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# Mentoring in adolescence: A sociocultural and cognitive developmental study of undergraduate women and sixth-grade girls in a mentoring program

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**MENTORING IN ADOLESCENCE:  
A SOCIOCULTURAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY OF  
UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN AND SIXTH GRADE GIRLS IN A  
MENTORING PROGRAM**

**BY**

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B.A., Pennsylvania State University, 1992  
M.S.Ed., University of Pennsylvania, 1993**

**DISSERTATION**

**Submitted to the University of New Hampshire  
in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Education**

**May, 1999**

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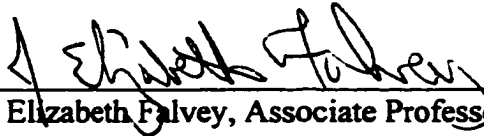
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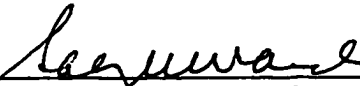
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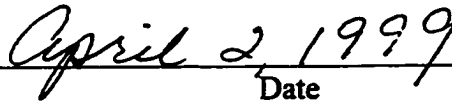
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Barbara Krysiak, Associate Professor of Education



Sally Ward, Professor of Sociology



Date

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to the 13 sixth graders who generously listened to my odd questions and spent time talking to me at their lunch tables in the cafeteria, in their classrooms, in the hallways, in the libraries of their schools, and at their homes. They continually welcomed me each week and let me sit with them and take notes even during private conversations with their undergraduate partners. I am so grateful for your openness and trust. I would also like to dedicate this work to the 13 undergraduates who patiently endured long phone interviews in the evenings as well as the face to face interviews held in their dormitories and in my office. Despite tests and assignments, they made time for my agenda. I sincerely appreciate how you shared your worries and dreams with me. I will carry with me what all of you taught me about different perspectives, feelings, and how people grow through relationships.



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For the last four years I have read and thought and written with Professor Sharon Nodie Oja beside me. Nodie introduced me to theories of human development and the work of Lois and Norman Sprinthall, Alan Reiman, and Robert Kegan, which fueled a zeal that sustained me throughout the dissertation process. At every moment Nodie has patiently let me find my own way while challenging me to clarify my thoughts and supporting me with her own knowledge and experience. I am so thankful for the incalculable amount of time she has devoted to helping me find a place for myself in the field of educational research.

I would also like to thank members of my dissertation committee, Professor Liz

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There were several other professors who taught me the skills I needed in order to complete this dissertation, but there are two whom I would like to name. Professor Rick Barton patiently helped me learn statistical procedures, how to interpret results, and generously examined the analyses I completed for this study. The second half of the dissertation could not have been possible without the careful teaching of ethnographic methods by Professor Tom Schram. I sincerely appreciate their devotion to teaching and love of their subject matter.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Christopher Lucas, who has always helped me pursue my dreams.

With this “past” of loving people and challenging ideas a part of me, I know that I can take another step forward in the lifelong task of “becoming.”

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**ABSTRACT**  
**MENTORING IN ADOLESCENCE:**  
**A SOCIOCULTURAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDY OF**  
**UNDERGRADUATE WOMEN AND SIXTH GRADE GIRLS IN A**  
**MENTORING PROGRAM**

by

**Katharina Fachin Lucas**

University of New Hampshire, May, 1999

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, a quasi-experimental study was conducted to explore the cognitive developmental effects of taking on the role of “mentor” as an undergraduate or the role of “mentee” as a sixth grader in one university-based mentoring program. Second, an ethnographic study was conducted to study the experiences of ten sixth graders and ten undergraduates as they took on the role of “mentor” or “mentee” in a planned mentoring relationship. A sociocultural analysis explored processes occurring on the personal, interpersonal, and community level that shaped the mentoring experiences of the participants.

The participants in this study were 52 female undergraduates in their second year of college and 53 female sixth graders from six middle schools who met weekly in an after school mentoring program called Project Mentor. The undergraduates had enrolled in three sections of a two semester seminar which involved reflective writing, discussion, and readings about mentoring, tutoring, communication skills, and studies of adolescent

girls. Comparison groups consisting of 33 sixth grade girls from five schools and 28 undergraduates from the same university also participated in the study. Network sampling was used to create the undergraduate comparison group.

Both the experimental and comparison groups completed the Paragraph Completion Method Test as a pre- and post-test measure of conceptual level. Repeated measures ANOVA revealed no significant differences between groups. Both the undergraduate experimental and comparison groups demonstrated growth. Post hoc analyses indicated that undergraduates in the experimental group with lower initial conceptual levels demonstrated the greatest gain. Flanders' Interaction Analysis was used to document differences in the learning environment in the three mentoring seminar sections. Undergraduates enrolled in seminar sections with more student participation and less direct instruction showed the most cognitive developmental growth.

For the ethnographic study, the experiences of ten sixth grader-undergraduate pairs meeting at three schools were documented through interviews, observations, written reflection papers, and log sheets. The developmental stage of each participant was assessed in both fall and the spring using the Subject-Object Interview. Through the stories of three pairs, a sociocultural and developmental analysis of their experiences being "mentors" and "mentees" is constructed.

Conclusions include suggestions for structuring mentoring programs to promote cognitive development, ways of conceptualizing mentoring, and issues in the development of mentoring relationships between early and late adolescents.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

During the 1997-1998 school year I had the privilege of helping coordinate an after-school, university-based mentoring program for sixth grade girls called Project Mentor. Each girl met weekly at her school with a second year undergraduate from a local university. Together they tried to construct their own “mentoring” relationship in which the undergraduates would support and encourage the sixth graders’ academic achievement in mathematics and science, self-esteem, and career aspirations. The context of this program provided a unique opportunity for me to study both the cognitive developmental outcomes of mentoring experiences during adolescence and the process of how females at opposite ends of the same developmental stage, adolescence, develop supportive relationships with one another.

As a people grow from infancy into childhood, and eventually into adulthood and old age, their understanding of themselves and the world around them changes tremendously. Their conceptions become more complex as they interact with more experienced members of society and gradually take on more responsibilities. At certain ages people are expected to take on particular roles in society. It is assumed that by that age the support and guidance of others will have helped them be proficient enough to enact the role with a degree of autonomy. For example, an eighteen year old is assumed

to be a logical and abstract thinker who can formulate arguments and render judgements on complex social issues and therefore, is permitted the right to vote in the United States of America. Although the roles society places people in at certain ages indicate an expected level of development, the taking on of a role with a new level of autonomy and responsibility in itself also stimulates the development of conceptual complexity. In the context of Project Mentor, the undergraduates were trying to take on the role of “mentor” in a new relationship with a sixth grader who was to be the “mentee.” These unusual roles were attempted by girls and young women who, by nature of their age and our society, were also expected to take on the roles of an early adolescent and a late adolescent in the larger social context.

Adolescence, as a life phase, extends over almost a ten year period as people move from childhood to adulthood (Apter, 1990, p.18). For girls, early adolescence begins around the age of 11 or 12, when they are in sixth grade. Typically sixth grade is a time when children take on more responsibility at school and at home. Often they move to a middle school in which they must switch classrooms for different subjects which demands greater organizational skills, independence, and responsibility. Because the children have more teachers, they may have less of a personal relationship with each teacher. The middle school environment as a whole is less nurturing than the elementary school environment. At home girls this age often take on additional responsibilities as well. Around sixth grade girls are usually considered responsible enough to babysit neighbors’ children and younger siblings. Care-taking becomes a source of employment for girls and offers new opportunity for monetary discretion.

**This time of greater independence and responsibility roughly coincides with girls' physical maturation. In sixth grade girls usually turn 12, the average age of menarche. Physical changes affect both how those around the girls perceive them and interact with them and how the girls perceive themselves. As their bodies begin to take on the shape of adult women, girls begin to be treated differently by both opposite sex peers and by adult men. They may experience a new kind of attention, sexual interest, or even sexual harassment. Their male counterparts may have different expectations of them as they look more womanly. At the same time, girls experience their own sexual desires and begin to have first "crushes." For the first time, they want to be desirable to the opposite sex. Now that their bodies are looking more like adult women, they compare their developing bodies to present cultural physical ideals in the form of extremely thin female models in magazines and advertisements. Girls begin see themselves in a new light.**

**The changes girls experience in social role at school, at home, and in their neighborhoods as more experienced people interact with them in new ways and expect new things of them can be emotionally challenging, mentally confusing, and exciting. Adjustment becomes a gradual, on-going process.**

**Over the passage of ten years, girls graduate from middle school, high school, and possibly college. Each of these graduations is an additional transition towards greater independence and responsibility for self-definition. Like early adolescence, late adolescence holds unique challenges. The teenager leaves home, her parents, and high school friends, to enter a new community at college. With added freedom, new experiences, and distance from parental influence, young women begin to explore and**

**make choices about their values, beliefs, and goals.**

**At college a young woman experiences greater autonomy and responsibility for daily decisions as well as exposure to diverse values and perspectives through course work and living arrangements. She experiences the opportunity and frightening responsibility of choosing a potential career path through selecting a major course of study. Away from home, she has the emotional distance to begin to reshape her relationship with her parents. At the same time, relationships with peers become completely under her own discretion. For many young women, experiences at college also include creating, exploring, and ending intimate romantic partnerships.**

**Throughout the four years of college the young women know that they will be expected to take on the social role of adult by the time they graduate. Adjustment to present circumstances and experiences, resolving past histories, and concerns about future goals and responsibilities provide for both great stress and exhilaration.**

**During any period of transition, a person is challenged to grow and hopefully is supported in her development by the people who interact with her. She comes to know people like herself, only more experienced, who have also struggled with understanding themselves and society. She confides in the people she trusts, seeks advice, observes role models, and listens to stories of other people's experiences and how they resolved them.**

**In Project Mentor, two people in transition, a girl entering adolescence and a young woman moving toward the end of adolescence, are paired to take on the roles of "mentor" and "mentee" in a new relationship. Mentoring in adolescence seems to hold**

great potential for challenging the girls and young women while also supporting their development. This study documents the social role-taking process of mentoring in the context of specific pairs, examines the girls' and young women's perceptions of their experiences from a developmental perspective, and assesses the conceptual developmental outcomes of two semesters of involvement in this mentoring program.

### The Intervention: Project Mentor

Project Mentor was an after school program created by the collaboration of a university faculty member and area public schools. Project Mentor offered sixth grade girls in six different schools the opportunity to develop a mentoring relationship with a female undergraduate and to receive academic support through that relationship. The parents and girls were informed that the goals of the program were to increase the academic achievement in math and science, self-esteem, and career aspirations of the girls. Potentially, a cohort group of sixth graders and undergraduates could participate in the program for three consecutive years. This study was conducted during the first year of implementation.

Undergraduates accepted as potential "mentors" were assigned to one of six different schools considering car-pooling issues. In order to be a mentor, the undergraduates were required to register for a two semester course for a total of four credits. The undergraduates were then clustered into three seminar sections according to the middle schools in which they mentored. The seminars met on three different nights from 6:30pm to 8:30pm every other week. There were approximately seven seminar sessions in the fall and eight in the spring for a total of about 30 seminar hours. All three



seminars followed the same syllabus in terms of readings and assignments.

It was anticipated that trying to build a trusting relationship with and support the academic and personal development of a sixth grader might be a challenging role for an undergraduate. Therefore, the undergraduate seminar was designed to give the college students a background in female adolescent development, to help them develop communication skills and tutoring skills, and to support them in their new role as “mentors.” All of the components of EDUC 797, *Mentoring Within and Beyond the Academic Lives of Adolescent Girls*, were intended to create the conditions for psychological development suggested by the research of Thies-Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987), including significant “role-taking” over an extended period of time, guided reflection, and a balance of support and challenge provided through the feedback of an instructor. See Appendix A for course syllabus.

To prepare for class, the undergraduates were asked to read short articles about communication or tutoring skills and selected readings from recent literature about adolescent girls. In order to guide their reflection on these readings, the undergraduates were given two or three unique questions that prompted them to compare the readings to their personal history and then to their mentee or to discuss the relevancy of ideas in the readings to their mentoring relationships. The undergraduates were expected to respond to these questions in a two page paper to be handed in at each seminar session. These papers and the readings were then discussed during the seminar and the papers were responded to by the instructor through written comments on the papers. For documentation purposes, the undergraduates filled out a log sheet for each mentoring

session which described what they did with their partner and any concerns they had.

They also kept a record of any contacts outside of the mentoring sessions.

Throughout the university school year, the mentor-mentee pairs met one day a week after school for one hour. There were approximately 8 mentoring sessions in the fall and 9 in the spring for a total of 17 hours. It was intended that a school liaison would be present during the weekly mentoring sessions to facilitate and moderate when necessary. For two schools, I played the dual role of facilitator/moderator and researcher; in one school I assisted the school liaison. Typically all the mentor-mentee pairs met on the same day at a particular school in a designated room. The sixth graders and undergraduates met as a group for the first time during the last week of September or the first week of October in 1997. In subsequent weeks, the sixth graders and undergraduates were paired by the school liaison, either randomly or purposefully, at her discretion.

The "mentor-mentee" pairs could spend their time together during the after school program in any way that seemed to meet the needs of the sixth grader or of the relationship according to the judgement of the undergraduate mentors. The college students were aware that the goals of Project Mentor were to improve the academic achievement and attitudes toward math and science, build self esteem, and increase the career aspirations of the girls. To address the goals of the program, the undergraduates were encouraged to tutor the girls in math and science and were provided with a resource binder of math and science enrichment activities related to the school curriculum. During the course of the year, some pairs engaged in tutoring, others did enrichment

activities, while others spent time talking and developing their personal relationship. The activities engaged in by any particular pair actually varied from week to week. At some schools the girls and mentors additionally organized holiday celebrations and activities for the entire group on certain days. In this way, there was great diversity by school and by pair in the mentoring experiences of the participants.

In addition to the weekly hour of time scheduled for the sixth graders and undergraduates to meet as pairs, the school liaisons were encouraged to bring the sixth graders and undergraduates together as a group during the regularly scheduled mentoring time for monthly discussions. The discussions were intended to help build the girls' confidence about speaking in a group and to help expose them to multiple perspectives about complex issues relevant to girls and to mentoring. The school liaisons were given a list of potential focus questions that related to the readings used in the undergraduate seminar. Focus questions included, for example, what does it mean to be feminine, do middle school girls/female college students face different challenges than middle school boys/male college students, who are some women you look up to or admire and why, and what are you learning from your mentor/mentee? The frequency and occurrence of these discussions varied by school.

In addition to the scheduled mentoring times after school, the undergraduates were encouraged to spend time with or contact their sixth grade partners at other times as well, although this was not required. The frequency of additional contact varied greatly. Pairs may or may not have visited each other's homes, have done activities like go to the movies, have talked to each other on the phone, or have written each other letters and

journals. There were also whole group activities which all participants could have voluntarily attended. Although only a small group of pairs attended, free tickets to a college female ice hockey game and basketball game during the spring of 1998 were available. Additionally, bus transportation was provided to bring all of the sixth grade mentees from the six schools to a poster session of research done by women at the university. The sixth graders and undergraduates spent time together visiting the campus after the poster session. Two schools also visited the college campus independently an additional time during the course of the year.

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, a quasi-experimental study was conducted to explore the cognitive developmental effects of taking on the role of “mentor” as an undergraduate or the role of “mentee” as a sixth grader in one university-based mentoring program. Second, an ethnographic study was conducted to study the experiences of ten sixth graders and ten undergraduates as they took on the role of “mentor” or “mentee” in a planned mentoring relationship. A sociocultural analysis explored processes occurring on the personal, interpersonal, and community level that shaped the mentoring experiences of the participants.

### Research Questions

The quasi-experimental portion of study was guided by the following question: Would the undergraduates and sixth graders involved in Project Mentor demonstrate greater gains in conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity as measured by the Paragraph Completion Method Test than those in the comparison groups?

**The ethnographic portion of the study explored:**

- 1. On the community level, what was the environmental context of the program at three out of the six schools hosting Project Mentor? What was the physical environment like and what types of interactions did it promote? What role did the school liaison take on? What was the school culture in terms of curriculum and teacher-student relationships? How did the sixth graders and undergraduates interact as a whole group and as smaller sub-groups?**
- 2. On the interpersonal level, what were the interactions of ten out of the 30 undergraduate-sixth grader pairs meeting at the three schools like when they met once a week after school? What types of roles did they take on and how did these change over time? What preceded either an expansion or contraction of roles? Were there any visible signs of affection or lack of affection?**
- 3. On the personal level, what was the intrapsychological context of each relationship? What were the developmental stages of each of the ten undergraduates and ten sixth graders? How was each perceiving the relationship? What challenged or confused each person? What did each think she was learning from the experience? Did the person think of her partner outside of the mentoring program? What were the memorable moments for each person? How was the developmental stage of each member of the pair manifested in her perceptions of the relationship and interactions with her partner?**

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **Psychological/ego Development**

**In order to study and interpret the role-taking experiences of the sixth graders and**

of the undergraduates, I utilized Kegan's (1982, 1994) theory of psychological development. As a general theory of psychological development, I believe that Kegan's constructs subsume concepts like identity development, self-esteem, and locus of control. He calls his approach constructivist developmental and considers it to be building on the tradition of structural developmentalism (Kegan, 1979). Kegan's theory focuses on the Self as a system that actively makes meaning, and through this process, becomes more complex over time. As a meaning-making process, the Self is the underlying context that creates the cognitive and affective experiences of the person, in other words, the way s/he mentally and emotionally interacts with his/her life experiences (Kegan, Noam & Rogers, 1982). At different stages the Self is embedded in, "subject" to, and non-critical of certain ways of making meaning, but can reflect on or make "object" previous ways of making meaning. A person's developmental Self stage can be assessed through an hour long clinical interview, called the Subject-Object Interview. The interviewer then codes a transcript of the interview using a manual that describes indicators for five different developmental stages and the four transition points between every two stages (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987).

For this study I conceptualized mentoring as an experience that takes place on both a social or interpersonal level and on an intrapsychological level. Kegan's structural developmental theory of the Self and the corresponding Subject-Object Interview allowed me to assess the Self stages of the participants, which gave me some information about the intrapsychological context of each of the undergraduate-sixth grader pairs' relationships. An understanding of each sixth grader's and each

undergraduate's Self stages enabled me to interpret each person's perceptions of her experiences with her partner during the after school program.

All of the sixth graders and undergraduates in the ethnographic study demonstrated ways of making meaning from experience that Kegan would categorize as having an Imperial Self, an Interpersonal Self, an Institutional Self, or various transition points between these three stages.

Imperial Self. During childhood and early adolescence, people typically relate to the world around them as Imperial Selves (Kegan, Noam, and Rogers, 1982). They are subject to their own needs, interests, and desires, which means they cannot reflect on how these aspects of themselves are embedded in their understanding of and emotional reactions to their experiences. Imperial Selves think in concrete terms and reason with a sense of cause and effect.

Interpersonal Self. The Interpersonal Self usually emerges during adolescence (Kegan, Noam, and Rogers, 1982). Gradually a person begins to be able to hold multiple perspectives or ideas in his/her mind and relate them to one another, which requires a more abstract way of thinking. At the same time, the adolescent with an Interpersonal Self becomes subject to this ability to perceive multiple perspectives and demonstrates a heightened "capacity for mutuality, empathy, and reciprocal obligation" in relationships (Kegan, Noam, and Rogers, 1982, p. 113). The Interpersonal Self does not understand itself as existing separate from interpersonal relationships and, therefore, is embedded in interpersonal relationships. For this reason, feelings are experienced as "co-owned"; "there is always an 'other,' imagined or real, implicated in the emotion" (Kegan, Noam,

and Rogers, 1982, p. 113).

**Institutional Self.** During late adolescence young men and women often develop Institutional Selves (Kegan, Noam, and Rogers, 1982). They are ideological and consider others also to be self-systems guided by values or principles. In relationships, Institutional Selves have a sense of autonomy and self separate from the other person.

### **Conceptual level**

As people develop throughout their lifespan, their understanding of themselves and their experiences becomes more complex. Hunt developed an instrument that measures these changes in conceptual level (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978). Named the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) Test, the instrument consists of five beginnings of sentences to which a person responds by writing at least three sentences. The writing prompts include: "what I think about rules, when I am criticized, when someone does not agree with me, when I am not sure, and when I am told what to do." The investigator then codes each response using a manual that describes characteristics of different conceptual levels (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978). Of the five items, the three highest scores are averaged to assign a total conceptual level score. Conceptual level scores range from zero to three and there is one half level in between every two levels.

The scoring manual indicates that the construct of conceptual level includes both aspects of interpersonal maturity and conceptual complexity. Any paragraph response to one of the sentence starters will prompt the person to reveal both how they respond in interpersonal situations and how they think about these situations. When considering the



progression of responses that characterize conceptual level scores from zero to three, “increasing conceptual complexity is indicated by discrimination, differentiation, and integration” of concepts (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.3). “Increasing interpersonal maturity is indicated by self-definition and self-other relations” (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.3). The interpersonally mature person demonstrates less impulsivity and defensiveness in her answers while writing more about empathy, adherence to social norms, and self-awareness.

All of the participants in this study achieved a conceptual level score between 0.5 and 2.5 on the PCM Test.

Conceptual Level Score of Zero. Conceptually least complex, people with a conceptual level of zero respond to the sentence stems in ways that indicate that they act impulsively to satisfy their own desires. Nowhere in their responses do they express that they go through a reasoned thought process before reacting. Interpersonally immature, they reveal that they react to external controls, like rules or commands, with anger.

Conceptual Level Score of One. People with a conceptual level of one make decisions and develop opinions following dichotomous reasoning. They see themselves as a part of a group, are conformist, and take social rules very seriously. In terms of interpersonal maturity, they disapprove of others who do not follow the rules or social norms of the group with which they identify. They are prone to feelings of guilt or embarrassment when they transgress social rules or the expectations of others.

Conceptual Level Score of Two. A conceptual level of two is assigned when the person emphasizes that s/he makes decisions independently, rather than following social

rules or others' expectations. More conceptually complex than the dichotomous reasoning of a conceptual level of one, this person is beginning to recognize that choice, opinion, and perspective affect the application of and creation of social rules.

Interpersonally, an individual with a conceptual level of two is more tolerant of people with different opinions.

**Conceptual Level Score of Three.** The person with a conceptual level of three reasons most complexly by considering multiple points of view, facts, feelings, and principles. Synthesis is the hallmark conceptual skill of this level. The individual at this conceptual level has the interpersonal maturity to be able to reach compromises with others that satisfy multiple perspectives and needs. At the same time, the person accepts responsibility for his/her decision-making.

The way Hunt sequences the levels of conceptual development seems to be consistent with Kegan's stages of development. As a person in a Subject-Object interview is able to reflect more on and becomes less embedded in her experiences, her answers on the PCM should exhibit a greater ability to step back from her own perspective, see multiple perspectives, distinguish herself from those perspectives, and then recognize the interaction among perspectives. In this study, the construct of conceptual level is used to study the cognitive developmental outcomes of this mentoring experience in the quasi-experimental portion of the study.

### **Social role-taking**

During the course of our lives, we take on a progression of social roles that demand greater and greater responsibility and autonomy. When role-taking experiences

are structured by a planned curriculum that is designed to promote social-cognitive development, they are called Deliberate Psychological Education Programs (Cognetta & Sprinthall, 1978; Sprinthall & Scott, 1989; Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). Educational researchers have explored the cognitive developmental outcomes of Deliberate Psychological Education Programs and similar institutionalized experiences that involve participants in “significant helping/altruistic roles” such as being a mentor teacher or a counselor as an adult, or being a tutor or peer counselor as a high school student (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1998, p.214). Social role-taking is distinguished from role-playing because it involves actually “taking on the responsibility of helping a peer or younger person” (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1998, p.214). In this study the process of taking on the roles of either “mentor” or “mentee” was studied through observations of, interviews with, and the reflective writing of participants. How the roles of “mentor” and “mentee” were co-constructed by each pair will be discussed in Chapter Five.

### Theoretical Framework

Project Mentor as a planned, educational program is grounded in the philosophy that the purpose of education is to foster the fruition of human potential and that the ultimate goal of education is the development of the person. All planned mentoring programs try to facilitate the development of positive, personally significant relationships between more experienced and less experienced people. A mentoring relationship should be mutually satisfying as it promotes the growth of both individuals (Yamamoto, 1988).

The way mentoring relationships facilitate the growth of the less experienced person or “mentee” can be conceptualized according to Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of learning. Vygotsky (1978) suggested that a person first learns something through interacting with another, more experienced person on the social plane, and then internalizes that experience. Recently theorists are conceptualizing this process as less of an internalization and more as a type of appropriation (Kirshner & Whitson, 1998). The novice or “mentee” faces a challenge by using the “tools in the social environment adaptively in experimental imitation of the larger culture’s usage” with the guidance and encouragement of the more experienced person or “mentor.” (Kirshner & Whitson, 1998, p.23). The “mentor” and the “mentee” in a planned mentoring program can be thought of as taking on established social roles designed to pass down to younger generations skills and attitudes that are associated with success in a particular culture.

Having less experienced members of society engage in challenging activities with the support of an experienced person does not, however, automatically reproduce culturally based expectations, values, social skills, or even cognitive skills in a younger generation. A neo-Piagetian perspective would assert that each person engages the world and makes sense of it (Kegan, Noam, & Rogers, 1982). Learning is the act of an individual meaning-maker who approaches tasks with volition, creativity, and the uniquenesses inherent in human beings. At all times, the person is not only shaped by culturally institutionalized experiences, but rather, actively shapes his/her own learning by the way s/he uniquely makes sense of these experiences, and in so doing, ultimately shapes the culture him/herself as well. Similarly, Rogoff (1995) asserts that the process

of human development involves “individuals, groups, and communities transform(ing) as they together constitute and are constituted by sociocultural activity” (in Wertsch, Del Rio, Alvarez, 1995, p.161.) This perspective of developmental growth implies that not only the “mentee”, but also the “mentor” will be making sense of and potentially growing through these experiences.

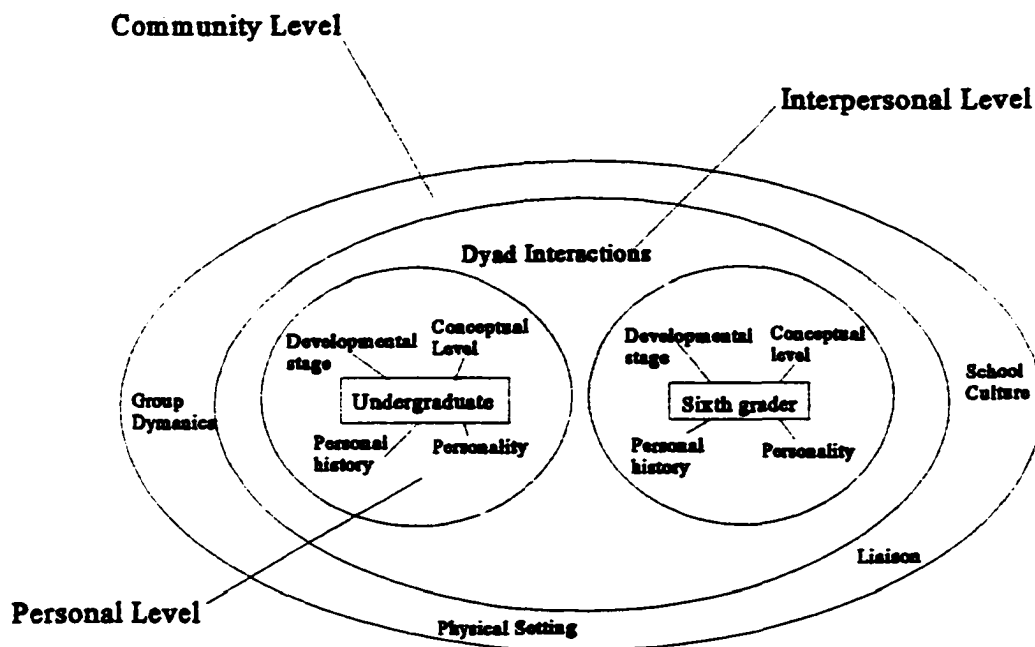
Taking on a sociocultural perspective in the tradition of Vygotsky and Rogoff, I thought of mentoring experiences as multilayered, bi-directional, contextualized relationships that promote the development of the people involved. Knowing that I was studying a process, my study “attempts to grasp processes in the full complexity of their interrelationship” “instead of attempting to isolate elements from relationships” (Bidell, 1988, p.322). I wanted to acknowledge and study the dialectical and multi-leveled nature of helping relationships.

Rogoff (1995) provided a conceptual framework that guided not only the ethnographic part of the study, but also helped me understand how quantitative and qualitative methods might both contribute to a deeper understanding of mentoring relationships. Rogoff (1995) suggests that often researchers studying developmental processes simplify and narrow their inquiry to one of three levels: the personal, the interpersonal, or the community level. The levels represent conceptual tools that help a researcher focus on specific aspects of a very complex process. Using Rogoff’s levels as a conceptual framework, I envisioned the mentoring relationships as developing through several different, but interrelated, contexts (see Figure 1). I attempted to incorporate all three levels: the personal, interpersonal, and community level, into my study and analysis

of the mentoring experiences of the sixth graders and undergraduates in this program.

Figure 1

A Sociocultural Study of Mentoring Relationships using Three Levels of Analysis:  
The Personal, Interpersonal, and Community Level



The after school mentoring program asked 53 girls and 52 young women who did not know each other to try to become “mentors” or “mentees” for one another. As they entered into the role of “mentor” or “mentee” in this planned mentoring relationship, each sixth grader and undergraduate brought her own personal history, personality, conceptual level, and developmental stage to her understanding of and enactment of that role. Who each person was, would shape, and possibly would be shaped by, her experiences as a “mentor” or “mentee.” Considering that the people themselves

provided an important context for the relationship between any sixth grader-undergraduate pair, I wanted to study mentoring as involving processes occurring on Rogoff's personal level.

I decided to use both quasi-experimental and ethnographic methods to study the processes occurring on the personal level. The quasi-experimental part of the study enabled me to explore the significance of the cognitive developmental changes happening within each person over the course of the eight months of the program. I chose to use Hunt's Paragraph Completion Method Test as the measure of cognitive developmental change because it was well established, could readily be administered to large groups, and had been used in studies of similar peer teaching programs. This instrument measures conceptual level, a concept that combines indicators of conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity into a single score.

I assessed the conceptual levels of the 53 sixth graders and 52 undergraduates both at the beginning and at the end of the first year of the program. Because the test was also administered to matched comparison groups, I could then infer the significance of the cognitive developmental outcomes of mentoring experiences in programs like Project Mentor.

In order to study processes occurring on the personal level in a more complex way than just as cognitive developmental changes, I wanted to use ethnographic methods to study in-depth the experiences of ten undergraduate-sixth grader pairs. Focusing on the personal level, I first wanted to gain an understanding of each of the ten sixth graders and each of the ten undergraduates as whole Selves who were making sense of their

experiences in a particular way at this point in their lives. For this reason, I assessed each of their developmental Selves using a clinical interview. I thought that this general perspective would enable me to better understand and interpret each person's reports about how she was experiencing this particular relationship that I would gather in subsequent interviews.

I decided to use Kegan's structural developmental theory and the corresponding Subject-Object Interview to assess and interpret the developmental stages of the participants for many reasons. First, the theory resonated with my own beliefs about learning and human development. Kegan assumes the neo-Piagetian perspective that the individual actively makes meaning from his/her experiences. Moreover, he considers cognition and emotion to be processes that occur in the underlying context of the developmental Self. This contextualized approach to cognition and emotion appealed to me. I believed that this theory was compatible with how I wanted to study mentoring as a cognitive and emotional experience for the particular people involved.

The instrument, Kegan's Subject-Object Interview, also respected the dignity of each participant by allowing her to choose the life events to discuss, which was ethically important to me. Additionally, the topics for discussion included emotional experiences and the interview focused on the way the person made sense of and felt about them. Although the Subject-Object interview would not necessarily relate to the person's experiences in the mentoring program, it would approach the discussion of experiences in a way that was certainly compatible with my interest in how each person was perceiving her mentoring experiences with her partner, including both the way she



understood them and felt about them.

Knowing that, from the participants' perspective, the most important aspect of the after school mentoring program was the hour they would spend together each week engaged in activities after school and talking, I certainly wanted to attend to the processes occurring on what Rogoff would call the interpersonal level. For this reason, I observed the ten pairs each week as they spent time together. I carefully recorded their interactions, including where they went, what they said to one another in conversations, and kinds of nonverbal behaviors they exhibited towards their partners. These field notes provided vignettes used in Chapter Five to reveal the type of roles each person took on in the relationship and how they changed over time.

To study the mentoring experiences of the participants only from the personal level perspective of who they were when they entered and left the relationship and the interpersonal level of how they interacted with one another, would have allowed the conceptual tools of interpersonal level and the personal level to separate dynamic processes into discrete aspects of an experience. Because of my neo-Piagetian assumptions, I considered that, as each sixth grader and undergraduate was interacting with her partner and even before and after they were together, they would be interpreting these experiences and would be having feelings about them.

Considering again Rogoff's conceptual tool of focusing on processes at the personal level, I decided to interview each sixth grader and undergraduate at the end of each semester about her experiences with her partner. These mentoring interviews explored how each person was perceiving, understanding, and feeling about her

experiences with her partner in the after school mentoring program. For the undergraduates, I also kept copies of the reflective writing that they completed in preparation for the mentoring seminars. In these reflection papers they wrote about their own experiences growing up and their mentoring experiences with their partners in the program. Based on the mentoring interviews and reflection papers, I could construct a story of how each person's understanding of the relationship changed over time and what the significant moments were for her. To me, each person's Self was actively making meaning from the experiences she was having with her partner in the after school program. When I summarized each person's perspective on her experiences and how that perspective changed, I considered that person's developmental stage as assessed by the Subject-Object Interview. Kegan's developmental stage theory helped me make meaning from the dynamic perspectives of the girls and young women. In Chapter Five I construct a developmental interpretation of the processes occurring on the personal level.

I could not study the mentoring program only from the perspective of Rogoff's personal and interpersonal levels, however, because this was a large program taking place at six different middle schools. I decided to attend to what Rogoff calls the community level. As each undergraduate-sixth grader pair met at a particular school, they were surrounded by other unique sixth graders, undergraduates, and a school liaison. All of the pairs meeting at a particular school would also have group experiences as well as dyad experiences. The group would develop its own dynamic. Likewise, the physical setting of where the pairs were meeting would offer opportunities for certain types of activities and interactions. The school curriculum would shape the type of homework the

pairs might work on together and the conversations they would have about the sixth graders' school work. Coming from a day shaped by school culture, the sixth grader would arrive for the after school program with expectations and behaviors patterned after their teacher-student and peer relationships. Each undergraduate-sixth grader pair would have group experiences and would be affected by the cultural norms created by the school culture, individual personalities, and group dynamics that surrounded them and, of course, to which they contributed.

Because of these considerations, I decided to observe ten pairs that met at three different schools. While taking notes on the interactions of the pairs, I documented the physical set-up of the room where pairs met, the layout of the school and school grounds, the interactions of teachers and students, the actions of the liaisons, and the interactions of the sixth graders with each other, the interactions of the undergraduates with each other, the interactions of sixth graders and undergraduates who were not matched in a dyad, small group interactions when pairs paired with one another, and whole group interactions when everyone participated in the same activity. The processes occurring on the community level are included in Chapter Five as each of the three schools are described and then compared.

### Implications

This study goes beyond studying group-wide outcomes of a mentoring experience. The ethnographic portion of the study will describe in detail the dialectical nature of building relationships in a planned mentoring program as an early adolescent girl or as a late adolescent young woman. I believe this study will be very useful for the

many organizations and schools that have mentoring programs. It offers a means for reflecting on how coordinators may be able to facilitate mentoring relationships and support students involved in such a program. In a more general way, the study offers one more view into the human experience and perhaps will help us to better understand the nature of relationships that help people grow.

### Organization of the Study

The chapters in this dissertation are organized in the following way:

Chapter Two surveys the research and theoretical literature about adolescence and relates that literature to Project Mentor.

Chapter Three describes the design, data analysis, and results of the quasi-experimental study.

Chapter Four describes the methodology of the ethnographic study.

Chapter Five relates the stories of the relationships of three representative undergraduate-sixth grader pairs. Each story begins with a description of the school context. Then each person in the pair is introduced in terms of their family background and developmental level as determined by the Subject-Object Interviews and the Paragraph Completion Method Test. Throughout the chapter, descriptions of the interactions of each sixth grader-undergraduate pair are interpreted as demonstrations of a social role-taking process. In addition to data from observations, the content of interviews and student reflection papers are used to portray each person's perceptions of their experiences with their partner. These perceptions are interpreted according to Kegan's developmental theory. Chapter Five concludes by revisiting the personal, interpersonal, and community

levels of analysis. First, the environmental context of the three schools are compared, which brings into consideration the presence of the total number of 30 pairs who met at those schools. After this discussion of the community level, the interpersonal level is addressed through a summary of themes related to the social construction of mentoring roles using data gathered from all ten pairs in the ethnographic study. Lastly, the developmental issues related to building mentoring relationships during adolescence, that the stories of the three pairs highlighted, are summarized in light of the total ten pairs studied.

Chapter Six summarizes the quantitative and ethnographic portions of the study, offers conclusions, and describes implications of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### A SELECTED REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following review of relevant literature summarizes the ideas that guided both the study and the facilitation of the mentoring program. The literature review includes three topics: structural developmental theory, studies of adolescent girls and young women, and studies of developmental outcomes of similar programs.

For the study, structural developmental theory was used to assess the developmental levels of the participants, to determine any changes in developmental level, to evaluate the developmental outcomes of participation, and to interpret the participants' perceptions of their experiences in the mentoring program. From a programmatic standpoint, developmental theory was used to plan the nature of the support provided the undergraduates in the mentoring seminar. In this chapter, studies of female relationships in adolescence are reviewed using developmental theory to provide a cohesive interpretation of some of the possible factors affecting the nature of the mentoring relationships in this program. For the mentoring seminar, literature related to female relationships in adolescence was used to help the undergraduates explore their own personal histories, relate to their partners, and understand better their own relationships with their sixth grade partners.

Studies of developmental outcomes of similar programs involving role-taking

offer the rationale for using the Paragraph Completion Method Test as a measurement of developmental change.

### Structural Developmental Theory

Structural developmental theory assumes that people, over the course of their life span, progress through an invariate hierarchy of stages of increasing independence, maturity, and conceptual complexity. The term “stage” refers to an emotional and cognitive level of making meaning, in other words, the way a person understands and experiences him/herself and the world around him/her. Although people do tend to advance to higher stages as they grow older, any one stage does not correspond to one particular age. Development is a slow process that occurs through the interaction of the person and the environment. For simplicity, theorists describe each stage as a discrete entity; in real life, though, people are most often between stages, exhibiting characteristics of two stages as one gradually emerges, dominates, and replaces the previous stage. For this study the structural developmental models of two researchers, D.E. Hunt and Robert Kegan were used to assess and understand the perspectives of the sixth grade and undergraduate participants.

#### Hunt

Hunt’s model of development focuses on the growth of conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity. Hunt and his colleagues created an instrument called the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) Test to identify a person’s Conceptual Level and defined four developmental stages (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978).

The earliest Conceptual Level (CL) is scored a zero. This person is impulsive and

**does not consider other people's thoughts and feelings. S/he is motivated only by his/her own desires. S/he tends to respond in unsocialized ways, for example with anger, to external controls.**

**The next CL score is a one. A person at level one has internalized cultural norms and expectations. S/he considers rules and roles very important and demonstrates dichotomous thinking. S/he respects authority and feels embarrassed when his/her actions are identified as inappropriate.**

**A person with a CL score of two is concerned with his/her independence and ability to make his/her own decisions. S/he is interested in other people's ideas and tolerant of differences in opinion. Additionally, s/he is more able to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty. Nine studies of university students conducted between 1970 and 1976 and ranging in sample size from 20 to 138 revealed a mean CL score of 1.8 (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.41). This seems to indicate that university students tend to be developing a level 2 way of thinking.**

**A CL score of three is the highest assessed developmental stage. This person can integrate both a concern for others and his/her own needs into decisions. S/he takes responsibility for his/her actions and will act on principle. S/he can also work in the interest of compromise and synthesize multiple points of view.**

**Hunt and Sullivan (1974) have developed an instructional model that uses information about students' conceptual level to guide teaching practices. They suggest that students at lower conceptual levels benefit from more highly structured environments while students at higher conceptual levels prefer more autonomous**



learning opportunities. Hunt and Sullivan, and researchers applying their model, have studied the process of matching students' conceptual level with a particular degree of structure and then gradually challenging them, or mismatching, to promote the development of greater conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity.

In this study the PCM Test was used to assess changes in Conceptual Level in order to compare the cognitive developmental outcomes of participating in a mentoring program in sixth grade and as an undergraduate, to matched comparison groups not involved in Project Mentor.

### **Kegan**

Structural developmental theories of the self, as articulated by Kegan (1982, 1994), provided both a means of assessment and the analytical framework for the ethnographic portion of this study. The ethnographic investigation focused on the nature of the mentoring experiences of a small group of pairs in three different schools.

Theoretically, each person's experience in Project Mentor represented an interplay of action and thought: what the person did with her partner, how the partner responded, and how the individual person interpreted the interactions. According to structural developmentalists, it is a person's Self, the prime meaning maker, that makes sense of experiences (Kegan, Noam, & Rogers, 1982). The Self is not a static entity, though. The Self, as an integrated, self-constructing system, grows and changes as a result of reflection on experiences. Therefore, I needed to try to learn about each person in the study as a Self at a developmental stage in order to understand the way they were experiencing participation in Project Mentor.

Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, and Felix (1987) created an assessment called the Subject-Object Interview that helps a researcher identify a person's developmental stage or one of four transitional steps between any two stages. I used the Subject-Object Interview in the ethnographic study to assess each sixth grader's and undergraduate's Self in the fall and again near the end of the program in the spring. Knowing each person's developmental stage helped me interpret my observations as the dynamic of two Selves interacting with one another in a mentoring dyad, co-constructing the social roles of "mentor" and "mentee." I also used my assessment of each person's Self stage to interpret and understand the participants' perceptions of their mentoring experiences as expressed in interviews and reflection papers from a developmental perspective.

Kegan (1982, 1994) has articulated a theory of stages of the Self that synthesizes the extensive work of other developmental psychologists including Piaget, Vygotsky, Hunt, Marcia, and Loevinger. The next section will summarize Kegan's stages most relevant to adolescence, relate them to similar theories of other developmental psychologists, analyze studies of girls considering developmental theory, and explain how developmental stages may impact the experiences of the participants of Project Mentor. For the purpose of relating Kegan's stage theory to Project Mentor participants and other literature on adolescents, I will make reference to age. It is important to remember, though, that stage only roughly correlates to age and that most often people are in transition between stages at any one moment in time.

**The Imperial Self in Childhood and Early Adolescence.** Before middle adolescence, children typically function at a concrete operational stage of thinking, according to Piaget. They understand concepts literally and can be deceived easily by appearances. Kegan includes concrete operational thinking in the second order of categorical consciousness, which he also calls the Stage 2 Imperial Self (Kegan, 1994, p.30). Stage 2 children understand their own uniqueness and that other people have different points of view, but cannot think abstractly or consider two points of view simultaneously. For example, they may have an internalized representation of their parent based on their attachment from infancy, but cannot reflect on it and how it is affecting them. Children who are Imperial Selves “reason consequentially, that is, according to cause and effect” (Kegan, 1994, p.30). They are subject to and only know the world through their own wishes, needs, and interests (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987, p.14).

Loevinger’s developmental theory describes a Self-Protective level of ego development that is similar to Kegan’s description of the Imperial Self. A Self-Protective stage child makes decisions and interacts with people in ways that satisfy her own needs. This does not mean the a Self-Protective stage child is unresponsive to other people’s needs. On the other hand, when the Self-Protective person is responsive to another person’s needs, she is doing so because she is concerned about the consequences to herself of not acting to satisfy that person’s needs.

Several recent books have idealized the vivaciousness of the pre-or early adolescent girl. Based on her work as a therapist, Pipher described the female child as

having “assertive, energetic, tomboyish personalities” in contrast to the “deferential, self-critical, and depressed” nature of adolescent girls (Pipher, 1994, p.19). In a longitudinal, cross-sectional design, Brown and Gilligan (1992) interviewed nearly one hundred girls aged seven to eighteen at a school for girls every year from 1986 to 1990. They described the youngest girls as being able to voice their feelings when they conflicted with those of another person. In other words, they could stand up for themselves and confront other people. The researchers noticed, though, that as girls got older, they learned to be “nice,” avoid all confrontation, and “disassociate” or subordinate their needs in their relationships with other females (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p.216). The girls seemed to have learned a type of silencing, a belief that they would not have relationships if they asserted themselves, and they learned it from adult women (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p.220).

When considering developmental theory, it seems logical that the pre-adolescent would be more inclined to assert her needs in her relationships because she is self-protective and at the second order of consciousness. Her needs are primary. She cannot consider both her needs and her friend’s needs simultaneously, although she can recognize each at different times. Pipher, Brown, and Gilligan seem to be mourning the transition into the next developmental phase, the conformist level of ego development and the third interpersonal order of consciousness. Perhaps the reason why this transition can be so tragic in the eyes of the adults is because they are witnessing the additional effects of female socialization in North America.

The studies I reviewed considered girls in sixth grade to be early adolescents. As

early adolescents, the girls are probably at the Imperial Self or self-protective stage or in various stages of transition out of Imperial Self or self-protective thinking. During July 1997 I conducted a pilot study of five girls who were going to be attending sixth grade in September 1997. They ranged in age from just turning 11 to having just turned 12 years old. My analysis of the Subject-Object Interviews indicated that four of the five girls were in various transitional stages between Kegan's stage 2 Imperial Self and a stage 3 Interpersonal Self. In Cohn's (1991) meta-analysis of 65 studies using Loevinger's Washington University Sentence Completion Test (WUSCT), no significant gender differences among sixth graders in terms of ego development were found. However, the analysis of studies of sixth graders was limited by small sample sizes. From seventh grade through high school, though, significant gender differences were found. Girls tended to be one stage higher than the boys. For example, the mean stage for the young adolescent boys was self-protective, while the young adolescent girls' mean score was self-protective-conformist. I anticipate that the sixth grade girls in Project Mentor will begin sixth grade at the Imperial Self stage or at one of the early transitional stages as the Interpersonal Self emerges and co-exists with the Imperial Self.

The Interpersonal Self in Early, Middle, and Late Adolescence. During adolescence, young people begin to develop what Piaget termed formal operational thought, or the ability to think abstractly. With the advent of formal operational thought, adolescents may develop a new way of knowing, stage 3, that Kegan calls the Interpersonal Self or cross-categorical consciousness. Adolescents with Interpersonal Selves can internalize another person's point of view and reflect on two perspectives

simultaneously, but cannot separate themselves from their relationships (Kegan, 1994, p.31). Their own perspectives and emotions are deeply affected by what they perceive to be the perspectives and emotions of those around them. The development of an Interpersonal Self, like any developmental stage, is a slow process. Movement towards a stage 3 way of making meaning may begin, for example, in junior high school, continue through high school, and still be evident in the person as a college undergraduate.

Loevinger describes a change similar to Kegan's move from second to third order consciousness as the transition from self-protective to conformist understanding. Girls and young women in the conformist phase are apt to make decisions that are coordinated with social expectations, more than personal desire. Likewise, their descriptions often sound clichéd to listeners at a higher developmental level.

In addition to the development of more complex cognition, a more Interpersonal Self, and a more integrated ego during adolescence, girls are also continuing on the pathway of identity development. Attachment theory suggests that prior to adolescence, in fourth and fifth and perhaps even part of sixth grade, children's identities are more like internal representations of their parents (Cohen, 1974, p.216). Their parents' behavior of offering security and affection and punishment have become internalized consequences that shape the children's actions to satisfy their own needs, desires, and interests. As children move through adolescence, though, they become more abstract thinkers. They begin to seek an understanding of who they are and what their role and purpose in society is. Adolescents developing Interpersonal Selves consciously begin to consider who they are in terms of how they think other people, particularly their peers,

are perceiving them. At the same time, they start to recognize that beliefs and values are choices and begin to experiment with different choices.

Building his theory on Freudian psychosexual assumptions, Erikson maintained that adolescent boys seek identity separation from their parents through an individuation process while girls do not form a separate identity at all, and instead separate only to join with a husband. Feminists have critiqued this “dichotomizing of identity versus intimacy” (Archer, 1992, p.28). Since the work of Gilligan (1990) and Belenky (1986) and their research teams, female identity development has been studied using different methodologies. Their work and the work of their colleagues has challenged the field to pay greater attention to the complexity of identity development. Concepts such as development through connection and the reconceptualization of individuation as differentiation are beginning to reshape the landscape of identity research. The section entitled “Studies of female relationships in adolescence” will address the ideas of development through connection in more detail.

When young women enter college, they are considered to be in the period of late adolescence. As undergraduates, many young women will exhibit a stage 3 Interpersonal Self or important aspects of this Self as they transition to the next stage. The processes of identity development including differentiation from parents and creating an integrated sense of one’s values, beliefs, and goals continue over the course of four years. Although different students will respond to their college experiences in various ways, college seems to offer an environment that promotes developmental change. In fact, the developmental differences found between early and middle adolescent males and

females seem to disappear due to the developmental growth that takes place during college.

According to Cohn's (1991) meta-analysis of 65 studies conducted between 1970 and 1987, most college freshman were found to be at the Loevinger's conformist or conscientious level, although women tended to be slightly more reflective than men. More recently, Mabry (1993) found that the average ego development stage was conformist for entering male college students while the average ego development stage was self-aware for entering female students in her sample. Cohn's meta analysis indicated that gender differences in ego development seem to decline dramatically during college. In fact, among older adults, ego development was found to be roughly equal.

Some students will spend a great deal of time in college exploring their values, political views, and career goals. Marcia (1991) has named this exploration phase the moratorium status of identity development. This stage of exploration can cause stress, for example, as the student struggles with choosing a major that can lead to a future career identity that may or may not be consistent with parental expectations. At a moratorium status of identity development, students may be experiencing a transition from third to fourth order thinking as defined by Kegan's (1994) theory. The fourth order of consciousness is called the Institutional Self and will be described in more detail in the next section. During the period of transition between stages 3 and 4, college students do not have dominant Institutional Selves that integrate their values, beliefs, and goals, but their Selves are not completely Interpersonal either. I think they may be experiencing a sense of continual choice, pulled in different directions, experimenting



with preliminary choices in order to find what will become a comfortable integration.

Sometimes college students maintain their adherence to parental values and make choices, such as choice of major, in conformity with parental expectations without exploration of alternatives. Marcia (1991) describes such college students as identity foreclosed. Identity foreclosed people commit to an occupation and values based on parental or social expectations and never experience the exploration phase. For the students who have an Interpersonal Self, an identity foreclosed status can alleviate the developmental stress of having an opinion in opposition to the internalized perspectives of their parents and making a choice without a fully formed ability to differentiate themselves.

Students with an Interpersonal Self could also respond to the conflicting values surrounding them at college by internalizing them and feeling very confused. In response to this confusion, the college student might take a very relativistic stance to maintain internal peace, proclaiming that all perspectives are equally valid and that one cannot ever be more justified in making a particular choice. I think that extreme relativism may be related to an identity diffuse status, by which a person no longer explores alternatives and yet has not made any commitments (Marcia, 1991). An identity diffuse status seems to lead to more crises and emotional turmoil in the years following college graduation (Josselson, 1987).

The Institutional Self in Late Adolescence. The college experience is an environment ripe for learning. College course work can stimulate an increase in conceptual complexity when it challenges students to acknowledge and articulate diverse

**perspectives and competing theories and then to make their own conclusions based on reasoning (King & Kitchener, 1994). In addition to course work, college campuses offer many opportunities for students to take stands on political issues in public forums, such as during rallies and student union activities. For the student who lives a college experience of animated discussion, reading, and reflection, college may promote the development of an Institutional Self. At this fourth stage of development in Kegan's theory, as an Institutional Self, the person defines themselves and makes decisions according to an integrated sense of their values and beliefs (Kegan, 1994, p.95).**

**People who are at the fourth level of institutional consciousness can have close interpersonal relationships while maintaining a sense of themselves, their values, and their integrity. Although they remain connected in a relationship, their internal balance is tipped toward a heightened awareness of differentiation. They pride themselves on their independence. People with Institutional Selves see other people as organized self-systems as well. They reason abstractly, are able to relate multiple ideas to one another, and understand the concepts of multiple roles, ideology, context, and subjectivity.**

**I think that a person with an Institutional Self would rank identity achieved according to Marcia's theory of identity development. Marcia (1991) categorizes people who have explored various occupations, ideologies, and values and have committed to a choice, identity achieved (p.530). Although no studies have been conducted to correlate Kegan's stages with Marcia's, studies have indicated that college students in the higher identity statuses of identity achieved and moratorium are also at higher levels of Loevinger's ego development, and demonstrate a more mature cognitive style (Hopkins,**

1982; Adams and Shea, 1979).

As I was planning to teach the mentoring seminar for the undergraduates involved in Project Mentor, Kegan's, Loevinger's, and Marcia's theories all guided the readings I chose and reflection questions I assigned. For example, in the questions that the students responded to in their reflection papers, I asked them first to apply the reading or concept to their own lives and then to their mentoring relationship. As we read, wrote, and talked in the seminar about values and diversity, communication and acceptance of difference, as well as what it might mean to be a role model, I hoped to create a forum for identity exploration. Of course I did not expect that these students, by the end of their second year in college, would be identity achieved or have Institutional Selves. On the other hand, I did expect that they would be in transition from Interpersonal Selves to Institutional Selves and hopefully would have enjoyed support through the challenges and confusion that transitions create.

#### Studies of Female Relationships in Adolescence

Because my study is a study of relationships and seeks to interpret the experiences of girls and young women paired in a mentoring program from a developmental perspective, it is particularly important to consider previous studies of female relationships in adolescence. Studies of adolescent girls' relationships with their mothers, their peers, and their schools provide rich descriptions of adolescent perspectives and provide examples of how their cognitive, ego, and identity development interrelate.

Apter (1992) interviewed 65 mother and daughter pairs from Britain and the

United States to study the nature of their relationships as each perceived it. Apter also observed them interact with one another. The daughters ranged in age from 11 to 21. Apter describes her findings according to a number of themes in which vignettes from participants of various ages, from early to late adolescents, are included. Apter does not cluster her conclusions according to any age or structural developmental stage patterns.

Apter's interviews and observations revealed much conflict between the mothers and daughters as the daughters tried to change their relationship with their mothers (Apter, 1992, p.16). Often the girls were critical of their mother's responses to them in conversation, seemingly looking for the mothers to say particular things and often being disappointed. During the interviews, Apter discovered that the daughters were trying intensely to get their mothers to recognize different aspects of themselves, to be seen as they wanted to be seen, to be understood. Apter noticed that if the daughter only saw her mother in terms of the daughter's own needs, then the daughter was less successful with getting her mother to understand her. On the other hand, if the daughter was able to be more sensitive to her mother, she was able to present herself more effectively (Apter, 1992, p.105).

Although Apter did not interpret her data from a structural developmental point of view, I think it is possible to use a developmental lens as one way of understanding her findings. The adolescent girls revealed in Apter's interviews that they could describe how they thought their mothers were perceiving them and how that affected them. This ability indicates a third order of consciousness; the girls could internalize another perspective and reflect on it and their own simultaneously. A girl at the third order of

consciousness subjects herself to that internalized perspective of her mother and experiences internal conflict and distress if her internalized mother's perspective is incongruent with her own. This is the same dilemma that the girl moving from the Imperial Self to the Interpersonal Self stage faces. For example, she will feel guilty about doing things her mother would disapprove of, so she must change her mother's opinions. She will not be satisfied with merely not getting caught and not being punished. There can be different degrees of movement, though, towards the third level of consciousness. If the second level of consciousness dominates the daughter's way of thinking, and the third order is only emerging, then one might anticipate Apter's finding that the girls who only understood their mothers in terms of their own needs were less effective in actually having their mother understand them. The daughter has to understand her mother enough to be able to get her mother to understand her.

The struggles between mother and daughter indicate a process of differentiation through a connected relationship. The daughter wants her mother to see her differently because the daughter sees herself as being different than the little girl she once was. In terms of attachment theory, the adolescent is highlighting the differences between the self she wants to be and the internal representation of her mother that she once held to be herself. That the mother herself recognizes the changes and the difference between the mother and daughter can be very important to the daughter. It is for this reason that the adolescent will constantly correct her mother, scowl and seem disappointed with whatever she says, and criticize her mother. Despite all the interpersonal struggles of adolescence, girls do desire connection with their mothers. In the words of Apter, "the

very difficult balance is clear: there are the highly exacting needs of the adolescent, who wants the mother to watch and appreciate, but not to misunderstand, to watch and see and understand, but not to intrude, to allow individuality, to be enthusiastic and confident about growth and maturity, yet not to let go, and above all not to abandon” (Apter, 1992, p.121). This finding that girls develop through connections with others is not only consistent with sociocultural theories of development, but also corroborated by the research of Carol Gilligan.

Apter’s work highlights the interpersonal conflict dynamic of the mother-daughter relationship during adolescence. I think that conflict is played out because of the developmental stage of the daughter as well as because of her desire for connection with her mother. The mother-daughter relationship becomes the nexus for developmental change in the daughter’s understanding of herself. This leads me to wonder if a mentoring relationship with someone at the opposite end of adolescence also could become a pivotal place for the girls and young women to experiment with, live through, and change their understanding of themselves. On the one hand, the mentors are young women, not mother figures, who will abruptly enter the mentees’ lives; it may be too extreme to predict that a relationship could grow that is in any way similar to the attachment relationship between a mother and daughter. On the other hand, if the mentors and mentees do develop close relationships and maintain their relationship over several years, the experience may become a very significant context for development.

A mentoring relationship in itself is a unique growth-inducing relationship.

Yamamoto (1988) explored the meaning of mentorship in a position paper. He described

how “everyone yearns to be known, understood, and respected, not merely for who one has been and who one is, but also, and probably more critically, for the emergent self - who one can be, who one is going to be” (Yamamoto, 1988, p.184). Yamamoto described how in a mentoring relationship, the mentor and mentee look on one another with regard, with trust, and with affection. Similar to their relationships with their mothers, the sixth graders may begin to want very much for their mentors to know and understand them if they do develop trust in and affection for their mentors. Yamamoto suggested that the mentor’s regard for the mentee and ability to see her potential brings a sense of hope to the relationship. The mentee feels hope as she begins to explore her own identity through this relationship.

The role of the mentor that Yamamoto described may seem to be too challenging for a college student. That may be the case. Through observing the sixth grader-undergraduate pairs’ interactions and learning their perceptions of their experiences, I will be studying the nature of the role-taking experience of a small number of pairs. Although taking on a mentoring role may seem unusual for someone of college age, the young women will be encouraged and supported in their attempts to become mentors. For example, during the fall semester in the mentor seminar, the mentors will be reflecting on how they are building trust in their relationships with their mentees and developing communication skills. During the spring semester, the mentors will be reading Yamamoto’s article and a couple chapters from Apter’s book, in order to reflect on the nature of their relationships with their mentees. In this way, they will be encouraged to try to build such a deep relationship. If the sophomore college students

and the sixth grade girls really develop a mentoring relationship as deep as Yamamoto describes, then development may thrive through this connection.

Other studies of female relationships in adolescence have revealed how much girls value a sense of connection with their mothers during adolescence. Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer (1990) studied the moral development of girls at a single sex private school for four years, using interviewing as their research methodology. The twenty adolescent girls focused on in Sharon Rich's chapter called "Daughters' Views of their Relationships with their Mothers" described how much they depended on their mothers for emotional support; they liked to share and talk with their mothers. "Even girls who recount weak connections say they would like to feel closer to their mothers" (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990, p.259). Good relationships between mothers and daughters appeared to be reciprocal: the adolescent girls described "being there" to love, nurture, and protect their mothers just as their mothers do for them.

In contrast to emotionally supportive, reciprocal relationships, girls also experience frustrations and disappointments in their relationships with female family members and friends. In such relationships, there is a sense of disconnection that the girls describe as a "wall" between themselves and the other person. "The image of a wall recurred in interviews with adolescent girls - a physical rendering of blocks preventing connection, the impasses in relationship which girls accurately described and which were associated with intense feelings of anger and sadness" (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990, p.19). Perhaps the impasses were due to the culture of silence that Brown and Gilligan (1992) discovered in their later work. When girls and women do not think it



is socially acceptable to communicate their needs in a relationship, then it is very hard to improve relationships when difficulties arise, and ironically the girls suffer and accept their sadness while maintaining a self-negating relationship.

Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer suggest that conflict is not allowed in female friendships outside of the home, due to the ideal of the “nice girl” that girls are socialized to become. Nice girls are calm and pleasant and get along with everyone. To become the “nice girl,” the girl sacrifices her “true self” for a “false self,” according to Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer. If a girl does assert her voice in her friendships as she grows through middle elementary school, there are negative social repercussions from peers as well as adult women. Thus, there is no way to resolve the effects of a friend’s perspective that the adolescent finds painful.

The phenomenon of feeling a wall and negating the separate self in a disappointing relationship may be related to Kegan’s notion of a self structured by a third order of consciousness. When adolescents are unable to separate their sense of self from their own reaction to the other person’s words, their only recourse, as was implied by Apter’s research, is to change the other person’s perspective. Thus, Apter found that the source of mother-daughter conflict during adolescence is the girl’s vigilant attempts to change her mother’s perceptions of her. In Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer’s research, though, the girls did not seek to change their friends’ perceptions or actions. They could not resolve their internal conflict with the other person so they disconnect, not asserting their needs, and lose their “true selves” in order to maintain the relationship.

The undergraduates read selected chapters from Gilligan, Lyons, and Hanmer’s

book during spring semester of the mentoring seminar. They wrote about how they might retain their “true selves” in their mentoring relationships while trying to be “the perfect mentor.” Likewise, they were asked to write about whether they or their sixth grade partners have ever communicated their feelings to the other person when their feelings or thoughts were in conflict. The hope is that the undergraduates and sixth graders would build a relationship in which they can be their “true selves.” Such an experience may encourage the participants to avoid “false selves” in other relationships as well.

It may be that part of the reason why girls begin to censor themselves in their friendships is that they are developing an Interpersonal Self. This Interpersonal Self is fundamentally distressed by conflict in relationships, and desires for both perspectives to be in agreement because the person identifies herself with the relationship. In terms of Loevinger’s stage theory, research using the WUSCT (Washington University Sentence Completion Test) indicates that girls may move into the conformist stage of ego development more quickly than boys. Cohn’s (1991) meta-analysis of 65 studies published between 1970 and 1987 showed that, among junior and senior high school students (7th through 12th grade), girls scored significantly higher on the WUSCT than boys. “On average, adolescent girls scored three-fifths of a standard deviation higher than boys on the WUSCT (weighted  $g = 0.61$ ,  $CI = 0.52-0.70$ ). Expressed in an alternative format, the mean ego level of adolescent girls was higher than the ego levels of 73% of adolescent boys (Cohen’s  $U = 72.9$ )” (Cohn, 1991, p.259). In the studies reviewed, most of the young adolescents scored between the self-protective and the conformist stages,

with the girls scoring at least one stage higher than the boys. For example, a girl would probably be self-protective-conformist, demonstrating abstract thinking and needing more social approval; whereas a boy would be self-protective, being more concrete in his thinking and egocentric (Cohn, 1991, p.260). Most older adolescents scored between the conformist and self-aware levels. Again among older adolescents the girls tended to be one stage higher, being more reflective and self-aware, than the boys.

According to the developmental psychology research literature, girls seem to develop more quickly than boys. If they are indeed moving towards an Interpersonal Self during sixth grade, this makes them more prone to be affected by social pressures to be passive, “nice”, quiet, non-assertive, and feminine. Project Mentor cannot ward off the development of an Interpersonal Self; stage 3 is a necessary and important stage of development. In fact, their stage 3 ability to internalize another’s perspective and their proclivity to have their identities embedded in their relationships, may incline the girls to see themselves through the eyes of their mentors. Hopefully through the experience of being respected by their mentors, of feeling the regard their mentors have for them, and of hearing the high expectations and encouragement of their mentors, the sixth grade mentees will gain a different perspective on themselves. The college student mentors will also be living examples of a femininity that includes high achievement and self-assurance.

### Adolescent Development through Mentoring

This study was designed to explore both the changes in conceptual level that may be stimulated by the role-taking experience of being in a mentoring program, and the

complex interrelationship of mentoring and developmental stage. On the one hand, during the planning stages of Project Mentor, the syllabus for the undergraduate mentoring seminar was carefully designed to offer the students a stimulating learning opportunity in the context of the course work. On the other hand, the nature of the after school mentoring experiences of particular pairs and even the in-class experiences of the undergraduates in the three seminar sections could not be predicted, but instead only studied. This section will describe why, theoretically, a mentoring experience in this program might stimulate the conceptual and personal development of the undergraduates and sixth graders.

Project Mentor is just one program in the history of “Deliberate Psychological Education” programs that have been designed to support and encourage growth in conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity of middle school, high school, and college students (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). Deliberate Psychological Education programs share five necessary features. First, they involve students in “significant role-taking experiences in complex human ‘helping’ tasks” (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987, p.71). Second, they include challenging reading and thoughtful reflection. Third, a balance between action and reflection is maintained so that action is preceded and succeeded by reflection. Fourth, the students experience continuity in the program. They take on a particular role for a length of time, rather than only on one or two occasions. Reflection is likewise continuous throughout the experience. Fifth, an empathetic instructor supports the students in this endeavor and challenges them to think about their experiences in more complex ways.

Project Mentor tried to incorporate each of these five components of Deliberate Psychological Education programs. The undergraduates would be taking on the significant helping role of “mentor” for about eight months. They were encouraged to help their sixth grade partners understand concepts that were challenging them in school and engage them collaboratively in enrichment activities in math and science. The mentoring seminar required the undergraduates to read about adolescent development, communication, and tutoring. To balance action and reflection, in preparation for each seminar session the undergraduates wrote reflection papers in response to questions that challenged them to relate the readings to their own life experiences and to their experiences in the program with their sixth grade partners. The instructors supported and challenged the undergraduates’ thinking through seminar discussions and written responses on the reflection papers.

The development of the sixth graders would be achieved more indirectly. The sixth graders would be taking on the role of “mentee” in their partnerships with the undergraduates. The undergraduates would offer them personal support through encouragement and empathetic listening. The undergraduates would also challenge the sixth graders to think about academic concepts as well as personal or social issues in more complex ways during the course of tutoring, shared activities, and conversation. The exact nature of every interaction between each undergraduate-sixth grader pair was not planned and supported, though. The undergraduates were expected to plan for the time with their sixth grade partners independently and were expected to respond to the needs of their partners as they understood them on any given day.

In the previous two paragraphs mentoring was represented as an intellectually challenging experience. What cannot be overlooked is that mentoring, by its nature, involves two people in a personal relationship. Litowitz (1993) suggested that “what motivates the child to master tasks is not the mastery itself but the desire to be the adult or to be the one the adult wants him to be,” (p.187). The learning that occurs in a mentoring relationship comes through the trust and mutual affection that grows between the “mentor” and the “mentee.” As a researcher I wondered about how the mentoring relationships would grow and change over the course of a school year and, in turn, how the individuals involved in those relationships would grow and change.

One way of conceptualizing how mentoring might facilitate the development of each person would be to anticipate that the sixth graders would come to identify with their undergraduate partners. Over time, affective connections would bond the pairs in closer personal relationships. By identifying with her “mentor,” the “mentee” would internalize an image of femininity that includes being intelligent, high achieving, and confident and begin to see herself in this image. A sophomore college woman who encourages and believes in the sixth grader’s potential, who challenges and inspires her, may help the sixth grader visualize herself as a college student in the future. Then the sixth grader might begin to make choices in the present based on that different image of her potential, her future.

Imagining that the sixth graders would internalize an image of their undergraduate partners and hold themselves to that image seems to indicate a sense of mimicking. Sometimes a person will develop by appropriating others’ actions. Through

the performance, she changes the way she conceptualizes something by practicing what requires an alternate framework (Litowitz, 1993, p.188-189). Project Mentor did not intend to encourage development only through mimicking, though. For example, during the tutoring the sixth graders would be encouraged to engage in active problem solving. Likewise, the undergraduates and sixth graders at each school would participate in monthly focus group discussions about relevant topics facilitated by the school liaisons. In these discussions, the sixth graders and undergraduates would be challenged by the facilitator's questions to engage in Kegan's third order thinking, to be able to reflect on their own perspective and another's simultaneously. Due to the age and experience differences, the undergraduates and sixth graders would be listening to each other and responding to multiple perspectives in one conversation.

In any "mentor-mentee" relationship there seems to be a power difference. The mentor is more experienced, older, more proficient. She has a greater responsibility to encourage and be supportive and responsive to her mentee. This situation could exacerbate the passivity of a sixth grader who is beginning to lose her "voice" in interpersonal relationships and beginning to subjugate herself to the image of the "nice girl" who never disagrees or causes conflict (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). At the same time, with encouragement and modeling, the mentoring relationship could also be an opportunity to exercise voice in a supportive relationship. The sixth grader might develop a sense of self as one who has important things to say, who has important dreams and goals, who has ideas and instincts to be trusted by the girl herself.

In the role of mentor, the college women are developing skills for being

responsive to the unique needs of each mentee. To a degree this builds on an ethic of care and the role of nurturing that women seem to be socialized into in our society. Feminists might be concerned about the development of the undergraduates beyond a mentoring role that could take the form of a stereotypical female role of self-sacrificing support and attentiveness. The readings and reflection papers are designed to encourage the undergraduates to explore their own values, consider their own personal histories, and express their own opinions as knowledgeable individuals. Hopefully, during the course of supporting and challenging their sixth grade partners, they would find opportunities to explore their own interests and talents and experience having a “voice” in a caring relationship.

Although this section about why mentoring experiences in this program might stimulate the personal development of the participants was entirely theoretical, there have been many studies to substantiate that role-taking experiences do stimulate conceptual growth.

#### Studies of the Cognitive Developmental Outcomes of Role-taking Experiences

For the past 20 years researchers have been studying the psychological development of students in particular programs designed to stimulate development. I would like to describe the results of three studies that investigated the developmental effects of programs most similar to Project Mentor.

Sprinthall and Scott (1989) studied the effects of a cross-age peer tutoring program. Fifteen female 11th graders volunteered to tutor fifteen 4th and 5th grade females in math three times a week for approximately 20 minutes each time for 15



weeks. The comparison group consisted of 15 students who volunteered to be teacher aides. The 4th and 5th grade students involved in the study had scored below the 90th percentile on the California Achievement Test. Fifteen were randomly assigned to tutoring while 15 were randomly assigned to a control group.

The high school tutors participated in a training program that included: "An orientation to tutoring, developing helping relationships, developing communication skills (two sessions), principles of education as applied to tutoring (two sessions), rules, responsibilities and procedures, content area (math) strategies and activities, record-keeping functions, and evaluation in tutoring" (Sprinthall & Scott, 1989, p.441). The training took place in the context of a weekly seminar which included reflective discussions and journal writing. The comparison group of teacher aides received brief instructions as needed by the teachers to which they were assigned.

The high school students completed the PCM (Hunt, 1978) and the Defining Issues Test (Rest, 1979) as a pre-test and post-test. The high school girls who were tutoring demonstrated an average gain of a third of a stage on the PCM, which was significantly more than those who were teacher aides ( $p < .05$ ). On the Defining Issues Test the high school tutors gained an average of 12.6 points on a 90-point scale, which was again significantly more than those who were teacher aides ( $p < .01$ ). The elementary girls who were in the experimental group improved their scores on the California Achievement Test by more than 11 points, while the control group only improved by more than 4 points (Sprinthall & Scott, 1989, p.443).

This study, although involving small sample sizes, does indicate that active role-

taking coupled with skill development and reflection can result in more developmental gains than role-taking alone. Although the tutors in this study were high school students and in Project Mentor they will be sophomore college students, I think that the similar structures of the two programs may produce similar results because of their common role-taking experiences and reflective components. In this study the PCM was able to indicate conceptual level changes that took place in a 15 week period when the tutoring experience involved weekly seminars and tutoring three times a week. In contrast, Project Mentor will include a longer seminar and longer tutoring sessions that meet more infrequently; the seminar will last two hours every other week and the tutoring will be one hour per week. It will be interesting to find out if these programmatic differences will affect the developmental outcomes.

A similar study was conducted by Cognition and Sprinthall (1978). The experimental group consisted of 17 senior high students (10th through 12th grade) enrolled in an elective social studies class that involved teaching junior high students (6th through 8th grade) in small groups twice a week for 12-14 weeks. The comparison group consisted of 26 students in regular social studies classes. The senior high students learned instructional skills as well as communication skills through role-playing in the course, then taught a lesson to the junior high students. The seminar "allowed for feedback, debriefing, and reflection" (Cognition & Sprinthall, 1978, p.58).

The experimental group showed gains on Loevinger's WUSCT, typically demonstrating a move from stage 3 to stage 3-4. The experimental group also showed significant gains on the Defining Issues Test ( $p < .05$ ). The comparison group did not gain

on either test. These findings were corroborated by post-test interviews in which the students talked enthusiastically about their growth and in which the instructors described how the students asked more questions and demonstrated greater insight into themselves and others during the course of the semester (Cognetta & Sprinthall, 1978, p.63).

Although not a study of a tutoring program, the third study investigated the cognitive developmental outcomes of a carefully structured early field experience course in education (Watson, 1995). Nineteen second year undergraduates were in the experimental group, while 20 undergraduates in an early field experience course at a different university comprised the comparison group. All participants completed the PCM test at the beginning and at the end of one fifteen week semester. For the first six weeks the seminar met twice a week as the students engaged in small group activities and discussions. Then the undergraduates began to complete the required 24 hours in a public school classroom and the seminar met once a week for the rest of the semester.

During the course of the semester the undergraduates had many opportunities for role-taking. First they developed, taught, and evaluated a lesson for their classmates in the seminar (Watson, 1995, p.118). Then they developed and conducted three learning activities in a public school classroom. Throughout the semester they also interviewed and maintained a journal with a Learning Partner, who was a student in a public school classroom. The goal was to understand the perspective of that student. When responding in the child's journal, the undergraduates were supposed to apply a guided reflection model (Reiman, 1988) to match and gradually mismatch the child's level of conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity.

There are many different ways that the researcher tried to create opportunities for reflection and to challenge the undergraduates to think about ideas and their experiences in more complex ways. In preparation for class, the students had assigned readings and completed a Learning Log in which they “described prior knowledge of a topic, analyzed and evaluated the readings, and finally synthesized the new learnings” (Watson, 1995, p.117). The instructor responded to the students’ writing using the guided reflection model developed by Reiman (1988) in order to promote the development of conceptual complexity. To stimulate further reflection, she facilitated the seminar discussions by using five questions: “1. What difference can or do the ideas we have discussed make in your life? 2. How can you apply what you have learned from our discussion to teaching situations? 3. What alternatives do you see for solving a particular problem we have discussed? 4. What is the most important thing you have learned from our discussion? 5. What questions do you still have based on our discussions?” (Watson, 1995, p.117).

The undergraduates in this carefully structured early field experience course did demonstrate significantly higher gains in Conceptual Level score as compared to those in a traditional early field experience course at another university. The experimental group had a mean gain of +.20 (pre-test  $x=1.74$ , post-test  $x=1.94$ ), whereas the comparison group had a mean gain of -.07 (pre-test  $x=1.80$ , post-test  $x=1.74$ ).

The findings of these three studies by Scott and Sprinthall, Cognition and Sprinthall, and Watson indicate that students do develop conceptually and interpersonally from taking on significant helping roles, with opportunities for reflection, and the support and challenge of an instructor.

## Summary

Similar to other mentoring programs and even to studies of natural mentoring experiences, Project Mentor tried to facilitate the development of a mentoring relationship between a more experienced and a less experienced person. In Project Mentor, the experienced people were young women in late adolescence, while the less experienced partners were girls in early adolescence. The girls and young women in Project Mentor entered into the challenge of building mentoring relationships at different developmental stages. One might predict that the sixth graders would be at the Imperial Self stage and beginning to develop an Interpersonal Self, while the undergraduates would have Interpersonal Selves with newly emerging Institutional Selves. Until this study, how a mentoring relationship might progress between a girl and a young woman, between a person with an Imperial Self becoming Interpersonal Self and an Interpersonal Self becoming an Institutional Self, had not been documented.

Other studies of adolescent girls have explored the nature of the girls' interpersonal relationships with their mothers and friends, rather than their experiences with helping relationships like those in mentoring programs. Previous studies have identified important underlying issues in these relationships. The desire for their mothers to understand them as the girls understand themselves and to be in a loving relationship with their mothers has emerged as an important theme for girls in adolescence. These findings reinforce that connection is important even during the individuation processes that seem inherent in adolescence. In contrast to mother-daughter relationships, studies of peer relationships have inferred that girls lose their voices as they progress from early

adolescence to middle adolescence. Themes of negating the self and being true to the self in peer relationships have emerged from this literature.

How female relationships during adolescence are mediated by the developmental perspectives and understandings of the participants is unclear because the studies did not assess the participants' developmental stages nor did they interpret their findings according to developmental stage. I wonder what aspects of themes about voice and self and connection are manifestations of developmental stages and the influences of our particular period of history in USA culture. This study expands on the literature about adolescent relationships by exploring mentoring relationships using developmental stage as an interpretive framework.

This study also expands on the research literature about cognitive developmental outcomes of Deliberate Psychological Education programs. Unlike previous studies, the treatment involved developing mentoring relationships, rather than helping relationships primarily consisting of teaching or tutoring. Additionally, the nature of this program is different than other studies because the role-taking experience extended over a longer period of time, but was less frequent.

The next chapter will describe the quasi-experimental study of the cognitive developmental outcomes of participation in Project Mentor.

## CHAPTER III

### QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

#### Methodology

The purpose of the quantitative portion of this dissertation was to study the cognitive developmental effects of a mentoring experience. Specifically, the study investigated two hypotheses:

1. That the sixth graders involved in the weekly after school mentoring program would demonstrate a significantly greater increase in conceptual level scores on the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) Test than the comparison group of sixth graders.
2. That the undergraduates who were mentoring sixth graders and enrolled in ED 797 would demonstrate a significantly greater increase in conceptual level scores on the Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) Test than the comparison group of undergraduates.

#### Research Design

This quasi-experimental study followed a pre-test post-test design with one undergraduate experimental group, one undergraduate comparison group, one sixth grade experimental group consisting of subgroups from six different schools, and one sixth grade comparison group consisting of subgroups from five different schools (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Quasi-Experimental Design

$E_1$  = treatment group of undergraduates

$E_2$  = treatment group of sixth graders

$C_1$  = comparison or non-treatment group of undergraduates

$C_2$  = comparison group of sixth graders

$E_1 = O_1 \quad X \quad O_2$   
 $C_1 = O_3 \quad \quad O_4$

$E_2 = O_1 \quad X \quad O_2$   
 $C_2 = O_3 \quad \quad O_4$

O represents the measurement.

X represents the Project Mentor experience.

Time is shown moving from left to right.

Sampling and Participants

The experimental group of sixth graders consisted of 53 girls in six different middle or junior high schools. The schools varied in terms of location (rural, suburban, small city), size, curriculum, and affluence. Teachers, counselors, and administrators recommended girls for the program according to a suggested profile: socioeconomic status (middle, working, and lower income families), family educational background (neither parent having completed a college degree), and academic achievement (at risk for low science and math achievement). The parents and girls were invited to an information night about Project Mentor and the study, and at that time were invited to sign consent forms.

Each school liaison was also asked to identify a comparison group of sixth graders of the same profile. If a sixth grader chose not to be involved in the mentoring, she was invited to be a part of the comparison group. Similarly, if a sixth grader dropped out of the program, she was replaced by a person from the comparison group. To be



included in the analysis of cognitive developmental change, though, the person had to have been in the program for two semesters. The comparison group consisted of 33 girls from 5 of the 6 schools involved in Project Mentor.

The undergraduates in the experimental group attended an information session about Project Mentor and completed the application process. The students who attended the information session wrote one paragraph in response to each of the following questions: what is your definition of a mentor, how do you think you would benefit from being a mentor, how do you think a sixth grader would benefit from being a mentee? The application solicited information about the student's year in college, college major, socioeconomic status, number of siblings, and whether or not the student was the first in the family to attend college. Additionally, the students were asked on the application to write in a paragraph how they were going to fit mentoring and the mentor seminar into their schedules and why they wanted to be mentors. The students also provided the name and phone number of one reference who was subsequently contacted for a verbal reference. Each reference was asked what qualities the student had that would make her a particularly good mentor, and then the reference was asked if s/he had any reservations about the student being a mentor. Based on the applications and references, students were either assigned to a school and a seminar section or were placed on a prioritized waiting list. Those on the waiting list had the option of taking the seminar without being paired with a sixth grader.

The Table 1 lists the numbers of sixth graders and undergraduates for each of the six middle schools involved in Project Mentor and the size of the sixth grade comparison

groups.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Participants by School**

<u>School</u>	<u>Sixth Grade Mentees</u>	<u>Undergraduate Mentors</u>	<u>Sixth Grade Comparison Group</u>
A	8	8	8
B	10	10	3
C	7	7	7
D	9/8	8	0
E	5	5	2
F	15	14/15	13
<u>Total</u>	53	52	33

It is important to note that of the eight mentors listed for school D in the table, three of them only mentored for one semester due to scheduling problems and study abroad, and therefore were replaced by new mentors in the spring. Notice also that in two of the schools, school D and F, two sixth graders were paired with one undergraduate for mentoring. In school D one of these sixth graders dropped out of the program in the spring. In school F an additional undergraduate was able to begin mentoring one of the girls for the spring semester. School E had two sixth graders drop out of Project Mentor in the fall semester and were replaced by two other girls. All of these participant changes result in slightly different sample sizes for the hypothesis testing, because students who did not have both a pre and post-test score and who were not members of the comparison or experimental group for two semesters were not included in the analysis.

The undergraduate comparison group consisted of 28 students. In order to

construct a comparison group that was most similar to those undergraduates involved in the mentoring program, network or “snowball” sampling was used. Each mentor was asked to identify a friend who was ideally of the same year in college and major, but who was not involved in a similar role-taking experience such as participating in a teaching or counseling internship.

### **Instrumentation**

Hunt’s Paragraph Completion Method (PCM) Test was used as a pre- and post-test measure of conceptual level (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978). The PCM Test consists of five beginnings of sentences to which a person responds by writing at least three sentences. The writing prompts include: “what I think about rules, when I am criticized, when someone does not agree with me, when I am not sure, and when I am told what to do.” The investigator then codes each response using a manual that describes characteristics of different conceptual levels (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978). Of the five items, the three highest scores are averaged to assign a total conceptual level score. Conceptual level scores range from zero to three and there is one half level in between every two levels.

The scoring manual indicates that the construct of conceptual level includes both aspects of interpersonal maturity and conceptual complexity. Any paragraph response to one of the sentence starters will prompt the person to reveal both how they respond in interpersonal situations and how they think about these situations. When considering the progression of responses that characterize conceptual level scores from zero to three, “increasing conceptual complexity is indicated by discrimination, differentiation, and

integration” of concepts (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.3). “Increasing interpersonal maturity is indicated by self-definition and self-other relations” (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.3). The interpersonally mature person demonstrates less impulsivity and defensiveness in her answers while writing more about empathy, adherence to social norms, and self-awareness.

All of the participants in this study achieved a conceptual level score between 0.5 and 2.5 on the PCM Test.

**Conceptual Level Score of Zero.** Impulsive behavior and responding to external controls with anger is typical of people with a conceptual level of zero. They act to satisfy their own desires.

**Conceptual Level Score of One.** People with a conceptual level of one are conformist and take social rules very seriously. They are prone to feelings of guilt or embarrassment when they transgress these rules or expectations and disapprove of others not following rules. Reasoning at this conceptual level is dichotomous.

**Conceptual Level Score of Two.** A conceptual level of two is indicated by responses that emphasize independent decision making. This person is more tolerant of differences in opinion.

**Conceptual Level Score of Three.** The person with a conceptual level of three reasons most complexly by considering multiple points of view, facts, feelings, and principles. Synthesis is the hallmark conceptual skill of this level.

This test has been used with adolescents as well as adults. In fact, the scoring manual was developed for samples from grades 6-13. Forty-four studies conducted

between 1970 and 1976 established that “general conceptual level (hereafter labeled, CL) increases with age, that there is considerable variation in CL at all grades, and that there is considerable variation between schools at the same grade” (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.39). About 500 students from grades 6-11 were tested between 1971 and 1974 at one year intervals to calculate test-retest reliability coefficients. The coefficients ranged from .45 to .56 (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.44). Construct validity has been established by correlating CL scores with IQ/ability/achievement measures. Eleven studies conducted between 1965 and 1975 demonstrated a correlation between intellectual ability and conceptual level that ranged from .15 to .43 (ibid, p.46). The authors note that “persons very low in ability/achievement are almost always also low in CL; however, high ability/achievement persons vary enormously in CL (ibid, p.45). Twenty-six studies reported interrater reliability coefficients ranging from .68 to .96, with a mean of .86 (ibid, p.42). Miller’s (1981) review has more recently concluded that studies have demonstrated that the conceptual level of students can be positively affected by instructors matching and gradually mismatching the level of structure they provide during instruction and activities to the CL of the students.

Because the ability of the instructor to match and mismatch structure to the CL of the students has been found to have an effect on CL change, it was important to document the amount of structure provided during the undergraduate mentoring seminars. One indicator of the level of structure an instructor provides is the amount of time s/he engages in direct versus indirect teaching. Direct teaching indicates higher structure and less opportunities for student participation, while indirect teaching

**challenges students to reflect on their experiences and articulate their learning.**

**In order to assess how the learning environment during the seminars promoted student reflectiveness, I used Flanders' categories for interaction analysis to code audiotapes of the seminars (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1998, p.351). There are a total of ten interaction categories. Seven of the categories describe teacher talk. Out of these seven, four represent categories of indirect teaching: accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, accepting or using the ideas of students, and asking questions. The other three categories of teacher talk describe direct teaching, including: lecturing, giving directions, and criticizing or justifying authority. Two of the ten categories describe student talk as either response or initiation. In the student response category, the students are answering close-ended questions posed by the teacher. For the student initiation category, students are responding to an open-ended question or are initiating an interaction with the teacher.**

### **Procedures**

**The 52 undergraduates and 53 sixth graders in the experimental group completed the pre-test PCM in the beginning of October 1997. The PCM Test was located at the back of a survey assessing self-esteem, attitudes towards math and science, aspirations, and academic achievement. The students independently completed the survey over the course of two to three mentoring sessions at their schools, for about 20 minutes each time. School liaisons moderated.**

**To complete the post-test, six graders in the experimental group who attended six different schools stayed an additional session after Project Mentor ended in May 1998.**

This way, no time was taken away from their time with their undergraduate partners. They completed the entire survey, the last section of which was the PCM Test, in one sitting. Thirty-seven experimental group sixth graders completed both administrations of the PCM Test.

Sixth graders in the comparison group, comprised of girls from five different schools, also completed the same pre-test during October 1997, but did so during the school day. The school liaisons coordinated the completion of the surveys by the comparison group and typically distributed them during a study hall. A similar process was followed for post-testing in May 1998. Twenty-eight comparison group sixth graders completed both administrations of the PCM Test.

Undergraduates in the experimental group completed the pre-test PCM concurrently to their sixth grade partners during the first several mentoring sessions in October 1997. For the post-test, time during the second to last seminar session, which was the third week in April 1998, was set aside for completing the survey. In seminar C the instructor allowed the students to bring the survey home, complete it independently, and return it on the last session. Forty-six experimental group undergraduates completed both administrations of the PCM Test.

Undergraduates in the comparison group attended one of four administrations of the survey that were held during the first week of October 1997. It took the undergraduates approximately a half hour to forty-five minutes to complete the entire survey. The undergraduates in Project Mentor were asked to bring their friends any of the nights of the seminar to complete the survey in a different room in the same building.

For the post-test the comparison group was again invited to complete the survey during the third week in April 1998 on three consecutive nights during the seminars, but in different rooms in the same buildings. Each person in the comparison group was given the incentive of being entered in a lottery for \$50.00 if they completed both the pre- and the post-test. Likewise, each undergraduate in the experimental group was entered in a separate lottery for \$50.00 if her friend completed both the pre- and the post-test. Out of the 32 original undergraduates in the comparison group, 28 completed both administrations of the PCM Test.

### **Limitations**

**Internal Validity.** There were four potential threats to internal validity in this study: history, selection, maturation, and instrumentation.

The confounding effect of history was the greatest threat to the internal validity of this study. The quasi-experimental study was conducted in a natural setting, a program that involved six different middle/junior high schools and three different sections of the undergraduate mentoring seminar. By nature of the organization of this university-based mentoring program, there were three aspects of control over the treatment that contributed to the historical threat to internal validity: variability across schools, across pairs, and across undergraduate mentoring seminar sections.

Control over the treatment, the mentoring experiences of the undergraduate-sixth grader pairs at the schools, was attempted through regular meetings with the school liaisons. The liaisons were provided a resource binder including a list of their responsibilities, the goals of the program, and some tools for facilitating the building of



mentoring relationships between the sixth graders and undergraduates. There were indications by the undergraduates that the liaisons in the six schools facilitated the after school programs very differently. The various levels of involvement and interaction styles of the liaisons were documented in the three schools involved in the qualitative study. In order to document some of the variability in mentoring experiences between different undergraduate-sixth grader pairs, the undergraduates were asked to complete log sheets of activities engaged in with their partners. Additionally, attendance sheets were kept for both the undergraduates and the sixth graders in each school to document differences in frequency of involvement in the program.

Another element of the historical threat to internal validity was the fact that three different instructors taught the three sections of the undergraduate mentoring course. A single syllabus with identical readings and reflection paper assignments was used by all three instructors to maintain continuity across seminar sections. The variability of treatment experience in the seminars depended on the teaching style and level of structure provided by each instructor. In order to examine the potentially different learning environments in each seminar, each seminar was audiotaped no less than five times over the course of the two semesters and coded according to Flanders' interaction analysis. Subsequently, differences in the proportion of teacher talk to student talk and in the proportion of direct teacher instruction to indirect teacher instruction were compared. This comparison would establish one investigation into the equivalency of treatment experience for the undergraduate experimental group.

A second possible threat to the internal validity of this study was selection.

Because random assignment was not used, there is a chance, for example, that an additional variable was used by the schools to determine whether a sixth grader was invited to be a part of the experimental or comparison group. Demographic variables such as family composition, parental divorce, and parents' jobs, as well as degree of liking oneself, math, and science were included on the survey completed by all participants to reveal sources of potential difference between the undergraduate and sixth grader experimental and comparison groups.

Because a developmental instrument was used as a pre- and post-test measure over the course of eight months for adolescent participants, maturation must also be considered as a potential threat to internal validity. The test-retest reliability of the PCM Test with sixth graders over the course of a year was .45 based on one study of 97 students conducted during 1972-1973 (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978, p.44). For college students, PCM Test scores have been shown to be relatively stable over short periods of time such as three months (ibid, p. 42). The quasi-experimental design of having a comparison group for both the undergraduates and the sixth graders allowed for an investigation into the potential effects of maturation. Using a repeated measures ANOVA for hypothesis testing also provided information about the effect of time separate from that of group.

The final threat to the internal validity of this study was instrumentation. The PCM Test was located as the final section of a long survey of self-esteem, aspirations, attitudes towards math and science, and school experience. The entire survey was completed by all comparison and experimental groups involved in this study. There were

some differences in the administration of this survey. For the administration of the survey to the sixth graders, each of the six school liaisons was given a script. The sixth grade experimental group completed both the pre- and post-test after school. The entire pre-test survey was completed over the course of two or three mentoring sessions for about 20 minutes a session, so that the pairs would also have time to get to know each other right at the beginning of the program and because the attention span and reading levels of the girls was lower at the beginning of the year than at the end of the year. The post-test was completed at one sitting after school a week after mentoring had ended. All of the sixth graders in the experimental group were able to complete the entire survey by the end of an hour. The comparison group, on the other hand, completed the survey during the course of the school day. They were given the survey to complete over several study halls as needed.

There were differences in administration for the undergraduate experimental and comparison groups as well. The undergraduate experimental group completed the pre-test over the course of two or three mentoring sessions at the beginning of October 1997 for about 20 minutes a session. The comparison group completed the pre-test in the evening during the first week of October in one sitting. For the post-test, two of the seminar sections that the experimental group was enrolled in completed the survey during the second to last seminar session during the third week of April 1998. Due to scheduling changes, seminar section C was given the post-test survey to take home during the second week of April and was instructed to return it at the last seminar session the first week in May. When two of the seminar sections were completing the post-test

during the course of seminar sessions in the evening during the third week of April, the undergraduate comparison group completed the post-test at the same time in nearby rooms. About five undergraduates in the comparison group who could not attend any administration were sent the final survey in the mail and returned it by mail within two weeks.

It is not possible to ascertain the potential effect that variations in location and time of day during the administration of the PCM Test may have had on the CL scores. On the other hand, all participants were given ample time to complete the survey.

External Validity. The threats to external validity were largely controlled. Because the pre- and post-tests were administered eight months apart, there is relatively little risk of an interaction effect of the testing itself. An analysis of demographic variables revealed no significant differences between groups that could lead to interaction effects of selection bias. The Hawthorne effect could potentially result in higher PCM Test scores just due to the fact that the students were involved in a study. This is highly unlikely, though, because developmental scores cannot be “faked. As a measure of cognitive developmental structure, the PCM Test is not affected over periods of 6 months to 1 year by situational factors, short-term interventions, or regular school instruction.” “Meta-analyses have shown that only specifically designed and development-oriented interventions have a positive effect on this instrument as an outcome measure” (Sprinthall & Scott, 1989, p.442).

On the other hand, one potential threat to external validity would be the interaction effect of the qualitative study. In other words, participation in the qualitative

study could potentially promote conceptual development. Eleven sixth graders and 11 undergraduates involved in the qualitative study completed both the PCM pre- and post-test and were included in the hypothesis testing analyses. These participants were each engaged in four interviews that would stimulate deeper reflection, and opportunities for reflection have been related to cognitive development. In relation to the total, this group represents 30% of the sixth graders and 24% of the undergraduates in the experimental group.

Overall, the generalizability of this study has to be qualified. The results of this study can only be generalized to similar sixth grade and undergraduate participants in a similar program that would include a bi-monthly seminar for the undergraduates and mentoring as a once a week after school program.

#### Statistical Data Analyses

Responses to each of the five open-ended items on the PCM pre- and post-tests were coded using a scoring manual which gave characteristics and examples of answers and their corresponding conceptual level scores. Each item response was assigned a score ranging from 0-3, with 0.5 transition points between each stage (Hunt, Butler, Noy, & Rosser, 1978). Therefore, each of the five items on the test could receive one of seven scores. In order to avoid potential bias created by knowing whether the respondent was a sixth grader or undergraduate or whether the response was from a pre- or post-test administration of the PCM Test, all of the responses were randomly typed into separate files by item number. I scored all of the responses collaboratively with another graduate student. We proceeded, scoring one item of the randomly mixed responses from both

administrations of the PCM Test, from both sixth grader and undergraduate comparison and experimental groups before moving on to the next item. The overall CL score for a single test was calculated by averaging the highest 3 scores from all items.

To document the interaction style of each of the three seminar instructors, I audiotaped each seminar several times each semester. As I listened to each audiotape, I coded the interaction between the students and the teacher every 30 seconds using Flanders' Interaction Analysis categories. The frequencies of each interaction category were tabulated across observations to calculate the average percent of teacher talk and student talk, and the average percent of direct and indirect teaching. These percentages were used to compare the interaction styles of the instructors.

A repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine whether the experimental group showed significant cognitive developmental growth as compared to the comparison group. Post Hoc analyses were used to explore trends in differences in cognitive developmental outcomes among the seminar sections as well as trends in initial CL level and outcomes.

## Results

This section summarizes the results of a quantitative investigation into the cognitive developmental changes of the sixth grade and undergraduate participants in Project Mentor, and of the sixth graders and undergraduates in the comparison group. For this study of the cognitive developmental outcomes of the experience of mentoring and being mentored, I had two hypotheses to explore:

1. That the sixth graders involved in the weekly after school mentoring program would

demonstrate a significantly greater increase in conceptual level than the comparison group of sixth graders.

2. That the undergraduates who were mentoring sixth graders and enrolled in ED797 would demonstrate a significantly greater increase in conceptual level than the comparison group of undergraduates.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Both the pre and post-test PCM responses of a sample 17 students, representing 10% of the total number of participants, were sent to an experienced rater in order to establish the reliability of scoring. Table 2 summarizes that a strong correlation was found between the experienced rater’s scores and the investigator’s scores.

**Table 2**  
**Comparison of the Mean CL Scores of the Investigator and the Reliable Rater**  
**(n=17)**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Pearson’s r</u>
Pretest Investigator	1.52	0.39	0.95
Reliable Rater	1.62	0.46	
Post-test Investigator	1.48	0.54	0.84
Reliable Rater	1.63	0.56	

Tables 3 and 4 below summarize the mean pre-test and post-test Conceptual Level (CL) scores for participants in the experimental and comparison groups who were included in the hypothesis testing. Those students for whom there was no pre or post-test score due to absences or lack of complete responses were not included.

**Table 3**  
**Sixth Grade Students' Mean Conceptual Level Scores**

	<u>Pre-test</u> <u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Post-test</u> <u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Experimental $n=37$	1.02 (.22)	0.5-1.67	1.00 (.26)	0-1.5
Comparison $n=28$	1.05 (.20)	0.5-1.33	1.04 (.35)	0-1.5

**Table 4**  
**Undergraduates' Mean Conceptual Level Scores**

	<u>Pre-test</u> <u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Post-test</u> <u>Mean (SD)</u>	<u>Range</u>
Experimental $n=46$	1.68 (.35)	0.67-2.33	1.75 (.36)	0.83-2.5
Comparison $n=28$	1.56 (.37)	1.0-2.33	1.69 (.34)	1.17-2.33

There were no significant differences in the CL pre-test scores of the sixth graders who were participating in Project Mentor and those in the comparison groups. Although there were likewise no significant differences in the CL pre-test scores of the undergraduates who were participating in Project Mentor and those in the comparison groups, the undergraduate experimental group did begin with a higher mean CL score. Levene tests reveal that the variance of the sixth grade groups' CL scores were equal and the variance of the undergraduate groups' CL scores were equal.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

As can be seen from the descriptive statistics, the mean pre- and post-test scores for the sixth graders indicate no mean growth in conceptual level. The repeated measures ANOVA analysis, as summarized in Table 5, confirmed that there was no



significant effect for time or for whether the girls were in the comparison or the experimental group.

**Table 5**  
**Sixth Graders: Repeated Measures ANOVA, PCM pre- and post-test**

	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>ETA<sup>2</sup></u>
Group	.04	1	.04	.45	.504	.007
Time	.01	1	.01	.19	.660	.003
Time x Group	.00	1	.00	.02	.892	.000
Error (Between)	5.41	63	.09			
Error (Within)	3.06	63	.05			

On the other hand, the pre- and post-test means for the undergraduate experimental and comparison groups do seem to indicate CL growth. Table 6 summarizes that the repeated measures ANOVA for the undergraduates in the experimental and comparison groups revealed a significant effect ( $p < .05$ ) for time, but not for group. In other words, the undergraduate experimental and comparison groups did show significant gains in conceptual level over time as measured by the PCM, but there was no significant difference in growth between the two groups.

**Table 6**  
**Undergraduates: Repeated Measures ANOVA, PCM pre- and post-test**

	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>	<u>ETA<sup>2</sup></u>
Group	.30	1	.30	1.6	.210	.022
Time	.33	1	.33	4.94	.029*	.064
Time x Group	.04	1	.04	.55	.459	.008
Error (Between)	13.39	72	.19			
Error (Within)	4.88	72	.07			

\*p<.05

**Post Hoc Analysis**

Since the main effect for time in the ANOVA comparing the pre- and post-test scores for the comparison and experimental groups of undergraduates was significant, a post hoc analysis can illuminate trends of cognitive developmental change within the two groups.

Previous studies have shown that high school, college age, and adult participants at different initial conceptual levels can have different outcomes from the same treatment (Reiman, 1988; Scott, 1987; Watson, 1995). Typically, pre-test CL scores ranging from 0 to 1.7 are clustered together for analysis as a low CL group. Moderate conceptual levels are those ranging from 1.8 to 2.2 on PCM pre-tests. Participants with initial conceptual level scores ranging from 2.3 to 3.0 are considered to be in the high category.

Table 7 below summarizes the mean gain scores for those participants who had low, moderate, and high PCM Test scores initially. In both the experimental and the comparison groups, the low CL group had the highest cognitive developmental increase, and the experimental group gained slightly more than the comparison group. In contrast,

the moderate and high CL groups did not show any mean increase in CL.

**Table 7**  
**Mean Gain Scores of Undergraduate Participants with Low, Moderate, and High CL Scores**

<u>Group</u>	<u>Low (0-1.7)</u>	<u>Mod (1.8-2.2)</u>	<u>High (2.3-3.0)</u>
Experimental (n=46)	.32 (n=24)	-.20 (n=21)	-.50 (n=1)
Comparison (n=28)	.20 (n=19)	-.02 (n=8)	.00 (n=1)

Mean gain scores do mask how many participants actually demonstrated significant change in CL. Therefore, an additional analysis is necessary to identify those in each category of low, moderate, and high initial CL who demonstrated significant growth. Significant change in CL has been defined in previous studies as a gain score of .20 or greater, which is nearly a one-quarter stage increase (Reiman, 1988; Scott, 1987; Watson, 1995). Table 8 shows that a higher percentage of undergraduates with initially low CL scores demonstrated significant cognitive developmental change than those in the comparison group with low CL scores.

**Table 8**  
**Frequency of Significant CL Change Scores among Low, Moderate, and High CL Undergraduate Participants**

<u>Group</u>	<u>Low (0-1.7)</u>		<u>Mod (1.8-2.2)</u>		<u>High (2.3-3.0)</u>
	<u>NS Change</u>	<u>Sig. Change</u>	<u>NS Change</u>	<u>Sig. Change</u>	<u>NS Change</u>
Experimental	11 (46%)	13 (54%)	20 (95%)	1 (5%)	1 (100%)
Comparison	14 (74%)	5 (26%)	7 (88%)	1 (13%)	1 (100%)

Previous studies have indicated that the necessary conditions for stimulating

**cognitive developmental growth include: significant role-taking over time, guided reflection, and support and challenge from an instructor (Thies-Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1987). Because the role of the instructor in facilitating the process of cognitive developmental change is an important one, I audiotaped each of the three different sections of the mentoring seminar several times each semester in order to analyze the interaction styles of the three instructors. As an instructor for one of the seminars, I audiotaped myself more frequently as a way to reflect on my own teaching.**

**Table 9 summarizes the results of the Flanders Interaction Analysis across observations. For Instructor A the ratio of teacher talk to student talk was 1::1.4, while for Instructor B it was 2::1, and for Instructor C it was 1::1.3. With regards to the ratio of teacher talk to student talk, Instructors A and C are similar in the percentage of class time that they were voicing their ideas, facilitating discussion, and responding to students' ideas. As a whole, the students spoke slightly more than the instructors in sections A and C. In contrast, the instructor of seminar section B spoke on average about twice as much as the students did as a whole.**

**When teacher talk itself is examined, Instructor A was 2.8 times as likely to be using methods of direct rather than indirect influence, Instructor B was 3.7 times as likely to to be using methods of direct rather than indirect influence, and Instructor C was 5.1 times as likely to be using methods of direct rather than indirect influence. Even though Instructors A and C spoke for roughly the same proportion of the seminar time, Instructor C had a more direct teaching style than Instructor A, while Instructor B fell between the other two in terms of utilizing a direct approach.**

**Table 9**  
**Seminar Instructor Interaction Styles: Mean Percentage of Seminar Time Spent**

<b>Instructor</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Audiotaped Seminars</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Teacher Talk</b>	<b>39.24</b>	<b>65.02</b>	<b>38.49</b>
<b>Indirect Teaching</b>	<b>10.46</b>	<b>13.78</b>	<b>6.34</b>
<b>Direct Teaching</b>	<b>28.78</b>	<b>51.16</b>	<b>32.15</b>
<b>Student Talk</b>	<b>53.64</b>	<b>31.54</b>	<b>51.56</b>

Based on these differences in interaction styles, one may expect to find differences in mean gain scores on the PCM Test. Table 10 shows that there were differences in mean gain scores, although a repeated measures ANOVA did not indicate any significant differences among the three seminar sections. On the other hand, the results do reveal a potential trend that the students in seminar B, in which there were the most teacher led interactions, did not demonstrate cognitive developmental gains.

**Table 10**  
**Mean Undergraduate Pre-, Post-, and Gain Scores by Seminar**

<b>Seminar</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><u>Pre-test</u></b> <b><u>Mean (SD)</u></b>	<b><u>Post-test</u></b> <b><u>Mean (SD)</u></b>	<b><u>Gain</u></b> <b><u>Mean (SD)</u></b>
<b>A</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1.73 (0.37)</b>	<b>1.82 (0.36)</b>	<b>+0.10 (0.36)</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1.65 (0.45)</b>	<b>1.60 (0.32)</b>	<b>- 0.05 (0.40)</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1.68 (0.31)</b>	<b>1.86 (0.39)</b>	<b>+0.18 (0.55)</b>

In summary, analysis of the initial conceptual levels of the undergraduate participants and their cognitive developmental change indicated that only those who began with a low conceptual level demonstrated nearly a quarter of a stage increase in conceptual level score, which is considered to be significant cognitive developmental

growth. Furthermore, although the numbers are small, a greater percentage of low CL participants who were in the experimental group demonstrated growth than those of low CL who were in the comparison group. Post Hoc analysis also revealed that there were differences in instructional style among the three seminar instructors. In other words, although the syllabus and the written assignments were identical, the participants' opportunities for reflection and support and challenge from an instructor during class were different. On average there was 40% less student talk time in one of the seminars, and the instructor of that seminar was also more likely to be engaged in direct instruction. In this seminar section there was no mean gain in conceptual level, which indicates a potential trend by teaching style in the experimental group.

## Discussion

### Hypothesis One

When formulating Hypothesis One, I assumed that the experimental group of sixth graders from six schools and the comparison group of sixth graders from five of those schools would be equivalent. A categorical analysis using chi-square showed the groups to be similar in terms of their pre-test CL scores, the highest level of education of their parents, and a measure of how much they liked themselves and science. On the other hand, significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) were found with regard to family composition and liking math. The girls in the experimental group were more likely to be in single parent households and disliked math more than those in the comparison group. Additionally, I assumed that the natural variety in mentoring experience would not be significant enough to make conclusions about the cognitive developmental outcomes of

participating in such a program invalid. This assumption is difficult to justify. The qualitative study will illuminate the types of variety in mentoring experiences that existed among a sample of pairs from three of the schools. It will reveal the types of activities engaged in by different pairs, the roles each person played in the mentoring relationship and how that changed over time, the rate of trust building and friendship development, the frequency of contacts, and the facilitative role of some liaisons.

Overall, the sixth graders in the experimental and comparison groups did not demonstrate mean cognitive developmental growth over the course of the eight months of this mentoring program. Thus, Hypothesis One was not supported in this research.

One might wonder why neither group of sixth graders demonstrated any mean increase in conceptual level scores on the Paragraph Completion Method Test. Although the test is normed at the sixth grade level, I have not seen it used to assess cognitive developmental growth at that level, although it has been used in this capacity for high school students, undergraduates, and adults. It could be that the instrument is not sensitive to the changes in conceptual level that the sixth graders experience at this age. For example, the sentence starters are written in abstract terms which may limit the types of responses given by children at this age level, as opposed to an instrument which might ask them to respond to a concrete story of an event.

One interesting finding based on the analysis of conceptual level scores of the sixth graders was that both during the pre- and post-test the girls demonstrated a conceptual level one. That means that the sixth grade girls in this study in general are at a dependent, conforming developmental stage. Theoretically, one would expect them to

prefer a more highly structured, clear and consistent environment. This type of environment, balanced with challenging choices and support, would be expected to promote growth towards a higher level of reasoning that allows a person to form multiple concepts from the same pieces of information, adapt to a changing environment, tolerate stress better, and see things from multiple viewpoints (Hunt and Sullivan, 1974, p.212). Such abilities, if developed through a relationship with a “mentor” in late adolescence, would be very helpful considering the decisions about drug use and sexual activity that girls in early adolescence face.

Because no mean CL growth was indicated in this mentoring program, it leads me to wonder if a more structured program might have yielded stronger results. The undergraduate mentors were entirely responsible for planning and engaging the sixth graders in both academic tutoring and in conversations about relevant topics. The undergraduate mentors read about how to support and help develop their sixth grade partners’ personal decision-making skills and academic reasoning in math and science problem-solving, but the degree to which they were able to apply these ideas to their interactions with the sixth graders will only be seen through the ethnographic part of this study. The cognitive developmental outcomes may have rested heavily on the planning, instructional, and communication skills of the undergraduate mentors and on the depth of the relationships formed between the sixth graders and undergraduates.

If the mentoring program were to be more structured, it would most likely have to be through the activities engaged in by the pairs during the after school meeting times. During the first year of implementation, the undergraduate mentors had a resource book



of activities and read about, discussed, and practiced specific communication and instructional skills during the mentoring seminar. Instead of having the undergraduates try to apply these skills and plan for mentoring independently, planning and role-playing activities for each after school session could be incorporated into the mentoring seminar. The instructor could help the undergraduates be prepared to engage their partners in activities like tutoring, math and science enrichment, discussions about particular topics, or journal writing in ways that would promote the conceptual development of the sixth graders. Although planning for each mentoring session would be facilitated during the undergraduate seminar and that in itself would promote more uniformity, I believe the undergraduates would still need to have to flexibility to respond to the immediate needs of the sixth grader on any particular day.

One might also consider creating a more structured approach to mentoring through whole group activities at each school. In fact, the original program ideas for Project Mentor included monthly discussions facilitated by the school liaisons about topics such as sexual harassment, feminine ideals, and female role models. These discussions largely did not take place. One reason for this was the level of proactive involvement on the part of the school liaison. But an even more powerful factor contributing to why group discussions did not take place was that most sixth graders and undergraduates saw such group discussions as diversions from their time together as pairs and often did not want to engage in them. Perhaps this may be different during the second year of implementation, when most of the undergraduates and sixth graders have gotten to know each other at each school and have perhaps developed more trust within

the group as a whole.

A further discussion of possible changes in the program will follow the chapters describing the ethnographic portion of the study.

### Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis Two was not supported by this study. The undergraduate mentors did not demonstrate significantly greater increase in CL scores than the undergraduate comparison group. However, both groups did demonstrate a significant increase in CL scores over the eight month period of the study.

Post hoc analyses revealed that undergraduates in both the experimental and the comparison group who had lower initial CL scores demonstrated the most CL gain. However, a higher percentage of undergraduates with initially low CL scores demonstrated significant cognitive development if they were involved in the mentoring program than if they were in the comparison group.

Other studies have also shown that those beginning with lower conceptual levels make the greatest gains during significant role-taking experiences that occur over time with support and challenge from an instructor and opportunities for reflection (Reiman, 1988; Scott, 1987; Watson, 1995). On the other hand, two out of the three studies cited showed overall significant cognitive developmental change in the experimental group as compared to the comparison group.

In Scott's (1987) study, 15 high school females tutored fourth and fifth grade girls while the comparison group served as classroom aides at the same grade level. The program in comparison to Project Mentor consisted of more hours over a shorter period

**of time and the tutoring experience was more highly structured and facilitated. This program lasted only 15 weeks, the equivalent of one semester. For three periods a week the high school students tutored their partners. One period a week they met for a seminar to engage in training, discussions, and journal writing. One other period per week was spent preparing for tutoring with the guidance of the facilitators.**

**In comparison, the undergraduates in Project Mentor met with their sixth grade partners after school once a week. As a result, a total of 17 mentoring sessions took place over an eight month period due to school breaks, whereas the students in Scott's study tutored their partners 45 times. Another difference between the two programs was that the undergraduates in Project Mentor were expected to plan for each mentoring session independently, applying ideas from seminar and reading and utilizing a math/science resource book. Perhaps this difference in frequency of role taking and guided planning contributed to the non-significant results found in the study of Project Mentor.**

**Watson's (1995) study also showed significant growth for an experimental group of undergraduates engaged in a highly structured and reflective early field experience course in education. The comparison group was enrolled in a different education program at another university. Similar to Scott's study, the experience lasted for 15 weeks. For the first six weeks the students attended the course twice a week and then once a week for the final six weeks. The total hours scheduled for the course meetings was 26 over the course of the semester. Additionally, though, the undergraduates spent 24 hours in a public school classroom teaching a total of three whole class activities as**

well as conducting weekly interviews and maintaining a journal with one student in the classroom who seemed different from them. The reflection undertaken by the students in Watson's study involved one conference with the instructor, a written learning log in response to the readings, and responses to their partner's journal. The instructor used a guided reflection model to respond to the undergraduates' written work in ways that would promote conceptual complexity. Likewise, the undergraduates were taught this same model and used it to respond to their partners' journals. This guided reflection model for written responses was developed by Reiman (1988) and is an adaptation of Flanders' Interaction Model (Sprinthall, Sprinthall, & Oja, 1998, p.351). Examples of Reiman's guided reflection model for written responses can be found in Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1993, 1998).

There are three important differences between the experiences of the undergraduates in Watson's study and those in Project Mentor. First, the undergraduates in Watson's study were engaged in more hours of role-taking over a shorter period of time. Second, the undergraduates in Watson's study consciously practiced promoting their partners' development of conceptual complexity through shared journal writing activities, whereas the undergraduates in Project Mentor only variably shared a journal with their sixth grade partner and were not instructed in the adaptation of Flanders' Interaction Model. Third, the three instructors of the mentoring seminar did not deliberately try to apply Reiman's guided reflection model when responding to the undergraduates' reflection papers, unlike the instructor in Watson's study. These three differences between the two programs may be significant enough to constitute

differences in cognitive developmental outcomes.

Overall, the undergraduate experimental group did not demonstrate as much conceptual level growth as was expected considering the results of similar studies. Upon further examination, it is apparent that there were important differences between the experiences of the high school students and undergraduates studied by Scott and Watson and the undergraduates involved in Project Mentor. Additionally, in this study both the undergraduate experimental and comparison groups demonstrated conceptual level development over the course of eight months of college, unlike in Watson's and Scott's studies where the comparison groups' conceptual level scores even declined slightly. The cause for the development of the comparison group is unclear. Although the students in the experimental group were asked to identify friends for the comparison group who were not engaged in similar role-taking experiences, this cannot be verified because the comparison group was not asked about this on the questionnaire.

Hypothesis Two rested on the assumption that the mentoring experience of the undergraduates in the experimental group would be similar. In actuality, there was great variability in what the undergraduates actually did with their sixth grade partners during the after school program. Another source of variability was the amount of direct instruction and student talk in the three different mentoring seminar sections. Post hoc analyses indicated a potential trend in which the students who were more engaged in discussions during seminar sessions, demonstrated greater gains in conceptual level scores.

Although it is not possible to determine precisely why the undergraduate

**participants of Project Mentor did not exhibit significant growth in conceptual level as compared to the undergraduate comparison group, the ethnographic study will provide an in-depth look into the experiences of some of the undergraduates and sixth graders involved in Project Mentor, and will reveal some of the intrapsychological, interpersonal, and school contexts of this role-taking experience.**

## CHAPTER IV

### ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY METHODOLOGY

Previous research has shown that when high school students, undergraduates, or adults take on a significant teaching or helping role over an extended period of time with the support of an instructor and opportunities for reflection, they do demonstrate conceptual developmental change. In this study, clear developmental outcomes did not result. The growth of the sixth graders, potentially the recipients of the help or instruction or care, was measured, which was not done in previous studies. As a group, the sixth graders showed no measurable conceptual growth from being in the role of “mentee.” Compared to other studies, they were of a younger age group, they were the recipients of help rather than the help-provider, and they did not have opportunities for guided reflection about their role of mentee. The undergraduates, on the other hand, demonstrated conceptual growth, but not significantly more than the comparison group. Post hoc analyses indicated some interesting trends, although not significant differences between groups. One trend found was that undergraduates with lower initial conceptual level scores demonstrated the greatest gain if they were in Project Mentor. A second trend revealed that undergraduates in the experimental group who were enrolled in seminar sections with more student participation and less direct instruction showed greater conceptual developmental gains. It must be noted, though, that teaching style

**was the only aspect of variability in mentoring experiences that was measured.**

**In order to elucidate any findings of this quasi-experimental portion of the study and to explore in-depth the experiences of the participants of Project Mentor, I conducted an ethnographic study of a subgroup of sixth grader-undergraduate pairs. In this section, I will describe the questions that guided the qualitative portion of the study, the participants, and the methods of data collection and data sources.**

### **Orienting Questions**

**The ethnographic study explored:**

- 1. On the community level, what was the environmental context of the program at three out of the six schools hosting Project Mentor? What was the physical environment like and what types of interactions did it promote? What role did the school liaison take on? What was the school culture in terms of curriculum and teacher-student relationships? How did the sixth graders and undergraduates interact as a whole group and as smaller sub-groups?**
- 2. On the interpersonal level, what were the interactions of ten out of the 30 undergraduate-sixth grader pairs meeting at the three schools like when they met once a week after school? What types of roles did they take on and how did these change over time? What preceded either an expansion or contraction of roles? Were there any visible signs of affection or lack of affection?**
- 3. On the personal level, what was the intrapsychological context of each relationship? What were the developmental stages of each of the ten undergraduates and ten sixth graders? How was each perceiving the relationship? What challenged or confused each**



person? What did each think she was learning from the experience? Did the person think of her partner outside of the mentoring program? What were the memorable moments for each person? How was the developmental stage of each member of the pair manifested in her perceptions of the relationship and interactions with her partner?

### Participants

Many different sixth graders and undergraduates volunteered to be a part of the ethnographic portion of the study. Of the six schools involved in Project Mentor, I chose to study pairs meeting at three of the schools that varied in size, curriculum, and affluence. The undergraduates going to two of the schools attended my seminar section, which enabled me to know them better as individuals. From the 31 pairs meeting at the three schools, I selected thirteen pairs based on the criterion that both the undergraduate partner and the sixth grader's parents consented to involvement in the qualitative study. The schools, the school liaison roles, and six participants will be described in the following chapter.

### Instrumentation

The Subject-Object Interview was used to assess the structural developmental stage of each of the 13 sixth graders and 13 undergraduates involved in the ethnographic study in order to analyze from a developmental perspective their perceptions of their experiences in the program and their interactions with their partners. The developmental stages of the sixth graders and undergraduates ranged from the Imperial Self, to the Interpersonal Self, to the Institutional Self. The Subject-Object Interview is based on Robert Kegan's (1982, 1994) structural developmental theory of the self. It is a

relatively new instrument, first being used in a research study in 1983 by Goodman.

During the Subject Object Interview, the participant is given ten index cards with single words or phrases written on each one including, for example, angry, sad, success, and important to me (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1987). For the first fifteen minutes, the interviewer prompts the person to recall recent events when she experienced that emotion and write down on the card a couple of words to remind herself of that memory. Then the person chooses a card and begins to talk about the event. The interviewer listens empathetically and asks probing questions to reveal the underlying subject-object material, in other words, what of her experiences the person is able to reflect on and what she is embedded in. Then the person talks about another card; the process continues for about an hour.

When scoring the Subject Object Interview, the rater makes 21 distinctions between stages 1 and 5; there are 4 transitional steps between any two stages. Interrater reliability at complete agreement was 67% and 82% within 1/5 stage in Goodman's (1983) study. There is some evidence for test-retest reliability based on Lahey's 1986 study of 22 adults. She used the card "torn" to interview participants about "love" one week and no longer than two weeks later, used the same card to interview them about "work." Correlations between the two interview scores were .82 (Spearman coefficient) and .834 (Pearson's  $r$ ).

Inter-item consistency was established by a study of 72 Venezuelan adolescents between 12-17 years old (Villegas, 1988). Villegas interviewed each adolescent using the S-O Interview on one occasion, but omitted the "strong stand" card. On another

occasion, she used the “strong stand” card as a part of a different interview. The correlation between the scores from the “strong stand” card and the S-O interview was .96.

The S-O Interview has been found to correlate moderately with Kohlberg’s MJL, Loevinger’s SCT, a measure of Piagetian stage, Selman’s social-cognitive measure, and Gibbs’ sociomoral measure (Lahey, et al, 1987, p.367). A longitudinal study of 35 persons reinterviewed annually is being conducted presently (ibid, p.368).

#### Data Collection and Data Sources

Because each of the three schools I selected had a different day of the week designated for the after school mentoring program, I was able to be present at every mentoring session in each of the three schools for both fall semester 1997 and spring semester 1998. I acted as a participant observer. In two of the schools I filled the role of school liaison, supervising the pairs and facilitating when necessary. In the third school I assisted the school liaison as needed. While at each school, I noted the physical environment, the role the liaison took on that day, teacher-student interactions, types of homework assignments, and how the sixth graders and undergraduates interacted as a larger group.

Each week I would typically observe two pairs per hour mentoring session. I would always ask first and then sit near an undergraduate-sixth grader pair in order to observe and record their interactions in a notebook or on a laptop computer. From the observations I was able to document how each person interacted both verbally and nonverbally with her partner on different weeks through the school year. The

**undergraduates also kept log sheets of what activities they engaged in with their partner and any concerns they had. These log sheets helped me explore changes in what activities they did together and how often they met. The field notes were used to interpret what roles each took on during the interactions I observed, and how mutual affection was demonstrated or not demonstrated over the course of two semesters.**

**In addition to the observations and log sheets, I interviewed each sixth grader and undergraduate twice each semester. I utilized the Subject-Object Interview as a developmental assessment in both the fall and the spring to help me understand each person and the way she interpreted interpersonal experiences in general. Each interview lasted about a half hour for the sixth graders and one hour for the undergraduates. I tried to explore with the person how she felt about the experiences that came to mind and the source of those feelings.**

**I also asked each sixth grader and undergraduate both in December 1997 and again in April or May 1998 to reflect on herself and her experiences in the mentoring program in an interview. For example, I asked each person to describe her partner, the role she usually took on in the relationship and the role of the partner, and if she ever saw different sides to herself when she was with her partner. At the end of the program, I asked each sixth grader and undergraduate what the significant moments were in her relationship with her partner.**

**In addition to observation and interviews, the reflection papers that the undergraduate wrote for the mentoring seminars provided another source of data. Over the course of two semesters, the undergraduates had prepared for each seminar session by**

responding to focus questions in the form of brief essays. The questions prompted the undergraduates to reflect on the readings, relate them to their personal histories, compare them to their sixth grade partner, and discuss how they might apply to their mentoring relationships. These reflection papers give an indication of the undergraduates' perceptions of their sixth grade partners and of their mentoring relationships and how these perceptions changed over time.

I see the mentoring interviews, the Subject-Object Interviews, and the reflective writings as complementing each other in helping me understand the developmental processes occurring on what Rogoff would call the personal level for both the girls and the undergraduates. At the same time, the observational data of the pairs interacting give a view of the developmental processes on the interpersonal level. Additionally, being present at the three schools allowed me to make observational notes of the environmental context of the program at the three schools which was also shaping the experiences of the participants on the community level. I think that this methodology of multiple sources of data from different points in time has helped me to begin to study the complex nature of this mentoring experience.

During the fall semester I observed and interviewed thirteen pairs. Four of the pairs met on Mondays at Bradbury Middle School. Five of the pairs met on Tuesdays at Stapleton Middle School. The other four pairs met on Wednesdays at Chesterfield Middle School. (All of the school names are pseudonyms.) At the end of fall semester, one of the undergraduates involved in the study at Bradbury dropped out of Project Mentor due to her course load. Early in the spring semester a sixth grader at Chesterfield

suddenly moved to another state. Because I had the greatest number of pairs to observe in Stapleton and felt that I needed more time with each pair, I decided to stop observing one pair at this school. Both the sixth grader and the undergraduate of this pair demonstrated developmental levels similar to other pairs and the development of the interactions was also similar to other pairs.

Therefore, at the end of spring semester I had two semesters of observations and interviews from ten pairs. Three pairs were from Bradbury, three were from Chesterfield, and four were from Stapleton Middle School.

### Data Analysis

Because I came to this research project with the assumption that psychological development is a dynamic sociocultural process, I tried to learn about each person's experiences in the mentoring program by attending to processes occurring on three different, but interacting, levels: the community, the interpersonal, and the personal levels. It was only after gathering observational, interview, and archival data that I began to analyze it according to the three levels.

To analyze processes occurring on the community level, I summarized my observations of the environmental context of the school. In the following chapter I will describe for each of the three schools: the physical environment, the role of the liaison and myself, the school culture and curriculum, and the group dynamics apparent during the after school program. The physical environment of where the students met for Project Mentor created opportunities for certain kinds of activities and interactions. The role of the liaison and myself is also described because the amount of facilitation and

support at each school varied. Additionally, a snapshot of the curriculum of each school and my impression of the school culture is included to set the stage for the types of learning experiences and relationships with teachers that immediately preceded the sixth graders' engagement with the undergraduates in the after school program. I consider the story of each pair's relationship to be embedded in these environmental contexts that supported and shaped, to some degree, the nature of the pair's experiences.

The second level of analysis focused on processes occurring on the interpersonal level. I analyzed the observations of the interactions of the sixth graders and undergraduates as they worked in pairs for the roles that each person was taking on during interactions with her partner. As I mapped the development of the relationship, I began to conceptualize the roles as socially constructed by the interactions of the partners.

Because I consider the three levels of community, interpersonal, and personal as conceptual tools, rather than separate and independent entities, I could not consider the interpersonal level of analysis without regard for the processes occurring on the personal level, the perceptions, feelings, and understandings of each person. Because of my methodology, I had interviews and observational data that held information about the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of different pairs' experiences in this mentoring program at various points in time. I was studying movement, a dynamic rather than a moment. I looked for changes in and persistence of perceptions and behaviors over time. Finally, I used developmental theory and the results of the Subject-Object Interviews and the PCM Test to interpret each person's understanding of her experiences with her

partner. Thus, the narrative story of each pair's relationship is told from a developmental perspective.

Although I studied ten pairs involved in the after school mentoring program for two semesters, Chapter Five includes only the stories of three pairs. Each person I interviewed and each pair I studied contributed stories of struggles and joys, disappointments and moving memories. For this dissertation, though, I wanted to construct a developmental analysis of mentoring experiences.

Considering the developmental levels of the participants, how each was perceiving her partner and their relationship, the development of the relationships, and the issues that emerged during the course of their relationships, I noticed patterns among the pairs with similar combinations of developmental stages. In particular, five of the pairs included an undergraduate at stage 3 with an Interpersonal Self and perhaps a newly emerging stage 4 Institutional Self and a sixth grader with a stage 2 Imperial Self. These five pairs, even though each person had a unique personality and personal history and each pair engaged oftentimes in unique activities, demonstrated common ways of interpreting their experiences. Therefore, I chose one pair that could represent this most common combination of developmental stages.

Because I wanted to provide an analysis that would be helpful to facilitators of similar mentoring programs, I decided to include in Chapter Five two other pairs that would, along with the previous pair, represent the range of developmental stage combinations that I studied. As I was selecting which narratives to include in the dissertation, I also decided to choose one pair from each school because environmental



context was an important aspect of any pair's experiences in Project Mentor.

One pair, Mariana and Beth at Stapleton Middle School, represent a sixth grader and an undergraduate who were both in transition between two stages. Mariana, the sixth grader, had both an Imperial Self way of experiencing and understanding things and an Interpersonal Self fully present. Beth had both an Interpersonal Self and an Institutional Self fully present. The second pair, Danielle and Naomi at Chesterfield Middle School, represent a sixth grader with a solid Imperial Self and an undergraduate with a dominant Interpersonal Self. The third pair, Bett and Ruth at Bradbury Middle School, represent a sixth grader in transition with an Imperial Self and an Interpersonal Self equally present and an undergraduate with a dominant Institutional Self.

Through the stories of these three pairs, I construct a sociocultural and a developmental analysis of their experiences being "mentors" and "mentees" in Project Mentor. In chapter five I will describe the environmental context of the after school program at each school, introduce each partner including family background and developmental stage, and relate the story of the development of each pair's relationship and the perspectives of each person over time. Chapter Five concludes by revisiting the personal, interpersonal, and community levels of analysis. First, the environmental context of the three schools are compared, which brings into consideration the presence of the total number of 30 pairs who met at those schools. After this discussion of the community level, the interpersonal level is addressed through a summary of themes related to the social construction of mentoring roles using data gathered from all ten pairs in the ethnographic study. Lastly, the developmental issues related to building mentoring

**relationships during adolescence, that the stories of the three pairs highlighted, are summarized in light of the total ten pairs studied.**

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MENTORING ROLES

The ethnographic methodology described in the previous section gave me the opportunity to study both the interpersonal, social process of taking on the role of mentor or mentee in a planned mentoring relationship and the intrapsychological context of the relationship, the perceptions and developmental levels of the participants engaged in this process. This section will describe the stories of three undergraduate-sixth grader pairs from the perspective of how they mutually constructed the roles they took on in their relationship and how the developmental level of each person shaped how they interpreted their experiences together.

In any planned mentoring program, from the beginning of the relationship, one person is designated the “mentor” and the other is the “mentee.” Because the roles have titles, they seem defined. Even the first time the individuals meet each other, they know what role the other person will be trying to take on in the relationship.

In Project Mentor this was certainly true for the undergraduates. In fact, over the course of two semesters, the undergraduates read different articles about what being a mentor entails (National Mentor Working Group, 1991; Yamamoto, 1988), possible stages of a mentoring relationship (Ferguson and Snipes, 1994), and wrote about their own experiences being mentored. They also read about the importance of affection and

positive regard (Pipher, 1994, p.254) and the need for reciprocity (Noddings, 1992) in helping relationships. The undergraduates tried to relate these ideas about a mentoring or helping relationship to their own experiences in the mentoring program in reflection papers. The readings and guided reflection papers were intended to support the undergraduates as they took on the new role of mentor.

The sixth graders, on the other hand, did not have the opportunity to explore theories about the nature of a mentoring relationship. They and their parents were invited by letter to attend an information night at their schools about the mentoring program. At six different schools the information night was conducted in roughly the same way. The university faculty member introduced Project Mentor and its goals of increasing academic achievement in math and science, self-esteem, and career aspirations. The parents then joined the university faculty member in another room to ask questions, giving the undergraduates and sixth graders time to meet each other as a group. I would facilitate a “get to know each other” share about hobbies, and then each undergraduate who was present explained why she wanted to be a “mentor.” The sixth graders then took turns saying why they might want to be a “mentee.” Most said they thought it would be nice to make a new friend or to get to know someone in college. Others did not know what to say and occasionally one would say, “my parents want me to do this.” The sixth graders had to learn through their experiences in the program what it might mean to be a mentee and what a mentor might have to offer.

As I observed the pairs involved in the ethnographic portion of the study each week at the three different schools, I was in essence witnessing the process of each pair

defining what roles each person was going to take on in their relationship. I took notes about what they said to one another, their nonverbal behaviors, and what they did together. As I studied these notes in conjunction with the interview data, log sheets, and reflection papers, I noticed how the role each person took on in the relationship either expanded or contracted over time. In fact, the role that one person could take on seemed to be shaped by the role the other person was taking on. The interactions of the members of each pair continually defined and re-defined each person's role in the relationship. In this way, the role of a single person was socially constructed by the dynamic relationship between the partners.

Like the black and white image of ying and yang, the role of one person in a pair had to fit the role the partner was taking on. The undergraduate might have read that a mentor is a role model, a guide, a teacher and a friend, but she could not unilaterally try to be that role in the relationship. For example, an undergraduate could not tutor if the sixth grader was not taking on the role of student, bringing her homework and asking questions. The undergraduate could not be a guide if the sixth grader did not reveal things and either directly or indirectly seek advice. Either person could set limits on the role of the other by the role she herself was taking on. Through the stories of three different pairs, I am going to show in the coming sections how the role-taking in this mentoring program proceeded as a process of partners socially constructing each other's roles, as well as their own.

Considering role-taking to be an interpersonal process alone would have allowed the analysis of the mentoring experiences of the girls and young women in this study to

rest on observations of the partners interacting. But such an analysis would miss the intrapsychological level that was shaping and being shaped by the experiences each person was having in Project Mentor. I interviewed each person using the Subject-Object Interview near the beginning and the end of the first year of the program so I could understand how she interpreted her life experiences in general. If, as Kegan says, the Self is the prime meaning-maker, then each person's Self would be the lens through which she understood her experiences with her partner. Having a sense of each person's Self helped me interpret the perceptions each person had of the relationship, including what made her feel successful or happy, and what confused her or disappointed her. How each was making meaning of or understanding the interactions she was having with her partner, contributed to the development of the mentoring relationship and was a deeper, underlying dynamic in the social construction of the role-taking process. In the following sections I will introduce each person, her developmental level according to the Subject-Object Interview, and describe the story of each pair's relationship through the lens of the social construction of roles and through the lens of Kegan's developmental theory.

The three pairs I observed and interviewed for the ethnographic part of this study met in three different middle schools: Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury. Each of these schools created a unique environment for the after school program. The opportunities for different kinds of interactions and the expectations of the participants were most likely influenced by the nature of the schools. For this reason, I think it is very important to describe each of the schools immediately preceding the story of the

pair that met at that school. As I describe each school, I will also talk about my role at the school because I acted most often as a participant observer rather than simply as an observer. I was a part of the environmental context which supported the mentoring relationships.

### **The Environmental Context of Stapleton Middle School**

Stapleton Middle School, located in a small university town, was a large school that housed grades 5 through 8 in a suburban atmosphere. The sixth grade was organized into teams, so the students usually had only two or three primary teachers. In this school the hallways were wide and bright white. They were lined with bulletin boards of photographs of class trips and colorful student projects. The curriculum tended to be progressive. For example, some teachers used simulations to teach social studies, and the students created their own inventions in an integrated writing, math and science unit.

When school ended, there was still a lot of activity in the building. There might be intramural volleyball in the gym; parents would be coming in and out; the librarian was usually in her office keeping an eye on the library and available to help. The classrooms were typically unlocked after school and many teachers were still in them working.

The 15 girls in Project Mentor from Stapleton varied greatly in terms of family background. A couple had parents with professional degrees. Others were in single parent families in which the parent had to divide her time among several children and a job. Still others had working class parents. Some girls had older siblings who had been in some trouble. The girls ranged in personality, academic achievement, and emotional

health. Some had social problems such as being teased by peers or having trouble maintaining friendships. Others were quiet and could fall through the cracks. Some had academic problems in math. Each was recommended for the program by the counselor or vice principal and chosen for a different reason. Behind every recommendation, though, was the expectation that an older role model and friend was just what the child needed.

In Stapleton the sixth grade counselor was the liaison. She was a strong supporter of the mentoring program and very involved in women's issues in the community as a whole. The liaison was usually present every week for the mentoring program. Prior to the first day the liaison and I met to plan "get to know each other" activities. On the first day, the liaison facilitated the activities while I assisted. At the end of the first session we held a brief meeting with the undergraduates to solicit any specific preferences about working with or not working with particular girls. By the next week the liaison had a list of pairs based on the undergraduate preferences, what she knew about the girls, and random matching.

Each week the liaison would take attendance just by observing as people arrived and once the group congregated, would make weekly announcements about future activities and things the pairs might like to get involved in, such as a walk-a-thon for victims of domestic violence. She knew many of the girls personally through counseling them and she always remembered everyone's name. Often she had other work to do, but her office was right next door and she would wander in and out as the pairs met. The counselor and I collaborated on the after school program at Stapleton. She took on most



of the responsibilities related to running the after school program and coordinating with the school. I could just help as needed, adding in announcements, setting rules, and facilitating activities. My observations were longer and had less interruptions at Stapleton than at the other two schools because of the primary role of the liaison.

The mentoring program began at 3pm, a half hour after school ended. The liaison chose this meeting time because the late bus would come at 4pm and she thought it would be easier to supervise the girls right after school than after the undergraduates left. Before the undergraduates would arrive, about half of the girls congregated in the liaison's office, since it had a couch and round table. They would be laughing and giggling about who liked whom, looking through games, chasing each other, etc. Other girls would sit in a classroom and wait, chat with friends, or wait in front of the school. As soon as an undergraduate would arrive, the pair would walk together to the sixth grade classroom next to the liaison's office and sit next to each other for announcements and attendance.

The classroom where the group came together was a room filled with writing projects and lively bulletin boards with life-sized cutouts of Amelia Earhart and Albert Einstein. The desks were arranged in pairs and then later in two concentric u-shapes. There was also a small table where two pairs could work and a small couch that the pairs typically did not use. The teacher was often in the classroom, working at her computer or desk. She was very friendly and outgoing, often talking to the girls, joking with them, and praising them. The liaison and the teacher would talk as well about family and school. The first day we met in the classroom, the liaison immediately introduced me to

**the teacher and pointed out a book of poetry on her desk that she had published.**

**After announcements, the pairs could go anywhere in the school building or on the school grounds. I only asked that they sign out on the board where they were going in case we had to find them. Right after announcements, all but two pairs would disperse. Some pairs had other sixth grade classrooms that they would always go to. Others liked to use the liaison's office. The pairs always had access to the library and, with permission, could use the computer room. The liaison could also get permission for the whole group to use the Life Skills (Home Economics) room for a special event like pumpkin carving. Certain pairs would often come back to sign the board and go outside for the last fifteen minutes. The school had a large parking lot in the rear, surrounded by a soccer field, an open field of grass, and a nature walk in the wooded area behind the fields. Pairs would typically work on homework or a project and then play four-square, take a walk, or play with a soccer ball outside.**

**Overall, there was a very positive atmosphere in this group every week. The girls immediately paired with their undergraduate partners when they arrived. The girls were energetic and enthusiastic about the program as a whole. Several of the pairs also paired with one another to do activities outside of the after school program together because either the undergraduates or the girls were close friends. The pairs at Stapleton Middle School organized several parties or whole group activities during the after school time. In fact, in the spring one pair organized a Valentine's Day party for which each pair designed a mailbox which was entered in a contest. At the end of the semester, two pairs collaborated to create a field day with an obstacle course in which each pair competed**

against the other pairs in a series of heats.

The undergraduates who met with the girls at Stapleton attended my seminar section. Because I had the opportunity to read and respond to their papers, interact with them in class, and interview them each several times, I usually felt very comfortable observing the pairs at this school. The undergraduates would welcome me when I joined them and bring me up to date on what they were doing at the moment. Sometimes they would come up to me when I was with another pair to make sure I knew where they were going, besides just writing a location on the board.

I studied three pairs at Stapleton Middle School, although only one pair will be described. I will introduce each person, her family background, her developmental level according to the Subject-Object Interview, and for each sixth grader, why she was invited to join the after school mentoring program. Then I will present a narrative account of the story of the relationship of a undergraduate-sixth grader pair through the dual lenses of the social construction of mentoring roles and developmental theory.

### An Introduction to Mariana and Beth

#### Mariana, the sixth grader

Mariana was a tall, brown-haired and brown-eyed sixth grader with a quiet voice. When I interviewed the counselor and vice principal about why they recommended Mariana for the mentoring program, I discovered that they both were under the impression that Mariana came from a single parent family. During the year of the program, Mariana was in fact living alone with her mother in graduate student housing at a university while she finished a Master's degree. They also owned a house in the

neighboring town. By late spring, her mother was graduating and they returned to live in this house. On different occasions Mariana referred to a stepfather, but it was unclear whether or not they resumed living together at the end of the school year. Mariana was also in contact with her father and would join him for trips to Puerto Rico.

In addition to family make-up, the counselor and vice principal described other reasons for recommending Mariana for Project Mentor. The counselor was concerned about Mariana's number of absences. The vice principal described how Mariana "struggles a bit in school and is shy and somewhat introverted." "She had problems with her friends last year and her best friend has since moved away, which might be a good thing." The counselor thought that "Mariana has potential, but needs another adult figure" and the vice principal thought "she would benefit from a friend and role model."

Mariana was very soft-spoken when I interviewed her. She would pause and then speak slowly and thoughtfully. Although quiet, Mariana was open about her experiences and thoughts and feelings during the interviews and maintained eye contact. I interviewed Mariana at home both in the spring and in the fall. Her mother was home working on graduate school assignments both times and I would sometimes see her on campus. She was always friendly, although busy, and supportive of Mariana being in the program.

I interviewed Mariana in November 1997 and at the end of April 1998 using the Subject-Object Interview. Both of these interviews took place in her home at a dining table. Mariana's responses indicate that she was in a transition stage between stages 2 and 3, with both the Imperial and Interpersonal Selves equally present. Demonstrating

stage 3 ways of making meaning, Mariana was very much affected by the thoughts and feelings of those around her as she perceived them. She greatly valued relationships and the ability of those around her to understand her.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of sixth grade Mariana lost her great grandmother who would give her advice and tell her stories. Her great grandmother was "one of my best friends" and a comfort to Mariana. She also began the year without her closest friend who had just moved away. Mariana described how this friend was one person who understood how she felt like no other friend because her parents were also divorced. Beth walked into Mariana's life at an important time when she had a bit of a void in terms of close friendships as well as a somewhat sophisticated understanding of relationships for a sixth grader.

Despite her stage 3ish, Interpersonal Self, ways of talking about her close friendships, Mariana was also an Imperial Self. She often described things in very concrete terms and was shaped as much by her own interests, needs, and desires as by her ability to reflect on the people around her. Her Interpersonal Self seemed new and she seemed proud of this new way of looking at things. For example, Mariana described how in fifth grade "I kind of thought I was always right" in contrast to sixth grade when she was "more open-minded" and "listens to other people's problems and I try to think about what maybe they're thinking."

According to the paragraph completion method test, Mariana's conceptual level score was 1.2 on the pre-test and 1.3 on the post-test. Mariana's responses indicated that she in general valued rules and followed them. She thought in terms of right and wrong.

She respected authority, but had her own opinions and felt she had a right to them. She declared that she would not just do as she was told if she thought she was being told to do something wrong.

### Beth, the undergraduate

Beth was a second year undergraduate. She had two younger sisters. The sister closest to her in age was not related, but a teenager under the guardianship of her parents. Beth's mother was a Chapter 1/Title I Coordinator at a school and her father had an engineering background and worked as a hydroelectric operator.

Beth struggled with several concerns throughout the year. First, she worried about her youngest sister whose anorexia was diagnosed over the summer and who was participating in therapy. During the year her sister also developed bulimic behaviors. Her younger sister's illness caused great strains on the family. In addition to these concerns, the decision of a major weighed heavily on Beth's mind for most of the year. She had actually entered college thinking about veterinary science because of her experience training horses, but found that she loved art and writing courses much more than science courses. When I interviewed her during the fall in her dormitory room, she had a painting hanging above her bed and another work in progress on the floor. Beth described how much she loved learning many subject areas and disliked the idea of narrowing her studies to a major. On the other hand, she was experiencing great pressure from her family to identify a major that would lead to a lucrative career. By the end of the year, and many internal struggles, she chose to major in English and minor in secondary education.

I interviewed Beth using the Subject-Object Interview at the beginning of October 1997 and at the end of April 1998. For the first interview, we were in her dormitory, but for the second we were in my office at the university. Beth's way of talking about her experiences indicated that she was in the transition when a stage 3 Interpersonal Self and a stage 4 Institutional Self are both fully present. In October she was battling between being strongly affected by the approval and concerns of her family and placing limits on the effect of other people's thoughts and feelings on her feelings about herself, her values, and her decisions. By April her Institutional Self seemed stronger, and was beginning to resolve challenges and assert her Self as a system of integrated beliefs. Although the stage 4 Self was beginning to dominate, Beth was aware of how new this way of making meaning was. For example, she wrote in an April reflection paper how she now felt the desire to share her opinions and would take the risk to verbalize them, but still had to force herself to overcome the fear of conflict and criticism. Because in a sense Beth had a foot in stage 3 and a foot in stage 4, she could easily empathize with Mariana's stage 3ish ways of interpreting and feeling about her experiences.

According to the Paragraph Completion Method Test, Beth earned a conceptual level score of 1.2 in the fall and 1.5 in the spring. In her responses, Beth revealed that she preferred having rules and guidelines, that criticism was upsetting, and that disagreement caused her to question herself.

#### Mariana and Beth in the After School Program in the Fall

This section describes Mariana and Beth's interactions in the after school program during the fall. Their interactions reveal the kinds of roles each person took on in the

relationship and how these roles expanded over time through a dynamic, interpersonal process.

Mariana and Beth got off to a rocky start. In a reflection paper submitted during the third week of October, Beth wrote, "For the past two weeks, she has not come to the sessions. I was beginning to fear that she did not want to come anymore, though I truly felt she had been enjoying the sessions and our conversations." Mariana's absences happened right at the beginning of their relationship, after they had only been paired for one session. During the time they didn't meet, Beth wrote Mariana a letter and sent her a postcard from a weekend trip. In this way, Beth reached out and took extra steps to let Mariana know that this relationship was important to her. At the next session they met, Beth helped Mariana with some math in the classroom and then suggested that they sit outside on the grass since it was a sunny day. This change from formal to informal atmosphere set the stage for them to have a more personal conversation. During this early meeting as a pair, Beth communicated through her actions that she could help Mariana with homework, but also wanted to be a friend to her. Beth was helping Mariana see the kind of role she wanted to play in their relationship.

While outside, Mariana suddenly yet quietly said, "my grandmother died." Beth had created the opportunity for them to talk and Mariana had taken it. Beth described this moment as a "bombshell" and remembered it in an interview months later as a turning point. Although Beth didn't really know how to respond, she found a way to talk to Mariana about her feelings about her grandmother, about coping with the loss of someone special to her, and about how her friends didn't understand the traditional



**Puerto Rican mourning practices her family followed. Because Mariana revealed all of these circumstances, Beth was reassured then that Mariana's absences were due to family affairs and not because she didn't want to have a relationship with Beth. Mariana's confiding in Beth about her grandmother also let Beth take on the role of listener and support person from the beginning of their relationship, as well as the role of tutor.**

**While they were talking, Beth also found out that Mariana lived near the university and suggested that they walk home together each week with Mariana's mother's permission. By walking home with Mariana, Beth communicated how much she valued their relationship. She wanted to spend extra time with Mariana. She showed that she wanted to be more to Mariana than a companion during an after school program.**

**The next week Mariana again was not present. Beth arrived and scanned the room for Mariana. When she realized Mariana had been in school that day but had gone home, her face dropped. She sat down with her arms hanging limply. I suggested she call Mariana right away and find out what happened. Beth returned saying that Mariana's mom was going to drive her over. When they arrived, Mariana's mother said to me within earshot of Beth that Mariana had turned to her after Beth called and said, "I can't believe I forgot. I had been thinking about it all day and then something bad happened at the end of the day and I went right home." Mariana's mom had in essence made sure that Beth knew that despite her actions, Mariana looked forward to seeing her. After this absence, Mariana attended regularly for the rest of the fall.**

**This third time that Beth and Mariana worked together was the week of Halloween and Beth had brought a pumpkin for them to carve. When I walked into the**

home economics room, they were simultaneously cutting a serrated edge around the top of the pumpkin, each with a knife. Beth treated the pumpkin carving as a collaborative activity, and helped Mariana take a role in the entire process. When they were done cutting, Beth took on the job of removing the "lid" they had cut out together. Even though Beth had to do this part alone, she involved Mariana by asking her to find a fork to help pry the stubborn lid. As Beth worked pulling on the stem, the stem popped off suddenly and they both giggled. Except for giggling, Mariana was silent during this whole interaction. Mariana appeared to be hesitant, quietly following Beth's directions, but not initiating anything.

As soon as the top of the pumpkin was off, Beth referred to an icecream scoop near Mariana and asked, "Does it fit?" By asking Mariana a question that she could only answer if she picked up the scoop and tried it, Beth kept Mariana active in the pumpkin carving process. Mariana tried to use it and then said, "I think I'll use my hands." As soon as Mariana removed her hand with a fist of pulp, Beth stuck her hand into the pumpkin. Beth, just as she did for cutting out the lid, took a collaborative approach rather than dividing up tasks. While they both emptied the pumpkin, Beth asked Mariana about school, shared her own experiences at a different school where she was observing for a class, and engaged Mariana in a conversation about home and Halloween.

Quietly, Mariana stopped and commented, "This stuff is really weird." They looked across the pumpkin, each with an arm still stuck in the pumpkin up to the elbow. Beth responded, "I think it's funny" and then continued to ask, "Do you know what they use to make pumpkin pie?" Mariana picked up a stringy pile of pulp suggesting, "This?"

Beth then explained that people cook with the interior of the pumpkin under the rind. Beth had created an opportunity in the conversation to share some of her knowledge with Mariana, to teach her something new.

Beth then asked Mariana what they should carve. Beth immediately followed her question with a suggestion, "You can do a picture of a cat and the light shines through." Mariana didn't respond and rather than leaving an awkward silence and allowing Mariana to struggle with finding something to say, Beth asked her a more specific question. "What's your favorite face?" Mariana volunteered shyly, "A vampire. My friend says I look like a vampire." Curious, Beth asked, "Why?" and Mariana responded pointing at her forehead, "I have a widow's peak." By pursuing a more direct line of questioning and not forcing her own idea, Beth gave Mariana the opportunity to share about herself as well as have more input into the activity. Beth then asked Mariana how they should carve it and Mariana suggested looking in a book of patterns Beth had brought. In this way, Beth also had Mariana pose a strategy.

As they continued to pull out the pulp, Mariana softly mentioned while rubbing her wet hands together, "I like this." Beth, squishing a pile of pulp with her fingers commented, "You know what this feels like?" Mariana, looking across at Beth immediately imitated her, moving her hands in the same motion, squishing the pulp and seeds, and replied, "No." When Beth said "Frog eggs," Mariana exclaimed in an echo, "Frog eggs!" And Beth merely said, "We have to find some in the spring." Beth, by making this statement, created a shared expectation about a future activity and revealed her own interest in and comfort with nature.

This one piece of a forty-five minute activity, only the third time they had been together as a pair, demonstrates how Beth would provide the opportunity for a shared activity and then proceed to fully engage Mariana in it by asking her questions, reading her reactions, and interjecting her own knowledge. Beth never directed Mariana to do something and then sat back and observed. Her hands were also in the pumpkin. Likewise, Beth found carving tools for both of them to use. Although she had to pose many questions to Mariana in order to learn more about Mariana and to gain her input, it did not seem like a one-way interaction in which Mariana was put on the spot. Beth would respond to what Mariana said in personal ways, sharing about herself spontaneously. Beth also taught Mariana during the interaction by casually mentioning things related to what they were doing.

Mariana, in turn, participated willingly and quietly revealed her enjoyment with occasional giggles and comments. As Beth asked specific questions, Mariana would share about herself and her school work. In response to Beth's questions, Mariana would also state her preferences and make suggestions about strategies. Occasionally Mariana would also make a comment about what she was thinking about what they were doing.

The pattern of interaction that Beth initiated in October 1997 continued through December. During the last mentoring session of the semester, I found Mariana and Beth sitting on the floor in a classroom together. They were making snowflakes. Mariana had one arm in a homemade sling while Beth had one wrist and hand bandaged. Beth would ask Mariana to suggest a color, pick up a sheet of paper and fold it several times into a small triangle. She would then hold the paper taut, angling it as Mariana cut it with the

scissors. They took turns making snowflakes in this way together. As they worked, Beth asked Mariana about what was on her math test, what was the hardest part, and how she thought she did. Beth would mix factual questions with questions about feelings and preferences.

Beth knew that Mariana was going to be in a school play in January and commented to Mariana, "You've been in a lot of plays. What do you like best about it?" Mariana responded, "I like being a different person for a while." Beth asked about her lines and Mariana admitted, "I haven't really memorized them." And as they talked Mariana revealed, "My biggest scene I'm talking to myself. I feel so stupid." Beth, catching the moment to introduce some vocabulary asked, "A soliloquy?" And Mariana went on to explain, "I'm casting a spell for Cinderella and getting her ready for the ball, but she's not there." Mariana continued to describe how she felt about being in the play and Beth went on to talk about her memories of being in a play and feeling embarrassed but enjoying it too.

Throughout the interactions I observed, Beth consistently balanced multiple roles: being a friend who cared about Mariana's preferences and feelings and did things collaboratively with her, being a challenger who asked Mariana to think more deeply and express her thoughts, and being a teacher who could recognize opportunities for sharing knowledge. Mariana was willing to respond and share when asked, willing to be engaged, attentive, and receptive to Beth taking on those roles. Throughout the fall Beth and Mariana took on complementary roles. I interviewed Beth and Mariana individually about their experiences in Project Mentor in December and found that their perceptions

of their relationship likewise complemented one another. I asked each of them during the course of the interviews: can you describe (partner's name), what is she like; how would you describe the role you take on during mentoring, what do you do during mentoring and how would you describe the role (partner's name) takes, what does she do?

### Perceptions of After School Mentoring Experiences

#### Interpreted through Developmental Theory

##### Through the Eyes of Mariana

Mariana entered into the mentoring program already with a full stage 2, her Imperial Self, and a full stage 3, her Interpersonal Self, formed. She was in the process of moving between these two ways of knowing. At this point in her life Mariana also lost two people who she considered close friends, a girl at her school who moved and her great grandmother who died. Beth entered into Mariana's life right at this challenging time. Mariana was missing someone who could be older and wiser and someone who could understand her experiences in sixth grade. By the time I interviewed Mariana in December about her experiences with Beth from the previous two months, she already considered Beth a friend.

The way Mariana understood Beth and her friendship with Beth, as evidenced by her responses to interview questions, demonstrate both her stage 2 and stage 3 way of interpreting her experiences. On the one hand, she described their friendship in very concrete, stage 2ish terms; Mariana liked Beth and liked doing things with her. She enjoyed that Beth "always has something to say" and was "fun to do things with."

**Mariana thought that Beth was funny and really nice. At the same time, though, Mariana understood Beth and her relationship with Beth on a deeper, more abstract level. For example, she also described Beth as "understanding." When comparing spending time with Beth to being with friends her own age, Mariana said first, "I trust her a lot" and then continued to say, "A lot of my friends are the exact opposite of me, but we have a lot in common. We both like to write, like horses, neither of us are sporty." A solid stage 2 would see similarities as enabling the friendship to exist and would merely remark on their presence, whereas Mariana, having both stage 2 and stage 3 structures, was beginning to be able to express how the similarities between herself and Beth engendered trust and shared understanding.**

**In December Mariana could identify that Beth was taking on multiple roles, which indicates that she had a more complex understanding of their relationship than a person with only a stage 2 structure would have. Describing the nature of Beth's different roles was challenging for Mariana, though. When I asked Mariana what role Beth took on when they were together, Mariana answered, "She helps me with school work, but she's also a friend." At a different point in the interview I asked Mariana how Beth was most helpful. Mariana volunteered, "She'll help me with my school work, but she'll also give me advice on other things too." Although Mariana mentioned that Beth helped her with academics, she kept qualifying these statements. From Mariana's perspective, Beth was not just a tutor. Mariana emphasized Beth's role as a friend and confidante. Beth was trustworthy and could give advice. And Beth was fun to be with. Mariana saw Beth as a friend she could count on.**

From the interviews it seems as though Mariana had interpreted Beth's questions about her preferences, strategies, school experiences, and home life as a friend seeking to get to know her. Perhaps also because Beth fully participated in the activities in a collaborative way, Mariana saw her as taking on the role of friend. Mariana thought of Beth as someone who was like her because they had things in common, and yet someone with more knowledge and experience. Mariana was experiencing a unique type of friend, someone not only to have fun with, but someone to trust and who could give advice, someone to learn from.

When asked in December about her own role during mentoring, Mariana didn't mention being a student or learning from Beth, she looked at me and explained in a calm and even voice, "I'm a friend to Beth. I'm someone she could talk to and she's someone I could talk to." This statement seemed to imply that Mariana saw their relationship as reciprocal. There was no sense of a power difference or special responsibilities. From Mariana's perspective, she was enjoying spending time with a new person and getting to know her. At the same time, though, because she described Beth as someone who could help with schoolwork and could give advice on other things as well, Mariana revealed that she saw herself in the role of one who could seek out help and advice.

Through the mutual friendship she had developed with Beth, someone similar to her and yet older and wiser, Mariana had begun to see herself in a different light. During the December interview, Mariana described how the way she looked at herself was changing. When I asked Mariana what she had learned from Beth, she said, "how to respect myself more, accept myself and not try to change." I do not know if Mariana



learned this through the direct advice of Beth or if she learned it indirectly through Beth's listening and asking questions, through how Beth showed that her relationship with Mariana was important to her, or through Beth being a role model of someone similar to Mariana who accepted herself. As Mariana was moving towards a dominant Interpersonal Self from her Imperial Self, her interpersonal relationship with Beth offered her a positive, encouraging message of her value as a person.

Her relationship with Beth was also a place for exploring different sides to herself. Mariana mentioned in December seeing the "artistic" side to herself when she was with Beth, a side she said she never realized before. Earlier in the interview when I asked Mariana if she ever thought about Beth outside of mentoring, Mariana responded, "Yeah, when I'm either writing or creating something because I know she likes to do those things." Although Mariana had already known that she enjoyed creative writing, she and Beth shared this interest and talked about it. They also engaged in other artistic activities that reflected Beth's additional interest in the fine arts courses she was enrolled in at the university. Mariana had come to associate both writing and art with Beth. Through their friendship, she experienced herself in a different way, with new found talent that she carried with her even as she engaged in those activities alone.

By December Mariana felt that she had found a friend in Beth, someone she could trust and with whom she had things in common. Through this relationship Mariana also found another window into herself. She began to accept herself more and experience herself as a person with artistic talents.

### Through the Eyes of Beth

Beth entered into her after school time with Mariana having both a stage 3 and a stage 4 Self. Like Mariana, Beth primarily thought of herself as taking on the role of friend in December. Coming from a stage 4ish perspective, though, Beth approached her friendship with Mariana by actively trying to understand her as a person. She commented in an October reflection paper, "I think she (Mariana) was surprised that I care to know the why behind her answers." On the one hand, asking Mariana questions was the way Beth felt comfortable building the relationship. It was her way of getting to know Mariana. And she wanted to understand Mariana in a deep way, as a stage 4 person wants to know how the other person thinks and not only what the other person thinks.

Their relationship was not just a meeting of two separate individuals, though. To Beth's Interpersonal Self, she was seeking connection with Mariana. Beth believed that her active listening was a way to communicate to Mariana that she cared about her. Beth wrote, "I feel she needs to know that I am truly interested in what she has to say, what she likes, and what she feels strongly about." What I observed Beth do was interact with Mariana in a very supportive way, spontaneously sharing about her own ideas and experiences as well as asking Mariana about hers.

Beth also hoped to help Mariana define herself through asking her thought-provoking questions. Beth described what she imagined her own role to be when she said in an interview, "I kind of feel like I'm her friend, and yet I'm a little more than that. It's my job to help her clarify her ideas or her values. By bringing up questions that I

have about what she's thinking, in hopes that when she answers it she'll hear where she's coming from. I feel like I'm part friend, part listener. Like a really good listener for her to be able to rely on." From her stage 4 structured way of understanding people, Beth expected Mariana to have thoughts and opinions and ideas and wanted to challenge her to examine them for herself, like Beth would do in her own thought processes. True to her stage 3 structure, though, Beth was sensitive to Mariana's feelings and could empathize with the way she understood things at this point in her life. She realized that Mariana did not necessarily think about ideas like a stage 4 self would. So Beth's way of challenging Mariana took the form of gentle questions and mutual sharing.

During the December interview, Beth described with excitement, how the role Mariana took on had changed over the previous weeks. From Beth's perspective, Mariana took on a passive role at first, expecting Beth to direct their interactions, as if to say, "OK, what are we supposed to do. You're the mentor, I'm the mentee." As Beth described how Mariana began to initiate things over time, her tone of voice became lighter. Now "she (Mariana) brings up topics she is frustrated with or upset about. Kind of brings them up to me as though I could listen and help out like a friend would." "The conversations we have had, she's just come out and said, this is bugging me. She's more open than before. The problems are mostly internal with family and experiences." Beth seemed pleased by Mariana being more open about her thoughts and concerns. In Beth's eyes, they were interacting as friends would, with Mariana confiding in Beth. Mariana was engaging with her in a stage 3 type of friendship built on trust and shared understanding, which made Beth's Interpersonal Self feel successful.

In another arena, schoolwork, Beth noticed that Mariana was especially receptive to her input. For example, when Mariana and Beth had worked on a difficult math problem together, "she was very patient with my (Beth's) explanation. She waited for me. I said, let's look at it in a different way, and we went for it. She looks for my advice and is respectful of it, open to new ideas." Beth described Mariana as "extremely understanding and cooperative," as "patient," and as a "very good listener." In Beth's eyes, Mariana was taking on the role of someone actively seeking and expecting to learn from her, which opened the door for Beth to step into a teacher-type of role with confidence.

In addition to putting a lot of effort into developing a friendship with Mariana, Beth also wanted to help her do well in school, which reflected her understanding of the goals of the after school program. When Beth realized that Mariana seemed to be doing well in science and math, she decided to offer her enrichment to "help her get ahead a little." Beth began to take on more responsibility for finding things that would interest and challenge Mariana. Beth considered the experience of taking responsibility for planning what they would do together, as an opportunity to explore whether or not she might like a career in teaching. At the same time, though, a teaching role was also an opportunity for Beth to practice and develop her Institutional Self way of reasoning.

There are many ways to approach teaching, but theoretically one's way of understanding teaching and learning is structured by the developmental Self. In Beth's case, she started talking and thinking about teaching from the perspective of her stage 4 Institutional Self. For example, when asked in what ways Mariana showed her a

different side to herself, Beth said that when Mariana asked her to help her with her creative writing it made her "think about different ways to approach creative writing with kids her age. It's made me think, how can I present this idea. Is it too early to bring in characters and setting?" Beth responded to Mariana's request for help by trying to assess Mariana's background, planning experiences that were developmentally appropriate, and teaching Mariana. As she gained more experience doing this in the spring, Beth talked about this teaching role with more detail and excitement.

Overall, Beth was very invested in her relationship with Mariana and thought about Mariana a lot outside of the after school program when she was doing other things. "I just went to (town name) tonight. Thinking about if we went to (town name) what we might do, what I might like to show her." Mariana was definitely an important person in Beth's life. Beth really put a lot of effort into getting together with Mariana. She not only called her when Mariana didn't attend the after school program, she would call and plan for them to do other things together as well. For example, they went to the mall together and Beth described in seminar how much she learned about Mariana and their similarities and differences from that trip. Beth always seemed to be trying to get to know Mariana better. Some of the ways Beth did this was by spending extra time with Mariana by volunteering to walk home with her each week, going on occasional outings with her, and by creating a journal in January for them to share.

As she tried to understand who Mariana was as a person, Beth recognized that there were similarities and differences between them. On the one hand, she could easily identify with Mariana. She enjoyed hearing "her perspective on things. She brings up

things I remember thinking about in those days. I like listening to her and putting in words here and there like, 'I remember that.' And hope I can be of help." In this way, their similarities helped Beth play the role of confidante and supporter, and one who could give advice if that was sought. Beth, as part Interpersonal Self, seemed to naturally expand the sense of connection between herself and Mariana by building on their common interests. For example, she would bring up topics that they both were interested in, such as asking about what Mariana was learning in her horseback riding lessons.

Beth never overlooked their differences, though. Unlike a straight stage 3, who would feel that differences create a lack of connection in a relationship, Beth had a stage 4 perspective on differences. She valued the differences between her life experiences and Mariana's as an opportunity to learn about different ways of looking at and experiencing the world. As she got to know Mariana, she discovered that Mariana really enjoyed learning about different cultures. Mariana herself had a Puerto Rican family history, which awoke in Beth a similar interest in cultural differences. Beth commented in an interview,

I've learned more about culture and how even here in (state name) it can be a problem in social learning, like being able to interact. How it's hard for her to explain to students how things are different for her in her family. I feel like I've learned a lot about culture in general and how being part American and part Puerto Rican is different than us who come from mixed backgrounds and don't have set values or traditional guidelines for our culture.

Over time, Beth began to explore the possibility of pursuing English as a Second Language teaching certification because she found the idea that people had cultural differences so fascinating.

Sometimes the differences between them caused confusion, though. Mariana used a very soft voice when they were together and calm, subtle facial expressions. Beth needed to learn how to 'read' her reactions. "Like sometimes I can't tell if she does like it or doesn't approve of it, because she uses the same gestures and voice for both. Usually I ask the same question in a different way to get a response I can understand." Sometimes, because of Mariana's quietness and lack of enthusiastic expression, Beth worried that Mariana wasn't interested in what they were doing. Behind that subtle exterior was a sarcastic sense of humor, though, that confused Beth at first. "Sometimes she'll say 'oh, that's so cool' and I find out it's about some kids smoking on the corner. If someone said something in that tone of voice, I would've thought they'd really mean it." Beth had to learn to read Mariana's meaning in a different way than she was used to. By recognizing these differences and trying to understand Mariana's meaning and feelings, I think Beth actually did respond to Mariana in ways that communicated understanding instead of misunderstanding and therefore gained Mariana's trust.

#### Mariana and Beth in the After School Mentoring Program in the Spring

The fall semester laid the foundation for Mariana and Beth's relationship in the spring. When Mariana and Beth talked, their conversation still flowed mainly due to Beth's proactive role. Mariana maintained her quieter, yet attentive and thoughtful demeanor marked with a subtle sense of humor. The following excerpts from times I observed Mariana and Beth in the spring reveal some of the experiences that contributed to each person's perspective on the relationship that is analyzed in the next section.

Like in the fall, Beth would ask Mariana questions and shared her own

experiences in a spontaneous kind of way. For example, during February Beth and Mariana were working on a Valentine mailbox for a party (and mailbox contest!) that one of the other pairs had organized. While they were working, Beth asked, "Is your music class over now that the play's over?" Beth demonstrated through this question that she was thinking about what Mariana's school day might be like. They had talked about the play Mariana had a role in for one class back in December. Mariana replied, "Now we're in Life Skills." Beth probed, "What do you do?" Mariana made a face and said, "Today we cooked omelets and deviled eggs. Which is gross because I don't like eggs." On another day I would see her share some homemade peanut butter and chocolate candy with Beth from this same class. Beth immediately related to the idea of cooking eggs and said, "I worked in the dining hall today. I started at 7 o'clock and I was done at 3pm. I was cooking the whole time. I had to scramble eggs. It was neat to be left all alone. I didn't get it at first. Couple of pancakes landed on the floor." Mariana raised her eyebrows.

In a way, Beth was showing Mariana how the skill of cooking eggs might be useful without preaching to her. She merely related a rather humorous story. It was also Beth's first day on the job, so she was sharing with Mariana some of what college was like for her. It was interactions like these that helped me see why Mariana believed that Beth could relate to her and yet also what led her to want to learn from Beth.

Another day in the spring I observed Beth and Mariana engaged in a goal-setting activity. The undergraduates had been encouraged during the mentoring seminar to set goals with their sixth grade partners. Of all the pairs I observed, Beth was most able to



maximize the learning potential of this activity. First Beth asked Mariana to brainstorm ten goals on a piece of paper while she did the same on her own sheet. Then she suggested that they each pick their top five. Once these were circled, they moved their papers next to each other, so both could see them. As it turned out, they both had the goals of write a book, own a horse, and go to college in common. Beth then challenged Mariana to think more deeply about her goals by asking her one by one, why she chose each goal. Beth took Mariana's goals very seriously. She would ask Mariana what were some steps she could take to achieve each goal. Whenever Mariana was unsure, Beth supportively made concrete suggestions. Mariana answered thoughtfully to each of Beth's questions. When Beth accidentally overlooked one of Mariana's circled goals, Mariana said, "You skipped one." They both were completely focused on making these goals realities.

For example, Beth read aloud from Mariana's paper, "Own a horse. What's your reason?" Mariana said, knowing that both she and Beth shared a love of horses, "Cause I like horses." Beth continued, "Are you able to have a horse in (the town where Mariana would soon be living)?" Mariana explained, "In 8th grade I can get a horse." Beth did not let the goal drop there. She went on to ask, "What can you do to prepare until then?" Knowing that Beth had extensive experience training horses, Mariana suggested, "Improve my stable management skills." Beth then wondered, "Are these things you've talked to your mom about?" Mariana nodded. Later, in a reflection paper Beth would write about how amazed she was at Mariana's mother's supportiveness towards her daughter's goals. This realization made her critique how her own mother's lack of

enthusiasm for her goals influenced her own ability to enjoy setting and achieving goals. In essence, this experience with Mariana stimulated Beth to critique her Interpersonal Self and allow her Institutional Self to gain strength.

Beth then suggested to Mariana another immediate action she could take, "Maybe keep your eye on the newspaper for horses for sale. Have you and your mom talked about how to pay for the horse?" Soon Mariana read aloud her next goal, "Go to college in California." When Beth asked, "Why do you want to go to college in California?" Mariana replied, "Because California is special. I have to go to college because my mom said I have to. But I want to, too. Why is California special? I don't know." Beth wondered, "Have you visited there?" but Mariana had not. Beth then looked over the whole sheet and linked this goal to some other goals that Mariana had written, like learning Spanish, traveling to other places, and becoming an actress. Beth suggested, "I can see a couple of reasons. A lot of people speak Spanish in California. It is far for traveling. And it is a good place for acting." Later, Beth explained the difference between long-term and short-term goals and they set some immediate goals for the next week. I heard them refer to their goals throughout the rest of the semester.

#### Mariana's Perspective in the Spring

When I interviewed Mariana again at the end of April, her perspective was similar to the one she had in the fall. She described Beth as "a good person to talk to" and that "she relates to a lot of stuff." Although she considered Beth to be older and wiser, as she said "I like to look up to Beth," Mariana thought that Beth could understand her perspective very well. For example, she commented, "I can probably tell Beth more

things than I can tell my mom. Like secrets or something that might have happened with my friends. Beth can probably look at things through my point of view. My mom's perspective would be different." Mariana felt that she could trust Beth to understand her, that in some ways she was on her level. At the same time, though, Mariana said that what she liked most about Beth was "having another friend that's not really my age. People that are older than you know a little more. They can teach you and also have fun with you."

Similar to the fall, Mariana recognized that Beth was taking on multiple roles in their relationship and valued each of the roles Beth took on. Although Beth and Mariana were not openly affectionate with each other like some pairs when they were together, during the interviews their affection for one another was clear. For example, when I asked Mariana in the final interview how she felt about Beth she said, "She's like a friend, but she's also someone who helps me with my schoolwork and personal problems. So I really like Beth." Beth was someone both on Mariana's level who could understand her as she understood herself, and someone wiser and more experienced who could share her knowledge and offer a different perspective.

From being with Beth, Mariana did think that she was developing a new sense of perspective. When I asked Mariana if she saw a different side to herself when she was with Beth, she responded, "I try to have a positive outlook on things. I don't always look at things negatively." Curious, I wondered aloud if that was something different from last year she said, "That's something new." Mariana seemed to be trying to see her own experiences in a more positive way when with Beth.

### **Beth's Perspective in the Spring**

When I interviewed Beth at the end of March she was excited about the teaching role she had tried to take on. As she described how she felt about planning for her time with Mariana and teaching Mariana, Beth demonstrated the power of her Interpersonal Self. For example, Beth took on the responsibility of planning things for them to do together and felt that if she didn't plan ahead she was "letting (Mariana) down." Beth also revealed how much she enjoyed being in a teaching role when she said, "I look forward to planning things out when I have time. I'm excited because I think she'll be excited. There's so much I want to do." The way Beth focused joyfully on anticipating Mariana's reaction seemed very consistent with her stage 3 Self. Mariana also made her feel successful in this role, which was likewise essential to Beth's Interpersonal Self. Beth mentioned one incident when "(Mariana) said she didn't understand about stars and I'm in the weather class, and I rattled something off. And she said, 'I would've understood it if he explained it that way.' It was nice to hear her say that. To know I could explain it. I like to be able to help her too." Their relationship became an opportunity for Beth to explore teaching as a potential career in a context that was supportive and encouraging to her Interpersonal Self.

The way that Beth conceptualized teaching, though, demonstrated a stage 4 way of understanding how people learn. She tried to think about who Mariana was (her interests, her prior knowledge), how much structure she should offer, and her learning goals, and then tailored activities to her. Through the spring Beth learned that planning was a big part of taking on a teaching role. For example, she commented,

One of the main things with working with Mariana, it's made me realize how important it is to plan things ahead of time. I really want to be a teacher and this is important to me. It's been a challenge to find things we could both work on that she's excited about. To me, that's something I haven't had to do before. Is work that hard. It's not something like studying for an exam that you can just do and get it over with. It is constantly something new.

Although she found planning challenging, Beth enjoyed it and generally felt successful at it. During my very first interview with Beth in September, she was confused about her choice of major and what she wanted to pursue as a career. By the end of April, Beth was more resolved about choosing an English major with an education minor.

Beth was proud of her planning efforts and the teaching experience she was gaining from being in the program with Mariana. On the other hand, Beth did not approach Mariana in the manner of a teacher who had planned an activity and wished to directly instruct a student. As someone in the process of limiting her Interpersonal Self and strengthening her Institutional Self, Beth greatly valued the ability of a person to independently set personally relevant priorities. This perspective affected her interactions with Mariana. It was very important to Beth that Mariana had choices about the activities they would do together and that she was encouraging Mariana's independence, will, and decision-making.

Although Beth was very excited about taking on a teaching role and talked about it throughout the spring interview, she revealed that having a confidante type of friendship was likewise important to her. When asked about the high points and low points in their relationship, Beth did not talk about specific activities she had planned that Mariana seemed to enjoy, instead she talked about spending time with Mariana

walking home together and writing in the journal to each other. Listening and talking and being together, were still fundamental to Beth's way of being with Mariana. Beth wanted very much to know Mariana's thoughts and feelings about her daily life experiences. For example, Beth said, "I think that one of the high points is that we've gotten to write in the journal and we've gotten to communicate more through it. And being able to spend more time with her by walking her home. I know I'll miss that now that she's moved." Beth clearly had a desire to know Mariana well and to have a close relationship.

Because Mariana was not a very expressive person, Beth was sometimes worried that Mariana wasn't interested in what she had planned. I think that Beth's Interpersonal Self was always looking for signs from Mariana that she enjoyed being with Beth. Each sign, even just a smile would be remembered. Beth mentioned in an interview at the end of March that she had attended one of Mariana's horseback riding lessons. She said, "I told her how good she looked when she was out there, and how she should be proud of what she had accomplished. She smiled as though she was very thankful and that meant a lot to me." At another point in the interview Beth talked about the journal they would write in and share with each other. When asked if there was anything she liked least about being with Mariana, Beth said with a smile "If you want to get to basics, she always forgets the journal. But it's packed anyway!" At another point in the interview Beth mentioned, "Lately she's been writing about moving. She just got a new dog. I got to meet her on Wednesday. She wrote about him." Beth was visibly happy that Mariana used the journal to share her feelings with Beth, even if she sometimes forgot to actually

give it to her. It showed that Mariana wanted the kind of relationship Beth wanted.

Mentoring provided an opportunity for self exploration for Beth. She could look at herself as a stage 4 Institutional Self through the sense of connection her Interpersonal Self had with Mariana. Beth said,

A lot of times when I am with her, I can see how I was, and how she is, and how I am now. Nobody would willingly admit they are introverted, or not outgoing, or not easily make friends. But I can see that it's been difficult for her. And just by seeing how she reacts to all of this, I know I would react the same. So I've been able to see myself clearer rather than someone else telling me. I can see what goes on with her, going on with me too.

Through knowing Mariana, Beth was coming to know herself better. As she listened to Mariana's struggles and witnessed her behaviors in different contexts, Beth could see her own self as an early adolescent and many parts of her past that were still with her now as an undergraduate. When asked what she learned from Mariana spring semester Beth said, "I guess I've learned a lot about myself. She's let me see more about me than I knew before." Through taking on the role of listener and friend, Beth payed careful attention to who Mariana was, how she understood things, how she felt, what her experiences were. By reflecting on her experiences with Mariana, Beth was beginning to understand her own history and what brought her to whom she was today, such as her family relationships, her personality, and her past behaviors.

Beth was exploring who she was in the existential sense of "who am I?" In this way, her relationship with Mariana was a place for experiencing her past and present. At the same time, though, Beth was also exploring her future. The query of "who am I" also included questions of what major should I choose and what do I want to do after college?

Similar to Marcia's theory (1991) which emphasizes career choice as a factor in identity development, Beth experienced with Mariana whether or not she might like teaching as a career. Through trying on the role of more experienced person, planner, and teacher, Beth was learning that she might really want to pursue teaching as a career.

### The Environmental Context of Chesterfield Middle School

Chesterfield Middle School was a sixth through eighth grade school in a small city. The hallways were dark, tall, narrow and echoed as people moved through them. In the classrooms, I saw stacks of worn textbooks with copyright dates over ten years old. The desks were arranged in pairs in rows facing the blackboard. In one classroom student work consisted of a group of five paintings of sunflowers taped to the back wall. One wing of the sixth grade hallway was covered by author-study reports on chart paper. The sixth grade faculty was organized by teams, and the students would switch classes among about three different teachers per team. The curriculum was very traditional. Homework consisted of reading chapters and answering questions on worksheets and writing reports about different topics.

When school ended, the building was usually empty and the classroom doors were locked. The school had a small area of grass in front of it, but was surrounded by a parking lot and the street. There was no field or playground. Next door was the public library with lush grass and a couple of trees in front of it and across the street was the back of the police station. Students would usually be hanging around outside of the school, calling out to one another, teasing and starting fights. I saw middle school students smoking around the building on several occasions. I actually had to ask one



parent to let me keep his daughter inside and work with her after her undergraduate partner had left each week so she wouldn't get involved in fights while she waited for him outside.

Most of the 8 girls in Project Mentor from Chesterfield lived in a nearby housing project. Every girl came from either a single parent family or a melded family of several different marriages. Two of the girls had fathers who had committed suicide. The liaison for Chesterfield Middle School was the Title One Coordinator. She recommended these girls for the program because of their low income status. Most, but not all of the girls, also had difficulty achieving in school. Several of the girls were very quiet and obedient, while a couple were aggressive or in search of attention.

The girls and undergraduates met during the fall in the library, which had round tables and chairs where they usually sat in pairs or in fours. On the first day, the liaison had not planned any "get to know each other" activities. She had the girls start with the pre-test survey while I pulled an activity from the liaison resource book. Before the activity, the liaison asked each person to stand and announce their name to the group. Afterwards I realized that only two parents had come to the information night and that most of the girls didn't understand what the mentoring program was going to be like. The second week, I asked everyone to sit in a circle on the rug in the library and tried to more clearly explain the program and we did a name game. As a group we decided to pair up by drawing names out of a basket.

The liaison was running a simultaneous homework club in a room at the far end of the hallway and left when it finished, so she was not present for the after school

mentoring program. Each week, though, the liaison would provide snacks for the group through some school funding. The girls would come to the homework club room and carry the snacks to a resource room in the same hallway where they could meet and eat because food was not permitted in the library. The liaison also took on the responsibility of transportation. When the housing project was not providing dependable transportation, she secured funding for a weekly taxicab that would drive the girls home.

The small resource room used for snacks had two rectangular tables placed end to end facing a chalkboard. At the far narrow end of the room were two teacher desks and two computers that the girls were allowed to use. When I would arrive, two of the girls would be silently eating, two would be arguing or teasing each other, and two would be playing games at the computers. The undergraduates would arrive in two different groups because they car pooled and most were close friends. They usually walked in engaged in their own conversation. I did not see the sixth graders and undergraduates immediately connect when one or the other would arrive. They were each engaged in their own things and seemed hesitant about approaching one another's "group." On several occasions I suggested to the undergraduates that they make eye contact and walk right up to their sixth grade partner and engage her in a conversation. I rarely, if ever, saw this happen. If contact was made as soon as a partner arrived, it was because the sixth grader ran up to the undergraduate.

Once everyone arrived, I would announce that it was time to move to the library and the sixth graders would walk in one noisy clump while the undergraduates followed behind. They would usually pair up once they began to sit down in the library. The pairs

would work at different round tables on homework or on math games from the math/science resource book that the undergraduates were provided through the mentoring seminar that they were taking for course credit through the university. One or two undergraduates would plan other activities to do with their partners. These pairs would sit apart from the tables on the rug in different areas of the library.

In January I suggested that they just sign out of the room we had snack in whenever they were ready. Two pairs usually would stay and work in the resource room and one pair would always go to the library. The others would change location throughout the hour and depending on the week. Sometimes I would find a pair sitting on the floor in the hallway working. Other times they went next door to the public library. Sometimes they might go into a classroom to try to catch a teacher. At different times during the spring, the same undergraduates who had planned other activities for their partners in the fall, planned craft or enrichment activities and sometimes were joined by another pair. Overall, pairs engaged in more craft activities and activities specifically designed to enhance self-esteem in the spring.

The pairs at Chesterfield Middle School had one group party at the end of the year. Two girls brought music and when we entered the snack room, it was decorated with streamers of toilet paper. During the party, everyone sat in a circle to play The Question Game. Afterwards, the entire school became a playground for a game of Sardines.

## An Introduction to Danielle and Naomi

### Danielle, the sixth grader

Danielle was a very quiet, thin girl. She rarely participated in discussions and spoke in a soft voice. The Title One coordinator recommended Danielle for the mentoring program because she was from a single parent family and lived in a nearby housing project. Her grades were average, she was obedient in class, and completed her assignments. She was very shy and silent, the type of student who could easily fall through the cracks. Danielle was also new to public school. She had just switched to public school from Catholic school during winter break of fifth grade. She said that the reason for the switch was that “I didn’t have any friends.”

I interviewed Danielle at school as well as at home. Danielle lived with her mother and two younger siblings in a public housing development consisting of large, subdivided houses, each with lawn space around it. The development was lined with sidewalks and had a small daycare center and gymnasium. Danielle’s mother worked during the day until 5pm and for part of the fall, also in the evening. While her mother was working, Danielle’s younger sister, who was nearly four years old, was usually in day care. After school Danielle and her brother would be by themselves or playing in the neighborhood until their mother arrived. Danielle and her brother shared a father, while her youngest sister was from a different father. Danielle did not seem to have contact with her father.

During the Subject-Object Interviews Danielle demonstrated a stage 2 Imperial Self way of experiencing and understanding the world around her. Her own needs,

interests, and desires governed her actions. Like most children, Danielle described picking fights with her brother and taunting her younger sister. She talked about her two kittens, which were very important to her. Danielle was afraid of “getting in trouble” and was obedient in order to avoid punishment. In the final interview, for the first time, Danielle described with excitement being disobedient, as if it thrilled her just to realize that she could get away with doing something and not get caught.

On the Paragraph Completion Method Test, Danielle demonstrated clearly dichotomous thinking. For example, in the case of a disagreement, Danielle wrote that she would find out who was right. Similarly, if she was unsure, Danielle wrote that she would ask someone. Danielle’s responses indicated a conceptual level score of one.

#### Naomi, the undergraduate

Naomi was a second year undergraduate majoring in environmental science. She was the youngest of two siblings and had an older brother. Naomi’s mother was employed as a Title One tutor and her father worked for the government. Always upbeat, friendly, and relaxed, Naomi would usually arrive a little late, wearing loose faded jeans and a wool sweater or flannel shirt. She described herself as a procrastinator who also loved to get involved in many different things and would sometimes over-commit herself.

Based on the Subject-Object Interviews, Naomi was a stage 3 Interpersonal Self with early indications of a developing stage 4 Institutional Self. She felt very successful when those around her were happy because she in some way had contributed to their happiness. Naomi enjoyed pleasing others and did not like conflict. For example, she

would avoid making a decision that her parents would not approve of. Naomi was just beginning to explore setting limits on the effect other people had on her.

On the Paragraph Completion Method Test Naomi earned a conceptual level score of 2 both in September and in May. In general, Naomi demonstrated complex reasoning that went beyond the black and white conformist thinking of a level one score. For example, Naomi wrote about both the need for rules and the need for freedom to help people grow. She believed that criticism could be helpful, even though sometimes painful. She described weighing the pros and cons when unsure about something.

#### Danielle and Naomi in the After School Program in the Fall

At the end of October I observed Danielle and Naomi working on a problem from the math/science resource book at one of the round tables in the library. The page in the book showed nine playing cards. The problem was to rearrange the cards so each horizontal, vertical and diagonal line of three cards would add up to 15. Naomi had brought playing cards with her.

Naomi gave nine red cards to Danielle and gave herself nine black cards. It was clear that they were each going to do the problem. Naomi explained the rules, and both she and Danielle proceeded to look down at their cards, moving them into different arrangements. While they were doing this Naomi asked, "Did you name the kittens?" and Danielle answered in a voice just above a whisper, "Zoe and Abby." Naomi continued, "Which one is yours?" "Zoe. Cause I picked that one," Danielle explained. Naomi then asked, "You chose the name?" and Danielle responded, "And my mom picked Abby."

The conversation happened while Danielle was trying to figure out where to

move her cards and as they both were rearranging them. Danielle seemed distracted as Naomi asked her questions, and answered very briefly. They each continued moving their cards as Naomi asked about how Danielle did on a test, what tests were coming up, and where she was going for Halloween.

Naomi seemed to be trying to carry on a casual conversation in order to get to know Danielle better, but considering the math problem task at hand, it was difficult for Danielle to both talk and mentally add at the same time. Danielle was very focused on the task, only looking up when she became frustrated and at a loss for strategies. At that point, she would look at Naomi's cards. Simultaneous to the problem-solving, Naomi asked Danielle factual questions and Danielle answered them literally. Naomi did not really ask about Danielle's likes or dislikes or feelings, nor did she share about herself. The interaction reminded me of two students working on a problem in class, one trying to start a conversation and the other trying to be a "good student" and solve the problem.

When neither of them seemed to be getting anywhere with the problem, Naomi commented, "You having any luck?" After another minute of working independently, Naomi suggested, "Here, let's just work on one." At this point, Naomi seemed like she was going to take on more of a coaching role. They pushed Danielle's red cards to the side and both of them looked at the black cards in front of Naomi. Naomi started moving the cards. She arranged four cards:

3      5      7  
6

Then she asked Danielle, "What should we put? What do we need?" Naomi moved the

six under the seven, picked up a two and said, laying down the card under the five, "Five plus two is seven."

3     5     7  
      2  
         6

Danielle continued Naomi's sentence, "seven and eight." And Naomi ended the sentence with, "Is fifteen" and laid down an eight card.

3     5     7  
      2  
      8     6

They continued to work, Danielle quietly looking on, leaning forward, and staring at the cards in thought. Naomi would move the cards and prompt her to add them. Naomi had changed the activity from each working completely independently to one in which she was highly structuring Danielle's participation. Naomi was in control of the cards and prompted Danielle to help add them to determine the next number to lay down. Their conversation was one of Naomi beginning a sentence, leaving a blank, and Danielle filling in the blank. Occasionally Danielle would interject a suggestion like, "We need a two."

This was very early in their experience as a pair and I think Naomi was struggling with how they might work together. Naomi first wanted to be equally participating and be like a student herself. She also wanted to get to know Danielle during the activity. When Naomi realized Danielle needed some more guidance and was becoming a little



frustrated, Naomi made completing the problem her primary goal. She quickly took the lead in directing the solving of the problem by asking Danielle specific computational questions. In the process of solving the problem, Naomi did not discuss or encourage strategic thinking.

Throughout the fall Danielle and Naomi worked together in ways similar to the event described above. Typically they focused on Danielle's homework or on a problem from the math/science resource book. They would work side by side, relatively independently, unless Danielle was having difficulty. When doing homework, Naomi would take out a piece of paper and do the problem also. After Danielle was done with a problem, she would compare her answer to Naomi's. Danielle usually could identify how any errors occurred when a mistake became apparent. When Danielle was confused about how to solve a problem, Naomi pointed out procedures she could follow rather than developing Danielle's reasoning and strategic thinking. If they were working independently, Naomi would try to engage Danielle in a conversation. She would ask Danielle specific questions about home or school and Danielle would answer pleasantly, but literally, in brief phrases.

### Perceptions of After School Mentoring Experiences

#### Interpreted through Developmental Theory

##### Through the Eyes of Danielle

Danielle entered into a mentoring relationship with Naomi as a stage 2 Imperial Self with a very concrete way of understanding concepts and relating to others. When I interviewed Danielle in December, she associated Naomi with the things they had done

together: math enrichment activities, which she called “games,” and homework. In response to almost every question I asked during the interview, Danielle referred to these two types of activities. For example, Danielle indicated that something she would remember from mentoring was “playing math games” and that playing games was what she liked most about being with Naomi. Danielle thought that Naomi was particularly helpful when “we were doing my math homework, she did the same problems on a different sheet to make sure we both got the answers right.”

When asked if she ever thought about Naomi when they weren't meeting, Danielle said, “Yeah, kinda. Probably when I'm doing my homework. She gave me her number so I can call her. So every time I see that I remember.” At that point they had never spoken over the phone, though. When I tried to probe during the interview, Danielle did not express any sense of wondering what Naomi might be doing or a desire to tell her something after she saw the phone number. It was almost as if she would only think about Naomi if, while doing her homework, she would notice a phone number on her book and would recall whose number it was. Throughout the interview Danielle seemed to associate Naomi with the role of homework and math games companion.

Although Danielle focused mainly on the academic activities she and Naomi did together, Danielle did mention that she enjoyed talking to Naomi. Danielle explained, “We talk about school and how my kittens are growing and stuff.” At this point in the year, Naomi was just beginning to be someone with whom Danielle felt comfortable having a casual conversation. I believe that Danielle thought of Naomi as a tutor, but definitely inferred from her experiences with Naomi that Naomi was “nice. I think she

likes helping people." Danielle knew that Naomi wanted to help her with her school work, but specifically did not see her as a teacher who was there to teach her anything and made this very clear when I asked if she had learned anything from Naomi that semester. Danielle said, "I haven't really learned anything. She hasn't really taught me anything. Like teachers teach you stuff, but she's not really a teacher." There was no indication that Danielle saw Naomi as playing a larger role in her life than a nice person who came to help her with her homework and play math games, and who liked to chat while doing these things.

Something that was not clearly evident when Naomi and Danielle were together was that Danielle was not sure that she really wanted to be staying after school. Danielle revealed during the December interview that the after school program impeded her from doing other things that she liked to do. Because Danielle was a stage 2 Imperial Self rather than an Interpersonal Self, the fact that there were other things that she wanted to be doing at home must have affected Danielle's personal investment in developing a relationship with Naomi. When I asked Danielle what she liked least about being with Naomi, she replied, "I don't get to spend as much time with my friends at home. Sometimes we distribute papers." In fact, I was interviewing Danielle in the kitchen of her home and later during the interview a girl came by to ask if Danielle could help her deliver papers. Afterwards, I gave Danielle a ride to the other side of the housing project so she could catch up with a group of about five children, a girl her age and several younger children, who were delivering a newsletter to all the residents. Danielle told me they were paid a small amount of money for doing this. When asked if she looked

forward to seeing Naomi, Danielle said, "Yeah, I look forward to seeing her sometimes. I like going home with my friends on the bus but I like staying after school too." Danielle seemed torn between wanting to spend time with the other children in her neighborhood and staying after school to meet with Naomi.

Rather than being due to an attachment to Naomi, though, Danielle's desire to stay after school seemed mostly related to getting her homework done. For example, in response to a question about how she felt about Naomi, Danielle said, "I like her. We get a lot of my homework done and stuff." At another point in the interview when I asked Danielle, in what ways does Naomi show you a different side to yourself, Danielle replied, "I don't know. She kind of makes me happy. Cause when I get my homework done and stuff it makes me happy. She can be funny too." During the December interview Danielle could not talk much about Naomi as a person. She seemed generally positive about her, but seemed to mostly associate her with the role of homework helper. To Danielle, Naomi was a nice grown-up there to help her do well in school. She did not see Naomi as someone to have as a friend, or someone to admire, or someone there to give her personal support.

Considering that Danielle was an Imperial Self governed by her own needs and desires and guided by a very concrete way of thinking, she experienced Naomi in a very narrow role. On the one hand, Danielle knew that Naomi was not a "teacher" because she did not have "lessons." She did know, though, that Naomi could help her on academic work because Naomi had tried to help her after school and had given her a phone number to call if she had trouble at home with her homework. In terms of being a

potential friend, Danielle also had no reason to think of Naomi as a potential friend because they had not engaged in any activity that friends her age might do together. Furthermore, Danielle had no older sisters nor did she seem to have any older friends that she might associate with a role like “older and wiser friend or role model” that she would then expect Naomi to take on. Danielle’s understanding of what Naomi might be for her was very limited. So she focused on getting her work done and answering any questions Naomi might ask her, but did not respond in a way that would help Naomi expand her role or allow them to have a more personal relationship.

### Through the Eyes of Naomi

During fall semester Naomi was trying to define and understand her own role in her relationship with Danielle while trying to get to know Danielle. Both of these tasks were challenging. In terms of her own role in the relationship, Naomi saw herself as “just that in-between being a friend and a teacher. Because when I’m helping her with her math problems, I’m definitely the teacher because I know what to do and how to do the problems, but it’s done in a manner like a friend. Like me doing the problems with her.” Naomi wanted to be helping Danielle academically, but didn’t want to be like an authority figure telling Danielle what to do. She wrote in a November reflection paper how she “feels responsible for” Danielle and was trying to be more of a “guide” than a “friend” like she had been as a babysitter for other children. When I asked Naomi during the December interview how Danielle showed her a different side to herself, Naomi said, “Well definitely the whole role of mentor because it is one step above being a friend. But it’s not that much of an authoritative figure, so that in-between I haven’t been

exposed to before." Naomi was trying to be something other than a teacher or a friend to Danielle, but wasn't quite sure what that meant.

Part of what made it challenging for Naomi to talk about her role during the interview was that she had only taken on a somewhat narrow role in the fall. She was not sure how to expand her own role from being a homework or math games companion to having a more personal relationship with Danielle. As a stage 3 Interpersonal Self, Danielle's weekly emotional reaction to her and responses to her questions were very important to the roles Naomi felt comfortable trying. Naomi was interpreting Danielle's interactions and taking on a role that she thought Danielle expected or wanted her to take on. Naomi had noticed that Danielle seemed to be focused on whatever academic activity they were engaged in during the after school program and did not talk about other things spontaneously nor with much detail when Naomi asked her questions. She interpreted this to mean that Danielle was interacting with her in a more formal and polite way, as a student does in class with a teacher. When describing Danielle's role, Naomi said, "She's just kind of, she's still a student I'd say. She hasn't totally opened up. She more or less plays the role of student more than as a friend who shares things and stuff." Naomi felt a lack of mutual comfort between herself and Danielle. She explained, "We haven't reached that total comfort zone where we are both at ease. I am not completely at ease being around her yet. I don't think she is either."

Naomi attributed her own feelings of discomfort around Danielle to personality differences. Naomi described Danielle as "quiet, thoughtful," "polite," and "shy, very shy." She found it challenging to interact with Danielle. Naomi explained, "It's a little

hard because I'm not used to someone who is so quiet." Danielle was different than the other children Naomi had interacted with in the past. She described how, "I just kind of assumed all kids are a little rambunctious, who just cling to someone older. I've always babysat kids who 5 minutes after meeting me were climbing all over me." Danielle's reserve took her by surprise.

Naomi herself was also very different than Danielle. When asked to describe herself, Naomi said, "I think I have a generally happy, go-lucky personality, which I like. I like to laugh a lot. I smile a lot." Growing up, Naomi had very different life experiences than Danielle. For example, in an October reflection paper Naomi described herself in sixth grade. She wrote, "I played both soccer and field hockey at the same time that year, had piano lessons every Monday, and played the clarinet in the band. I placed a lot of importance on my school work as well." Danielle, on the other hand, did not have any extracurricular activities after school other than mentoring. She went home and was playing in the neighborhood or was alone with her siblings watching TV until her mother came home from work. In her next reflection paper Naomi remarked, "Come to think of it, I don't think I could have been paired up with someone any more opposite to myself than she is. This is not a bad thing in any respect, however. I think it will just take us both a little longer to adjust to being around each other and being attuned to each other."

Danielle was a quiet child, very different from Naomi. To a degree I think Naomi was baffled by the newness of being with someone like Danielle. At the same time, though, for a stage 3 Interpersonal Self, recognizing difference often leads to feelings of

disappointment and disconnection. An Interpersonal Self feels whole when she thinks the other person in a relationship understands her thoughts and feelings and is taking them into consideration. When an Interpersonal Self sees that there are differences between herself and the other person, she thinks that they are not in tune with one another and therefore do not have a close relationship. Naomi was having trouble “connecting” with Danielle. She wanted to know more about Danielle, but was having trouble getting her to “open up.” She thought that Danielle just didn’t trust her enough to really talk to her at any length. What Naomi did know about Danielle was that she had a very different personality than she was used to. Naomi had tenacity, though. She wanted to be a “mentor” and believed that her major task was to gain Danielle’s trust so that they could develop a closer relationship.

By December Naomi had noticed how some of the other pairs interacted and wished she and Danielle had a more affectionate relationship. In response to a question about whether she looked forward to seeing Danielle, Naomi replied, “It’s challenging but I enjoy every minute of it. I see like the other girls and they are hugging their girls. I would like to have that connection, but it would take a long time to build that trust and understanding.” Later in the interview Naomi reiterated this point when she commented that “sometimes I feel it is hard to get through to her and I don’t know. And I see everybody else responding to their mentors.” Despite some feelings of disappointment, Naomi remained very positive about the potential to get closer to Danielle. She wanted her role to expand to that of personal support person and was hoping it would as they spent more time together.



Naomi approached the relationship as a challenge and kept reaching out by trying to make conversation while they worked on homework or math games together. She searched for indications from Danielle that she enjoyed being with her. Naomi described what she liked most about being with Danielle in the following way,

I like the challenge and I like making her respond in a positive way and not just seem kind of indifferent, because she can be sometimes, or vague. Like I made her multiplication tables once. Because they were doing multiplication of decimals, because she needed that. And she lit up. When we work on homework problems, it's really cool because we work on them together.

Naomi struggled to be an academic support and a partner in Danielle's endeavors. It was not until Christmas, though, that Naomi was able to communicate her desire to have a more personal relationship with Danielle.

For Christmas Naomi made Danielle a present and symbolically built a bridge from the role of homework companion to that of friend. Naomi explained, "I made her a journal for Christmas, so that took some thought. I covered it with magazine cutouts. And I didn't know exactly what would suit her." Naomi was so excited that Danielle had responded warmly to the present. At another point in the interview Naomi said, "Today she said the coolest thing. When I gave her the journal I made, she said, 'I have to get you something.' It was a good thing she said that. It made me feel like she cared more or there was more of a connection." Naomi had reached out, taking the risk to do something a friend might do, and Danielle responded by communicating her desire to take on a friend-like role too.

This gift was the beginning of Danielle seeing Naomi in a new light. The gift-giving in itself communicated that Naomi wanted to go beyond the role of academic

support. By covering the journal with things she thought Danielle might like, Naomi showed that she was trying to get to know Danielle's interests and preferences. By giving her something to bring home and use, Naomi demonstrated that she wanted to be a part of Danielle's life outside of the school building. And by choosing a journal as a gift, Naomi communicated that she believed that Danielle's thoughts and feelings about her life experiences were important.

#### Danielle and Naomi in the After School Mentoring Program in the Spring

The spring brought great changes in Naomi and Danielle's relationship. Naomi began the semester afraid that "she didn't want anything to do with me" because Danielle had canceled out on going to a basketball game with Naomi one weekend at the beginning of the semester. This would have been their first "outing" together. Soon thereafter they did have an opportunity to be together without the close presence of all the other pairs and engage in a more informal activity.

At the start of spring semester I suggested to the group at Chesterfield that they sign out of the snack room and just indicate where they would be in the school, on the grounds, or next door at the public library rather than having everyone automatically move into the school library. This was the same procedure that I had used in Stapleton and Bradbury in the fall and I had begun to wonder if having all the pairs in the same place in Chesterfield was limiting the development of their relationships. In February Danielle and Naomi decided to go to the school library and make Valentine's cards. Although I did not formally observe them that week, Naomi wrote on her log sheet that they ended up being fairly alone and began sharing stories about their lives. Naomi

**began her reflection paper about this session with “Well, I have some exciting news! Danielle and I had a really great session!”**

**Their relationship had begun to change. The next week Danielle was working on her social studies report, putting facts on different note cards, and Naomi was drawing. While they were working, Danielle suggested that sometime in the spring they could paint and decorate some boxes like she had done at home last year with her mother. Danielle wanted to reenact an at home, mother-daughter event with Naomi at school. Just Danielle’s suggesting that Naomi and she do this seemed to indicate that Danielle was seeing Naomi as a potential friend. Through this suggestion, Danielle was helping create a new role for herself and for Naomi through a shared activity. Naomi, often struggling to find a role for herself when Danielle was focused on completing her homework and sometimes not needing much assistance, jumped at the opportunity to do something new with Danielle. I observed them the following week.**

**On March 4 Naomi walked in with a plastic shopping bag. She set it down on the table in front of Danielle. As Naomi brought out two hexagonal paper boxes covered with orange and black designs, newspaper, red, blue and yellow oil paints, brushes and two frisbees as pallets, Danielle reached into her bookbag and deposited a plastic container of ivory paint, decalogue varnish, glue, and Christmas stickers on the table. They stared, looking at each other’s supplies. After talking about the different supplies, each decided to paint the outside of her box.**

**As they began to paint, they started to talk. For the first time I had witnessed, each participated extensively in the conversation. Danielle was not distracted by the**

activity and Naomi shared more about herself and asked more door-opening questions. As Danielle was mixing colors on the frisbee pallet, Naomi remarked, "I really like that color." Danielle responded in a soft and slow voice, "Thanks. I like mixing colors." Danielle continued swirling the paint, strands of yellow and blue and red still visible. "I like when they haven't totally mixed. What's your favorite color?" Naomi asked. "Blue," Danielle replied. Naomi revealed, "Mine's sky blue. Kind of like this, but brighter. I don't know, it changes." This brief exchange about favorite colors proved to be an important part of a pivotal experience for Danielle. Danielle realized that Naomi and she were alike in one way and she would use this commonality in the coming weeks as she built a more friendship-like relationship with Naomi.

While they painted, the conversation continued. Naomi asked about what Danielle was doing in school and even shared that she had recently given a speech in one of her college courses. In response to a question about what she was reading in school, Danielle retold a mystery story about a murder on a train. At the end of the story Naomi asked Danielle, "Have you ever been on a train?" This question opened the door for Danielle to relate the story to her own experiences and helped them learn more about each other. Danielle answered, "At the zoo" and then added, "And at Disney World." Naomi wondered aloud, "Who took you?" And Danielle replied, "My grandparents and my brother and sister were there, too." Naomi then talked about her own visit to Disney World. They had found something else they had in common. Naomi related, "I got lost when I went. I was with my grandmother. She said you could go off and explore. I came back to the place where I thought we were supposed to meet. We didn't meet up

until six hours later. We met at the hotel. I was like ahhh! This is kind of nerve wracking!" Danielle likewise shared about her trip, beginning, "We all went together. My grandmother is legally blind." Naomi quickly responded with surprise, "So is my grandmother." Danielle asked, "Does she have a seeing eye dog?" Again they had found a connection between them. Naomi and Danielle started to compare the histories of their grandmothers' disability. Imitating how Naomi had shared an emotional memory, Danielle talked about things that had happened on her trip.

Danielle and Naomi talked easily throughout this activity. Danielle revealed more in this conversation than she ever had before. Her answers were lengthier; she picked up where she had left off after Naomi interjected a comment. They related to each other's experiences and found that they had things in common. In future weeks when Danielle did her homework a couple of times during the after school program, Naomi continued to ask if Danielle needed help, to encourage her to study for tests, and to check how she was doing in her classes. On the surface they maintained the previous roles of student and homework companion or helper. On the other hand, their knowledge of one another as whole people had expanded. This conversation had helped Naomi move into other areas of Danielle's life and showed that she could relate to them. While Danielle realized that perhaps Naomi could be more to her than a homework helper, Naomi was open to slipping into the role of friend at any time.

Following this time of more extended conversation, Danielle's understanding of Naomi expanded even more during a visit to the university. During the last week in March, Danielle came to the university for the "Women in Science Poster Session." This

was an event for Women's History month that each girl from the six schools involved in Project Mentor had the opportunity to attend. Bussing was provided and most girls did attend, chaperoned by their school liaisons. After the pairs looked at the posters of research and talked to the female graduate students about their projects, the girls were allowed to go around campus with their partners. Naomi and Danielle went to see Naomi's dormitory room. From this visit Danielle had a new vision of Naomi as a real person like herself who went to school and lived in a little room with another student.

The next week Danielle symbolized how much more she knew about Naomi in the form of two gifts. In the final interview Naomi explained that on April 1 "she gave me this mailbox that she had painted." Danielle had painted the mailbox blue, Naomi's favorite color, and had labeled it with Naomi's name and her roommate's name. In addition to the mailbox, Danielle gave Naomi "a photo album. It had dog pictures on the cover because she knows I have a dog and I have lots of pictures of him. The first second she saw me she was like, 'Come over here! I have something for you.'" From the beginning of their relationship Naomi had seen them both as animal lovers and asked frequently about Danielle's kittens. In previous weeks Naomi had shared pictures of her dog and was disappointed when Danielle kept forgetting to bring in pictures of the kittens.

These gifts symbolized a new connection between them, reminding them both of the painting they had done together, their conversations about pets, and the visit to the university dormitory. By choosing these particular gifts, Danielle was demonstrating that their time together was meaningful for her, that she had attended to Naomi's likes and

interests, and that she cared for Naomi. The gifts also served as a reminder of the other person when they were not physically with the other person. In this way, the presents moved where the other person couldn't, into the partners' home, present every day, symbolizing a connection that reached beyond an after school program.

The pattern of gift giving continued between them during the last month and a half of the mentoring program for sixth grade. For example, for Easter Naomi sponge-painted a terra cotta pot blue, again using their favorite color and representing their shared painting memory, and filled it with colored cellophane and candy. They both talked in their final interviews about receiving presents from the other person. Gift-giving seemed to be a significant act of affection between them, acts that transformed how they could be in the other person's life.

At the end of the semester Naomi went to Danielle's birthday party and got to see the louder, sillier, at-home Danielle. She watched her interact with two friends and talked to her grandparents. During the final after school session Naomi was one of a few undergraduates who were available, so she spent time with Danielle and two other girls in the program that had been the other guests at the party. The girls giggled and teased each other and the previously very, very quiet and understated Danielle was making jokes in an English accent. Naomi said to me in a pleasantly surprised voice as we walked out, "I really got to see a different side to Danielle!" This end of the year seemed to be just the beginning in terms of their exploring how they might play more than one role in each other's life.

### **Danielle's Perspective in the Spring**

During the interview at the end of April, Danielle seemed to take a broadened perspective on Naomi's role. At the beginning of the interview Danielle described Naomi as "nice. Well like, if I tell her I have a test the next day, she'll ask if I need help with it. For holidays, she gets me gifts. For homework, if I don't understand it, she helps me." She seemed to be interpreting Naomi's actions as demonstrations of caring. Although Danielle still perceived Naomi as a school work helper, she talked more about how they had fun together at the end of the spring semester than she had at the end of the fall semester. For example, Danielle said in response to a question about what she liked most about being with Naomi, "Well, that we have fun and like we can talk about stuff." Her happiness with being with Naomi seemed to revolve less around the fact that she was getting her homework done in the spring. She was beginning to see Naomi as someone she could do other things with and she enjoyed doing these things. These experiences doing activities together other than homework was broadening Danielle's perception of Naomi and the role she could take on in Danielle's life.

Unlike the interview at the end of the first semester, there were no indications in this interview that Danielle had any reservations about being in the after school program. When I asked Danielle if she ever thought about Naomi when they were not meeting, she answered, "Yeah. Because like at home I don't know, my brother's loud and he can be mean, and my sister's annoying, and my mom is just my mom. I like to get away from them and do fun stuff." Later in the interview she remarked, "When I'm bored I might think about her because we do fun stuff together." Their time together was now fulfilling



the desires of Danielle's Imperial Self to have fun. By the end of the school year Naomi was no longer just a nice person who helped her get her homework done, she could be a partner in fun activities and someone to exchange presents with. For a person at stage 2, this was a friendship type of relationship.

The most telling part of the interview, in terms of revealing how Danielle perceived Naomi's role, was the end. When I asked Danielle what were some of the high points and low points in her relationship with Naomi, she responded, "We mostly had fun. We like to talk to each other. We've always had a good time. We've never had a fight or disagreed so she'd be upset." I think it is significant that Danielle responded to this question describing their relationship in terms of a friendship. During the interview I wondered aloud if there were any certain moments she'd remember and Danielle explained, "I don't know about always remember, I tend to forget. Probably painting those boxes. Today we went to the library and picked out a Where's Waldo book and tried looking for him. I think I'll remember that for a while." To Danielle, the times that they did together things that she might have done with a friend her own age were more memorable than the many times she did her homework during the after school program.

We ended the interview talking about significant moments. I asked Danielle if there were any turning points when the relationship changed and she said, "When we were doing the boxes we talked and got to know each other better." Through their conversations, they found out that they had some things in common. Danielle enjoyed most "That we can talk about neat stuff that we both like. Like we both think it would be neat to live back in the 1800's and wear long dresses. Some of the stuff we think the

same. It's cool." Danielle was clearly happy to have found commonalities with Naomi. She had slowly begun to see Naomi as someone she had some things in common with, someone like a friend.

At the end of April Danielle never described herself as having a particular role during the after school sessions with Naomi. On the other hand, she talked about having fun with Naomi as if she were a stage 2 friend or partner in shared activities and she talked about receiving help from Naomi on homework as if she were a tutee. What Danielle did do, though, was describe how she acted around Naomi in comparison to her family and friends and schoolmates. I think that within these descriptions lay an indication of the role Danielle took on in her relationship with Naomi and how that changed throughout the year.

In general Danielle described herself as a shy person. She implied that it usually took her a long time to feel comfortable enough around people before she could say anything to them. On the other hand, she noticed that she acted different in different contexts. When asked to describe herself, Danielle said, "I think I'm quiet, but with my family I can talk to them and I'm louder there because I've known them for a long time. A lot of other people think I'm quiet too. I don't think I'm dumb, but I don't think I'm super smart, like a brainiak, but I think I'm smart." Danielle also described how, similar to being with her family, she could be more relaxed around her friends. She explained, "I'm not really quiet around my friends. I can talk to them. I don't have to worry about anything. Like in school I have to worry about getting good grades. But with my friends things don't matter really." To Danielle, school was a place for seriousness. If you did

not behave, you might get punished and get a bad grade. At school Danielle was fearful and shy; she felt surrounded by people who she did not know well. In less formal settings, like at home and with friends, Danielle could be spontaneous. The only constraint on her behavior was her mother's rules and a sibling "telling on" her.

During the interview Danielle began to try to distinguish how she acted after school with Naomi as compared to during the school day or at home. By describing her actions, Danielle was describing her comfort level and relationship with Naomi.

Danielle said, "At home I can talk in a louder voice. With Naomi I'm not as shy as I am at school, if someone I don't really know talks to me. With Naomi I'm not really loud, but I'm not too quiet either." I think that in retrospect Danielle recognized that she had become more comfortable around Naomi by the end of the spring semester. At the same time, Danielle knew that she wasn't completely relaxed in the after school mentoring program. She had just begun to move from the totally focused on school work, only responding when spoken to, student doing supervised seatwork kind of role, to showing more sides of herself when the after school program ended for the year.

During the April interview, Danielle seemed to indicate that her relationship with Naomi had changed. She tried to describe these changes by distinguishing between the beginning of their relationship and the present. Danielle created a contrast to capture the change:

In the beginning I was shy and stuff. I forgot her name couple of times. But then we'd only do homework because we didn't know each other well. But now we know each other pretty well so we can do other stuff. We both like to paint. I know she has dog and brother and lives in New Hampshire. She knows I have two cats, brother and sister. We both know stuff we like.

Danielle associated the activities they did together with how well they knew each other. Danielle also explained that "when we did homework we'd talk to get to know each other better" and thought that painting the boxes was turning point. So in Danielle's mind, the activities were both a means to getting to know each other and an indication of how well they knew each other.

As they got to know each other, Danielle realized that she and Naomi had some things in common. She began to see Naomi in a new light and began to interact with Naomi differently. Danielle started to demonstrate affection for Naomi in the form of gifts. Her first gifts for Naomi, the blue mailbox and pet photo album, showed that she had noticed their similarities: they both liked the color blue and pets. I think that Danielle's talk of the similarities between them in the April interview marked a change in how she saw Naomi. By April they had passed through an entrance into potentially new roles. Danielle knew that they were no longer just homework companions, they were two people with shared likes and ideas, two people who were gift-givers and gift-receivers. Naomi had become more like a friend even though Danielle was not as relaxed during the after school program as she would be if she were with a friend at home.

#### Naomi's Perspective in the Spring

When I interviewed Naomi again in April, she struggled to describe Danielle's role. Naomi said,

She definitely isn't the dominant role in how we are. I don't know how to describe it. She shares things. So, I don't know. She's my mentee, I think. I

wouldn't exactly say she takes on the role of friend, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Like she doesn't always ask me a question after I ask her a question. But she does do little things like pouring me a glass of soda (when she gets herself one, without asking first if she should), little things that show she is a friend.

Naomi talked throughout the interview about how Danielle in general seemed to be thinking of Naomi more, recognizing her presence, and initiating different kinds of interactions. Naomi saw that Danielle was wanting to expand her experiences with Naomi beyond the scope of receiving help with her homework.

One of the most memorable moments for Naomi was in February, when Danielle suggested that they do a craft together. When I asked Naomi about whether Danielle had ever said something or done something that she would never forget, Naomi smiled and said,

I don't think I'll forget how excited she was last week when she gave me the present and how, when we did the boxes, she thought of the idea. That was really impressive to me. She suggested it one week and then I bought the boxes and brought in the paint. She had done it before. Out of the blue she suggested it. I was psyched. It shows she was thinking about what we were doing and that she wanted to put forth something and put in an extra effort. That she was willing to contribute to the relationship we have.

Because Naomi was predominantly a stage 3 Interpersonal Self, she interpreted Danielle's gifts and suggestion for an activity as a sign that their relationship was important to her and that she cared about Naomi. Later in the interview Naomi said that one of the high points in their relationship was when Danielle remembered to bring in the picture of her cats because "that shows she thinks about things we're doing outside of the hour we spend together." Naomi had found the signs that she was looking for and felt confident that Danielle valued the time they spent together.

In April Naomi also described the role she was trying to take on in her relationship with Danielle. She explained, "Well I definitely try to be a friend, and also someone who tries to guide her, even if it's just someone who reminds her to study for her science test. And I'm there for her to talk to. I'm someone who will listen. And also do whatever, chit-chat. Help her with her homework or doing a fun activity or something like that." Naomi felt she had become a companion for Danielle, someone who could assist her, and someone who encouraged her academic achievement. Although she never relinquished the role of being an academic support, Naomi was becoming more able to take on multiple roles. When I asked Naomi what she liked most about being with Danielle, she replied, "I like knowing that she knows that she has someone that she can count on, even if I'm not there all the time. I think she realizes that I'm part of her support system, so that's a good feeling." Being mostly at a stage 3, Naomi was always interpreting how she thought Danielle saw her. Because Danielle was becoming a more active participant in their relationship, suggesting activities and talking and giving gifts, Naomi thought that Danielle trusted her. Overall, Naomi felt successful by the end of the program. She wrote in her final paper: "If my relationship with Danielle were rough or going horribly I think I would doubt my ability to form relationships like this, to be a role model and mentor. But this hasn't happened and I've gained a dose of confidence!"

Naomi had struggled with how to develop a level of trust and openness between her and Danielle. When asked to talk about the high points and low points in their relationship, Naomi said that the "low points were the awkwardness in the beginning. It felt like I was stumbling through to do what I needed to do to help her open up, but that

came with time." Naomi had also struggled with wanting to be something other than a teacher or friend and wasn't sure what that might mean. In April Naomi believed that being in the role of "mentor" had challenged her to develop new communication skills. She explained that,

I've always been able to interact with people pretty easily. But Danielle's brought out a part of me that's really had to think about what to ask her. Think about how I can get to know her and get her to feel comfortable around me. Just asking questions and listening. And letting her talk. And also realizing that I may not think that certain activities are really beneficial to our relationship, but they really are having an effect.

By the end of the school year, Naomi and Danielle had shared a greater variety of experiences. She had more opportunities to be a fun companion, to share about her own preferences, to encourage Danielle's academic achievement, and to be a listener when Danielle shared about school and home.

As Naomi and Danielle started having more extended conversations in the spring, Naomi began to learn more about Danielle's family background. Because Danielle's life experiences were very different from her own, Naomi was often surprised by what Danielle said. When I asked Naomi what Danielle would say or do that was confusing to her, she answered, "If anything is confusing, it would be when she tells me something that I had no clue was going on in her life. And it kind of floors me for a moment. And I say, 'Oh, OK.'" These times when Danielle shocked her were very memorable moments for Naomi. In response to a question about something Danielle said or did that she would never forget, Naomi replied, "Just the little things that she says have gone on in her life. That when I was growing up, I didn't have clue about anything like that. My

parents sheltered me so much. Just hearing her experiences have opened up my eyes." Naomi was coming to know the nature of Danielle's life as a the oldest child of an unwed mother with two other children living in a housing project. What was normal for Danielle, living from paycheck to paycheck, not having two parents, was disturbing to Naomi.

In addition to differences in their family background, Naomi had begun to realize that people in Danielle's family and even Danielle herself might make different choices than Naomi and her family make. Naomi described how sometimes she disagreed with things that Danielle said, but never voiced her own opinions out of respect for their differences. Naomi told the story of one such occurrence:

She did tell me her mom placed an ad in the personals to try to find someone to date. And Danielle didn't express any opinion. And I'm not big fan of that. She mentioned that this man called and he had money, and she knew he had money, and that was big part of why she wanted her mom to date him. Which I don't really agree with. But given her life, that is all she can think or hope given her life as of yet. She wanted him to take her out for icecream. Or she wanted to go along on the date to get icecream. I guess the only thing is that I would hope she wouldn't think she would have to depend on someone else for money or for anything.

While Danielle as an Imperial Self saw this event as an opportunity for icecream and the man as a means to receiving things she wanted, Naomi interpreted the story as a metaphor for dependency and hope in an external savior. Looking at the story of the icecream date from a stage 3 perspective, Naomi worried that Danielle was learning to look for hope of financial security in relationships rather than in a career path.

Naomi was beginning to understand that lack of financial security affected Danielle and her mother's life in many ways that were foreign to Naomi. In time Naomi



learned that Danielle had a different plan for her future than the one Naomi was living. When I asked Naomi how she felt about Danielle she said, "She mentioned going to college maybe a year after high school, taking a year off. I hope she does go on in school and get a degree. And not have to worry when the next paycheck is coming, which is how they are living right now." Naomi recognized that her family and Danielle's family had made different life decisions and wondered what life pattern Danielle might follow. The differences between them were a source of concern for Naomi. She wished that Danielle's home life were more like her own. Once she became aware of the differences between them, Naomi was challenged to become comfortable with those differences.

By April Naomi had come to know Danielle much better and had learned a lot more about the details of Danielle's home life. Naomi realized that she was spending time with a child who was growing up in very different circumstances than she had experienced and that those experiences made her a very different person than Naomi. At the same time, Naomi could see that Danielle also was just a young girl, a person like Naomi who enjoyed crafts and giving presents. When I asked what she had learned from Danielle, Naomi said, "I learned that kids are really strong. They can be pretty resilient. Even though different things affect them in their lives, they still can maintain a sense of innocence and they still can grow." Naomi thought that "the whole experience of having a mentee is helpful. Just to realize that kids are being affected every day by things that I didn't have in my life. But she's also doing really well for all the different factors that have influenced her life, so that's encouraging to see." Through meeting with Danielle over eight months, coming to know her and relate to her, Naomi was beginning to

experience second hand how social issues affect real lives. The complex dynamic of human volition, personality, environmental influences, and development was coming through in the life of Danielle and became more apparent to Naomi as she became a part of Danielle's life.

### The Environmental Context of Bradbury Middle School

Bradbury Middle School was a public 6 through 8 grade school located just beyond the center of a medium sized town. The center of town was bisected by a small highway that ran through a number of towns. To an automobile driver, the towns did not seem to have distinct borders as the small shops of downtown would run into larger shopping plazas and strip malls. Just two blocks from downtown, the school was surrounded by large lawns and sports fields bordered by tree-lined sidewalks and neighborhoods. On the inside, the school had a cavernous feel. The walls were brown tile covered cinder block punctuated by dark brown wooden classroom doors and rows of metal lockers. The classrooms had tall, wooden-framed windows. The library was on the second floor, fully equipped with computers that could access the Internet. Each teacher also had a computer for personal use at his or her desk.

The sixth grade teachers were arranged in teams. The students typically had two to three classroom teachers who taught most of their classes. The curriculum made the school seem like a private school. For example, each student learned to play the recorder as a part of the music curriculum, and in sixth grade the students were introduced to Latin. Modern foreign language instruction began in seventh grade.

There were 9 girls in Project Mentor at Bradbury Middle School. Most of them

came from working class families. Half of the girls lived with one parent due to divorce. The girls on the whole were average students. Each girl was recommended to the after school program by the fifth grade teachers.

At Bradbury Middle School the Home Economic teacher was the liaison. She was not familiar with the girls in the program because the students were not able to take Home Economics until 7th grade. At the beginning of the school year the school liaison organized a “get-to-know each other” craft activity on the first day. She taught the group how to make an origami box and asked them to decorate it and fill it with stars on which they would print special qualities about themselves. The liaison also created the list of pairs through random assignment by the second session. Within a couple of weeks, though, practices for the school play began. The liaison informed me that this was a commitment for her and she would be unable to be present during the after school program. Due to family and personal issues, the liaison was not able to regularly attend to Project Mentor even after the school play was over. I took on the role of facilitator for the rest of the school year: making weekly announcements, taking attendance, answering questions, and giving advice.

The mentoring program began right at the end of the school day at 2pm. The sixth graders would come immediately to the Home Economics room and sit or prepare snacks until the undergraduates arrived. The classroom was a long, rectangular room. To the right of the entrance to the room, there were four heavy rectangular tables pushed together and surrounded by chairs, filling almost half the room. Two free-standing bookcases filled with books and supplies separated the kitchen area and a single round

table from the large rectangular tables and the classroom entrance. At the far end of the room were stoves, ovens, countertops, and cupboards. Sewing machines were against the wall farthest from the kitchen, each with its own desk. Additional bookcases marked off an area for the teacher's desk by the windows. Tall, wooden-framed windows lined the wall opposite the blackboard looking outside onto a green lawn. The liaison always had a supply of frozen juice and popcorn kernels that the girls were free to get out and prepare when they arrived.

When the undergraduates arrived, I would make a few announcements and then the pairs could go anywhere in the school or on school grounds. They would sign out on the board if they left the classroom. On a sunny day some of the pairs would sit, talking and working, outside on the lush lawn. Most of the pairs remained in the classroom for the majority of the time. The pairs would typically work at the large square of pushed together rectangular tables. If a pair really needed to concentrate, they might move to the circular table that sat behind the bookcase in the cooking section of the classroom. The sixth graders in this group interacted freely with each other as the pairs met, often making comments to each other, carrying on conversations, and sharing supplies. In general the pairs in this school engaged in less academic tutoring than those in the other two schools. Many pairs pursued crafts together, journal writing, and cooking. In fact, one pair each week would do some kind of baking activity and would serve cookies or brownies or cake to the rest of the group.

This group of sixth graders was the first to visit the university. The liaison had mentioned at the beginning of the year that she thought it would be good for the girls to

meet the undergraduates at college one week. The sixth graders remembered this idea and brought it up near the end of the semester. Three of the mothers were able to drive and the girls came to the university for the last after school session in December. They were allowed to go on a tour of the campus with their undergraduate partner, see where she lived, and then the whole group met for dinner in the cafeteria. Whole group activities continued in the spring. In January one undergraduate came up to me at the beginning of an after school session and asked if she could lead the group in a long-term goal-setting activity that she had learned in one of her classes. Later in the spring, a pair planned an egg hunt for the rest of the group. Another undergraduate organized a roller skating date one Saturday.

### An Introduction to Ruth and Bett

#### Bett, the sixth grader

Out of all girls from the six schools involved in the mentoring program, Bett was the only sixth grader who had both parents attend the information night with her. Her parents were outspoken, friendly, and supportive of the program. Bett's mother drove a school bus for the school district and her father was a salesman. She was the youngest of two children and had an older sister. Her sister was very strong in math, but Bett professed that she didn't like math. According to Bett, both of her parents had dyslexia, her father had ADHD, and her mother struggled with manic depression. Although I was unable to interview the teachers who recommended Bett for the program, I believe that their concerns for her centered on other students teasing her because of her heavy weight, her average grades, and her silence during class discussions.

When I first interviewed Bett early in the school year she was talkative and open, articulate and thoughtful about her experiences. She seemed confident and happy. What I learned over time by seeing Bett in different social situations was that, although she could talk to adults confidently and express herself abstractly and perceptively, Bett acted very differently around her peers. For example, during the after school program, I occasionally facilitated group discussions. In these situations, I saw a different side to Bett. She would wrap her arms around herself, slouch forward, and keep her eyes down in silence. Bett did not participate in any of the discussions. At other times, as everyone casually interacted with one another during the after school program, I heard her respond defensively to the other girls, saying for example, "I know what you meant!" even when nothing negative was implied.

Bett was an obese child. During the spring semester she revealed that she was diagnosed with a nervous eating disorder and was involved in therapy outside of school. Additionally, she participated in small group discussions with a couple of other girls with similar issues facilitated by the counselor at Bradbury Middle School. When I interviewed Bett in the spring, she revealed how deeply she cared about what other kids thought of her. It was apparent that she was aware of their every reaction to her. She noticed who said hi to her, when, and using what tone of voice. During the after school program, Bett's mood was usually dependent on how she had interpreted the other students' reactions to her during that day. She talked to Ruth extensively about her concerns over these interpersonal or social issues of her middle school experience. Bett desperately wanted to conform, blend in, and be popular among her peers.

The Subject-Object Interviews indicate that Bett was between stages, with both a complete stage 2 Imperial Self and a stage 3 Interpersonal Self. On the one hand, her Interpersonal Self was very attuned to emotions in relationships and defined her Self through her relationships. At the same time, her Imperial Self was concerned only with her own needs and desires in those relationships. For example, Bett wanted to be a part of the group and was reading messages of acceptance and disapproval in actions of her peers. Because some of her peers were not nice to her in school, Bett believed that she was not “cool enough” or “skinny enough” for the “popular people.” While her Imperial Self reasoned in a cause and effect manner, Bett’s Interpersonal Self was caught in the way she interpreted the subtleties of their reactions to her. When she did make friends, Bett had very high expectations of them. She expected her friends to notice and recognize what she was feeling, which represents a stage 3 expectation, and respond in a way that would make her happy, which was congruent with her Imperial Self. If they did not recognize when she was feeling down or not feeling a part of the group, Bett would become angry and sad, wondering “why would you do this to me?” In contrast, being included in group hugs at camp, “moved and touched” her. Being part of a group hug was the concrete evidence of acceptance.

Bett’s conceptual level score was a 1.0 on the pre-test and a 0.7 on the post-test. Bett’s responses reflected some typically level one traits. For example, she believed that rules were necessary. She also described feeling afraid to act when unsure because people might laugh at her if she were wrong. On the other hand, some of her responses reflected the impulsivity of a level 0.5. For example, she wrote that she usually doesn’t

listen when told what to do by a particular parent and gets “very upset” and “hates being criticized.”

### Ruth, the undergraduate

Ruth was a second year undergraduate, also the youngest of two children. She had one older brother who was in his last year at the same university. Ruth’s mother worked with medical records and her father was a manager in a company. Ruth was close to her parents and described how supportive they were of her and how they encouraged her independence. Ruth lived alone in a dormitory on campus. She had started out as a science major and then decided to change to an English and Business major.

Ruth was outgoing, always the first to participate, and distinctly herself. Even during the second week of the after school program when we were going around the table saying each other’s names in conjunction with another word beginning with the same letter, Ruth boldly suggested “Kazowie” for Kristen, an onomatopoeia from the old Batman television show. She never was shy or visibly self-conscious. In fact, Ruth could be described as assertively independent. She didn’t seem to be affected by what other people thought or did. She expressed her opinions and pursued her own goals and interests. Even though Ruth was an independent thinker, she did admit to sometimes feeling susceptible to the image of ideal feminine beauty portrayed by the media. Some self-criticism aside, Ruth felt good about being active and generally healthy. She enjoyed exercise and would try new sports, like taking racquetball lessons in the spring, without much self-consciousness. Ruth was distinctly herself and liked herself.



During the Subject-Object Interviews Ruth demonstrated a dominant stage 4, Institutional Self, way of making meaning from her experiences. She was thrilled by the opportunity to see how different ideas connected the different subject areas she was learning. She enjoyed engaging people in conversations, sharing and defining differences in perspective. Ruth was happy with the choices she was making and making choices according to her own principles. If there was any indication of a stage 3 Interpersonal Self, it was an afterthought or a concern to be considered and tamed.

Ruth's conceptual level score was 2.0 on the pre-test and a 2.5 on the post-test. Ruth's reasoning was sophisticated. In fact, the reliable rater, to whom I sent 10% of the tests, scored Ruth a 2.2 on the pre-test. Ruth's thinking went beyond a simple notion of right and wrong. For example, she wrote about the necessity to "bend or even break rules to accommodate unique situations." When criticized, Ruth described trying "to consider the source and genuinely weigh the motive and accuracy of the statement." In the case of a disagreement, Ruth wrote that she would assess the nature of the differences before engaging in a debate. She would try "to determine if it is a disagreement based on values or opinions. If so, then those disagreements aren't worth arguing about, so I don't try. If there's a disagreement based on facts, I try to figure out what those facts are and make sure I'm right before I try to convince the other person." In addition to Ruth, only one other undergraduate out of a total of 74 in both the experimental and comparison groups scored a 2.5 on the PCM test.

#### Bett and Ruth in the After School Program in the Fall

After the first couple weeks of the after school program, Bett and Ruth were one

pair that usually went off by themselves. One afternoon in October I found them outside in front of the school sitting on the grass together. When I observed them, Bett was very active in asking for help from Ruth on specific things while Ruth was acting as a tutor. In preparation for their time together, that week Bett had compiled a list of concepts from school that had confused her. She handed Ruth a little spiral notebook of colored pages with a list of topics and terms from math and science.

While Ruth was reading the list in palm-sized spiral notebook, Bett read over her shoulder and commented, "I didn't understand that. I got it wrong on my homework." Ruth got right to work teaching Bett about angles. "These are my favorite things to do in geometry. What you're doing now you'll do as a sophomore in high school," commented Ruth. Bett raised her eyebrows and said in a disbelieving tone, "Just that?" "And a little more, but if you get this," Ruth replied.

Ruth reviewed the concept of 360, 180, and 90 degrees and then explained how to determine the degrees of one angle, given the other on a 180 degree arc. After making some drawings, she demonstrated one problem solution. Then she drew another problem. Ruth prompted Bett, "What would this angle be? Take the total and subtract the part you know." Bett did the computation orally. Since she had completed that problem correctly, Ruth asked, "Want to try another like that?" Bett responded with, "Sure." Ruth drew a picture of a right angle. "If you know this angle is 80, what's the little part?" "90 degrees," Bett answered. So Ruth continued, "If you know the total is 90.." Ruth wrote down in the notebook  $a+b=90$  and  $80+b=90$ . Bett quickly said, "10 degrees."

Ruth seemed very comfortable in this tutoring role in the fall. Bett came prepared with questions for her and Ruth helped her understand different concepts. Ruth and Bett also spent time each week talking about their likes and dislikes, interests, life at school, and families. Throughout the fall I'd see them talking on the steps, lounging next to each other, smiling and chatting. They were also often in front of the school sitting on the green grass. They even looked like they could have been related to one another. Bett and Ruth were the same height, both with very dark hair, brown eyes, and fair skin. Of all the pairs I observed in the fall, this pair seemed very spontaneous, open and honest with one another during conversations. I never observed any uncomfortable silences or awkward moments. They also never appeared to censor their dialogue when I was present. I would approach hesitantly when the conversation seemed to involve personal topics, but Bett would always continue talking in the same tone as if my presence was not a distraction or a concern.

One time in the fall I joined Ruth and Bett on the steps while they were talking. Bett was describing, "When I get angry I like to go up to my room and listen to music. After a while I come back down and I feel better." Ruth asked, "What do you listen to?" Bett replied, "WERZ." "What do they play? Rock and Top 10? Wallflowers?" Ruth wondered. Bett explained, "I used to like rap. I'd ask my mom to put it on in the car and my mom hated it!" Ruth shared, "My parents are into country now. All you hear is Reba! You know how I told you how my mom would turn off the TV at 9am on Saturdays and we would clean the house? She'd put on music, but now all it is is country!" Like many other conversations I observed, this conversation was rapid and

light, moving in a lively way from subject to subject.

In mid November I observed Ruth and Bett while they each personalized a binder. After suggesting that they move to the back table together, Ruth reached into her bag and pulled out markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, tape, transparent paper to cover things with, two binders, stickers, and construction paper. Ruth explained that they could each cover their binder with things about themselves and then cover it in transparent paper. If they had time, she also had a science experiment for them to do at the end.

Bett pulled out a geometric design and began coloring it. She said a friend had drawn it for her. Meanwhile, Ruth went through a magazine of athletic clothing and cut out pictures and put them in a pile that both she and Bett could choose from. After Bett was done coloring and cutting out the geometric design, Ruth asked if she wanted any of the things she had cut out from the magazine. Bett replied, "The skier is cool, but I don't ski and I won't ever ski. I'm scared of heights." Ruth shared, "You know what's funny? My brother is, too, but he's a good skier. He's afraid of water slides." Bett continued, "I don't like water slides. My father loves them. I get it from my mother."

Later in the conversation Ruth explained that she got the magazine from her aunt who loves to bicycle and who bicycled across the United States with her husband one summer. Bett responded with a story about how she was almost hit by a car because she didn't look before going across the street and that she doesn't ride her bike any more because of that experience. This was the first conversation in which the differences between Bett and Ruth were accentuated through the course of their conversation. On the other hand, Bett also gave a clear indications that she was invested in the

relationship.

While they were working, I made an announcement to the whole group to remind the undergraduates to tape record one of their after school meetings if they hadn't yet completed an assignment on communication skills. Since it was already November and most pairs had already tape-recorded, Bett turned to Ruth in a teasing voice and said, "Will we ever tape record?" Ruth replied, "Oh, yeah. I forgot about that assignment. I guess we should next week." "Just thinking of you," Bett explained. Ruth countered, "Good that someone's looking out for me!"

Bett and Ruth continued drawing, cutting, and talking. Ruth commented, "So the play's coming up." Bett was supposed to have been in the stage crew, but was missing some of the practices because of the after school mentoring program. Bett replied, "They had it already. I'm not in it. (A teacher) was supposed to tell me when I should be there." Wondering about Bett's feelings about this, Ruth asked, "That's too bad. Are you bummed you missed out?" Bett casually responded, "I saw it. I liked it. They are performing it for our class this week, so I'll see it again. I'm not too bummed." Then Bett decided she was going to put the name of her favorite television show on the binder. She asked Ruth, "Do you remember what it is?" Ruth replied in a joking and earnest tone, "Don't tell me. I know I know it!" Bett tried to spark her memory of when she told Ruth about the show, saying, "We were outside on the grass around the first week." Ruth remarked, "I know it surprised me at the time." Not able to wait any longer, Bett announced, "90210." Ruth wondered aloud, "What do you like about it?" Bett answered, "I'm not sure. My mom said there's a moral in every one if you look for it."

Ruth said, "It's kind of like a soap opera." Defending her favorite show, Bett said, "But not as bad as some of the others like, .." Again there was a difference of opinion between the two of them, but the conversation continued on pleasantly throughout the activity.

Near the end of the hour, Bett looked over at Ruth and asked out of the blue, "I have a question. Are you going to be in the program next year?" Ruth turned, surprised, and looked in Bett's eyes, "I think so. Some people have classes they have to take at different times, but I think I can." Bett ended the exchange with, "That'd be cool. Then I'd be used to someone and I wouldn't have to get used to someone." For Ruth, this was a significant moment. She would remember this brief dialogue in both the fall and the spring interviews. For the rest of the school year, Ruth would believe that being in the mentoring program with her was important to Bett.

### Perceptions of After School Mentoring Experiences

#### Interpreted through Developmental Theory

##### Through the Eyes of Bett

During the December interview, Bett was very positive about being in the after-school mentoring program. She thought that Ruth was "nice and smart. She's really friendly and cares about people." She described Ruth as "easy to talk to if you have a problem." Bett could "open up to her" even though "other people who I don't know well, I often don't share stuff with." Bett's Interpersonal Self believed that she could trust Ruth with her feelings and concerns and valued Ruth in this role. A "good friend" was just one of the ways Bett perceived Ruth's role; she also saw Ruth as having the role of "a person

helping a child who has problems with math and science." She believed that Ruth was also there to tutor her. She appreciated that Ruth "explains things really well when I ask her a question about my work."

By December Ruth seemed to be playing a couple of different roles in Bett's life. Bett said she had learned "more about math and science" and "how to be a good friend" from Ruth. In Bett's eyes, Ruth was a person trying to be a friend, someone to help her when academics were challenging, and someone with "lots of good ideas" who "likes to share them with me." She could be counted on as a "grown-up" friend to confide in and as a knowledgeable person to learn from. At the end of the interview Bett described mentoring as "It helps me with school. Get to make a new friend. It's fun!" She clearly enjoyed being with Ruth.

When I asked Bett what role she took on when with Ruth, she described herself as "a person who has problems doing math and science." Bett saw herself as the person in the relationship who needed help and she would seek it by "asking her (Ruth) questions about my work." In addition to being in the struggling student role, Bett also said that "I think I am a friend to her as well." Bett thought they were developing a friendship and acted as a stage 3 friend would, opening up to Ruth and sharing things with her.

Bett seemed like she wanted a close relationship with Ruth in the fall. She showed during conversations with Ruth that she was curious about Ruth and remembered what her hobbies and interests were. She attended the after school program each week. During the December interview she was positive in everything she said about Ruth and their time together. At this point, she seemed to overlook their differences.

### Through the Eyes of Ruth

Ruth thought of Bett as a "very ambitious" and "thoughtful" person in December. Earlier in the semester she had written in an October reflection paper: "Unlike some people her age, Bett is very aware of those around her. She has such intelligence and insight to understand the actions and feelings of other people that so many don't see. I am just very impressed with who she is." Ruth was seeing Bett's Interpersonal Self during their conversations. Because Bett could talk about emotions and relationships in complex ways, she seemed more mature than the other girls. Ruth also noticed that Bett was "very close to her family" and had not "hit the rebellion" stage yet.

Based on their experiences in the after school program together, Ruth said that Bett "opens up and lets people know who she is" when she trusts them but was surprised by how Bett would not participate in a group discussion with her peers. She wondered if perhaps Bett didn't think that "what she had to say is important" in group settings and hoped that through their own discussions, she would see that her thoughts were valued. In November Ruth wrote in a reflection paper: "The one area that I can think of that Bett confuses me is her relationship with other peers. She responds to them as if they are always going to say something mean to her. She always seems to be on guard, and doesn't give them a chance to cut her down, because she is there first. Then again, at certain times she can be very friendly with certain peers." During the fall Ruth was just beginning to suspect that Bett was having very different experiences growing up than she did. In one of her first reflection papers Ruth described herself in middle school and high school as involved in sports, successful academically, and having a group of friends.



As Bett confided in her more in the spring, Ruth would realize just how different school was for Bett.

When I asked Ruth in December what role Bett was taking on during mentoring, Ruth answered, "She is still really trying to feel it out. She's trying to figure out the role she is supposed to play. She's getting used to me being there as what she needs me to be. Sometimes she is looking to me to guide, like she thinks that I know what I am doing." Looking at Bett through the perspective of an Institutional Self, Ruth expected her to know her own goals and use Ruth as a support for achieving those goals. In December Ruth talked about how much she liked "when she thinks during the week about what we'll do on Monday. When she comes in with a question, or something she wants to do with me." Ruth also liked when Bett took on an attentive student role. She mentioned, "I like when we go over her homework. She seems to get it and goes through it well." Ruth wanted to be responsive to Bett but expected her to be active in garnering that academic support.

Ruth approached her time with Bett in a very goal-oriented way. For example, in December something that Ruth liked about their time together was that Bett "shows that she is serious about what we're doing, like I am, that she takes it serious too." She appreciated how Bett took initiative in their interactions, especially during conversation. Ruth especially liked the times "when we start in with good conversations. When she's really interested. She brings up a topic and gets started." Ruth wrote in an October reflection paper that "We have never had a conversation just for the purpose of filling time. Usually we both seem quite intent to learn something from the other person. We

spend time establishing how we are similar and different, from personal lives to study habits." Being an Institutional Self, defining the similarities and differences between herself and Bett was a part of the relationship building process. Conversations had a purpose for Ruth, they had them in order to understand who the other person was and how she thought about things.

In December Ruth was trying to get to know Bett more each week. She thought that "kind of proportionally each one of these meetings shows me more and more." Ruth placed herself in the role of responding to what Bett needed at the time. She said, "I like to be a support. Anything that she wants to say or go over." Ruth was ready to follow Bett's lead, but she also wanted to push her in new directions. Particularly indicative of her stage 4 way of understanding mentoring, Ruth tried to be both "a support and a little bit of a challenger. Get her to think about something she hasn't thought about before. Get her to interact with someone in a different way than she has before." Ruth had noticed that Bett was very reluctant to participate in group discussions and was not friendly towards the other students in the program, so she wanted "to help her become more comfortable in the group" but was not sure how to do this. Ruth was both trying to meet Bett's needs as she expressed them and searching out needs that Bett didn't recognize herself. "Trying to figure out what she needs and trying to be that for her" made mentoring "challenging" for Ruth.

By December Ruth had noticed that she and Bett were different in some ways. Hesitating and thinking while she spoke, Ruth mentioned during the December interview, "I don't want to say she is pessimistic, but I think in dealing with the other girls

she isn't as open because she doesn't know how they will be to her. It makes me uncomfortable when she isn't as open, not as friendly to the other girls." Ruth was learning from Bett that "people do interact differently. That that can also change." During the course of the semester Ruth had revisited her own history and decided, "I'm sure that in sixth grade I wasn't as outgoing as I am now. And that Bett may not be outgoing in the group right now, but that might change. That she may come into her own." Ruth concluded that, "Bett will need that space to change. That I need to give her that space." True to her Institutional Self, Ruth believed that Bett would find her own way and determine her own principles over time.

Because Bett was beginning to talk to Ruth about social issues that upset her, being what Bett needed was also "very emotional. When someone else is going through a difficult time, it's hard to be a support. To watch someone else go through all the highs and lows. It brings back emotions and it brings up new emotions. I think about what I've been through. I wonder how this is affecting me and how it is affecting her. It makes for a lot of thought provoking ideas." Ruth was beginning to look for whether or not their relationship was having a positive impact on Bett. She wanted Bett to begin to look at her experiences in a more positive light, as if she had more of an Institutional Self perspective on interpersonal relationships. Whether or not their relationship was impacting Bett's perspective in any way would become a greater concern for Ruth in the spring.

In December Ruth described looking forward each week "to being a bright spot in her (Bett's) afternoon." The brief exchange in the fall when Bett asked if she'd be in the

program next year was very significant to Ruth. She recalled it in both the December and April interviews when asked if Bett had ever said something or done something that she would never forget. Ruth had interpreted this comment to mean that "she wanted me around." She said in the December interview, "It really stuck in my mind how seriously she takes it. I find it welcoming."

#### Bett and Ruth in the After School Mentoring Program in the Spring

In the spring when I observed this pair, I noticed Bett being more negative whenever she and Ruth were engaged in an activity rather than a conversation about relationships. For example, during the first week in February one of the undergraduates led the whole group in a long-term goal-setting activity. Each person got a piece of paper and was supposed to draw a map of their lives and where they might be in 5, 10, and 15 years. They had to write on the map potential obstacles and some supports that might help them overcome the obstacles.

As soon as they were to begin working, Bett whispered to Ruth, "I can't draw people." This struck me as a surprising comment because in the fall Bett had shown Ruth a sketchbook of dresses she drew because she wanted to be a fashion designer when she grew up. Perhaps Bett believed that her drawing ability was only confined to clothing. Ruth suggested that she just make stick figures and proceeded to do so herself. Bett looked at Ruth's stick figure of herself and commented, "I don't think you look like that." Ruth retorted, "This is just a framework for my mentality. It's just a representation." Bett commented, "Whatever that means." Ruth tried to get Bett going on the activity by asking, "What are you going to be doing at 25?" Bett replied, "I'm not

sure. A lawyer." Ruth quickly concluded, "So you are going to be a lawyer." Bett continued, "So I'll major in law." "I think you have to major in something like pre-law. And then you go to graduate school for law," Ruth corrected. Then Bett whispered to Ruth. I could only hear Ruth's response, "It's not about drawing! It's about your goals. You don't even have to draw. You can just write it out." Bett drew on her paper and asked, "Do you like it?" Ruth responded, "It's what you want. You don't have to stress about it." Ruth seemed frustrated by Bett's lack of confidence and dislike for the activity.

As they continued to work on their life maps, Ruth would try to prompt Bett about each consecutive step. To help Bett think of obstacles Ruth asked, "What would keep you from graduating from high school?" Bett replied, "I don't know." Ruth tried to relate the activity to something that Bett had been talking to her about earlier, an older sister of a friend who was pregnant and asked, "Do you think that girl who is pregnant will graduate from high school?" Bett answered, "I don't know." Ruth pursued the suggestion of teenage pregnancy as an obstacle, "But it could keep you from graduating." Bett said in a firm voice, "But I'm not going to get pregnant." Ruth retorted, "Well I put drugs but I don't really do that." Bett continued, "I thought it was supposed to apply to you." Ruth took a new tactic and asked, "Well, what might keep you from graduating?" Bett gave a suggestion of her own, "Grades. Maybe ADHD. Both my parents are severely dyslexic. And my mom is manic depressive." Ruth answered, "So you can write that and you can go through each one and then write what would get you through it if you get stuck on those obstacles."

After everyone had been working for a little while, the undergraduate leading the

activity asked if anyone wanted to share her map with the group. After a couple of undergraduates and sixth graders, including Ruth, volunteered, Ruth turned quietly to Bett and said, "Did you finish yours? Can I see? You don't have to show anyone else." Bett said, "I don't like it." Ruth replied with an encouraging tone mixed with a hint of frustration, "If you don't like something, don't just sit there. Change it. Spice it up with a little color."

Ruth had tried to facilitate Bett's involvement in the activity and to respond to her uncertainty by moving her from step to step with leading questions and suggestions. Bett's reactions to Ruth seemed to indicate that she thought Ruth's suggestions were inappropriate. Bett kept trying to reveal her anxiety about the activity, which Ruth took as negative attitudes and became somewhat impatient. I have to wonder if Bett's discomfort with long-term planning was related to some depression she seemed to be exhibiting in the spring. Overall, Bett and Ruth seemed frustrated with one another. That same day, though, they had planned to spend some extra time together after school at Bett's house.

In a February reflection paper Ruth described how they had each written some short term goals together at Bett's house: "We talked about each thing we wrote down. She came up with some great ideas, and she made me think of some new things to write that I hadn't really thought about before. Bett really seemed to be enjoying herself and was acting as if with a little patience and effort that this list could come true." From Ruth's perspective, it seemed like they had had a nice time together at Bett's house. The following week I asked each of them what they had done together. Bett focused on what

had happened in school since then. She described how she had gotten the math problem they had done together at her house incorrect and complained that the teacher never explained why it was incorrect. Ruth was much more upbeat, talking about meeting her dogs and other things they had done. What each focused on about this memory was strikingly different.

Throughout the spring I saw Bett become negative when Ruth tried to engage her in any academically-related activity. For example, Ruth had noticed that Bett had some confusion about reducing fractions for a homework assignment. To help her get more practice with fractions and to make it fun, Ruth suggested that they make cookies together during March. Bett could choose what kind of cookies they would make, but they would need to look at the recipe ahead of time and increase the measurements for the ingredients by 50% so there would be enough for the after school group as well as some left over to take home.

On March 30, 1998 I found Bett and Ruth sitting on the grass surrounded by brown pine needles from a large tree that shadowed the sidewalk in front of the school. They were chatting as a group of boys were riding their skateboards down the street. The conversation turned to the boys skateboarding and about having crushes on male teachers. Ruth then tried to initiate the activity by saying, "Maybe we should get ready for next week. Remember we were going to make cookies? But we have to figure out how to make one and a half times the recipe." Bett started looking around at the boys who were skateboarding and at a group of about three girls who were talking about six feet away. Bett declared, "I can't do fractions." Ruth retorted, "Oh course you can!"

She handed Bett a colorful cookbook of cookie recipes and prompted, "What should be make?" Bett answered while flipping pages, "Chocolate chip." Ruth responded, "Those are always good. Do you think you could bring some things if I bring some things?"

Then Ruth continued, "OK, let's see how much we will need" and took out a piece of looseleaf. Bett said, "I can't do this" and Ruth answered, "This was the deal." Bett replied, "I didn't shake on it!" Ruth laughingly said, "Shake, shmake. You do one and I'll do one. You start." Bett looked at the recipe which said the flour should be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups. Then Bett announced, "That would be  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and wrote on the paper  $2\frac{1}{6}$  and under it,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ . Ruth said, "So how do you add those two?" Bett answered, "I don't know. Oh, I can put" and gave the fractions the common denominator of 12. Ruth suggested, "I would do it over 4" and Bett replied, "This is the way I can do it." Ruth said "OK" and Bett added the fractions and handed the paper to Ruth. Ruth began to rewrite the problem and said, "I have to do it this way." Bett, looking as Ruth worked, said, "Oh, it was  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ." Bett took the paper back and put both over 4 and added correctly. Ruth volunteered to do the next one and Bett said, "The next two." Ruth replied, "OK, but then you have to do two. We need to make sure we do this right. Then we can have a batch here and you can bring home half a batch to your folks."

Ruth began to calculate and Bett suddenly announced, "I have to go to the library" and stood up. Looking up to her, Ruth said, "OK, we can finish next week" and Bett started walking down the street towards the public library. After Bett left, Ruth turned to me and commented that they had been having a really "good chat, really deep." Ruth explained that Bett often felt alone, like she had no friends. When she tried to start



the activity, though, Bett seemed to shut down.

The following week Bett went home from school sick and had to miss the after school mentoring program. Before she left school, though, Bett gave her cookie supplies and a little Easter basket to the secretary in the main office to give to Ruth when she arrived. She had obviously been planning on participating in the activity with Ruth. During the final interview, Bett even mentioned how she had been looking forward to baking the cookies with Ruth. That afternoon Ruth did bake the cookies, distributed them to the group, and delivered the rest to Bett's house. When no one answered the door at her house (Bett explained later that she was in a room by herself with the television on), Ruth left them wrapped up on the doorstep.

On the whole, Bett seemed to disassociate herself with the mentoring program throughout the spring. In some ways, she was gradually limiting the role Ruth could play in her life. For example, she was one of the few students who did not attend the Women in Science Poster Session at the university. When Ruth arranged a roller skating event, Bett did not come. Bett was bouncing between different moods during the after school program, being negative during activities but opening up during conversations. Sometimes both Ruth and Bett seemed to enjoyed their time together when one was listening and the other was sharing. Once they started doing an activity together, though, their time together seemed like an exercise in contrasts, filled with differences in points of view and desires.

The semester ended on a positive note, though. Ruth described the final after school session in her last reflection paper:

This was a terrific last meeting for us. She's losing weight (healthfully), making friends, taking risks by playing softball, and was having a friend ask a boy out for her. During the end of our last hour, she was in the classroom joking around with several other girls. This is a remarkable development, and I hope that her social skills have improved this much around the board and not just for that Monday when she was in a good mood. But, I'll take that Monday, even if it was just a first step towards a more confident and happy Bett.

I had noticed a difference, too. My field notes described the final scene at Bradbury Middle School: Bett approached a table of three other sixth grade girls rummaging through magazines with their undergraduate partners nearby. She made some teasing comments to one girl about not saying hi to her and promptly sat down. Ruth stood behind her, one hand on her shoulder, as they all began to talk about the latest blockbuster movie. Bett was facing the other girls smiling and chatting away with them.

#### Bett's Perspective in the Spring

When I interviewed Bett in April she had not seen Ruth for a couple weeks. She had missed the cookie baking session because of going home sick from school, the week after that the sixth grade was at a camp together, and the following week was spring break for Bradbury Middle School. I interviewed her at home during her vacation. It is difficult to determine how much this removal in time from her relationship with Ruth affected Bett's perspective.

Comparing the April interview to the December interview, Bett's perception of Ruth's roles had changed subtly during the spring, as well as the value she placed on those roles. In April Bett no longer used the word friend to describe Ruth. She seemed to have put some limits on that role. On the one hand, what Bett liked most about being with Ruth was "just hanging out and talking." Bett thought Ruth was helpful when "She

listens. When somebody sits down and listens to you, it can make you feel better." At the same time, her trusting and confiding in Ruth was limited "Because she's not family. I can discuss more things with my family because things are more personal with family than mentors." To Bett, Ruth served as a listener and was an interesting person to engage in a conversation, but it was unclear whether Bett still considered her a friend. Interestingly enough, Bett implied that Ruth took the leading role in their conversations when she said that "she (Ruth) does most of the talking most of the time."

Throughout the interview in April, none of Bett's direct and indirect descriptions of Ruth's role included the tone of warmth and trust that had been a part of her responses in the December interview. It was as if they still interacted and talked to one another, and just as a listener Ruth was helpful, but there wasn't a sense of connection between them. In the April interview Bett also talked about how she no longer needed Ruth to play the role of tutor. Bett clearly stated that "I get good grades. I do better than most people in the program, I get help from my teachers. So I don't really need help." She felt that therefore "We have nothing really to do." Without Ruth being the person to give her academic help, Bett felt that Ruth's role was diminished.

Near the end of the spring semester, just as Bett did not describe Ruth in the role of friend, she did not identify her own role as that of friend either. Bett included in her responses only descriptions of herself as someone who actively and equally participates in a conversation. Bett said, "I usually listen to what she has to say and respond." She enjoyed having these conversations with Ruth because she was skillful at "grown-up" conversation. She said, "I like to talk to people about serious things. I've always been

good about talking to people about people's feelings or something like that." She felt successful being able to engage Ruth in serious conversations.

Overall, though, Bett was having mixed feelings about their time together. She went back and forth in her description of Ruth in the April interview: "I think she's nice, but she can be sort of weird sometimes. But she's a caring person. Unusual. Extraordinary. Sometimes it gets on your nerves, but sometimes it's nice to have." I think that one of the reasons why Bett was having mixed feelings about Ruth was that the different sides of Ruth were bringing out different sides in herself that frightened her. Later in the interview when I asked Bett if she saw different sides to herself when she was with Ruth she said, "She acts sort of wacky sometimes. And so I act wacky. And then we both act wacky." But Bett didn't seem happy about this wacky side of her coming out. She went on to explain, "And I'm usually pretty cool and everything. Like, I don't usually go wacky and everything. I'm usually a down to earth person, I don't need reality checks. I usually am aware of everything that happens."

Bett believed that being wacky or different or silly was a step back for her. She was just beginning to be able to fit in, something extremely important to her emerging Interpersonal Self, and didn't want to go back to being an outcast. Bett commented,

I used to be clueless. I'm like normal, like everyone else in my grade. I used to be like this old friend of mine who had an imaginary dog, Puppy, that had kittens. They confuse me. Now I sit at a totally different table at lunch. It used to be 'how dare you sit at a table with different people.' Now I get along with people I didn't before. I see them at the movie theater and say hi to them in the hallways.

Bett was very concerned about the social dynamics of sixth grade. Bett's Imperial Self

had been hurt in the past by being teased or being “stabbed in the back,” but now acceptance by the group had even greater weight. Her Interpersonal Self was incomplete without acceptance from a group of peers whom she thought were important.

Ruth's independence from social conformity (Ruth's relaxed and natural demeanor, her sense of humor, her sense of taste and hobbies) represented a threat to Bett's own successful blending in with her peers. On the one hand Bett enjoyed Ruth and on the other hand, she disliked and perhaps was frightened by the independent spirit that Ruth embodied. In the spring Bett had seen the wacky side to herself when she was with Ruth and worried about it. Bett was in search of popularity through sameness and did not find that in Ruth.

When I asked Bett how she felt about Ruth she replied, “Mixed probably. Sometimes I'm really happy to be around her and other times I'm really bored.” I wondered aloud what made one time more enjoyable or boring and Bett attributed these differences to her own mood. She explained, “Like being in a mad mood when I come. Having a bad day. I have those a lot.” A bad day usually revolved around how she interpreted other people's reactions to her. Disappointment would cloud her entire perspective on life. Bett seemed to be going through a rough time in the spring. She revealed to Ruth that she had begun individual therapy for an over-eating disorder and was participating in group therapy at the school as well.

In the spring Bett was consumed by distressing issues as she saw them to be affecting her life. She did “not usually” think about Ruth outside of the times they were meeting. When they were together Bett would “get bored a lot” and “sometimes I wish I

could go home." Her Imperial Self wanted her needs to be fulfilled. If she were in a bad mood and Ruth was not cheering her up through either conversation or through having something that she found fun or entertaining, Bett just wanted to leave. On the other hand, "sometimes it's fun," Bett said. She attested that, "I think we have a good relationship." Although Bett was often negative in her outlook on things in general, she did not totally withdraw from Ruth. Even though Bett no longer responded positively when Ruth tried to teach her or engage her in anything academic, Bett did trust her enough to let Ruth take on the role of a listener. She would still talk to her about serious topics and would reveal her feelings about what was going on in her life.

#### Ruth's Perspective in the Spring

In April Ruth thought of Bett as "a trusting little girl who likes the fact that someone takes an interest in her." In Ruth's eyes, Bett was trusting her and confiding in her through the course of their conversations. Ruth enjoyed "when she opens up and talks to me about big issues in her life." Because Bett had revealed her thoughts and feelings to Ruth throughout the year, Ruth said that "She seems pretty trusting. It didn't seem really hard to build up that initial trust with her, which made it easy." Just opposite to Bett's description, Ruth saw Bett as the talker in their relationship, the one who communicated her thoughts and feelings and experiences.

In April Ruth described herself as "pretty much a non-judgmental ear" for Bett. She enjoyed this role of "a good listener" and how Bett "feels she can talk to me a lot." On the other hand, a listener also responds sometimes to the talker and Ruth said, "I don't like the fact that sometimes I don't know how to react to her. That I get unsure."

The most challenging part of their relationship for Ruth was responding to Bett's worries, concerns, and complaints about her daily experiences. Ruth disliked "when Bett gets really negative about the world or about junior high." As a very up-beat person, Ruth had trouble empathizing. She explained, "That's really hard for me to deal with because that's not how I would deal with it. I tend to be positive about things." Her Institutional Self saw them as having philosophical differences about how to deal with life's challenges. Ruth's strategy was to "try to remember she's in a different situation." Ruth tried to share her perspective with Bett, but knew in some way that that reaction was not very helpful. She worried that "I'm just not sure how to deal with it other than don't dwell on the negative, but on the positive. But that's probably not what she wants or needs to hear." To a degree, Ruth was at a loss for how to make Bett feel better. She knew that sharing her own perspective was not very comforting to Bett.

Ruth looked back on her own past and tried to relate to Bett. On the one hand, Ruth felt that her own "experiences are not isolated and can be used to teach someone else." Ruth had been aware of pressures during adolescence and they affected her thoughts, like Bett, but they did not affect her behaviors. Ruth explained that

a lot of changes started when I was growing up. It happened around me. My friends were into drinking and looks. But just the way my family was kept me away from it. Bett reminds me that it was happening around me. That so many of the thoughts you have are extreme. I had those thoughts, but I never acted on them because I had the support system. The thoughts aren't that uncommon.

Ruth felt that to some degree she could understand Bett's concerns.

On the other hand, Ruth recognized that Bett was having experiences to which Ruth could not relate. She was challenged by "what Bett describes day to day. I was

never really in the situations she was in, or not to the degree she is. So I don't know what to tell her. Like when people say hi to her in one situation and not around their friends. People avoiding her and not wanting to talk to her." Ruth recognized that they had different personal histories and that Bett was experiencing her own unique challenges and making sense of them as best she could. Ruth's concern for Bett increased during the spring semester. Ruth explained in April, "I care about Bett a lot. And I worry about her because I know she's going through the usual sixth grade time, but being a bigger girl, I know it's harder. And I worry how she'll react to it. I get worried she'll be too defensive towards people. She'll build a wall and won't give them or won't accept a chance when it's offered." Ruth continued trying to challenge Bett to take a different perspective on her experiences.

In an April reflection paper Ruth described how "usually when she makes generalizations about popularity, or the kids in her class, or her life right now, I issue a challenge in gentle terms. Usually that consists of asking her to explain herself, and maybe just suggesting a different answer or solution or different way to approach the situation." Ruth was trying to offer Bett another perspective, but recognized that Bett could not necessarily consider different ways of making meaning like an Institutional self might. Ruth continued to say, "I like to be careful and not challenge her to a point where she doesn't want to talk anymore, that would be the absolute worst, since our time together is spent primarily in discussion instead of activity. So I often ride the fine line of listening, talking, asking questions, etc." Ruth intuitively recognized that Bett's Interpersonal Self might interpret her challenges as conflict and withdraw from the



relationship.

Ultimately, Ruth believed that she and Bett had philosophical differences in the way they dealt with their life experiences. She explained, "I definitely take on the philosophy of my family to be thankful for what's there and take life as it comes. We've always just kind of gone with the, 'everything's bearable when it's temporary.'" Ruth hoped that developing that philosophy "comes with time and I don't think she's come to that yet." She was trying to give Bett time to grow and slowly make sense of her experiences in more positive ways. What Ruth could not understand was how Bett's Self was defined by her peer relationships. She was interpreting Bett's depressed point of view as a perspective that she would eventually decide to change.

Although Ruth had difficulty empathizing with the way Bett interpreted and responded to her experiences, she valued what she learned from their differences. Ruth had interacted with Bett as an Institutional Self, coming to know her as an individual with her own ways of thinking and believing. Ruth wrote in her final reflection paper that "I had to learn how to communicate with someone who is very different than I was at that age" and that "as a college age person, I needed to adapt communication skills to different ages." Coming to know Bett also made Ruth think about her assumptions about other people. Ruth said in the final interview, "I've learned that I need to keep an open mind when meeting new people. Not to let outward appearance, not just her size, but the way she is in groups and in private, her shyness. Before I would have assumed that shy people don't have much to say or thoughts behind their shyness. I think it's just because I'm such an extrovert." Ruth had learned that Bett had many different feelings

and ideas behind the silent exterior that she showed in group discussion situations.

### Discussion

Mariana and Beth's relationship, Danielle and Naomi's relationship, and Bett and Ruth's relationship developed in very different ways. To a degree, the environmental contexts of Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury Middle School offered different opportunities for academic or non-academic activities, privacy or the influence of nearby pairs, and a warm or a formal atmosphere. The story of each relationship also occurred within the nexus of two unique individuals with personal histories and developmentally structured perceptions. These three stories are only a sample of the ten pairs I observed and interviewed, but represent the most important issues in mentoring related to developmental stages that I identified. In this final section of Chapter Five, I would like to discuss the dialectical processes that I studied on the community, the interpersonal, and the personal level while referring to the whole group of ten pairs that participated for two semesters in the ethnographic study.

#### The Community Level: Three Schools Hosting a Mentoring Program

Three different after school environments constituted the community level context for this study. My observations of these environments focused on the physical setting, the liaison role, group dynamics, and the school culture. Among Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury Middle School there were many differences that affected the mentoring experiences of the participants (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**Differences in the Environmental Contexts of Stapleton, Chesterfield, and Bradbury Middle School**

	<b>Stapleton</b>	<b>Chesterfield</b>	<b>Bradbury</b>
<b>Physical Setting</b>	sixth grade classroom  access to 6th grade classrooms  different groupings possible	library  no access/distant from 6th grade classrooms  pairs in close proximity	home ec. classroom  distant from 6th grade classrooms  pairs in close proximity
<b>Liaison</b>	present and active	not present	not present
<b>School Culture</b>	interdisciplinary units some experiential curriculum  friendly and personal teacher-student relationships	textbooks + worksheets  formal teacher-student relationships	traditional + progressive  friendly teacher-student relationships
<b>Group Dynamics</b>	positive  whole group, student-organized activities  formed small groups  worked in dyads	some hostility  occasionally small groups formed  worked in dyads	positive  whole group of sixth graders interacted  worked in dyads

At Stapleton, the pairs had great freedom of movement. The pairs utilized

regularly about three different classrooms and the liaison's office. Some pairs chose to work at tables right beside other pairs, but if they wanted to be alone, any pair could go to another classroom, play outside, or just sit and talk outside. Resources like the library and the computer room were accessible and the staff was friendly to both the girls and the undergraduates. I never witnessed any negative repercussions from school staff for using all of the facilities of the school, nor any negative social repercussions for pairs doing different things in different parts of the building. The only room that was difficult to gain access to was the home economics classroom, and because special permission had to be gained through the liaison from the teacher, the group infrequently engaged in cooking activities.

The physical setting of Stapleton Middle School gave the pairs many options. Contrary to the impression that the craft activity vignettes that I included in the story of Mariana and Beth might give, some of the four pairs I studied at Stapleton spent most of their time doing academic activities. When they worked on academics, though, their interactions were pleasant and comfortable, perhaps because they could easily interact with things in the environment around them. For example, I watched other pairs go into one of several different classrooms when a problem was difficult and use the chalkboard. I observed a sixth grader walk up to a world map attached to the chalkboard in one classroom, pull it down, and "show off" how many countries she had memorized for a test. I witnessed every sixth grader point out any projects she had done when they were being displayed in the room. In the hallway teachers often posted photographs of the class doing projects and going on field trips and I would often see the girls pointing out

themselves and their friends to their undergraduate partners.

Although the other pairs had somewhat different interaction styles, all the pairs I observed at Stapleton utilized several different locations throughout the school depending on what they were doing that week. They had choice and power in this environment. The school created a clearly academic setting, but the freedom offered, created a feeling both of individualism and nurturing.

Similarly, the liaison created an atmosphere of warmth. Actively involved in the program, she greeted all of the girls by name each week. She would announce opportunities for the pairs to become involved in activities outside of the after school program, which really encouraged additional interaction. Although most of the time the pairs did not engage in the exact event the liaison described, the pairs at this school did many more things outside of school than did the pairs at the other schools. (Certainly another important factor could also have been the close proximity of the school to the university.) The liaison was also always supportive and enthusiastic about anything a pair wanted to do and about every achievement of a sixth grader. She would also point out the school work of a sixth grader or mention something the sixth grader did to me or the undergraduate. This created an encouraging, positive atmosphere in which it was assumed that the kids were special, the undergraduates were special, and their mentoring relationships were of course going to be a wonderful experience.

The group dynamics at Stapleton were, on the whole, positive and encouraged fulfilling experiences for all of the four pairs I studied. Even periodically when a couple of the girls who had some social issues and who regularly went for counseling with the

liaison became upset with one another, the liaison intervened and the situation resolved itself quickly. Although the pairs at Stapleton moved around the school to a great degree, the grouping was very flexible. When a sixth grader had an idea for a whole group activity, the undergraduate would encourage it, the liaison would praise it, and the whole group would inevitably vote to support it. Because of the many options, the pairs had special memories as a whole group, as pairs who paired up at certain times, and many moments together one-on-one. All of the four pairs I studied at Stapleton were pleased with their mentoring relationships.

In contrast, Chesterfield was a much more constrictive environment. For example, the classrooms at Chesterfield were locked at the end of the school day. When I did see the girls interact with their teachers, none of their interactions involved pleasant casual conversation. The student-teacher relationships I observed were more formal. Perhaps this may be related to why all the undergraduates I observed in the fall at Chesterfield seemed to have difficulty carrying on casual conversations with their sixth grade partners.

When the pairs met during the fall, they were relegated to the library and the resource room we used for snacks. In order to share their school work with their undergraduate partners, the sixth graders had to initiate going upstairs and take the risk that the teacher might not be there to let them in. On the whole, there was also far less student work displayed. Most of the time, the students completed worksheets and read out of textbooks. When in the library, two pairs may have worked at a round table together, but they did not interact much. The library had a more formal, serious feel to it

than the resource room. The pairs would whisper when they talked. If a pair wanted to be alone, they had to move away from the tables and sit on the rug in a corner by the stacks. Typically, two of the pairs would sit on the rug when the undergraduate had planned an activity that did not involve homework or math problem-solving. The tables in the library seemed to be associated with school work.

I finally began to become concerned about how the environment was affecting the relationships one week when we couldn't use the library and we stayed in the resource room. The pairs seemed more relaxed there and vocal with one another, so I decided to have them just sign out of the snack room and go anywhere they wanted. Even though it seemed like there were not many places to choose from, this small amount of freedom increased the diversity of locations that the pairs chose to use. This way, pairs that really wanted to be close together and to interact with one another could.

Like Danielle and Naomi, the other two pairs I observed at Chesterfield had difficulty building a friendship type of relationship. It was not really until the spring semester that the pairs began to seem to have fun together and to get to know each other better. I observed one pair sit outside on the lawn in front of the public library and draw. Two pairs would sometimes do a craft together that one of the undergraduates had planned. In this case, the pairs would be talking and joking in a light-hearted way. Perhaps in the library it was hard for the sixth graders to come to know their undergraduate partners as anything but tutors, even though each undergraduate always tried to carry on a pleasant conversation there.

At Chesterfield, the liaison was less involved in the program and was associated

with Title I tutoring and academic assistance by the sixth graders. She was not able to be present during the after school program, which I was not aware of until the first after school session. Although I was present each week and I did assume the role of facilitator, I did not know the school, the teachers, nor the sixth graders at the beginning of the year. These circumstances certainly contrast the experiences of the sixth graders at Stapleton who walked in on the first day of the after school program and were welcomed by the familiar face of the school counselor.

Additionally, the group dynamics at Chesterfield were more adversarial. Throughout the fall there were two girls in the group, one who was in a pair included in the ethnographic study, who had aggressive or erratic attention-getting behavior. It was apparent that the other girls were afraid of or embarrassed by these two. Because the sixth graders would arrive and would be teasing or being teased, fighting or being silent, when the undergraduates and I arrived, there was often a feeling of hostility, awkwardness, or withdrawal among the group. This could make for a difficult transition to pleasant pair interactions. In the spring, neither of these two more aggressive girls were present and I think it is not totally unrelated that the pairs I observed got to know each other better during the spring.

Bradbury Middle School offered a mixed setting of freedom and restriction. On the one hand, the group met in the home economics room, which created great opportunities for group experiences. Because the tables were pushed together in a rectangle in the middle of the room, all of the pairs, except perhaps Bett and Ruth, always interacted with one another. Whenever other pairs engaged in an activity,



everyone else knew what they were doing and could copy it, comment on it, or share in it.

The home economics teacher showed the girls on the first day how to prepare popcorn and frozen juice, and from then on the girls enjoyed this responsibility and always took it on. In fact, the other two sixth graders I observed (and several others in the group) enjoyed food preparation so much that it was difficult for the undergraduates to try to engage them in a range of activities. In order to organize how many people were going to use the ovens each week, one sixth grader created a sign up sheet in the spring for each pair to take a turn actually baking a dessert and serving the whole group this snack. The sixth graders relished the baking.

On the negative side, the feeling of always being a part of a group made it difficult for some of the undergraduates I observed to interact with their partners on a more personal, and one-on-one level. To be alone, someone would have to initiate going outside on the lawn or somewhere else. In fact, it was only Bett and Ruth, who usually went off by themselves, who tended to have more personally revealing conversations. When the pairs did want to go somewhere else in the school, they were impeded. Several times a pair would want to use the computers in the library, but were refused access either because another after school program was using them or because the staff member did not trust the pair with Internet access. Additionally, the classroom used for the after school program was on the first floor near the school entrance. Like at Chesterfield, the pairs would have to walk to another wing of the building to access their own classrooms. This was not frequently done, which meant that the girls could only describe things they

had done at school, but often could not show them. The activities often turned to baking and crafts which was the sixth graders' preference, and the sixth graders as a group would chat and jest with one another even if the pairs were doing different things.

Considering the development of the mentoring relationships of all ten pairs in their respective school contexts, it seems as though a warm liaison who is knowledgeable about the sixth graders as individuals, a physical environment that offers opportunity for different groupings, access to the students' own classrooms, and positive relationships among the sixth graders, may make it a little easier for sixth graders and undergraduates to build mentoring relationships with one another in an after school program.

#### The Interpersonal Level: Ten Undergraduate-Sixth Grader Pairs in a Mentoring Program

Over the course of observing and interviewing the ten pairs for eight months, I slowly began to see the roles of "mentor" and "mentee" as socially constructed by the individuals in the pair, no matter the school context. Although the day-to-day dynamics of this co-construction varied across pairs, when I compared my observations of and interviews with all ten pairs, there seemed to be six interpersonal processes involved in the taking on of mentoring roles: 1). valuing each other's role; 2). taking on complementary roles; 3). identifying with one another; 4). sharing in a variety of activities; 5). experiencing turning points; 6). demonstrating affection for one another.

For all four pairs from Stapleton, the sixth graders really valued the roles that the undergraduates took on because the roles fulfilled certain needs they had. For one pair, the undergraduate's tutoring helped the sixth grader, who was very competitive, succeed in math and she was thrilled. Another sixth grader wanted to do well in school and also

have a big sister to talk to about boys and have fun with. Her undergraduate partner invited her over to her dormitory several times, they often talked on the phone, and when they were in the after school program, they worked on homework.

In all of these cases, the partner took on a complementary role. For many pairs it took several months to learn how to take on complementary roles. For example, four of the undergraduates from different schools did not share as much about themselves spontaneously during the course of their conversations, which would incline the sixth graders likewise not share. Additionally, five sixth graders were very concrete and literal in their answers to undergraduates' questions, so the conversation did not flow smoothly. Sometimes what the undergraduate expected to do and what the sixth grader wanted to do were at odds. Like with Bett and Ruth, if one person did not want to do academic activities, the other could not fulfill the role of tutor or academic enrichment person.

When the two people identify with one another, this seems to create a bond throughout the relationship. When short-comings become apparent or disappointments happen, they tend to be over-looked and tolerated. Similar to Mariana and Beth, there were two other pairs at Stapleton who felt very connected to one another. These were pairs that had common interests or saw themselves as similar in some ways. For example, one pair shared an interest in marine biology and were both quiet people. Another pair was made up of an outgoing, sometimes aggressive and hyper girl, and an undergraduate who also had the tendency towards hyperactivity and extreme "up" and "down" moods. After the first time the entire group at Stapleton met each other, the undergraduates could say who they would feel most and least comfortable working with.

Although most of the undergraduates did not feel comfortable working with this sixth grader, this undergraduate was enthusiastic about working with her. She could empathize with her partner's behavior and even enjoyed it. From her own experiences of having friends disapprove of her hyper moods, the undergraduate especially wanted to make the sixth grader feel liked and accepted for who she was.

In contrast, three of the pairs at Bradbury sometimes felt like they could not identify with their partner. For one pair, the undergraduate would sometimes disapprove of the sixth grader's assertive behavior. It was only after she began to witness some visible affection from the sixth grader, that she began to feel more fulfilled by their relationship. Another pair was made up of an extremely shy undergraduate and a talkative sixth grader. The sixth grader would vocalize wanting to do a certain activity, and the undergraduate felt pushed into it. Over time the sixth grader wondered if the undergraduate really wanted to be there because she did not initiate much. As Ruth and Bett spent more time together, Ruth had trouble empathizing with Bett's feelings and Bett did not seem to really want to be like Ruth either. These kinds of differences can cause roles to contract over time unless new ways of identifying with one another emerge.

Roles seem to be shaped and reshaped through shared activity. In order to be more things to the other person, to take on a more multi-faceted role, all of the pairs, no matter what the school, had to engage in various types of activities together. Perhaps because it involves seeing the person in a different context, meeting outside of the after school program seems to deepen the relationship. Roles stay constant, though, as long as

a pair engaged in the same activity, as demonstrated by the story of Danielle and Naomi in the fall. Once the activities changed, the roles changed as well. Two of the pairs, like Mariana and Beth, began with the undergraduate taking on multiple roles. The three pairs at Chesterfield and one at Bradbury gradually expanded their roles by engaging in different activities over time. The other pairs consistently did the same activities throughout the two semesters and their roles were generally constant.

Some relationships had definite turning points. For Danielle and Naomi as well as one pair from Stapleton, and perhaps others that I did not witness, when one person wanted to reenact a parent-child event with her undergraduate or sixth grader mentoring partner, this was a significant turning point or indication of closeness. Presents given either by the undergraduate or by the sixth grader in three of the pairs also were demonstrations of a desire for or an assumption of friendship. For one pair, simply comfort with physical closeness was interpreted as a sign of a deepening relationship.

Affection was an important aspect of the role-taking process across pairs. For two pairs, immediate and spontaneous affection between partners was apparent right from the start of the relationship. Another pair simply liked each other and both really enjoyed spending time together. For four others, signs of affection were watched for and made the undergraduate feel confident in trying on a new role. Four undergraduates who had waited for their sixth grade partners to reveal that they liked them or liked being there and had worried about this, took the risk to demonstrate their affection first in the form of a present or in a conversation. These acts moved the relationships forward.

Although the roles in this after school program seemed to be defined by the titles

of “mentor” and “mentee” and by the readings that the undergraduates read for the seminars, in actuality, roles expanded, contracted, and were maintained over the course of the eight months. One person could not unilaterally decide to take on a particular role because what she could continue to do was limited by how her partner reacted. Just as the school context constrained roles, the individuals themselves shaped their own roles and the roles of their partners.

### The Personal Level: The Developmental Perspectives of Ten Undergraduates and Ten Sixth Graders

In order to analyze the stories of three pairs from a developmental perspective, first I had to construct the story of each pair’s relationship, including each person’s perception of her experiences with her partner, and consider the results of the Subject-Object Interviews. While summarizing the stories of seven pairs, I noticed how the developmental Selves of the participants were manifested in how they interacted with their partners, interpreted their partners’ actions, and how they felt about their relationships. I began to listen to the voices of the developmental Selves as each person described herself and how she was experiencing this after school program. Across the pairs I saw patterns in what excited, disappointed, pleased, and confused the sixth graders and the undergraduates as they reflected on their mentoring experiences. Imperial Selves, Interpersonal Selves, and Institutional Selves each experienced mentoring with their partners in subtly different ways. I think it is important for the facilitators of adolescent mentoring programs to understand the way their participants might be experiencing the program as they make choices about how to structure the

program and as they try to support the participants in the roles of “mentor” and “mentee.”

The Adolescent Imperial Self and Mentoring. Seven of the sixth graders I interviewed had either completely Imperial Selves or strongly dominant Imperial Selves. For many undergraduates this surprised them. In most of the reflection papers in which the undergraduates described themselves in sixth grade, they interpreted their experiences as if they had been Interpersonal Selves in sixth grade. They remembered their desire to wear the right clothes and hang out with the popular crowd as part of a need to be approved of and accepted. What they did not realize is that they were rewriting their memories of feelings from sixth grade through their present meaning-making. Interpersonal Selves begin to emerge for some girls during sixth grade, but for others, do not even appear yet. It is important for the undergraduates in programs like this to understand the perspective of their partners with Imperial Selves in order to have realistic expectations for their partners’ behaviors.

Like Danielle, the Imperial Self sixth grader may seem a little immature to the undergraduate. She most likely will still enjoy playing more than deep conversations. All but three of the girls in this program clearly wanted to do activities more than anything else with their undergraduate partners, although they also enjoyed sharing stories and joking. The seven girls with dominant Imperial Selves did not hold reflective conversations about themselves or the people around them, except in terms of how others had treated them and how they felt about it. They could not have complex conversations about abstract ideas or internalized perspectives of others.

Presents were very important as demonstrations of caring and affection to the girls with Imperial Selves. These sixth graders' demonstrations of affection were concrete, in the form of home-made presents, hugs, or smiles. For example, one sixth grader at Stapleton gave her undergraduate partner a picture she drew for her the second time she saw her. Fundamentally, the Imperial Self sixth graders were motivated more by their own wishes and desires, and by the avoidance of discomfort, than by the internalized perspectives of others. During the Subject-Object interviews, they were subject to their wishes and desires but were not able to critically examine them yet. They were happy in relationships that fulfilled their wishes and desires, such as one that included fun activities that interested them and personal attention from an older person. Two sixth graders, for example, had particular goals that were important to them to achieve and that were met by the mentoring relationship. Therefore, that the undergraduate partners helped one sixth grader earn high grades, another finish her homework correctly, or four others complete crafts that required skills, made the relationships very fulfilling for the sixth graders with Imperial Selves.

An undergraduate who wishes to have a mentoring relationship with a sixth grader who is an Imperial Self needs to modify her expectations of the friendship aspect of the relationship. For five undergraduates this was a challenge. Like Danielle, the girls with Imperial Selves understood friendship as a trading relationship. For example, friends take turns with one another, play fair, invite each other over for visits and parties, and exchange presents. The seven undergraduates who did these things with their partners also had sixth grade partners who perceived their relationship as a friendship. If



the sixth grader did not interact with her partner as if they were in a friendship and the undergraduate wanted a friendship, one way that six of the undergraduates expanded the sixth graders' notion of potential roles was to initiate a range of activities in various settings. Being concrete thinkers, these experiences opened the sixth graders' eyes to seeing the undergraduates as possible friends.

The Adolescent Interpersonal Self and Mentoring. Both the eight undergraduates and the three sixth graders who had dominant or emerging Interpersonal Selves had similar expectations of mentoring as a relationship involving a level of mutual understanding and trust. The undergraduates and sixth graders with even some of the meaning-making capacities of Interpersonal Selves, who were paired with one another, felt the need to identify with one another as they got to know each other. Having common interests, similar personalities and habits, and similar opinions will make them feel "connected" in the relationship. Conversely, differences were sources of disapproval and embarrassment for one sixth grader and one undergraduate.

A sense of connection was very important to these undergraduates' and sixth graders' satisfaction with the relationship. The undergraduates and sixth graders with Interpersonal Selves looked for signs that their partners "understood" them by seeing if the other person could "read" their feelings and intentions and react just as they would hope. They were both very sensitive to trust in the relationship and actively tried to build it by noticing the other person's feelings and moods. Similarly, they were vulnerable to disappointments as the partners' responses were continually interpreted to mean that she either wanted or did not want the relationship, liked or did not like her, understood or did

not “really know” her. Two of the partnerships between a younger person with an emerging Interpersonal Self and an undergraduate with a dominant or subordinate Interpersonal Self were very close emotional relationships.

Having an Interpersonal Self had some implications for the type of role the undergraduate felt comfortable taking on in the relationship. Five of the undergraduates who had Interpersonal Selves looked for direction from their sixth graders because they needed their partners’ approval. For example, two undergraduates were hesitant to plan activities because they feared that their partner might not like what they planned or believed that they didn’t know their partners well enough to predict what they might enjoy. The response of the sixth grade partners deeply affected the undergraduates’ feelings of success or failure in the mentoring role. Their confidence in attempting to expand their role in their sixth grade partners’ lives depended on the positive responses they recognized in their partner. They benefited from a lot of encouragement from peers during seminar and from myself or the liaison if they were at Stapleton.

When undergraduates with full Interpersonal Selves were paired with Imperial Self sixth graders, particular issues arose with some of the pairs. Five undergraduates had some difficulty understanding why the Imperial Self younger person could not engage in the same type of close, personal relationship she had expected to have. A lack of what the undergraduate would recognize as confiding behavior on the part of the sixth grader made the undergraduate wonder if there was a lack of trust in the relationship. Some undergraduates also had difficulty believing that the younger person could feel totally happy and satisfied with a simpler relationship that did not include deep

conversations about feelings. Sometimes at least in one pair, the undergraduate interpreted the sixth grader's Imperial Self's concerns and behavior as selfish and self-centered. Becoming judgmental or disapproving seemed to hold the risk of limiting the potential of the relationship. On the other hand, when two Interpersonal Self undergraduates helped their Imperial Self girls achieve their goals while also having fun together, their relationships were very rewarding for both the sixth graders and the undergraduates. The concrete signs of affection from the Imperial Self sixth graders engendered great feelings of success in the undergraduates.

The Adolescent Institutional Self and Mentoring. Ruth, the undergraduate in the ethnographic study with an Institutional Self, and Beth, along with one other undergraduate with a beginning to dominate Institutional Self, especially tried to understand how their sixth grade partners thought about ideas and experiences. Theoretically, those with Institutional Selves should be most able to understand developmental differences between themselves and younger partners in a mentoring relationship. On the other hand, as Ruth demonstrated, if they are in the process of controlling their Interpersonal Self or have moved completely beyond this way of thinking, they may have difficulty having patience for the concerns of a younger person with this perspective. One of the undergraduates with an Institutional Self expected her younger partner to have her own ideas and goals for the relationship. Another just expected her partner in general to have goals. The third modified her expectations of the relationship very early on as she got to know her partner. All three of these undergraduates especially wanted to encourage independent thinking in their partners.

**They realized, though, that they had to temper the way they challenged their partners and had to plan the kinds of supports that would be most meaningful to their partners who were at a different developmental stage and conceptual level.**

### **Conclusion**

**The type of support each person in a mentoring program will need in order to feel successful taking on different roles and developing a relationship with an assigned partner will vary according to her developmental stage. With encouragement and information for the participants, I do think that most mentoring relationships in planned programs will be rewarding for all involved. It is important to remember for both the facilitators and the participants that one does not suddenly take on the role of “mentor” or “mentee.” These roles have to be negotiated over time through the interactions of the partners. Any one person does not have total control over how the relationship will progress. Roles can expand or contract over time. People will also come into the program with their own histories and concerns that will in some way impact the nature of the relationship regardless of their developmental stage or the level of support given by facilitators of the program. Additionally, the environment that immediately surrounds the pairs as they are meeting will also provide a context for the developing relationship and affect it in some way. Mentoring is a dynamic and complex experience that this study can only begin to explore.**

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

**This study explored the experiences of the girls and young women participating in a university-based mentoring program from a developmental perspective. I began this study wondering what it might mean for a second year university student and a sixth grade girl to be matched with one another in an after school mentoring program. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, I hoped to learn about the developmental implications of mentoring in adolescence and contribute to the field of role-taking studies. Other studies have focused on exploring the group-wide cognitive developmental effects of role-taking experiences that were structured in particular ways. This study brings the analysis to another level by documenting the differences in environmental context that surrounded the role-taking experiences, by using ethnographic methods to document the interpersonal context of a role-taking experience, and by including the Subject-Object Interview to assess the intrapsychological context of a role-taking experience.**

#### **Summary of the Quasi-Experimental Study**

**The quasi-experimental portion of the study investigated whether the sixth graders and undergraduates in Project Mentor would demonstrate a significantly greater increase in conceptual complexity and interpersonal maturity than comparison groups.**

Based on an ANOVA analysis of the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental and comparison groups, no significant differences were found. Sixth grade participants in both the experimental and the comparison groups demonstrated no mean change. On the other hand, undergraduates in both the experimental and comparison groups demonstrated conceptual level growth. The experimental group just did not develop as much as anticipated.

Post hoc tests revealed some potential trends in the patterns of conceptual level development of the undergraduates. Statistical significance is not implied in the following summary of trends. Comparing the mean gain scores of undergraduates in the experimental and comparison groups with different conceptual levels revealed that the undergraduates with low initial conceptual level scores, and not those with moderate or high CL scores, demonstrated growth. When these low conceptual level undergraduates were members of the experimental group, they exhibited more substantial conceptual growth, around a quarter of a stage or more, than those low CL undergraduates who were members of the comparison group. Furthermore, experimental group undergraduates in less teacher-directed and more participatory mentoring seminars demonstrated more conceptual level growth than those in the seminar that was most teacher-directed.

### **Limitations**

There were several limitations. First, there was a lack of control over the treatment. Because the undergraduates planned for the after school program independently, there was great variation in the nature of the activities that the sixth graders and undergraduates engaged in as pairs. In this way, the role-taking varied not

only due to the interpersonal dynamic between the partners, but also due to the type of activities they experienced together. It is unclear whether or not the roles the undergraduates in this mentoring program took on were equivalent to the tutoring or teaching “helping” roles engaged in by participants of Deliberate Psychological Education programs in previous studies. Second, there was variation in the opportunities for and support of reflection offered in the three undergraduate seminar sections. Third, the administration of the Paragraph Completion Method Test varied by school and by experimental or comparison group with regards to date and number of sessions given to complete the entire mentoring survey. Fourth, network sampling was used to create the undergraduate comparison group; and although each mentor was asked to identify a friend who was ideally of the same year in college and major, but who was not involved in a similar role-taking experience such as a teaching or counseling internship, I did not verify that the undergraduate comparison group was not engaged in similar role-taking activities.

### **Implications**

The quasi-experimental study investigated the cognitive developmental outcomes of being a participant in Project Mentor for two semesters. The results, considered in comparison to studies of similar programs that did promote the significant cognitive developmental growth of the participants, lead to several possible programmatic suggestions. If the goal of a university-based mentoring program for adolescent girls is to promote the conceptual and interpersonal development of the participants, then there are some possible interventions to consider.

- 1. Seminar discussions should involve the undergraduates actively in relating readings to experiences and comparing ideas to one another. The instructor can challenge the undergraduates to consider different points of view and think more deeply about their experiences and the concepts in the readings by using questioning techniques to facilitate group discussions.**
- 2. Because the mean sixth grade conceptual level was one both in the fall and in the spring, it seems most appropriate for mentoring programs to offer structured mentoring experiences for students at this age level. To help the undergraduates provide structured activities and be prepared to support and challenge their partners, time can be set aside during the course of the undergraduate seminar for preparation for each mentoring session. The instructor of the seminar would offer support during the planning process. Additionally, role-playing with peers would further develop teaching and communication skills.**
- 3. A guided reflection model (Reiman, 1988; Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1993, 1998) could be used by the instructors when responding to student reflection papers in order to challenge them to think about their experiences in the mentoring program in more complex ways. Additionally, the undergraduates could keep a weekly journal with their partners and apply Reiman's model as they write responses, in order to promote the conceptual development of the sixth graders.**
- 4. Even if all of the suggestions listed were incorporated into a mentoring program, participation may still not result in cognitive development if the pairs met only weekly after school and not during university and school breaks. In this study, the after school**



programs at the six schools included, on average, 17 sessions from October through May. It is unclear how frequently the role-taking experience must occur in order to promote the development of the participants.

### Summary of the Ethnographic Study

The purpose of the ethnographic study was to explore mentoring as a role-taking experience involving processes occurring on the community, interpersonal, and personal level. The experiences of ten undergraduate-sixth grader pairs meeting at three different schools were documented through interviews, observations, written reflection papers, and log sheets. Developmental interviews with each participant provided a lens through which to view and interpret the way each described her experiences with her partner.

### Limitations

As a qualitative study, this investigation into the mentoring experiences of participants in Project Mentor involved a small number of the total undergraduates and sixth graders involved in the program. In fact, there was no representation of pairs at three of the schools. The findings of the ethnographic study are not intended to be generalizable. The stories of three pairs give the reader an opportunity to come to know the experiences of some young women and girls in an after school, university-based mentoring program. Just as stories from more experienced people help us live through times of transition and challenge, these three stories and the discussion of the total ten pairs can offer facilitators of mentoring programs a deeper understanding of the possible perspectives of their participants. Likewise, for participants of similar programs, the stories and discussion section offer starting points for reflecting on their own experiences

**and hopefully gaining a deeper understanding of mentoring as a multi-layered, bi-directional, and contextualized relationship.**

**Although the data used to construct the stories of each pair was carefully triangulated through observations, interviews, and written material, I wrote the stories using a sociocultural and structural developmental interpretive framework. The reader has to remember that, as the researcher, I assessed each participant's developmental stage and then inferred how the general perspective of that developmental stage was manifesting itself in the feelings and thoughts that person expressed about her experiences in the mentoring program. Likewise, I observed the partners, listened to how they described their interactions and their feelings about their interactions, and then developed the idea that mentoring roles are socially constructed by the participants. Essentially, the stories are interpretations of the data. If a different researcher with different epistemological assumptions took the same data, an entirely different analysis could certainly result.**

### **Implications**

**The ethnographic study has several implications for facilitators of mentoring programs. The sociocultural and developmental analyses offer a way of conceptualizing the mentoring processes engaged in by participants in similar programs.**

**When undergraduates and sixth graders are paired in a mentoring program, the role of "mentor" and "mentee" cannot be defined separately from the interactions of the particular dyads. The role that any one person can take on in the relationship is dependent on the role the other person desires to take on or how deeply the partner**

**understands the potentially multifaceted nature of mentoring roles. Most likely, the dynamic interactions of the partners and their changing perceptions will be preceded and succeeded by the contraction or expansion of mentoring roles over time.**

**Mentoring relationships involve dialectical processes. They occur in a nexus of contexts. On one level, the relationship develops in a particular social and historical period. The individuals are affected by the mores of the time and generally held expectations about interpersonal behavior. The relationships also develop in particular settings which constrain and offer opportunities for certain activities and types of interactions. Finally, each person enters into a relationship with her partner with a developmental Self that she constructed from the way she made meaning from past experiences. This Self will shape the way she interacts with and interprets experiences with her partner, but at the same time the Self will be learning and growing from these new experiences.**

**Facilitators of mentoring programs may benefit from conceptualizing participation in a mentoring program as a complex, challenging, and potentially rewarding experience. With an appreciation for some of the processes involved in taking on the role of “mentor” or “mentee,” they may be able to offer the participants some perspective on what they are experiencing and find new ways to support the girls and young women in this endeavor.**

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

**This study suggests many exciting avenues for future research.**

**1. In terms of instrumentation, it would be interesting to explore quantitatively the**

**relationship between Hunt's definition and assessment of conceptual level and Kegan's stages of the Self and the Subject-Object Interview. Additionally, the Subject-Object Interview has not been correlated with assessments of Marcia's levels of identity achievement.**

**2. Based on the results of the quasi-experimental portion of this study, one might question whether the Paragraph Completion Method Test is sensitive to the cognitive developmental growth of sixth graders. Other, more concrete, versions of the test including descriptions of events and particular interactions between people could be developed and tested.**

**3. The relative impact of frequency of role-taking and types of opportunities for reflection (such as group discussions or journaling with an instructor) on the dependent variable conceptual level could be explored in a regression analysis.**

**4. Because previous research on cognitive developmental outcomes of Deliberate Psychological programs has been generalized to taking on a "helping" role in the context of other conditions, it seems important to study the breadth and nature of helping roles that stimulate conceptual development.**

**5. A follow-up study of the sixth graders and undergraduates who remain in the mentoring program over the next couple years could be conducted. Developmental change could be documented through annual Subject-Object Interviews. Several questions could be explored in such a study: How are the relationships of particular dyads changing as the Selves of the participants develop? Would Imperial Self girls like Danielle develop Interpersonal Selves and would they express concerns and enact**

patterns of behavior similar to those represented by girls such as Mariana and Bett? How would the relationships change if the undergraduates began to develop Institutional Selves? How will having a close personal relationship with an older or younger partner affect the participants long-term? Will they develop through this connection? Will the emerging Interpersonal Selves of the girls find encouragement to voice their needs and feelings, to be heard, and to assert themselves through their relationship with undergraduates who have emerging Institutional Selves? Will these relationships structured by the undergraduates, create an environment for sixth graders to learn slightly different female social roles? How might the mentoring roles that the girls and undergraduates take on and permit each other to take on also contract over time and why might this occur?

6. In the ethnographic portion of this study, the potential impact of social class differences on the mentoring relationships of the undergraduate-sixth grader pairs was not investigated. A study focusing on a social class analysis would offer an important perspective on university-based mentoring programs for girls.

7. The analysis from the ethnographic study could be reframed in terms of Noddings' (1984) ethic of care. The ethic of care combined with Kegan's structural developmental stage theory of the Self would begin to answer the question: what are the ways girls and young women at these developmental stages create and maintain caring relationships?

### Conclusion

This study was an initial attempt to explore the dynamic nature of relationships that engage people in experiences that help them grow as cognitive, affective, and

**interpersonal human beings. By looking at environmental context, individual developmental self stage, group conceptual level change, pairs' interactions, and individual reflections, I hoped to touch the many levels such an experience takes in the lives of adolescents. Over the years the girls and young women I interviewed will write and rewrite in their own minds this first year of being in Project Mentor. What significance they will attribute to the experiences they had with their partners and if they will believe that it affected who they continue to become, will have to remain a curiosity for now.**

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Syllabus from Education 797: Mentoring Within and Beyond the Academic Lives of Adolescent Girls**

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Department of Education  
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**Mentoring Within and Beyond the Academic Lives of Adolescent Girls**  
Education 797 section 03  
Tuesdays 6:40-8:30pm  
Room 201 Murkland Hall

**Course Description:** This seminar is designed to help college women develop the tutoring skills, communication skills, and knowledge about adolescence necessary to mentor local sixth grade girls. The seminar will meet twice a month for two hours each session. Each seminar meeting should be a time for discussion, reflection, and practicing new skills. Mentoring a sixth grade girl involves, minimally, tutoring the mentee once a week at her school. Additionally, one tutoring session a month will be reserved for a focus group discussion involving the mentors and mentees at their school site.

**Course Texts:**

Pipher, M. (1994). Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

A Course Packet of Readings and the Math/Science Resource Book is available at the Durham Copy Center.

**Course Requirements:**

- 70% Completion of reflection papers for each session. Reflection papers are due on the class meeting when the topic will be discussed. The target of each paper is 2 pages.
- 20% Regular attendance at the seminar and at the host school.
- 10% Participation. It is expected that students will participate in the class discussions, sharing their perspectives and discussing experiences relevant to the topic at hand.

## **Syllabus**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Topics</b>
9/9	#1	Description of study Responsibilities/Procedures Defining Mentoring Responsibilities of the Math Student Study Skills

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 1-12.

9/23	#2	Building relationships Listening Reviving Ophelia Warm-Ups
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**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 13-44.  
Read Reviving Ophelia chapters 1-3.  
Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- \* What was sixth grade like for you?
- \* Do you agree or disagree with Pipher's assertion that girls are socialized to abandon their true selves (Pipher, 1994, p.38)?
- \* If anxiety interferes with problem-solving in math, how can you as a mentor help your mentee overcome anxiety (Pipher, 1994, p.63)?

10/7	#3	Problem-Solving Strategies Vygotsky Listening How Students Learn, questions #1-5
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**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 45-80.  
Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- \* This week practice listening carefully to your mentee and asking questions so that you can understand her perspective better. It is by listening and understanding that you will begin to be able to teach in the ZPD.
- \* Audio tape yourself during one tutoring session. Listen carefully for the questions you ask your mentee and how you respond to her. Categorize your questions and responses as paraphrasing, door-opening, probing, or perception checking (p. 57 in packet). Write about what you discovered and set a goal for yourself for next week.

10/21

#4

Pre-post Evaluation of Self  
Acceptance  
Effective Feeling Response  
Reviving Ophelia  
Math Problem of the Day

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 81-102.

Read Reviving Ophelia chapters 13-15.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

"With girls this age, relationships are everything. No work can be done in the absence of mutual affection and regard. The first step in developing a relationship is helping the girl develop trust - for me, for the therapeutic relationship, and for herself" (Pipher, 1994, p.254).

- How is your mentoring relationship developing?
- Do you think your mentee trusts you? How do you know?
- How do your actions demonstrate that you have affection and regard for your mentee?
- How does your mentee communicate her regard for you?
- What is one talent you see in your mentee?
- Audio tape one tutoring session and listen to the tone of your voice (p.99 in packet). What did your tone communicate?

11/4

#5

Self-Esteem  
Math Webs  
Values and Attitudes  
Roadblocks

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 103-132.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- Using the list of values on page 103 in the packet, choose 3-5 values and discuss how your values are similar to and different from your mentee's values?
- How has your perspective on one of your values changed since you were in sixth grade?
- Audio tape yourself during one tutoring session. Evaluate whether or not you gave effective praise using the description on page 65 in the packet.

<b>11/18</b>	<b>#6</b>	<b>Simulation Behavior Management Test Your Management in Tutoring Terminating Relationships</b>
<b><u>Assignment due:</u></b>		
Read packet pages 133-142. Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have you ever had to manage the behavior of your mentee during tutoring? How do you think that affected your relationship?</li><li>• In what ways does your mentee confuse you?</li><li>• In what ways does your mentee or the role of being a mentor show you different sides of yourself?</li></ul>		

<b>12/9</b>	<b>#7</b>	<b>Tutor Evaluation of Tutee Pre-Post Evaluation of Self Reflection Setting Goals for Second Semester</b>
<b><u>Assignment due:</u></b>		
Read packet pages 143-151. Answer the following reflection questions in 2-3 pages:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What have you learned about yourself this semester?</li><li>• How have you changed this semester?</li><li>• How has your understanding of your mentee changed?</li><li>• How has your perception of the mentor-mentee relationship changed this semester?</li><li>• Evaluate your mentoring relationship as it stands right now.</li><li>• Listen to your audio tapes from the semester. What differences do you notice?</li></ul>		



## Spring Semester

1/27	#1	Decision-Making Goal-Setting Identity
<u>Assignment due:</u>		
Read packet pages 152-168.		

2/10	#2	Sexual Harassment Depression/Beauty/Alcohol/Sex Recognizing Roadblocks
<u>Assignment due:</u>		
Read packet pages 169-200. Read <u>Reviving Ophelia</u> , chapters 8-11 Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* During one tutoring session, set one or two goals with your mentee. Describe what this was like for you.</li><li>* What do you consider to be sexual harassment?</li><li>* Have you ever experienced sexual harassment? How old were you when you first experienced sexual harassment? How did you respond? How would you respond now?</li><li>* How would you respond if your mentee told you she was being sexually harassed by male peers on the bus or walking to and from school?</li></ul>		

2/24	#3	Caring Seeing and Being Seen Responding to Feelings
<u>Assignment due:</u>		
Read packet pages 201-217. Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Did you ever have someone in your life who showed you potential within yourself which you never knew you had? How did s/he communicate that to you?</li><li>* Describe one new thing that you learned about your mentee this week?</li><li>* Audiotape one tutoring session. Listen for roadblocks (p.198-200 in packet.) Describe the roadblocks that you heard in your conversation and how you might have responded differently.</li></ul>		

3/10

#4

**Family Relationships  
The Mentoring Relationship  
Active Listening**

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 218-236.

Read Reviving Ophelia, chapters 4-7

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- What in Apter's chapter do you agree with/disagree with? Try to justify your opinions with specific descriptions of your own experiences.
- Do you think your mentee thinks it's important for you to understand who she thinks she is?
- Is your perception of your mentee different from how she sees herself?

4/7

#5

**The True Self in Relationships**

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 237-299.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- Have you ever communicated your feelings or thoughts to your mentee when they were different than hers? What was that like for you?
- What do you think is the difference between discretion and disconnecting yourself from your feelings in a relationship?
- In the face of trying to be the perfect mentor, how can you retain yourself in your mentoring relationship and remain in tune with your feelings? How can you help your mentee do the same?
- Audiotape one tutoring session. Assess your level of active listening (p.236 in packet) and your responses to your mentee's feelings (p.216-217 in packet.)

3/24

#6

**How Learning Changes the Learner**

**Assignment due:**

Read packet pages 300-312.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- Are you in a stage of transformation now? What is the experience of transformation like?
- Has your mentee experienced a transformation this year? How is her transformation different than yours?

4/21

#7

### Girls in the Middle

#### Assignment due:

Read packet pages 313-337.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2 pages:

- What behavioral strategy did you use to negotiate school when you were in 6th grade?
- What behavioral strategy do you think your mentee uses to negotiate school?
- How do you think you can help your mentee develop leadership or channel assertiveness into leadership?

5/5

#8

### Ending Relationships Summer Activities Hunt Paragraph Completion Test

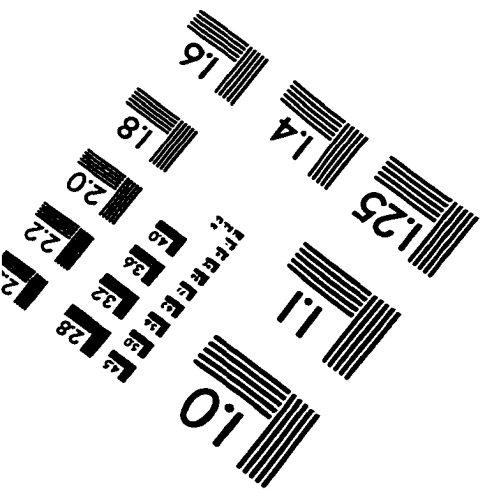
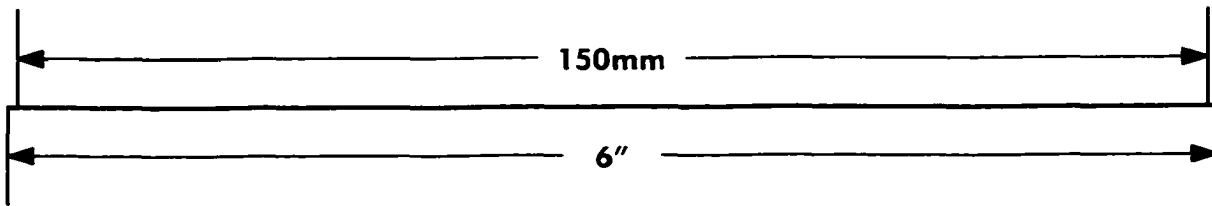
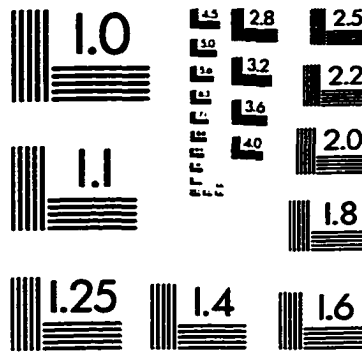
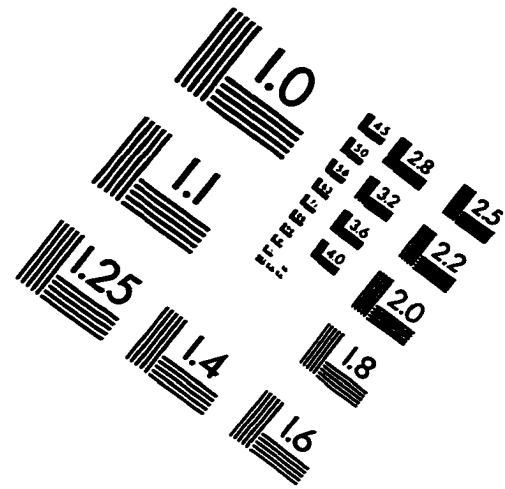
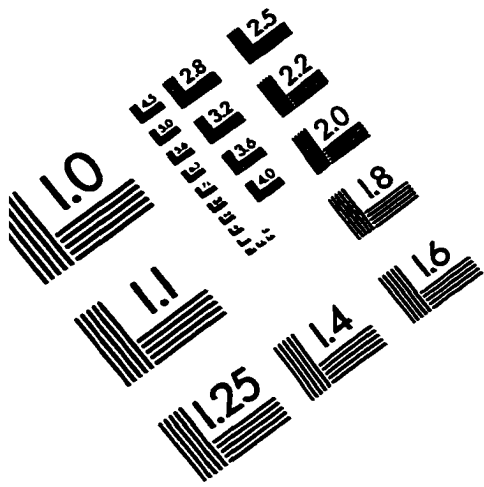
#### Assignment due:

Read packet pages 338-339.

Answer the following reflection questions in 2-3 pages:

- How has the way you think about yourself changed this year? What role do you think being a mentor played in that process?
- How has your understanding of relationships changed this year? Do you think being a mentor contributed to that change?
- Listen to some of your earlier audiotapes and compare them to your recent ones. How have your communication skills changed?

# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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