

Mentoring Relationships Within a School-based Environment

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ABSTRACT

Past research examining mentoring programs has explained the benefits that student mentees received from having an adult as a mentor. For the mentee, studies indicate that mentoring relationships positively influence academic performance, social attitudes, communication abilities, and career aspirations. However, there has been very little research from the perspective of the mentor regarding their experiences of being in a mentoring relationship. This study builds upon Berning's (2013) research that extracted the thoughts and opinions of retiree and teen mentors who worked with elementary students. The Berning report recommended that further research study adults involved in the workplace who spent their off time serving as mentors. This study addresses this gap by surveying 69 adult business professionals mentoring high school students in San Antonio, Texas. The survey revealed four central themes: 1) both mentors and mentees require high motivation for a successful relationship, with mentors often motivated by personal fulfillment; 2) mentors are driven by a commitment to give back to the community despite most lacking prior mentoring experience; 3) there is significant interest in mentor training to enhance program effectiveness; and 4) mentors generally enjoy the program, showing high willingness to continue, inclination to recommend it, and satisfaction with a monthly meeting schedule. Successful mentors are active listeners who engage their mentees by setting clear, aligned goals, while gaining the added benefits of enhanced communication and leadership skills through their mentoring roles.

Keywords: mentor, mentee, survey design, school-based mentoring, student mentoring

Business Careers High School (BCHS)¹, a magnet school located in San Antonio, Texas, provides its students with a college preparatory curriculum that is focused on student success in business and business-related fields. An important component of the student experience at BCHS is the mentor program where students are matched with a business professional for the school year. After completing an application and passing a background check, qualified mentors are accepted into the program. Mentors and mentees are paired by gender, common interests, and prescreening by the BCHS mentor program administrators to determine compatibility. Over 150 San Antonio-area business professionals serve as mentors, meeting monthly with students for an hour during lunch to provide professional guidance, personal development advice, and, overall, be a business community role model. Mentors are given a pre-determined topic to discuss with their mentee during their meeting as a conversation starter. This study surveyed these mentors to understand their motivating factors, perceptions, and experiences during their involvement in the BCHS mentor program. The author served as a BCHS mentor from October 2013 to April 2019, and 17% of the mentors surveyed were former BCHS mentees.

¹Business Careers High School was renamed Northside School of Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship in the fall of 2019. At the time this study was conducted in 2018, the name of the school was Business Careers High School.

Statement of the Problem

Prior research that examined mentoring programs has documented the benefits to mentees including increased academic achievement, leadership and communication, social interaction, and self-confidence (Eby et. al., 2008). However, little research has collected this information from the perspective of mentors. In her 2013 article “Fostering Close and Effective Relationships in Youth Mentoring Programs,” Jean Rhodes concluded that a) programs that provide support to the mentor have a higher likelihood of forming stronger relationships; b) successful relationships require mentors to be motivated, committed, and flexible; and c) mentors that derive benefits from the program, such as personal development, will maintain relationships longer and their enthusiasm will have a positive impact on the mentee. The current study sought to further understand the views of mentors and extend the reach of previous research in this area.

Purpose of the Study

In the 30-year history of Business Careers High School, its mentor program has never been formally studied. This study aimed to uncover the motivations, perceptions, and experiences of mentors participating in the BCHS program. The study provides findings that can be used to improve the mentoring experience for adults and lead to increased successful pairings between the mentor and mentee. Successful pairing is important considering that past research findings suggest that prematurely ending mentoring relationships can have negative consequences for the mentees, including decreased perceptions of self-worth and scholastic competence (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2011).

This study addresses four chief issues that were presented in the 2013 Rhodes report. The goal was to discover if the same findings in the Rhodes study concerning the attributes of successful mentoring relationships were applicable to the BCHS mentoring program. Four research questions provided the foundation of the survey:

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship?

Research Question 2: What are the benefits to mentors in the BCHS mentoring program?

Research Question 3: What were the motivations to become a mentor in the BCHS mentoring program?

Research Question 4: How do mentors feel about the BCHS mentoring program?

Theoretical Framework

This study expands on the master’s thesis completed by Aaron Berning in 2013 at Cedarville University. Mr. Berning’s research focused on economically disadvantaged children enrolled in a public elementary school who were either in a) an academically-based tutoring program held during the day with adult tutors or b) a relationally-based tutoring program held after school that was mentored by teens. Below is a description of the theories and statements from the Berning report and other relevant studies that were used in the development of the survey instrument.

Characteristics of Effective Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Sipe (1999) concluded that successful mentors tend to be a steady and involved presence in the lives of their mentees, respect their viewpoints, and seek supervision from support staff when needed. Mentors that have prior experience in an informal or formal manner seem to have an advantage (DuBois et al., 2002). Several tactics for successful mentoring relationships include establishing a safe meeting environment, setting up a communication framework, and creating clear goals (Straus et al., 2013).

Rhodes (2013) determined that successful mentors derive significant personal satisfaction from their mentoring roles, emphasizing the emotional rewards and fulfillment gained through the experience. When mentors do not derive benefits, relationships are at greater risk of early termination (Snyder et al., 2000). Philip and Hendry (2000) found that information gathered from mentors indicated that interactions with their mentees provided them with an increased sense of the reality in a young person’s life, a chance to redefine how young people and adults relate to each other, and an opportunity to provide support in their lives. Similarly, Hancock (2003) found that 75% of working mentors said that mentoring helped them have a better attitude at work and gain a new perspective on life in general. Further, O’Donnell et al., (1997) found that a high percentage of mentors reported improved communication and leadership skills resulting from their mentoring relationships.

Meier and Stutzer (2008) conducted a study that found intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for being a volunteer. Intrinsic motivations were described as the internal values and satisfaction one receives from participating in a volunteer activity regardless of the outcome. Rewards received directly by the individual or other tangible benefits were categorized as extrinsic motivators. Batson et al. (2002) explained that mentors are driven by the need to give back to their community or

impart their knowledge to the next generation. The Berning study provided the following explanations for desiring to be a mentor:

- The need to volunteer, give back to the community, and having an outlet to work with children.
- Being familiar with the mentoring program by already knowing someone serving as a mentor.
- Knowing a child that had benefited from being a mentee.
- Being retired and having the time to be a mentor.
- The personal knowledge of being mentored as a child and wanting to reciprocate that experience for a student.

Past studies show that school support is critical to how well a mentoring program performs. Communication with school staff and resource accessibility are both linked to mentor/mentee match quality and the longevity of the relationship (Herrera et al., 2011). Program practices a school can implement such as training, structured activities, frequency of contact, and monitoring of program implementation can enhance the positive effects of the mentoring program (DuBois et al., 2002). Frequency of meetings between mentor and mentee is an important factor in structuring a beneficial mentor/mentee relationship (DuBois and Neville, 1997).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In developing survey questions, a literature review on three important studies was conducted to research and provide data to address two topics. The Berning (2013) qualitative study explored what incentivized an individual to become a mentor. Straus et al. (2013) and Eller et al. (2014), in each of their studies, investigated the commonalities of effective mentor/mentee relationships.

An Overview of the Studies

In his 2013 study, Aaron Berning explored the attitudes and thoughts of individuals who served as mentors to elementary-age students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Using a telephone survey of seven open-ended questions, Berning sought to determine a) how mentors perceived the mentoring programs they were involved in; b) what motivated them to become mentors; c) what were the needs of the mentees; d) what determined personal success for the mentors and mentees in the program; e) what were the problems with the program; and f) suggestions for program improvement. Of the 18 randomly selected participants in the qualitative study, 13 were adult age and 5 were teenagers.

Straus et al. (2013), in their qualitative study conducted between March 2010 and January 2011, identified mutual characteristics in effective mentor-mentee relationships at the University of Toronto Department of Medicine and the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. Since successful mentors can positively impact the careers of their mentees, the goal of the study was to develop approaches and strategies to cultivate effective mentor-mentee relationships. Using semi-structured telephone interviews, the researchers gathered data from 54 participants.

Using qualitative data gathered from 12 workshops, Eller et al. (2014) sought the factors with the greatest influence in producing positive mentoring relationships of faculty and students in an academic setting. From this study, the researchers revealed commonalities from previous studies as well as new information. The researcher examined both mentors and mentees in developing their conclusions, which was a unique approach as previous research studied each group separately. The study sample group included 117 mentor-mentee pairings, 4 solo mentors and 1 solo mentee, with 239 total participants.

Study Findings

The review is organized by key themes that emerged from these studies: the incentives for becoming a mentor, the characteristics of effective mentor-mentee relationships, and recommendations for program improvement. By examining these themes, this review not only highlights the motivations and experiences of mentors but also provides insights into how mentoring programs can be designed and improved to foster positive outcomes for all participants.

Incentives for Becoming a Mentor

Berning (2013) focused on the motivations behind individuals becoming mentors, particularly for economically disadvantaged elementary students. Significant motivations included a desire to volunteer, a passion for working with children, and the opportunity to provide support and encouragement. The study also identified needs such as academic assistance, building self-esteem, and providing better guidance at home.

Characteristics of Effective Mentor/Mentee Relationships

The shared traits of successful mentoring relationships in academic settings were explored in the Straus et al. (2013) study. The primary themes included reciprocity, mutual respect, clear expectations, a strong mentor/mentee connection, and shared values. Conducting qualitative research through workshops, Eller et al. (2014) identified eight themes crucial for positive mentoring relationships in academic settings: open communication and accessibility, goal setting and time management, passion and inspiration, caring personal relationships, mutual respect and trust, knowledge exchange, independence and collaboration, and role modeling. The findings reinforced the importance of these attributes and suggested that future research should explore the negative aspects of mentoring relationships.

Recommendations for Program Improvement

Based on interviews with mentors, Berning (2013) suggested greater communication between mentors and teachers, the development of long-term mentor-student relationships, and strategies for recruiting and training mentors. Issues highlighted included the need for longer meeting times and less academic work during sessions. Recommendations from the Straus et al. (2013) study focused on training programs that enhance mentor and mentee skills, strategies for handling failed relationships, and further studies on the success and impact of mentoring. Eller et al. (2014) suggested that findings be used to foster dialog in existing mentoring relationships and guide new mentors, emphasizing the importance of positive mentoring behaviors and the potential need to address negative aspects in future research.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

Creswell (2012) defines a population as a target group of individuals with similar characteristics. In this case, the target population was adult mentors from the BCHS mentoring program. A purposive sampling method was used to invite a pool of 153 respondents, who were all current mentors in the BCHS mentoring program. Sixty-nine chose to take the survey for a 45% response rate. The response rate was considered to be above average based on statistics compiled by Nulty (2008). In his article, Nulty reviewed the responses rates of on-line surveys from eight past studies and the average response rate was 33%.

The researcher, as an active mentor in the program, could have completed the survey but chose not to. (Hodkinson 2005) concluded that the insider researcher has the advantage of familiarity of understanding the context of practices. However, Plows (2008) warns that insider positions can entail taken-for-granted observations. With concerns about subjectivity and possible bias, the researcher chose not to be a respondent.

In total, there were 47 female and 22 male respondents. Thirty-two of the participants (46%) identified themselves in the 31 to 40 age category with another 23% in the 41 to 50 age category. Financial services, technology, professional services, and education were the most popular job professions among the respondents. All participants had at least some college experience. Sixty-one of the 69 respondents (88%) had a college degree or higher. The majority of the respondents had been mentors for less than 3 years. The characteristics of survey respondents are shown in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

All respondents are anonymous, and this was conveyed to the participants in the introductory paragraph of the survey. Participants were also made aware that the survey results would be shared with BCHS administrators for possible improvements to the program. All respondents provided written consent to participate in the survey and no identifying information was gathered during data collection.

Figure 1

Age Distribution of Mentors.

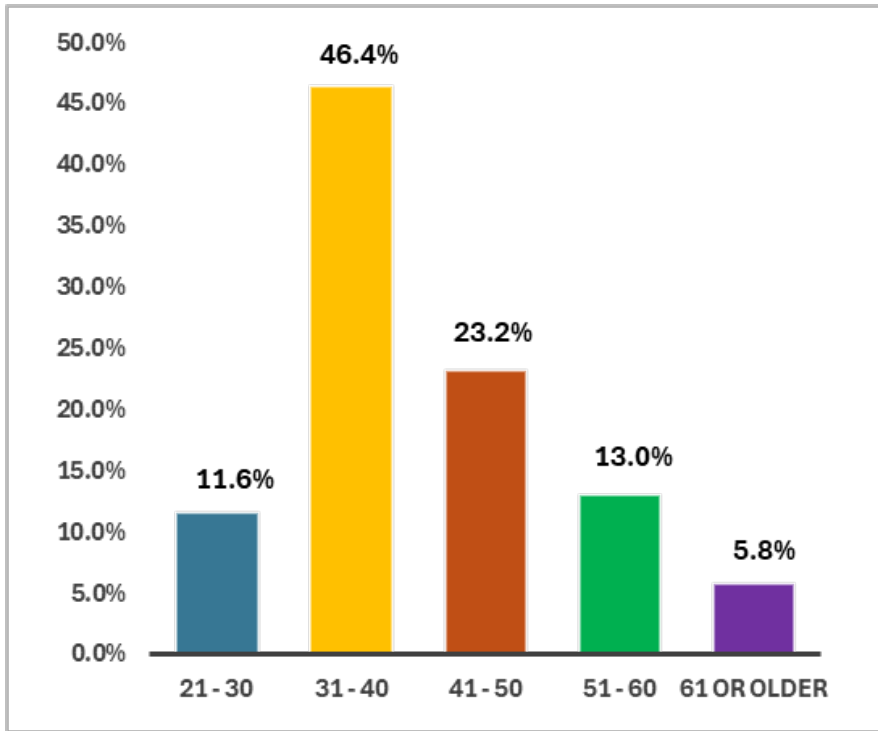


Figure 2

Education Levels of Mentors.

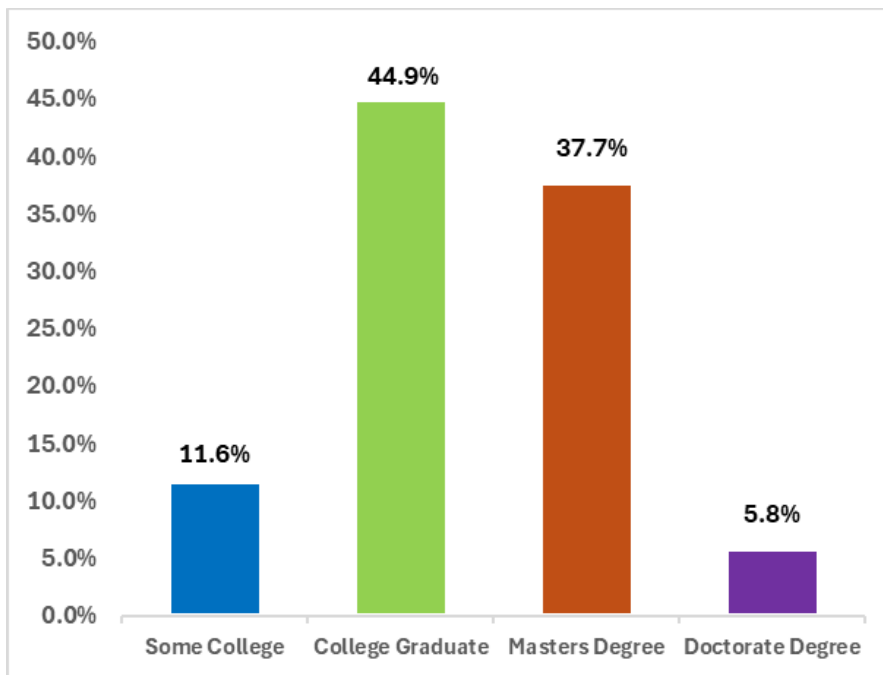


Figure 3

Mentor Professions

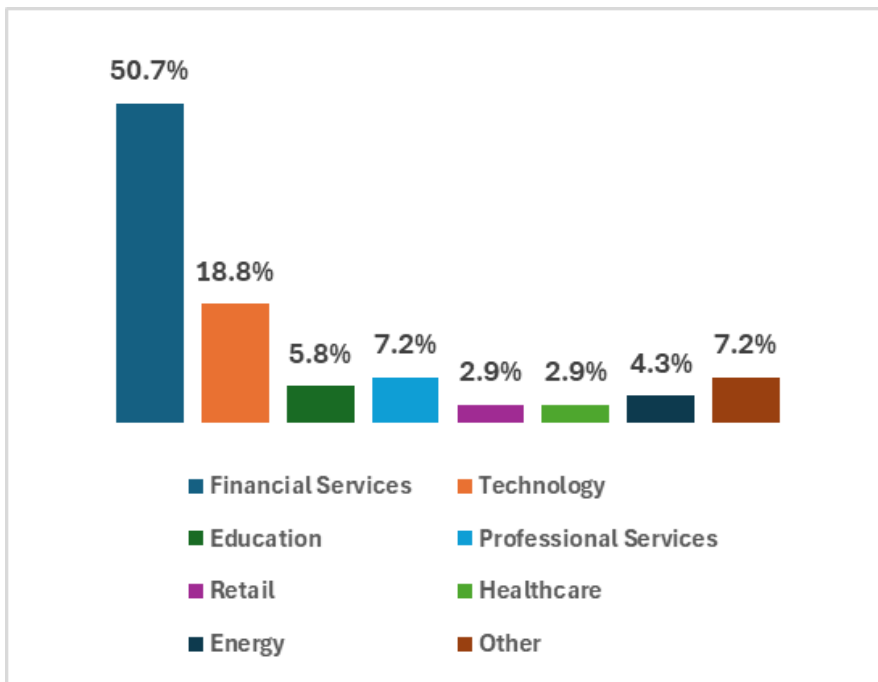
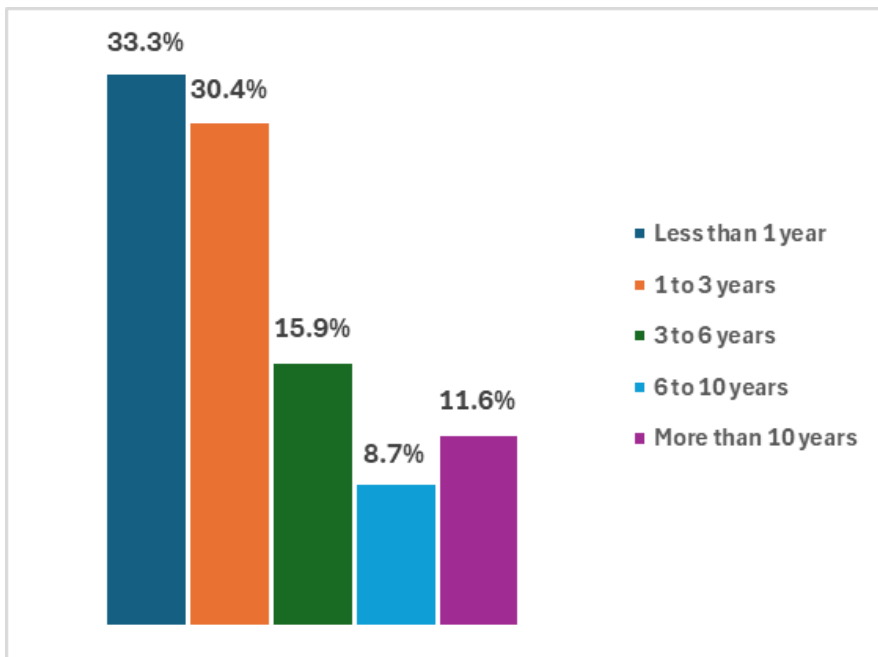


Figure 4

Experience as a BCHS mentor.



Instrumentation

Rather than interviews or focus groups, the online questionnaire method was used to reach the greatest number of mentors in the least amount of time. While this type of survey does not allow for in-depth probing of questions, online

surveys have proven to be effective in achieving respectable response rates (Watt et al., 2002). The survey was designed to answer the research questions stated in the study, provide possible suggestions to improve the BCHS mentoring program, and give greater insight into the experiences of mentors within the BCHS mentoring program. It was designed as an on-line questionnaire constructed using an online software service which allowed the participants to access the survey through a hyperlink. A 19-question survey was designed grouped into the following sections:

Section 1 – Demographic information including age, gender, professional background, and educational status.

Section 2 - Mentor motivations, mentor training, and personal experiences as a mentor.

Section 3 – Characteristics of successful mentoring relationships, feelings about the Business Careers High School mentoring program, and suggestions for improvement.

Below is a description of how the survey addressed each of the study's four research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship?

Survey Item(s): One question in the survey asked the respondents to rate factors, on a scale of one to five, on how important they were in an effective mentoring relationship.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits to mentors in the mentoring program?

Survey Item(s): Three survey questions examined the benefits of being a mentor through increased leadership skills, improved communication capabilities, and greater personal fulfillment.

Research Question 3: What were the motivations to become a mentor in the BCHS mentoring program?

Survey Item(s): Respondents were asked to indicate their reason for volunteering to be a BCHS mentor.

Research Question 4: How do mentors feel about the BCHS mentoring program?

Survey Item(s): Five questions in the survey pertained to mentor's attitudes toward the BCHS mentoring program and suggestions for improvement.

The survey was pre-tested twice with two working professionals as the first version was revised. Both individuals were able to answer the survey under five minutes and their opinions assisted in constructing the final version. The average time for completing the survey by the respondents was four minutes and seven seconds. Of the 19 questions, 16 were quantitative and 3 required open-ended answers.²

The survey was developed and the data was collected as follows:

1. *Survey permission.* The BCHS mentoring program administrator provided permission to conduct the survey on two conditions. First, no questions could be related to gathering personal information on BCHS students. Secondly, the BCHS administration emailed the survey directly to mentors since outside access to the email addresses was not permitted.
2. *Survey development.* The survey was developed using an online survey tool and through email verification, it was determined that all 153 possible respondents had access to the survey. Nineteen questions were developed with five of the questions used to gather demographic information.
3. *Survey duration.* An email was sent by the BCHS mentor program administrator on March 21, 2018 to the 153 mentors requesting participation in the survey. A web link to the survey was contained in the email. Mentors were given until April 6, 2018 to fill out the questionnaire.
4. *Survey answers.* The answers to the survey questions were gathered using an online survey tool for analysis. Specific questions were contained within the survey to gain the mentor's perspective on effective mentoring relationships, the motivations of mentors, the benefits received by mentors, and their thoughts regarding program implementation.

² Survey questions and data can be found at:

<https://www.openicpsr.org/openicpsr/project/188321/version/V2/view;jsessionid=C91D9D7995B4546E5A46D9446938B27A>

Data Analysis

The analysis of this study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to extract meaningful insights from survey data. For the quantitative aspect, the online questionnaire gathered numerical data related to mentor demographics, motivations, and perspectives on various factors influencing successful mentor-mentee relationships. The quantitative analysis focused on descriptive statistics, such as percentages and weighted averages, to assess key elements. These data were used to identify trends and general attitudes among the mentors. For the qualitative portion, open-ended responses were analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover recurring patterns and themes in the mentors' narratives.

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used to triangulate the data, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the survey results. Quantitative data highlighted overall trends and satisfaction levels, while qualitative responses offered detailed context and elaborated on mentors' personal experiences and suggestions for improvement. The combination of methods allowed for a richer analysis, particularly when determining key themes such as the importance of mentor motivation, communication, and the need for structured program support. This mixed-method approach ensured that both statistical trends and individual voices were represented in the conclusions drawn from the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the survey answers from the 69 respondents produced four themes. These four themes – mentor and mentee motivation, commitment to the community, training, and program enjoyment – are discussed below. The results of ten key survey questions are presented in Table 1.

Mentor and Mentee Motivation

The motivation of both mentors and mentees is essential for cultivating impactful mentoring relationships. Mentors consistently highlighted the importance of being a reliable and engaged presence, reinforcing Sipe's (1999) theory that consistent involvement is key to successful mentoring. Personal fulfillment also emerged as a major motivator, with nearly 61% of respondents finding the program personally rewarding, underscoring the intrinsic value that mentors derive from their contributions.

The survey revealed that the primary motivations for participating were the desire to give back to the community and the opportunity to impart knowledge to students. These findings align with Berning's (2013) work, which emphasizes that mentors often view their role as a way to stay engaged while helping others grow. Similarly, Eller et al. (2014) recognized the vital role mentors play in transferring knowledge and enhancing the skills of their mentees. Survey respondents rated mentor motivation as 4.8 on a 5-point scale, emphasizing its critical role in the success of the mentor-mentee relationship.

Despite the strong motivation from mentors, a recurring theme in the qualitative feedback was the need for improved mentor-mentee matching. Several mentors suggested that better upfront research could ensure stronger compatibility between mentors and mentees, leading to more effective relationships. Additionally, some mentors requested clearer guidance and support in motivating mentees, particularly those who appeared disengaged. This feedback highlights the importance of addressing both sides of the mentor-mentee dynamic, ensuring that motivation is fostered and sustained throughout the relationship.

Commitment to the Community

Batson et al. (2002), found that mentors are often motivated by civic-mindedness and the opportunity to share their knowledge with the next generation. This sentiment was echoed by the majority of respondents. In the survey, 68.1% of mentors indicated that they joined the program to give back to the community, while 53.6% stated they were eager to pass along their knowledge and experience to students. For some, personal connections to the school or past involvement in mentoring programs further fueled their desire to participate.

Qualitative responses also underscored this theme, with several mentors highlighting their motivations to "be what they needed as a child" or to "offer what my mentor offered when I was a BCHS student." Others pointed to personal experiences, such as their own children benefiting from the program or their desire to mentor young women into leadership roles. Many respondents expressed a deep sense of responsibility to positively impact students' lives and help mentees develop the skills needed for success. The mentors' passion for community engagement and their dedication to fostering the next generation reflects not only their altruism but also the enduring importance of mentorship programs in cultivating leadership and personal growth.

Training

Most respondents did not have prior training as a mentor, and 84% expressed interest in training if available. DuBois et al. (2002) suggested that program practices a school can implement such as training, can enhance the positive effects of the mentoring program. In the qualitative feedback, some mentors suggested that training could enhance their effectiveness, particularly by providing guidance on structured topics or specific strategies to motivate and engage mentees. Others mentioned that training could help improve mentor-mentee compatibility by setting clearer objectives or offering support when mentors face challenges in their role. Overall, the desire for more formal mentor training was evident, with many mentors seeing it as a way to deepen their impact and improve their mentoring relationships.

Program Enjoyment

Survey respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program, commending its well-organized structure and effective management. Notably, 87% of mentors indicated they are likely to continue participating, and 96% would recommend the program to others, reflecting strong overall approval. Most mentors found the monthly meeting schedule to be well-suited to their needs, reinforcing DuBois and Neville's (1997) research on the significance of meeting frequency for successful mentoring relationships. However, some respondents offered constructive suggestions for improvement, particularly highlighting the need to enhance the meeting environment. Several mentors noted that noisy meeting spaces can hinder effective communication. Additionally, mentors suggested incorporating more structured activities or discussion topics to foster deeper engagement with mentees. Others expressed interest in offsite activities or field trips, seeing these as valuable opportunities to strengthen mentor-mentee relationships outside the traditional meeting context.

Additional Connections

Below are two additional connections to related literature in the field.

Characteristics of a Successful Mentoring Relationship

Major factors for successful mentoring gleaned from the survey include the motivation of both mentor and mentee, a comfortable meeting area, administrative support, and strong communication skills. Effective mentors are not only active listeners but also establish a strong communication framework and set clear, actionable goals, ensuring that both parties are aligned and working towards tangible outcomes. These findings align with the work of Straus et al. (2013), which underscores the importance of these elements in building successful mentoring relationships. Together, these factors create a dynamic in which mentors can provide meaningful guidance and mentees can thrive, making the relationship impactful and lasting.

Benefits to Mentors in the BCHS Program

The survey results clearly demonstrate that mentors not only experience personal satisfaction but also see significant growth in their communication and leadership skills. This mirrors Hancock's (2003) findings, which highlight how mentoring enhances workplace attitudes and provides mentors with a renewed sense of purpose and perspective. Furthermore, the survey aligns with the work of Philip and Hendry (2000), who found that mentors consistently develop stronger communication and leadership capabilities through their mentoring roles. These improvements, both personal and professional, underscore the broader value of mentoring, not only for mentees but also for mentors, who benefit from the opportunity to refine their skills and gain new insights through their involvement.

Table 1

BCHS Survey Questions and Answers

Questions	Answers (% of Survey Respondents)
Would you be interested in taking mentor training if it was available?	No = 16.0%, Possibly = 47.8%, Yes = 36.2%
Rate the motivation of the mentor as a factor in a successful mentor/mentee relationship? (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important)	1 = 0.0%, 2 = 0.0%, 3 = 1.4%, 4 = 17.4%, 5 = 81.2%
Has being a BCHS mentor improved your communication skills? (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree)	1 = 1.5%, 2 = 5.8%, 3 = 44.9%, 4 = 39.1%, 5 = 8.7%
Has being a BCHS mentor improved your leadership skills? (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree)	1 = 1.4%, 2 = 7.3%, 3 = 36.2%, 4 = 40.6%, 5 = 14.5%
How important is a comfortable and safe meeting place as a factor in a successful mentor/mentee relationship? (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important)	1 = 1.5%, 2 = 0.0%, 3 = 13.0%, 4 = 46.4%, 5 = 39.1%
How important are clear objectives and expectations as a factor in a successful mentor/mentee relationship? (1 = Not Important, 5 = Very Important)	1 = 0.0%, 2 = 1.5%, 3 = 13.0%, 4 = 49.3%, 5 = 36.2%
Has being a BCHS mentor been personally rewarding? (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Disagree or Agree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree)	1 = 1.4%, 2 = 0.0%, 3 = 4.4%, 4 = 33.3%, 5 = 60.9%
Did you have any formal training before becoming a BCHS mentor?	No = 26.1%, Yes = 73.9%
The monthly scheduled meetings with the mentees are . . .	Too Few = 11.6%, Too Many = 0.0%, Just Right = 88.4%
How would you rate your experience as a BCHS Mentor? (1 = Poor; 2 = Fair; 3 = Good; 4 = Very Good; 5 = Excellent)	1 = 0.0%, 2 = 1.5%, 3 = 17.4%, 4 = 47.8%, 5 = 33.3%

IMPLICATIONS

The final question of the survey asked, “What would you suggest to improve the BCHS mentor program?” While several respondents expressed satisfaction with the mentoring program and its administrators, two improvements were frequently suggested. From the findings of the survey, the following two recommendations would increase the effectiveness of the mentor program.

1. *Invest in training.* Eighty-four percent of the respondents would be in favor of formal mentor training. Straus et al. (2013) recommended training programs as a method to promote the positive skills of mentors and mentees identified in the study. Also, DuBois et al. (2002) stated training can enhance the positive effects of the mentoring program.
2. *Group activities.* Comments from the respondents expressed the need for a) more opportunities to interact with other mentors in the program and b) activities involving mentors and mentees. One respondent stated, “I would love to do an activity other than lunch with my mentee. It would be fun for us to do activities where our mentees could learn and have fun either at school or off-site, whatever is acceptable. I would also enjoy meeting some of the other mentors involved in the program, it would be nice to get to know them a bit more.” Another respondent wrote, “I

wish there were a planned social event in the summer, so that we didn't have a long break in between and it was something that parents and everyone was comfortable with."

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this study is that no follow-up emails were sent to fill out the survey since a) all emails needed to be generated by the BCHS administrator and b) the survey needed to be completed within a college semester. Studies show that additional emails to the sample population during the survey period could have boosted the survey response rate of 45% (Nulty, 2008). Another limitation of this study is the mentee population studied. BCHS attracts exceptionally gifted students who must be accepted to the program. Conclusions reached in this study may not necessarily apply to the general student population. Similarly, the mentors involved in the study all have some form of advanced education. Their backgrounds and experience are not representative of all student mentors.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should focus on the opinions, thoughts, and suggestions of mentees, particularly the mentees that have graduated from BCHS. A study that explored how mentees felt about their BCHS mentoring experience would be beneficial to the program. Also, a study that compared the mentoring experience for similar students to the BCHS students would be helpful. In constructing the themes for this study, no prior research on mentoring programs comparable to the BCHS mentoring program was found. Finally, BCHS should consider a study to explore the reasons why a portion of their mentoring relationships do not succeed. This type of study would provide information to develop strategies to prevent future mentoring relationships from failing.

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