UNIVERSITY-SPONSORED SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING PROGRAMS THAT TARGET AT-RISK YOUTH: A GLIMPSE OF STUDENT-MENTORS' EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

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SUMMARY

This article looks at how inadequate academic preparation and logistical and bureaucratic challenges, if any, impacted student-mentors' experiences and how such impediments hindered the attainment of program goals. The program in question is a joint collaborative mentoring venture run by a local school district and a criminal justice department at a mid-sized four-year public university in the western part of the United States. The programs aim was to increase student-mentors' community and civic commitments as well as their knowledge of risk factors that generally inform delinquency, incorrigibility, and dependency. A total of 115 university student-mentors, who involuntarily served as student-mentors, were surveyed. Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data generated shows that while the program had the potential to benefit both mentors and protégées, the majority of student-mentors experienced professional, logistical, and bureaucratic impediments. Results further suggest that the success of university-sponsored school-based service learning projects that target at-risk youth may depend largely on how well student-mentors are logistically, academically, and bureaucratically prepared as well as the degrees of commitment by both university and local school authorities toward easing some of the obvious difficulties student-mentors encounter. Discussions are offered for ways in which voluntary recruitment of student-mentors, adequate academic preparation, and reduced administrative hurdles and logistical challenges may enhance personal commitments and mentoring experiences.

Key words: *youth mentoring, juvenile rehabilitation, service learning, and university-sponsored mentoring service-learning programs*

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring "is one of the most commonly-used interventions to prevent, divert, and remediate youth engaged in, or thought to be at risk for delinquent behavior, school failure, aggression, or other antisocial" behaviors (Tolan, Henry et al. 2008, 2). As a result, in recent decades youth mentoring has attracted substantial interest from policymakers, and intervention theorists looking for ways to positively impact the welfare of at risk youth. The success of mentoring in general has also caused several mentoring programs to crop up in universities, especially in the past two decades (Meyers and Smith 1999; Monroe 2003; Bordelon and Phillips 2006; McClam, Diambra et al. 2008; Tolan, Henry et al. 2008; Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009). These programs include university-sponsored mentoring service-learning programs that are intended to enrich college students' learning experiences (Bergerson and Petersen 2009; Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009).

The prevailing conclusions today are that mentoring positively affects various aspects of protégés' lives and development. More specifically, studies show that mentoring positively impacts at-risk youth (Chan and Ho 2008), promotes pro-social peer attachments and trust (Yeh, Ching et al. 2007), eases interpersonal difficulties and enhances social and emotional development (Blinn-Pike, Kuschel et al. 1998), assists youth's transition to adulthood, and reduces behavioral problems (Bergerson and Petersen 2009; Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009; Ahrens, DuBois et al. 2010). Mentoring also broadens protégés' social networks and support systems (Sánchez, Esparza et al. 2011), improves relationships with parents and reduces unexcused absences (Rhodes, Grossman et al. 2000). It also benefits youth with high and low

risk level behaviors (Chan and Ho 2008) and helps adolescents overcome societal and relational adversities (Rhodes, Bogat et al. 2002).

Academically, mentoring activities that provide guidance to youth have been linked to high academic achievement (Chan and Ho 2008; Sánchez, Esparza et al. 2011), positive attitudes about learning, realistic educational plans, and the ability to overcome negative educational socialization (Bergerson and Petersen 2009, 45). Mentoring activities also enrich academic experience and increase aspirations for higher education (Campbell and Campbell 2007), high academic achievement, and scholastic competence (Ahrens, DuBois et al. 2010; Sánchez, Esparza et al. 2011), as well as improve student retention (Jacobi 1991). It also serves as an important source of social and psychological nutrients for dealing with many of the complexities and challenges youth face during their transition into college and adulthood.

Research further shows that mentoring activities have long-term positive academic benefits (Campbell and Campbell 2007), including increases in career aspirations (Ragins and Scandura 1999; Bergerson and Petersen 2009), and the creation of social support systems that may be of value to protégés (Busch 1985; Blinn-Pike, Kuschel et al. 1998; Stanton-Salazar and Spina 2003; Yeh, Ching et al. 2007). Mentoring can also be strong social capital for many at-risk youth and in many ways can play a variety of other important roles (Jacobi 1991), especially when well-defined goals and expectations are present; mentor-protégé matching processes are well informed (Hall 2008); mentors are properly screened, trained, and supervised; and when the act of mentoring involves frequent one-to-one mentoring contacts between mentors and protégés (DuBois, Holloway et al. 2002; Miller 2004; Rhodes 2008; Cavell, Elledge et al. 2009).

When properly organized and delivered, mentoring also benefits mentors in various ways, by enhancing emotional satisfaction or psychological well-being and expanding college students' knowledge of at risk youth's socioeconomic challenges and histories (Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009). Mentoring also rejuvenates student-mentors and boosts their creativity, eases cultural adjustment, and has the potential to increase community and civic commitment as well as awareness of key risk factors that inform delinquency, incorrigibility, and dependency (Busch 1985; Campbell and Campbell 2007; Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009). These types of outcomes may be particularly evident in terms of school-based mentoring programs that are associated with service-learning courses.

In the context of such encouraging conclusions about the effectiveness of mentoring, this article argues that a high degree of individual student-mentors' professional preparation, logistical capabilities, and personal commitment, along with a low number of bureaucratic hurdles under which they operate, is critical to the achievement of positive mentoring results by university-sponsored school-based mentoring programs. Unfortunately, however, there is an absence of scholarly or empirical knowledge in circulation about student-mentors' experiences and the kinds of logistical, professional, and bureaucratic challenges they face when involuntarily participating in university-sponsored school-based mentoring programs in which students who are enrolled in service learning courses are compelled to participate.

The need for a better understanding of youth mentoring is well echoed by Tolan, Henry, Schoeny and Bass (2008). These researchers conducted a meta-analytic review of 112 studies, published between 1970 and 2005, and found that mentoring can have a modest positive effect on high-risk youth especially in the area of delinquency, aggression, substance abuse, and academic achievement. However, they called for more careful testing of mentoring efforts after concluding that existing studies on mentoring are less informative and quite limited in detail, especially in the area of mentoring activities and implementation characteristics (Tolan, Henry et al. 2008). The need to better understand youth mentoring is particularly evident in the context of university-sponsored mentoring service-learning programs.

To date, scholarly understanding of university-sponsored and school-based mentoring programs comes from the work of a few researchers like Hughes, Welsh et al. (2009) and Bordelon and Phillips (2006). Hughes, Welsh et al. (2009) describe one of many university-sponsored mentoring programs in the United States in which students who are enrolled in a service-learning course mentor high school youth and report on the effects of the mentoring experience on their own attitudes (Hughes, Welsh et al. 2009). Bordelon and Phillips (2006) look at variables that influence students to participate in service learning as well as students' perceptions of such programs, noting that it is not understood how "age, employment status, academic major, and child rearing influence students' interest in service-learning" (Bordelon and Phillips 2006, 146).

Indeed a better understanding of the experiences of university students involuntarily recruited into service learning courses requiring mentoring

assignments can significantly contribute to the understanding of the programmatic effects of university-sponsored mentoring. Furthermore, an understanding of the types of problems that such university student-mentors typically face when involuntarily participating in university-led and school-based mentoring programs can significantly impact how such programs benefit both at-risk youth and student-mentors. The word involuntarily is used with the understanding that the majority of university students who participated in the program under review were compelled by the department's curriculum to enroll in the mentoring program in order to fulfill specific requirements for a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

This article deviates slightly from the traditional empirical focus on the impacts of mentoring by exploring the experiences of university students with regard to bureaucratic impediments, professional preparation, and logistical difficulties. The assumptions are that difficulties in these areas can negatively impact student-mentors' learning experiences as well as the extent to which student-mentors may benefit their protégés. Thus this article documents (1) some of the professional difficulties that prevented student-mentors from carrying on healthy mentoring relationships as part of a required course, (2) logistical difficulties that interfered with students' delivery of mentoring services, and (3) administrative hurdles that overburdened mentoring relationships and affect the overall effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The university-sponsored school-based program being reviewed targets K-12 pupils (from kindergarten at age 5 to 12th grade at generally age 18) who have made contact or are at risk of making contact with the juvenile justice system, who are at risk of involvement in street gang activities or substance and or alcohol use or abuse or of developing criminal tendencies, or who have been identified by school officials as having academic challenges, behavior management issues, and or having few or no positive adult role models in their lives. The program, which is run jointly by a western United States public university's criminal justice department and the local school district, is supported by the criminal justice department's curriculum, which consists of five courses: Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Correction, Violence against Children, Youth Violence, and Youth Mentoring.

The Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Correction courses cover the various components of youth corrections. The Violence against Children course covers the philosophical and legal definitions of childhood and violence and also discusses the extent, distribution, and predictors of violence against children as well as the selective enforcement of laws against such violence. The Youth Violence course examines the magnitude, scope, and nature of youth violence; identifies factors that cause youth violence, and analyzes programs for preventing youth violence. In the Youth Violence course, students also analyze programs for preventing youth violence as the skills required for identifying and responding to criminogenic needs, risk factors, and protective elements.

In the Youth Mentoring course, students learn about the relationships between poor academic achievement and drug abuse, gang involvement, negative social influence, poor attendance rate, deficient interpersonal and problem solving skills, incorrigibility, dependency, and criminal behaviors and tendencies. While student-mentors are taught to guard against substituting for parents or acting as mental health therapists, they are trained to assist mentees with finding solutions to issues associated with delinquency, incorrigibility, and poor academic performance and to tutor protégés and talk with them about impediments to success. Student-mentors also learn to counsel mentees toward good work and study habits and to engage them in positive dialogues about character issues and social impediments with the aim to increase academic progress and success.

The local school district that participates in the program is the second largest in the county. The district currently has about 14,000 students and runs one primary school, ten elementary sites, one middle school and one junior high school, two large comprehensive high schools, and two small alternative high schools. The district also accepts an inflow of middle-school students from two neighboring school districts.

The method of matching protégés with student-mentors was determined simply by the existence of needs (a youth wanting mentoring services) and the availability of service (a student-mentor enrolled in one of the service learning courses). Neither age, gender, race, nor academic preparation played a role in this process. However, student-mentors were required to meet at least once a week and to spend 30 hours with their respective mentees during the spring or fall semester. Prior to the initial meeting, prospective student-mentors were also required to turn in a signed parental consent from a legal guardian or parent and be tested for tuberculosis and cleared by the University Health Department. In addition each

student was fingerprinted and subjected to a criminal background checks by the University Campus Police Department. The cost of the background checks and medical health clearances were borne by individual students in addition to the tuition they paid and the course materials they bought.

The fundamental basis of the program's goal to positively impact at risk thinking and behaviors through mentoring are consistent with the social learning theory, which holds that behaviors are learned through contact with others and through observation and imitation of other people (see for example Cullen and Agnew 2011). In the context of university-based mentoring, this model provides a good means for effective behavior modification due to the actual one-on-one modeling of good behaviors and the professional ability of students-mentors to provide guidance with regard to the management of protective, risk, and criminogenic factors. The theoretical bases of this program and indeed this study, therefore, are that (1) student-mentors can better enrich their professional training through exposure to at risk youth's behaviors and the clinical process of trying to positively impact risk and criminogenic factors while nourishing protective factors, and (2) that at risk youth's anti-social thoughts and behaviors can be positively impacted through the opportunities that mentoring provides for mentees to interact with and observe pro-social adults like the student-mentors. The question, however, is whether or not in practice the university-based mentoring program provided the resources needed to facilitate the social learning processes that can fully facilitate such social learning objectives.

METHODS

At the beginning of Fall 2011, students enrolled in service learning courses were matched with at-risk youth at various schools within the local school district. Each student-mentor met with his or her assigned protégé during regular school hours Monday through Friday. Mentoring activities or contacts between student-mentors and protégés lasted for 15 weeks.

Student-mentors met with their respective mentees exclusively on school grounds and during school hours under the programs' guidelines that permit interactions with mentees off school grounds only after prior authorization from mentees' parents. Typical mentoring activities included conducting one-on-one friendly discussions, helping mentees with academic work, talking about personal issues,

finding solutions to issues associated with delinquency, incorrigibility, poor academic performance, and facilitating mentees' access to information pertaining to post-secondary education, employment opportunities, and career goals. Mentoring activities also included talking about impediments to success, study habits and engaging mentees in positive dialogues about character issues and social impediments.

In order to develop some understanding of student-mentors' perceptions of program effectiveness and impact as well as related challenges, a 35 item questionnaire was developed and administered at the end of Fall 2011. The instrument contained 12 likert scale items, 2 open-ended questions, 11 closed-ended questions, and descriptive data items on age, gender, and academic status of both protégés and student-mentors as well as information about student-mentors' majors, concentrations, and career goals. The surveys were made available to 149 student-mentors during week fifteen, at which time mentors were asked to anonymously and voluntarily complete and return them to their respective instructors during week sixteen. A total of 115 valid surveys were received and included in this study. These surveys were analyzed using basic frequency distribution analysis to identify and describe sample characteristics and to describe the distribution of crucial variable types.

Quantitative Data

The twelve Likert scale items quantitatively measured students' professional skills in dealing with at-risk youth, their perceptions about program effectiveness and impact, and related personal challenges and administrative hurdles. For the purpose of SPSS analysis, dichotomous variables were coded using 1 and 0. The five Likert scale items were coded as 0= SD (Strongly Disagree), 1= D (Disagree), 2=N (Neither Agree or Disagree), 3=A (Agree), and 4= (Strongly Agree). As shown below, the 12 Likert scale statements were then grouped into four sections. The two open-ended items were grouped under the heading "logistical impediments."

The item under "program impacts on protégé" measures the perception of student-mentors on how they performed in response to the needs of their respective mentees and how they perceived the reciprocal responses by the mentees. It also captures students' perceptions of the program's impacts on at risk youth and student-mentors. The items listed under "program impacts on mentors" were designed

to gauge student-mentors' personal satisfaction with the program, especially with regard to how the program enhanced their learning skills, experiences, and development, and how they perceived the overall impacts of the program as a whole on fellow university students.

Program Impacts on Protégés

1. During this semester I significantly helped my mentee.
2. My protégé was highly motivated to work with me.
3. During this semester the mentoring program benefited my protégé.

Program Impact on Student-Mentors

1. I am glad I participated in the mentoring program during this semester.
2. During this semester I learned a lot about at risk youth through mentoring.
3. During this semester the mentoring program significantly benefitted Criminal Justice students.

Administrative Hurdles

1. During this semester school authorities made my contact with youth easy during the scheduled period.
2. Overall, the school district's staff was very helpful.
3. It was easy to see my mentee during the scheduled time.

Professional Preparation and Skill

1. Many times I was confused about what to do or talk about with my mentee.
2. I am willing to work with this protégé again.
3. My relationship with my protégé was great.

Logistical Impediments

1. In the space below please explain or describe main challenges or successes you encountered this semester in relation to your mentoring assignments.

2. Mentee or youth's most serious behavior problem.

The items listed under "administrative hurdles" were designed to provide an understanding of how administrative and bureaucratic hurdles impacted student-mentors' ability to carry out their mentoring obligations and the degree to which school district staff were committed to the successes of the program. Bureaucratic challenges include the process of getting parental permission, permission to enter school and to meet with protégés during and after school hours, course requirements such as the number of hours per semester a mentor is obligated to spend with assigned protégées during a semester, and the related expenses and hurdles associated with criminal background investigations and TB tests. The items listed under "professional preparation" were meant to gain insight into mentors' experiences working with at risk youth, the strength of mentors' interpersonal skills, how deeply student-mentors were committed to not giving up on youth, how they positively interacted with protégés, and how the mentoring assignment related to future career goals.

The two open-ended questions listed under "logistical impediments" were created to provide student-mentors with a space to state or explain, in their own words, the degree and types of logistical and professional challenges they encountered in relation to mentoring assignments and to qualitatively capture the different types of behaviors and needs exhibited by protégés. After reading each comment multiple times, as needed, to develop a sense of common themes and concerns expressed by respondents, the item on "mentee or youth's most serious behavior problem" was coded as presented in Table 1. About 21 (18%) of the 115 respondents did not make a statement about their youth's most serious behavior problem.

Table 2 represents the coding used for the open-ended item asking student-mentors to explain or describe the main challenges or successes they encountered in relation to their mentoring assignments.

Table 1. *Example of coding for "mentee or youth's most serious behavior problem"*

Statements about	bullying, fighting or active gang activities	were coded as	delinquent behavior
	poor grades	were coded as	academic
	absences, tardiness	was coded as	attendance
	having ADHD, depression,	was coded as	psychological
	social issues, difficulties, or staying on task,	was coded as	personal problem
	non-participation, disruptive, talks in class	was coded as	classroom problem
	non-participation, defiance, absences	were coded as	multiple problems

Table 2. *Example of coding for "challenges or successes encountered in relation to mentoring assignments"*

Statements about	not knowing what to do or talk about with students, or failure to identify protégés' needs, etc.	was coded as	preparatory deficit
	fingerprint, background clearance, not being able to see protégés because of scheduled class activities, lack of school district's staff cooperation, etc.	was coded as	administrative hurdles
	not being able to meet with protégé due to of lack of transportation, work, or personal responsibilities, etc.	was coded as	logistical problems
	benefiting from the program or the program helping protégé, mentors, etc.	was coded as	positive experience
	solving a problem associated with protégé or the program in general	was coded as	positive preparation
	multiple hurdles (two or more problems)	were coded as	multiple problems

Table 3. *Student Mentors Characteristics*

N = 115		f	%*
Gender	Male	50	43
	Female	64	56
	Missing	1	1
Academic Standing	Freshman	0	.0
	Sophomore	1	1
	Junior	39	34
	Senior	72	62
	Missing	3	3
Age	18-20	6	6
	21-23	82	71
	24-26	16	14
	27-29	3	3
	30-40	4	4
	41 and	2	2
Major	Criminal Justice	105	91
	Sociology above	3	3
	Economics	2	2
	Others	5	4
Concentration	Juvenile Justice	55	48
	Correction	13	11
	Legal Studies	4	3
	Law Enforcement	24	21
	Forensic	7	6
	Others	3	3
	Not reported	9	8

*percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number

Over one fourth of respondents, about 31(27%), did not respond to this item and thus did not provide additional information about challenges or successes they encountered.

Student-mentors' Biographical and Descriptive Information

As shown in Table 3, 50 (43%) student-mentors identified themselves as male and 64 (56%) as female (one did not choose a gender). The majority

Table 4. *Protégées Characteristics*

(n = 115)		f	%
Gender	Male	65	56.5
	Female	50	43.5
Age	6-8	13	11.3
	9-11	41	35.7
	12-14	29	25.2
	15-17	28	24.3
	18-19	3	2.6
Grade	1 - 2	6	5.2
	3 - 4	20	17.4
	5 - 6	28	24.3
	7 - 8	28	24.3
	9 - 10	19	16.5
	11 - 12	13	11.3

of student-mentors were in their third and fourth year. Precisely 72 (62%) were seniors, and 39 (34%) were juniors. The majority of respondents, 82 (71%), were between the age of 21 and 23 with 16 (14%) between the ages of 24 and 26 years old.

About 105 (91%) were majoring in criminal justice, with 55 (48%) specializing in juvenile justice, 24 (21%) in law enforcement, 13 (11%) in corrections, 7 (6%) in forensics, and 4 (3%) in legal studies, respectively. About 58 (54%) had prior mentoring experience involving at-risk K-12 youth, and 79 (69%) planned to work with juveniles or within the juvenile justice system after completing their degrees. Furthermore, the majority of the students, 58 (50%), were either taking or had taken Youth Violence, and 106 (92%) and 62 (54%) were either taking or had taken Juvenile Justice and Violence against Children, respectively.

Protégées' Biographical and Descriptive Information

As represented in Table 4, 65 (57%) of the youth were male and 50 (44%) were female, with 13 (11%) between the age of 6 and 8; 41 (36%)

were between the ages of 9 and 11, 29 (25%) were between the ages of 12 and 14, 28 (24%) were aged between 15 and 17, and 3 (3%) were between 18 and 19 years of age. Only 16 (14%) took Youth Mentoring prior to the 2011 fall semester.

Grade levels were equally diverse, with 6 (5%) in 1st and 2nd grade, 20 (18%) in 3rd and 4th grades, 28 (24%) in 5th and 6th grades, 28 (24%) in 7th and 8th grades, 19 (17%) in 9th and 10th grades, and 13 (11%) in 11th and 12th grades, respectively.

Responses to questions asking respondents to describe the behavior problems their protégés exhibited show that the youth needing mentoring services were very diverse in terms of needs. For instance, needs that student-mentors identified included negative behaviors and personal problems, classroom and academic challenges, mental-health needs, and low motivational levels. To be precise, of the 94 protégés reported on by student-mentors, 23 (20%) exhibited classroom-related problems, 20 (18%) showed delinquent behaviors, 20 (17%) manifested personal problems, and only 14 (12%) displayed academic problems. Psychological problems such as ADHD and depression were attributed to only 7 (6%) of the youth.

RESULTS

This article attempts to highlight logistical and bureaucratic challenges associated with a university-led school-based mentoring program and how such impediments, if any, impacted student-mentors' experiences and hindered the achievement of the program's goals and objectives. Analysis of the data shows that the program did benefit both protégés and mentees but that inadequate preparation and administrative and logistical impediments were major obstacles to the attainment of program goals and objectives. The results further show that university-sponsored school-based service learning projects that mentor at-risk K-12 pupils have many complex and dynamic aspects that are regulated by how well university students are prepared logistically, academically, and bureaucratically as well as the strength and degree of commitment made by both the university and the local school district's representatives.

In general, mentoring benefitted both student-mentors and mentees, as is demonstrated in this comment made by a twenty-two-year-old student-mentor about his experience working with his nine-year-old-fourth grader. He writes:

This semester during youth mentoring I must admit I was a bit bias to the whole thing but one of my mentees told me last week that I am his best friend and he loves it when I come. Being able to change a kid's life is wonderful.

Though the clinical needs and backgrounds of some protégés were complicated, with complex social histories that required sound clinical expertise, some students managed to help. This twenty-five-year-old mentor's comment about his experience working with his ten-year-old fifth grader provides a good example:

The main challenge was getting my mentee to show up to school on time with his homework done, but that was more of an issue because of the parents rather than mentee's fault. Also, the mentee tended to act out a bit when he did not take his ADHD medicine or he needed a new refill. The greatest successes were my mentee catching up with his missing work, started to turn his homework in on time, and feeling comfortable enough that he could talk to me about anything.

Despite similarly positive outcomes in many mentoring relationships, an overwhelming number of student-mentors had negative views of how they or the program impacted protégés. They disagreed or strongly disagreed that (1) their relationship with their protégés was great, (2) that it was easy to see their mentees during the scheduled time, (3) that they were willing to work with their protégés again, (4) that their protégés' motivation level was encouraging, (5) that they were glad to have participated in the mentoring program, (6) that they significantly helped their mentees, (7) that they learned a lot about at-risk youth, (8) that the mentoring program significantly benefited other students or at-risk youth, (9) that school authorities made it easier for them to make contact with youth, and (10) that the local school district's staff was helpful. Furthermore, student-mentors overwhelmingly agreed that they felt confused most of the time about what to do or what to talk about with their mentees. The distributions of responses are presented in frequencies and percentages.

Table 5 shows that a small number, about 8 (7%), agreed that they had significantly helped their mentees, while 88 (77%) indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had significantly helped their mentees. Similarly, only 10 (8%) agreed that their mentees had been highly motivated to work with them, while 14 (12%) neither agreed nor disagreed, but 89 (78%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their protégés had been "highly motivated."

Responses were even more negative when student-mentors were asked about how much the "mentoring program benefited" their protégés. Only 3 students agreed with the statement, and none strongly agreed. An overwhelming number, 99 (86%), disagreed or strongly disagreed that the "mentoring program benefited" their protégés.

Table 6 shows similar trends, with only 4 (3%) agreeing or strongly agreeing that they were glad to have "participated in the mentoring program," while 96 (84%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were glad to have "participated in the mentoring program." Similarly, only 5 (4%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had "learned a lot about at-risk youth through mentoring" assignments, while 90 (78%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had "learned a lot about at-risk youth through mentoring".

A small number, 8 (7%), agreed or strongly agreed that the mentoring program significantly benefited other Criminal Justice students, while 88 (76%) reported that the program did not benefit other students.

Table 7 shows student-mentors' perceptions of how school district officials made it easy or difficult

for them to perform their mentoring duties, with only 14 (12%) agreeing that school authorities made it easy for them to make contacts with their mentees, while 86 (75%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the school made it easy for them to make contact with their mentees. A similarly small number, 11 (10%), agreed that "overall school district's staff was very helpful" while 87 (76%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Responses to how student-mentors viewed their relationship with their protégés are reflected in Table 8 with no student "strongly" agreeing that the relationship was great. On the question of how easy overall it was for student-mentors to see their mentees during the scheduled time, 4 (3%) strongly agreed while 12 (10%) agreed, 52 (45%) disagreed, and 36 (31%) strongly disagreed. Only 2 respondents agreed, while 105 (91%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, that their relationship with their protégé was great. Similar results emerged with regard to willingness to work again with the same protégés. Only 3 respondents agreed that they were willing to work again with their protégés, while 99 (86%) disagree or strongly disagreed.

In response to whether or not they were many times "confused about what to do or talk about"

Table 5. *Program Impact on Protégé*

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. During this semester I significantly helped my mentee.	3	2.6	5	4.3	19	16.5	46	40.0	42	36.5
2. My protégé was highly motivated to work with me.	2	1.7	8	7.0	14	12.2	53	46.1	36	31.3
3. During this semester the mentoring program benefited my protégé.	0	0	3	2.6	13	11.3	55	47.8	44	38.3

Table 6. *Program Impact on Student-mentors*

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. I am glad I participated in the mentoring program during this semester.	1	.9	3	2.6	14	12.2	46	40.0	51	44.3
2. During this semester I learned a lot about at risk youth through mentoring.	2	1.7	3	2.6	19	16.5	52	45.2	38	33.0
3. During this semester the mentoring program significantly benefitted Criminal Justice students.	3	2.6	5	4.3	19	16.5	46	40.0	42	36.5

Table 7. *Administrative Hurdles*

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. During this semester school authorities made my contact with youth easy during the scheduled period.	7	6.1	7	6.1	15	13.0	47	40.9	39	33.9
2. It was easy to see my mentee during the scheduled time.	4	3.5	12	10.4	11	9.6	52	45.2	36	31.3
3. Overall, the school district's staff was very helpful.	4	3.5	7	6.1	17	14.9	48	41.7	39	33.9

Table 8. *Professional Preparation and Skill*

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
My relationship with my protégé was great.			2	1.7	8	7.0	62	53.9	43	37.4
I am willing to work with this protégé again.	1	.9	2	1.7	12	10.4	51	44.3	48	41.7
Many times I was confused about what to do or talk about with my mentee.	24	20.9	50	43.5	20	17.4	15	13.0	5	4.3

with their mentees, an overwhelming number, 74 (64%), agreed or strongly agreed while only 20 (17%) disagreed or strongly disagreed; 20 (17%) indicated that they neither agreed nor disagree that they were "confused about what to do or talk about."

Responses of 84 student-mentors to the open-ended item asking them to explain or describe main challenges or successes they encountered in relation to their mentoring assignments also show that 17 (20%) had positive experiences, and 15 (17%) indicated that they were academically and professionally well-prepared, while 30 (36%) indicated some degree of unpreparedness and difficulty with administrative hurdles and other challenges.

DISCUSSIONS

This study makes critical contributions to the understanding of relationships between positive mentoring and lesser bureaucratic and logistical hurdles for student-mentors to navigate and highlights both the need for a three-way collaborative mentoring system built on effective communication among school administrators, student-mentors, university representatives and the need for more understanding of factors that increase the success of mentoring relationships. Such factors include especially those that emphasize adequate and specialized training, goal oriented mentoring, voluntary recruitment, and longer periods of mentoring relationships, which collectively can produce good results for both the student-mentor and student-protégé.

Indeed, on the surface, the idea of university students helping struggling youth through university-sponsored school-based mentoring programs might look appealing, but in reality any contact with troubled youth that is intended to positively impact their social learning skills or thinking and behaviors in general requires a great deal of preparation that must include at a minimum some clinical knowledge and skill about how to identify and manipulate risk, criminogenic, and protective factors in ways that would positively impact negative thinking and behaviors. The inadequate clinical preparation reported in this study may explain some of the negative responses by student-mentors. For instance, in the present study only 16 (14%) of the student-mentors took the Youth Mentoring course prior to Fall 2011, though the course is the only one specifically devoted to youth mentoring that teaches students about how risk, protective, and criminogenic factors inform criminal behaviors, delinquency, and incorrigibility as well as covers the sources of some of the critical hurdles associated with working with at risk youth.

Indeed whether or not the responses of students reflect their clinical inadequacy or bureaucratic and logistical difficulties, the communication gaps between school administrators and student-mentors, the involuntary nature of how student-mentors were recruited into the program, or the additional time constraints that participation in the program created for student-mentors are well beyond the scope of this study. However, the results do show that the respondents in this study were not adequately prepared to handle many of the youth they were given, which also explains the number of students who reported being confused about what to talk about.

An example of some of the professional challenges and ways that unpreparedness played out comes from this twenty-one year old mentor commenting on his experience with his eight year old protégé. He writes:

I found it extremely difficult to connect with and help my mentee. I felt limited in what I could do to help my mentee because he was so young. I was not sure what to do when he did not want to work or listen. Had he been older maybe a high schooler it probably would have been an easier situation to deal with.

Another student-mentor, a twenty-one year old female, writes about similar experiences with her ten-year-old sixth grader. She writes:

Because it was very personal issue and he is still young, it was hard to get him to trust me and to open up about what happened. Another issue is that he is very quiet in class during class participation assignments and that is a result of the issue. It was hard to talk to him because he didn't want to talk about it.

Similar sentiments and frustrations were expressed by even those who had protégés who were willing to openly talk about their issues. This twenty-one-year-old female student commenting on her experience working with her fifteen-year-old tenth grader provides a good illustration. She writes:

The challenge was to get my student to do her work and turning it in. She is not motivated, so it's hard to motivate her into doing school work. I don't know how to make it fun. What was a success is getting my protégée to open up to and be very close to me. She was willing to share a lot of things.

Difficulties in connecting with a younger at-risk child, as well as difficulties in getting a youth's trust and eliciting that youth's motivation are typical and

routine preliminary challenges that a well-prepared clinical interventionist would expect to face during any initial contact with an at-risk child. The absence of effective communicative interactions between student-mentors and school administrators worsened these clinical challenges for student-mentors.

In some cases it was evident that despite the good intentions of some students, the communication gap between teachers, the youth, and school administrators created additional difficulties for student-mentors. The impact of such a communication gap is captured in this comment by a twenty-two-year-old female writing about her experience with her twelve-year-old sixth grader:

I don't believe my student needed any mentoring. My time could have been used more productively with another student at risk of falling into the juvenile justice system. She was always surrounded by friends which made it difficult for me to interact with her. Unfortunately, I don't think I made a difference in her life although I wish I had. The only problem was her two best friends which she constantly argued with. In my opinion, there was no reason to place her in the mentoring program. I would love to try the program again but with a more "at risk" student.

In this example, the failure of the student-mentor to recognize that each youth deserved guidance irrespective of how good his or her behavior might have been was aggravated by the absence of an established communicative mechanism for identifying the reasons why each youth was placed in the program. Indeed if proper communication had existed between the teachers or school authorities and the student-mentor, she would have been told the reasons why her protégée was in the program, and that information would have provided even the least experienced students with a productive starting point. This lack of communication may explain the high number of students who reported displeasure over school authorities' handling of the program. In a program such as this where university students are compelled by curricular requirements to mentor at-risk youth, all steps are needed to make such class exercises less clinically, bureaucratically, logistically, and financially cumbersome.

Voluntary recruitment of mentors, for instance, is a standard practice within the majority of mentoring programs that have track records of success (See, for example, Monroe 2003; Tolan, Henry et al. 2008). Undoubtedly people who volunteer to do things that they are good at and are willing to do with

their utmost might stand a better chance of success. Therefore, given the fact that by design curricular requirements force many students into university-sponsored mentoring programs, and such programs often cause students to incur financial expenses, the potential for university student-mentors to form negative impressions of such "volunteer" work rises. After all it should generally be expected that when people are forced to participate in an activity, a good reason arise for them to expect some form of physical return.

CONCLUSION

The findings reached here and discussed do not, however, provide a basis for generalization, and thus are intended to be understood in terms of the unique design of the program under review and the bureaucratic and logistical conditions under which student-mentors participated in the program and responded to the questions contained in this study. That is, the results reflect a unique university-sponsored school-based mentoring program with specific goals, and involved a specific group of university students, who generally worked and went to school, who commuted to and from distant locations to mentor protégés, who had to navigate many bureaucratic, logistical and clinical hurdles, who often dealt with unwilling teachers and administrators, and who incurred certain financial expenses. Indeed these challenges can have critical impacts on the success of university-sponsored school-based mentoring programs and activities.

Programs, like the University of Vermont and the Middletown School District's jointly developed special program for the education of minority teachers, for instance, incur some of the expenses associated with the effective operation of the program (Meyers and Smith 1999). Certainly it is highly likely that by minimizing bureaucratic and logistical hurdles and student mentors' out-of-pocket financial expenses like the cost of fingerprint and criminal background clearances, a more positive experience of student-mentors might emerge. Additionally, if the purpose of mentoring is to specifically impact youth at risk of making contact with the criminal justice system, then a comprehensive clinical method must be developed to identify potential candidates for such programs. Such method must clearly identify each candidate's problem area that warrants mentoring, using direct input from affected teachers and school administrators, as well as the prospective youth's parents. This kind of collaborative efforts will likely allow for teachers and school administrator to fully

support mentoring activities, and will also likely provide means for all parties to assist and monitor progress as well as appreciate monitoring as an extension of the collective goal to facilitate at risk youth's success.

It is apparent that despite the difficulties associated with balancing education with work and in many cases with family life, and the fact that most youth at risk of making contact with the criminal justice system have many conditions in their lives that prevent them from regularly attending weekly meetings with their student-mentors, the main disruptive hurdles seem to have come from school-teachers and administrator. The disruptions, which are manifested through the lack of support from teachers and administrators, should however be in terms of the United States' educational policies like the No Child Left Behind policies, which put a significant amount of time pressure on teachers and school administrators (Gabriel 2010). These laws use students' test scores as the basis for calculating teacher effectiveness, rewards, and sometimes for decision making regarding teachers' retention, and thus also provide them with incentives to not fully embrace programs that physically remove children from class or that cut into direct classroom instructional time.

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MENTORSKI PROGRAMI NA SVEUČILIŠTU NAMIJENJENI DJECI U RIZIKU: UVID U ISUKUSTVA I IZAZOVE STUDENATA MENTORA

SAŽETAK

Namjera je ovog rada steći uvid u kojoj mjeri neadekvatna akademska priprema te logističke i birokratske zapreke utječu na iskustva studenata koji mentoriraju mlade u riziku. Također, želi se ispitati u kojoj mjeri takve prepreke ometaju ostvarivanje ciljeva programa. Riječ je o mentorskom programu koji zajedno izvode lokalne škole i Odsjek za Kazneno pravo na sveučilištu u zapadnom dijelu SAD-a. Cilj je programa povećati uključenost studenata u zajednicu kao i njihovu društvenu odgovornost te povećati njihovo znanje o rizičnim čimbenicima koji dovode do delinkvencije i ovisnosti. U istraživanje je uključeno 115 studenata koji su se dobrovoljno uključili u mentorski program. Analiza kvalitativnih i kvantitativnih podataka pokazala je da, iako je program imao potencijala biti koristan i za mentore i za djecu, većina studenata mentora govori o stručnim, logističkim i birokratskim preprekama. Iz rezultata se nadalje može zaključiti kako uspjeh mentorskih programa na sveučilištu, namijenjenih djeci u riziku, može u velikoj mjeri ovisiti o tome koliko su dobro studenti pripremljeni. Ova priprema odnosi se na logističke, akademske i birokratske aspekte. Važan aspekt je i to koliko su sveučilište i škole posvećeni tome da olakšaju neke od očitih zapreka na koje studenti nailaze. U raspravi se navode načini na koje se mogu poboljšati posvećenost studenata i njihova iskustva mentoriranja kroz procese dobrovoljnog prijavljivanja studenata, adekvatne akademske pripreme te umanjivanja administrativnih i logističkih prepreka.

Ključne riječi: *mentoriranje djece u riziku, učenje u zajednici, mentorski program na sveučilištu*

APPENDIX A

End of Semester Evaluation

Mentor (you)

Gender		Circle one	freshman sophomore junior senior
Race			
Age		Major	
Concentration			Minor	

Mentee (youth). If you mentored more than 1 child please fill out one form for each child

Gender		Race	
Age		Based on your observation what is the main behavior problem:
Grade		

Please circle the category that best represents how you feel about each statement

1. My relationship with my protégé was great
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

2. It was easy to see my mentee during the scheduled time
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

3. I am willing to work with this protégé again
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

4. My protégé was highly motivated to work with me
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

5. I am glad I participated in the mentoring program during this semester
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

6. During this semester I significantly helped my mentee
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

7. During this semester I learned a lot about at risk youth through mentoring
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

8 During this semester the mentoring program significantly benefit Criminal Justice students
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

9. During this semester the mentoring program benefited Turlock Unified School Districts Kids
   Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

10. During this semester school authorities made my contact with youth easy during the scheduled period

  Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

11. Overall Turlock Unified School District's staff was very helpful

  Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

12. Many times I was confused about what to do or talk about with my mentee

  Strongly agree.   Agree.   Neither.   Disagree.   Strongly Disagree.

		YES or NO	
1.	Did you mentor any youth or child this semester?		
2.	Do you intend to work with juveniles after completing your degree?		
3.	Did you take CJ 4700 (Youth Mentoring) prior to this semester?		
4.	Did you take CJ 3650 (Youth Violence) prior to this semester?		
5.	Did you take CJ 4230 (Juvenile Justice) prior to this semester?		
6.	Did you take CJ 4350 (violence Against Children) prior to this semester?		
7.	Do you have any prior mentoring experience prior to this semester?		
8.	Were you enrolled in CJ 4700 during this semester?		
9.	Were you enrolled in CJ 3650 during this semester?		
10.	Were you enrolled in CJ 4230 during this semester?		
11.	Were you enrolled in CJ 4350 during this semester?		

In the space below please explain or describe main challenges or successes you encountered this semester in relation to your mentoring assignments. Use additional sheet if needed.