grades reflected the second largest change. During the first semester, Tony's average was a 73. The second semester grades posted showed an increase in Tony's science and math classes. He had averaged in the 60s in his science classes. However, he was able to post a 70 during the second semester. Math was also an obstacle for Tony. He has averaged in the mid-60s in his math classes. Tony was able to post a 70 as well in geometry. Tony's second semester grades improved to a 78 average.

Kevin was the only mentee that did experience any change in his grades. His first semester grades and his second semester average stayed the same at 68. His grades improved in English and science, but his grades in social studies and math declined. Kevin did excel with his elective course, where he was able to keep over an 80 average.

Keith was able to post a first semester average of 77. His elective class average was good. Keith's science class grades were unstable being either just passing or just falling short of the passing mark. Keith was able to improve in social studies and English. Keith posted a 78 in world history and an 82 in English. As a result, Keith's second semester average was 81.

David's average showed a tremendous improvement. During David's first semester, his average was a 74. His average in Science and English classes was 70. David improved in his Math and Social Studies classes by having an average over 80. His second semester average was an 80.

Observation of Behavior

This researcher observed the behavior of the mentees around school. Students conducted themselves in a polite way. Each student attended every class and was on time. The researcher noticed that the students participated in class deliberations. Most of the mentees carried themselves as upper classmen intent on graduating.

Summary

The data from the interviews, academic transcript analysis, and observations of in-school behavior showed that, for these mentees, participating in the mentoring program did affect their school performance in a positive way. A notable theme was that mentors could aid in helping African-American males to stay in school. Another notable theme was that the mentorship program builds character, self-esteem, teaches teamwork, and instills self-discipline. The outcome of this study revealed that when a mentor provides regular support for his protégé and communicates expectations for academic achievement, improvement in the mentees' achievement will occur. Mentoring participation seems to help students to set goals and to work towards accomplishing them. The result of this study also shows mentoring to be an influential tool. Mentoring should be more closely accepted as an ongoing strategy, which may serve as a device in helping to reduce the high school dropout problem in high schools. These mentees in the study believed mentoring helped them to be successful in school. This was evident in the comments of the mentors who thought it was their duty to prepare their mentees to contribute to society. Most importantly, teachers benefited from the involvement of the

students in the mentoring program, and offered thanks to the mentors for supporting the teachers' academic efforts.

CHAPTER 5: Discussions

The outcomes of the interviews, the review of academic transcripts, and observation of mentees' behavior showed that the mentoring program affected them in a positive way. This supports the literature, which indicates a mentoring program builds self-esteem (Hall, 2006), influences students' psychosocial development (Somers, Owens, & Piliawsky, 2008), and improves academic performance (Barnes, 1992). The results of this study show that African-American male students improved their academic performance while in a mentoring program.

Schools need to develop programs to reduce the number of dropouts. According to Hall (2006), a mentoring program exerted a holding influence over some students who might otherwise have dropped out of school. A mentoring program can be a form of dropout prevention. The results of this study support this view.

In this study, the mentees had major problems at the beginning of their high school years. These could have caused them to be potential dropouts. These students went through different school techniques to change their behavior. The results of this study show a mentoring program had the strongest and positive effect on changing students' school performance. According to the mentees and mentors in this study, the mentoring program created a family atmosphere and provided opportunities for developing relationships with these students.

Data also showed that the mentoring program provide steps to self-discipline. As a result, fewer behavior problems occurred among these mentees. The instilling of self-

discipline transferred into improving the mentees' grades, according to a review of academic transcript data.

The mentors agreed that students with low self-esteem had the tendency to "shut down" at school. They observed that students might demonstrate a "nonchalant" attitude, which could signal weak school performance or failure to put much effort into school performance. The data in this study showed students participating in the program experienced increased self-esteem through involvement in the mentoring program. The interview data revealed that the mentees gained a positive attitude that was evident at school throughout the duration of the program. This included respecting authority, going to class prepared, and believing in personal success. In addition, the mentoring program motivated these students to become personally responsible for their achievements. In their mentors, the students found adults with whom they felt comfortable, and in whom they could confide.

Recommendations for This School

Based on the mentees' and mentors' interviews, review of academic transcripts, and behavior observation, this researcher has recommendations for this high school. The recommendations to the school from this research study are as follows:

1. School counselors should nominate African-American males to mentors for participation in a mentoring program every year.
2. Mentors should conduct a workshop for the faculty on the goals for mentoring programs so that faculty can become familiar with the program and consider participation.

3. The school should develop a plan for assessing the performance of the mentees in determining academic and behavioral success, as opposed to viewing numbers alone as success in the program.

Implications for Future Research

The implications from this study reveal that this dissertation could be continued for another year in order to gather more data. This researcher would like to see how the mentoring program affects African-American males as individuals in other academic settings that do not consist of all African-American males. This researcher also wants to see collected data on how the students progressed from the time they began the mentoring program up to their present grade. The data could also be used to show administrators how a mentoring program can be useful when males are involved in individual groups as compared to a more structured mentoring group. Based on the data, this researcher wants to see if African-American males identified as being at risk or in danger can achieve self-discipline, be more responsibility and increase self-confidence. This study can be beneficial not only to male students, but to the entire counseling department.

Another future research project could be to replicate this study in other schools where there is a high number of at-risk African-American male students. It would be useful to see how the school performance of other African-American males is affected by this mentoring program. Finally, this study could be re-conducted on a larger scale to determine its total effect on a broader range of students.

Summary

The use of a mentoring program can be a powerful instrument in helping students stay in school. A mentoring program can build self-esteem, can develop character, can

instill discipline, and can teach teamwork. These four qualities are essential in a productive person in our society. This study supported the work of Hrabowski III, Maton, and Greif, (1998), showing that a mentoring program encourages or persuades students to stay in school. It also supported the work of Hall (2006), showing that a mentoring program has an impact on improving students' school discipline. The discipline African-American males gain transfers to educational endeavors. Students who participate in mentoring programs learn about and develop a work ethic. They learn how to work hard to accomplish a goal. African-American males identified as at-risk give up too easily. They do not get the needed knowledge or do not have the experience of success. The mentoring program allows students to exert the effort to be successful. Through this mentoring program, they become motivated in their class work. They begin to gain some respect for authority through their relationship with their mentors and others. They also gain the desire to continue their education to some type of post-secondary education. This does not have to be just a college education, but could be a vocational education as well.

The results of this study show that a mentoring program motivated the African-American males to stay in school, rather than drop out. The mentoring program provided a strong motivational influence and gave teachers the opportunity to reach these students, who in return became appreciative of the mentors, thus displaying it in their academics.

Consequently, in this study, African-American males also gained a positive relationship with mentors that proved to be rewarding and formed a relationship that could be useful in the future. They experienced a person who cared for them and guided their steps for success. Further demonstrated was that through a mentoring program, these African-American males developed skills of learned teamwork, reaped the rewards of

perseverance, built confidence, and learned to appreciate the value of following rules.

This study contributes support for the view that the outcome of a mentoring program can be to provide at-risk students with the necessary foundation to strive for success and to become productive citizens in society.

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Appendix A

BOCU

Brothers On the Come Up

Mentoring Program



Mentors:

Greg Tinsley

Keith Simmons

Mentoring Class

1. Maturity

2. Motivation

3. Role Model

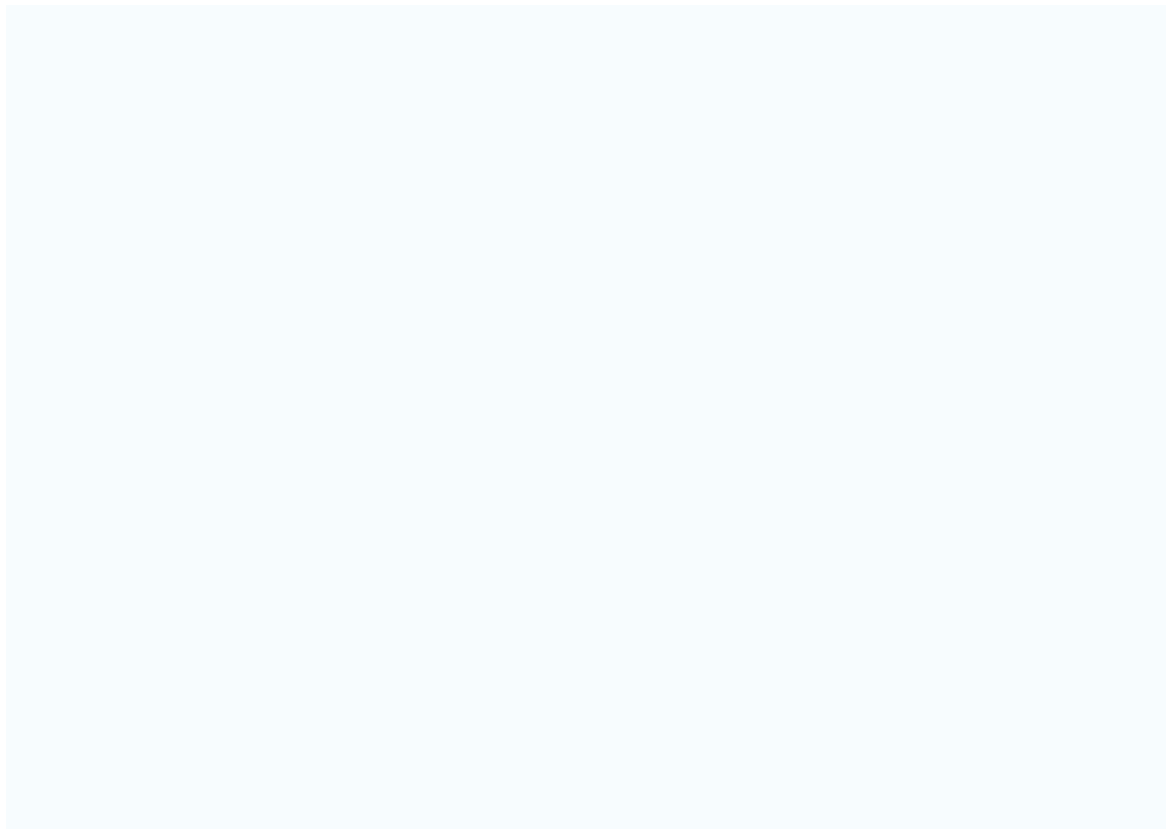
4. Respect

5. Self Discipline

6. Manhood

What is Maturity


What is maturity? Maturity is the ability to control anger and settle differences without violence or destruction. Maturity is patience. It is the willingness to pass up immediate pleasure in favor of the long-term gain. Maturity is perseverance, the ability to sweat out a project or situation in spite of heavy opposition and discouraging set-backs. Maturity is the capacity to face unpleasantness and frustration, discomfort, and defeat, without complaint or collapse. Maturity is humility. It is being big enough to say, "I was wrong." And, when right, the mature person need not experience the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so."



Motivation

In psychology, **motivation** refers to the initiation, direction, intensity and persistence of behavior (Geen, 1995). Motivation is a temporal and dynamic state that should not be confused with personality or emotion. Motivation is having the desire and willingness to do something. A motivated person can be reaching for a long-term goal such as becoming a professional writer or a more short-term goal like learning how to spell a particular word. Personality invariably refers to more or less permanent characteristics of an individual's state of being (e.g., shy, extrovert, conscientious). As opposed to motivation, emotion refers to temporal states that do not immediately link to behavior (e.g., anger, grief, happiness).

“Champions aren’t made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them- a desire, a dream, a vision. They have to have last minute stamina, they have to be a little faster, they have to have the skill and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill.” Muhammad Ali



Role Model

A Role Model is a must for all. It is a great help. Unconsciously we all have one. It is something which inspires us; it touches the core of our heart. Something we love to emulate. We want to be something like that. It is personification of our goal - in flesh. We can touch and feel it. Even before we learn to think the role model starts talking to us, it starts channeling our energy in a particular direction. It starts coloring us and we feel really happy about it.

Role Model and our Goal:

Goal is a must in life. Goal implies the end which we ultimately cherish, not the means which we initially work hard to acquire. Something which having attained we would consider our self fulfilled. Basically the most important thing which touches our heart has to be one, but as a person is multi-dimensional our list of priorities may include various other things too. Money, relationships, competence, work-satisfaction, recognition, status, comforts, beauty, dignity, betterment of children, happiness of spouse, parents, social work, culture, spirituality etc. This at times becomes a tricky and slippery field. We have a list of aspirations.

Ten Standards to Model

1. Be Real
2. Respect other cultures
3. Make your mark
4. Live life to its' full potential
5. Accept potential of others
6. Teach the need
7. Teach to reload mentally
8. Teach the importance of self discipline
9. Overcome your obstacles
10. Do the right thing

Respect

Respect is an attitude of acknowledging the feelings and interests of another party in a relationship, and of treating as consequential for the self the helping or harming of the other. Though most commonly referring to interpersonal relationships, it can be used between animals, groups and institutions including countries. Respect does not necessarily imply deference, but a respectful attitude rules out unconsidered selfish behavior. The concept of respect predates, and does not rely on, the existence of the concept of rights. Like the Golden Rule, treat others the way you want to be treated.

Respect is sometimes loosely used as a synonym for politeness or manners, though these are behaviors, whereas respect is an attitude. Intercultural differences in behaviours, self-perception and outward appearance may result in the unintentional appearance of disrespect.

Respect is the esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or ability, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or ability: I have great respect for her judgment.

MANHOOD

Manhood is the period in a male's life when he has left behind the innocence of childhood. It is during this period that the peak of a man's lifetime is reached. Throughout history, especially in the ancient cultures, boys would undergo many different, sometimes dangerous, ceremonies or sacrifices in order to be recognized as adult in their own right. This rite of passage from childhood to adulthood was very important to these emerging members of society, and many factors of their adult life would sometimes have been affected by this one transitional period of a male person's life.

Etiquette Practices of Men

Male is to hold the chair for all females when she stands or sits.

Male is to tip his hat to all females when passing each other.

Male is to stand when sitting and any female approach the place he is sitting and remain standing as long as she is present and standing

Male is to hold the door open for all females

Male is to hold the coat for all females when she puts it on or take it off

Male is to walk in the lead with a female when in a dark or semi-dark room

Male is to change conversation when suitable for female presence

Male is to walk to the curb side of the sidewalk when walking with a female

Think!

Violence - The Contemporary Poison

Promiscuous Sex - The Contemporary Destroyer

Drugs – The Contemporary Slavemaster

Appendix B

Cambridge College
1000 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child has been selected to participate in a study at his/her school. This study involves the influences of mentorship programs. Mentors can play a vital role in high school students' lives. I would like your support in working with me and the school to better understand the impact of mentoring has on high school students.

I am conducting a study for my dissertation. Participation in this study is optional. This study involves several conversational interviews. This interview will be private, and all information in this study will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used at all times, so that identity of all students involved and teachers, will be both anonymous and strictly confidential. Please sign the enclosed Consent Form, if you approve of your child's participation in the study.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at (843) 717-1501 from 7:30 a.m.- 2:45p.m. Monday through Friday. I may be reached at home after school hours at 748-5285.

Thank you,

Brian A. Simon

117 Silverton Road
Pooler, GA 31322
Phone: (912) 748-5285

Appendix C

Cambridge College**Institutional Review Board Proposal Cover Sheet**

Title of Project: AN ANALYTICAL CASE STUDY ON MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS AND THEIR EFFECT ON AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE PROMOTION FROM GRADES 9 to 12 AT RIDGELAND HIGH SCHOOL.

Anticipated # of Participants: Female: _____ Male: 13 Approx. Age Range: 14-61_____

Investigator (s): Brian A. Simon_____

Contact Information for Primary Investigator:

Name: Brian A. Simon

Phone: 912 656-0919_____

Email: brian.simon45@go.cambridgecollege.edu_____

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Kemoh Salia-Bao, Dissertation Chairperson_____

Date of Submission: __07__/_1__/_09__
 __08__/_7__/_09__

Anticipated Start Date:

 X **Expedited Review:** research that does not manipulate participants', threaten privacy, or cause stress to participants. Involves (e.g. analysis of some types of data, observational studies, some questionnaire and interview studies).

 Full Review: for all research that is not eligible for expedited review (e.g. manipulation of participants' environment, studies involving vulnerable populations such as AIDS sufferers or prisoners).

I have read and agree to uphold the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human research participants as they are described in the Belmont Report issued by the Federal Office of Health, Education & Welfare. This proposal and the attached materials meet the guidelines described by the APA Code of Ethics.

A copy of the Belmont Report is available at
<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>.

IRB #	_____
Reviewer:	_____
Decision :	_____

Appendix D

Cambridge College

Institutional Review Board Proposal

1. Purpose of investigation and procedures

The methodology for this dissertation will be a qualitative in-depth case study focusing on ten cases. Leading to an examination of some substantive problem in the school (Ridgeland High School) that occurs in practice and if possible my role in it. The main focus of the study is to find out the significance of how mentoring can influence students to succeed academically and also in activities at school and society as a whole. African-American male students in our schools' need extra motivations in which mentors give their undivided time to make them productive citizens in our society. The student participants are a target population. They will be African- American male students at a Ridgeland High School who are under the age of 18. They will be required to give consent to participate in the study. This population will also consist of high school teachers and an Assistant Principal. The study will be of a nine week marking period of a school calendar.

2. Anticipated risk and potential benefits:

The use of a mentoring program may be a powerful instrument in helping students stay in school. A mentoring program can build self-esteem, and character, instill discipline, and teach teamwork.

3. Steps taken to protect participants:

Before conducting this study, the researcher will get permission from the superintendent. The researcher also had to fulfill some requirements outlined in the superintendent's letter to the researcher. In the superintendent's letter, the researcher will discuss with the assistant principal the sample collection process. Before fulfilling these requirements, this researcher was given permission to conduct this study. Also, a consent form will be given to students for them and for their parent(s) or guardian(s) to review and sign. Moreover, a parent letter will be given. After the consent form has been signed, the researcher will interview ten African-American male students. The interviews will be conducted privately and one-on-one. Each interview will take place confidentially in the conference room of the counselor's suite at the school. The interviews will take place on the same day. Through this study, this researcher wants to explore the experience of students' participants. This researcher will keep confidentially all comments and opinions relative to the participants in order to avoid bias.

4. Manner of obtaining participants:

In this descriptive case study, there will be twelve participants. The first ten participants will be African American male students. Two African American male teachers will randomly nominate the African American male students. The criteria that will be used are that students are identified to be African American male students who have identified from first year of high school through grade 12. The rationale for having only ten African American male students is so that enough information can be obtained to show how the participation of being in a mentorship program can affect African-American male students' performance. Further studies may be needed that will include additional African-American male students will be nominated. There will be two African- American male teachers participating in this study. The reason that they were selected is because they play a very important role in the students' success. They form the structure and guidelines that are vital for African-American male to strive for success. Furthermore, they are responsible for the mentorship program. In this study, one teacher per class will also be a participant. The teachers will be randomly selected. The only criterion for this selection will be the teachers have taught the students for at least one year. If needed, additional interviews will take place with the participants. This researcher will summarize the data analysis and make recommendations back to the school as appropriate. It will be essential for this researcher to use portions of raw data to substantiate the themes that is reported.

**Cambridge
College**

Brian Simon <brian.simon45@go.cambridgecollege.edu>

IRB Proposal

Lovell, Ryan <Ryan.Lovell@cambridgecollege.edu>

Wed, Jul 15, 2009 at 2:33 PM

To: Brian Simon <brian.simon45@go.cambridgecollege.edu>

Cc: "Butin, Dan" <Dan.Butin@cambridgecollege.edu>, "Houston, Shannon"

<Shannon.Houston@cambridgecollege.edu>, "Salia-Bao, Kemoh" <Kemoh.Salia-Bao@cambridgecollege.edu>,

"LaPointe, Gregory" <Gregory.LaPointe@cambridgecollege.edu>

**Cambridge
College**

Ryan A. Lovell, JD

Dear Brian:

Thank you for submitting your Institutional Review Board proposal. The Board has completed the review process and your proposal has been approved. This decision signifies your ability to begin work on your research project with human subjects.

If your research criteria or process should change substantively during the research time period, you will need to submit a new IRB proposal with the appropriate changes.

If you have any further questions about your IRB proposal or any IRB procedures, please feel free to contact me.

Best,

Ryan Lovell

IRB Coordinator

Director of Licensure