Journal of Peer Learning

Volume 13 Article 5

Winter 2020

An Investigation into Mentoring Relationships of Higher Education Students in Community Settings

Ridwanah Gurjee
University of Central Lancashire, UK, rgurjee@uclan.ac.uk

Journal of Peer Learning (2020) Vol 13: 48–60

An Investigation into Mentoring Relationships of Higher Education Students in Community Settings

Ridwanah Gurjee

Abstract

This research explores one-to-one, formal mentoring relationships between students in higher education and their partnered mentees from community and secondary school environments. The purpose is to enhance understanding of mentoring praxis, bringing insight into structures and support of relationships. This paper addresses gaps in the literature by focusing more on the interaction that takes place rather than the benefits of mentoring alone.

The research adopts an interpretive methodological approach, incorporating qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews with mentors and mentees. Reflective portfolios, completed by students as an assessment for the university's Mentoring in the Community module, are another adopted method.

Findings are presented in a framework model encompassing key components of mentoring interaction (see Figure 1). This model represents a two-way process in which mentors and mentees interact, participate, and build a relationship despite differences in socioeconomic grouping, background, and character.

It is hoped that mentoring projects can engage, refine, and apply the theoretical model devised from this research in programmes to ensure that relationships supporting vulnerable children, young people, and adults are able to stride forward; to help individuals achieve their full potential in all aspects of life; as well as to discover a trusted companion along the way.

Introduction

Formalisation of the mentoring concept arguably began in 1904, when Ernest K. Coulter founded a project that used the idea of "big brothers" reaching out to young people in need of guidance, support, and positive adult role models. This work resulted in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America, which continues to operate to this day as one of the largest mentoring programs across the globe. At the same time, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) has been committed to empowering students to lead innovative and ground-breaking community projects that raise aspirations as well as increase access to opportunities for education and employment for students. One particular UCLan initiative, Student Mentoring in the Community, forms the focus of this research wherein students are formally mentoring young people and adults in community or school settings. The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of mentoring, provide the opportunity to adapt training workshops appropriately, and support pedagogical practice in mentoring.

This study investigates key research questions as follows:

- What interactions and communications are taking place between mentor and mentee, and are there any patterns of behaviour that may support the development of an effective mentoring relationship?
- Is there a relationship between the duration of mentoring and achievement of positive outcomes in terms of change in behaviour, attitude to learning, and the ability to deal with the complexities of life?

The challenges and uncertainties, from a personal perspective, that have fueled this research are reflected in the question of whether the training students receive prior to commencing mentoring placement is relevant, adequate, supportive, and applicable to practice. This empirical research, investigating the components of mentoring interaction, will support further community mentoring and peer support projects, as well as the development of student engagement in the community. A number of researchers (Clayden & Stein, 2005; Colvin & Ashman, 2010; Young, Hoffman, & Reinhardt, 2019) highlight the process-orientated factors that shape ties between mentor and mentee; this will be explored further to understand the pedagogy of mentoring.

Literature Review

Over the past few decades, and particularly since the Labour government took power in 1997, formal mentoring initiatives have become a significant part of the education system in the UK, introduced as a way of raising standards and attainment (Gardiner, 2008; Chester, Burton, Xenos, & Elgar, 2013). Similarly, in the US, national survey results of over 5,000 students across 49 institutions (Young, 2014) show mentoring practice to be common in academic settings (Bunting & Williams, 2017). An emerging body of literature has focused on the benefits of mentoring relationships, such as Colvin and Ashman's (2010) analysis of student-to-student peer mentoring. Their study identified benefits to mentees: feeling comfortable on campus and receiving support with learning and guidance to improve their education. Similarly, other researchers (Newton & Ender, 2010; Shook & Keup, 2012; Young, 2014) have explored the positive outcomes and skill development of formal peer mentoring at the undergraduate level. The line of investigation has centred around the benefits of mentoring, with a small number of studies, as identified by Young et al. (2019), that examine mentoring relationships in community practice. This study seeks to address the knowledge gap of the structure and framework of community mentoring by exploring experiences in different community roles and, moreover, the finer detail of mentoring interaction over time.

Key literature directly informing this research includes the work of Mantovani, Gillard, Mezey, and Clare (2019) as well as Clayden and Stein (2005), which explores mentoring styles and pedagogy with young people in and leaving care. The mentors were volunteers, trained for the role following their own personal transition to adulthood whilst in care or transitioning to independent living. The context of mentoring young people in care covers opportunities frequently offered to students at UCLan and is therefore relevant to this research. The original concepts of "instrumental" and "expressive" befriending modes, as identified by Clayden and Stein (2005, p. 8), are also fundamental to this research inquiry. The instrumental mentoring style is defined by Clayden and Stein (2005, p. 35) as goal-focused, whereas an expressive mentoring approach is nurturing and more focused on the relationship itself. Their research found

that mentors' initial practice was often very instrumental and goal-focused, but that this changed over time as they developed a relationship with the mentees. The patterns of interaction by participants are investigated in this study to ascertain the pedagogy of mentoring within a community context.

Historical research by Morrow and Styles (1995) suggests that mentees are more satisfied with, and feel affinity to, mentors who take a developmental approach, devote effort into building a connection, and set expectations according to their mentees' preferences and interests. Another ingredient to ensuring positive mentoring relationships is respect (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Zhang & Bayley, 2019). Conveying this respect through actively listening, showing an interest, valuing opinions, and not being judgmental of mentees' thoughts and feelings is consequently crucial. A further stance presented by Zhang & Bayley (2019, p. 62) is the aspect of "connectivism" wherein mentors and mentees are stimulated to "connect on similar areas of interest," which then supports the development of interaction, sharing, dialogue, and thinking together.

However, a complexity for research studies into mentoring is the difficulty of measuring the long-term impact for the mentee, especially as they have many influences on their lives. Research by Bynum (2015) indicates that informal family mentors, such as spouses, parents, family members, and friends, are just as valuable in terms of career advancement and success. Nevertheless, Clayden and Stein's (2005) findings provided a critical discourse of mentoring interaction processes and expressed the need for these relationships to develop a balance between instrumental and expressive dimensions; hence, this study will be looking at interaction modes and motivations of higher education (HE) mentors in the context of their community mentoring placements.

An interesting reflection could be had about why some individuals within the *same* mentoring program have different experiences within their dyadic relationships. Why do some mentoring relationships in this program develop positive outcomes while other dyads clearly do not work effectively? It is the quality of mentoring relationships and a focus on "the point of service" (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009, p. 50) that has therefore been central to this research. The actual experience and interaction that takes place and how they vary is important, with some mentors engaging in superficial exchange and others forging deep and meaningful connections that have the potential to develop into transformative learning, both in practice and in terms of identity (Bunting, Dye, Pinnegar, & Robinson, 2012). Other external factors that influence the effectiveness of mentoring relationships, such as inadequate mentor training or the complexity of mentee issues, may be beyond the mentor's capabilities. Researchers (Butz, Spencer, Thayer-Hart, Cabrera, & Byars-Winston, 2018; Zhang & Bayley, 2019) have identified training as an integral mentoring process for enhancing the confidence of both the mentor and mentee in shaping the relationship to flourish and develop into successful mentoring outcomes. Similarly, Colvin and Ashman (2010) stress the need for clarity of peer mentoring roles by understanding all parties' expectations through effective training on developing, maintaining, and managing relationships. Furthermore, course-based models and peer mentoring programmes that support intrinsic motivation (Young & Keup, 2018; Jensen,

2017) through training and reward schemes yield the greatest returns in terms of student engagement.

Further research by Hernandez, Estrada, Woodcock, and Schultz (2017) indicates that it is the quality of spending time together, rather than the quantity of time, that allows the mentor to be directly involved in the life of their mentee and to enable positive changes to come about. In addition, having a strong emotional connection (Mantovani et al., 2019) between mentor and mentee will more likely allow for transformative change to take place. Colvin and Ashman (2010) have highlighted five roles of peer mentors: being a connecting link, peer leader, learning coach, student advocate, and trusted friend. The literature has informed the approach of this study, which has aimed to unpack the emotional and pragmatic tensions of mentoring as well as add insight into the structure and support of mentoring relationships.

Methodology

The literature has shaped the approach of this study in many ways, including Deutsch and Spencer (2009) and Mantovani et al. (2019) highlighting the importance of exploring mentors' approaches using semi-structured interviews as a method. This basis has provided the opportunity to understand mentoring relationships and how they could influence outcomes. However, ascertaining the level of influence mentors have on mentees within this study will be a challenge, mainly because there are potentially many individuals and communities playing a significant support role in mentees' lives. Ellis and Goodyear (2010, p. 36) present this within a relational perspective and describe the social structures and the learning environment shaping human actions as part of the broader ecology of learning and teaching within universities. The broader ecology of learning, or possible influencers, for those in this study include University Student Services, Student Union, Careers Team, the Peer Support Network, as well as the one-to-one support from academic advisors, lecturers, and indeed, personal relationships of mentees, which may be substantial sources of guidance.

As a practitioner, a personal interpretive perspective was going to be part of the research process, and so, building rapport with the students was a key element in collecting rich analytical accounts of mentoring experience. As Cousin (2009) has expressed, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) explores subjective experiences and involves researchers being inserted into their settings. This practice involves, for example, asking mentors, "Tell me about how you planned your mentoring sessions" and asking mentees, "What were the benefits for you of having a mentor?" (Fox, Martin, & Green, 2007). This rapport-based process has enabled insights into the approaches adopted by mentors and an understanding of their choices in the interaction process of their mentoring practice.

Methods

The methods adopted in this research were individual semi-structured interviews and reflective portfolios, completed as part of a modular assessment. Gray (2009) has identified that semi-structured interviews open new pathways by allowing the opportunity to ask additional questions beyond the core questions based on the participants' responses. This technique can help to elicit richer data around the mentoring experience. The key aim of the questions was to focus on unpacking the mentoring styles adopted throughout

the mentoring relationship in terms of activities carried out and examples of the communication that was taking place. Another aim was to draw out the duration, complexities, and challenges faced by the participants to ensure that mentoring programmes could refine practice as necessary.

Participant consent was received to analyse reflective portfolios that students completed about their role as a mentor as part of the assessment for the university's Mentoring in the Community module. Using a random selection of portfolios and different student mentors than those being interviewed provided additional data on both the mentors' and mentees' experiences. Acknowledging that the portfolios came from the mentors' perspective, the discussion could include some level of subjectivity, exaggeration, and omission (Gray, 2009). However, it would also more likely contain some honest reflections, critical incidents, and examples of situations that both the mentor and mentee faced as a team.

When considering research in any field, it is necessary to acknowledge and be aware of the need to consult with the participants in an appropriate and ethical manner. However, in the subject of mentoring, it was paramount to recognize the mentees' potential vulnerability, whether apparent or hidden, such as anxiety and apprehension. Consequently, this research has focused on mentees in school environments and established community projects for trained HE students. This focus helped to avoid ethical concerns of vulnerable mentees from the community who would be much more likely to have complex issues, such as mental health concerns, that require professional support.

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and uploaded into NVIVO for Windows, Version 10 for thematic coding and data analysis. The focus was to work through each interview transcript and reflective portfolio to code participant responses and then draw out generic themes.

Profile of the participants

The sample included 13 individual semi-structured interviews with nine mentors and four mentees. Additional analysis of three reflective portfolios together provided a sample of 16 participants. The community context where the mentoring took place included mentoring adults, children, and young people from a secondary school and a foster care home, as well as peer mentoring HE students and a young person not in education, employment, or training (NEET) from established community projects.

Findings

The key findings of this research encapsulate some components of mentoring and present an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a conceptual framework (see Figure 1). This model identifies mentee participation and mentor interaction as a two-way process in which both the mentor and mentee bring with them their individual experiences, which Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) define as individual *habitus*. The three key elements of mentor interaction, mentee participation, and the link between the duration of mentoring and positive outcomes are detailed further and provide a narrative to the overall framework that was apparent from the data.

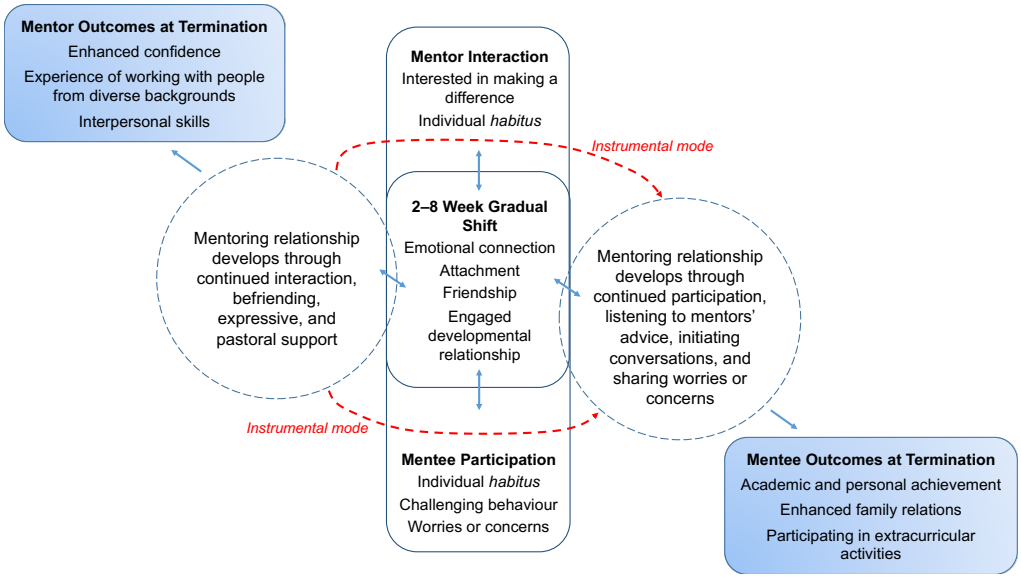

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the key components of mentoring interaction.

Mentoring interaction

The findings revealed that expressive interaction, as identified by Clayden and Stein (2005), was adopted more frequently than the instrumental mentoring mode. Thus, this highlighted that mentors preferred to befriend mentees by developing a positive rapport with them. Although there were some elements of instrumental mentoring, such as goal setting and establishing ground rules and boundaries, thus covering the formal aspects of mentoring, the sessions were largely about supporting the mentee emotionally and through reflective dialogue. This finding supports the suggestion by Clayden and Stein (2005) that mentoring relationships that adopt both instrumental and expressive dimensions are dependent on the mentor to guide this transition, and changes in interaction approaches should be based on the needs of the mentee. The mentors also decided not to appear formal in the first initial meetings and diverted from a structured approach, as they felt that building an effective rapport was far more important. Those who did have a prepared structure or script had to instinctively make the decision to change their stance quite quickly as it was evident that it was not fostering an effective relationship or creating a comfortable environment for the mentee:

> I sacrificed a number of elements that make up the structure of mentoring, such as boundary setting, in favour of developing a strong connection with the mentee where they felt trust and comfort.

Similarly, findings by Hernandez et al. (2017) also highlighted the aspect of formality affecting the level of trust and openness in a mentoring relationship, which then develops implications for the effectiveness of the relationship. Promoting mentoring through creating a safe and encouraging environment transitions the mentoring relationship into a "professional" friendship (Gardiner, 2008, p. 11). This term implies that whilst actively serving to acquaint mentees, there is an element of distance from personal aspects that is different than friendships developed through non-mentoring relationships (Beres & Dixon, 2016). Equally, the findings revealed evidence of expressive

mentoring during the latter stages of mentoring and as the relationship was starting to draw towards the termination stage. Erdem and Omuris (2014) suggest that the separation phase of mentoring does not occur immediately, although the formal mentoring relationship may have been terminated. Yet, the relationship is maintained informally as the mentee becomes more independent, and the mentor continues to support their mentee without abruptly terminating the relationship, which was similar for the mentors in this study.

The findings from mentees also revealed that their mentors adopted expressive interaction and equally ensured a comfortable and friendly environment for the mentee.

> He's like no pressure about anything, and he don't always talk about like my behaviour, what have you. Every session we make time for more quite personal chats like about everything I'm doing and sometimes, it's like….like, it's like more like a mate.

This supports the notion that mentors concerned with building an enjoyable and comfortable environment in turn create a quality relationship (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). Furthermore, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest that mentors are bringing with them their individual *habitus* of experience, confidence, and passion to make a difference by befriending mentees and developing an alliance with them through the expressive mode of mentoring (see Figure 1).

The mentees also felt that the initial response for both parties was very much focused on developing a bond rather than taking a structured approach. This focus was greatly appreciated and helped with the anxieties and apprehension they were feeling about befriending a stranger:

> I could just tell by her awkwardness that it probably wasn't a good idea to start the mentoring straight away, so I just scrapped that bit and diverted on to just, "How are you settling into Britain? Are you finding it ok?" Things like that.

The findings identified that the mentees had a lot of worries about their education and personal lives, which they were able to share with their mentors. Thus, "mentee participation" is another key element identified in the data (see Figure 1) as the background and individual *habitus* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) of mentees also influences the mentoring relationship. The mentees' willingness to share information and high levels of self-disclosure to mentors (Bear & Jones, 2017) correlates significantly with relationships that are strong in emotional connection.

Additionally, with the growth of information technology, some of the mentoring relationships have also included an element of e-mentoring, which primarily uses electronic communications. Some examples include e-mail, Skype, online chat rooms, and FaceTime, which make mentoring relationships innovative in practice by introducing contemporary methods of engagement in contrast to the traditional face-to-face mentoring. E-mentoring expands opportunities for knowledge transfer to take place in a synchronous and asynchronous format, offering flexibility in the communication and interaction

process (Rowland, 2012). This study intended to focus on face-to-face mentoring; however, although limited in use, the data revealed evidence of some elements of e-mentoring taking place in combination with face-to-face mentoring within some relationships. Whatever the form of mentoring—electronic, face-to-face, or blended—the findings identified that the mentees had a lot of worries about their education and personal lives, which they were able to share with their mentors. Furthermore, informal chatting and sharing experiences enabled mentees to become receptive to formal mentoring once a connection had been firmly established.

Mentoring for a connected relationship

Another theme that was evident and presented in the conceptual framework was the point at which the mentees were opening up to their mentors (see Figure 1). For mentoring meetings taking place on a weekly basis, the eight-week point was identified as the key transition phase in comparison to the two- to three-week time scale. When analysed further, the data revealed a correlation between mentors based in schools and community settings, who mentored children and young people, and who were able to build a deep connection with their mentees quite quickly, within two to three weeks. When compared to adult mentees and mature students, the time frame changed to eight weeks of continuous support before the mentees felt that they could open up to their mentors (see Figure 1). This finding supports claims by Mitchell, Eby, and Ragins (2015) that mentors develop higher levels of attachment security and sharing attributes, hence creating a shift to a more connected developmental relationship. It clearly also highlights a pattern in the data that building a deep connection with children and young people was generally easier and less time-consuming than it was with adults. The examples presented illustrate how the mentors identified this shift into a connected relationship:

> He started to initiate the conversation and talking more about himself, personal issues, his family background, that type of thing. So, after a few sessions, after a few weeks.

> Seeing their face light up when I arrive. Knowing that they like me…I see it in their faces when I walk into the room, and that gave me the biggest buzz.

The mentees' key learning point from the mentoring experience was the positive change in their behaviour in response to the support they received from their mentors. Some of the changes included enhanced confidence, support in dealing with difficult situations, as well as developing a positive attitude to learning. All of these changes are integral to their future education, careers, and personal lives.

Duration of mentoring

Another significant theme was many mentors feeling like they needed more sessions to continue with the relationship—that it was still not the right time to end the mentoring support:

> I'm not sure how long that will last—it will probably last to the end of this year, initially, and if she feels she needs more help academically next year, then I will continue.

On the other hand, an equal number of mentors felt that the length of mentoring was adequate. All this indicates, as Rhodes and DuBois (2006) have suggested, that the mentoring relationship needs to last for an "optimal time" to reap the greatest benefits. The length of this optimal time may be varied in each of the mentoring relationships of this research, and the approximate average length of mentoring sessions was identified as 6.5 months; however, this conclusion was unclear and very individualised, requiring further clarity and research.

Furthermore, the research findings show that once the mentor and mentee progressed into an attached relationship, and as it continued further to an average of 6.5 months, there were clear positive outcomes (see Figure 1) and dramatic changes, such as evidence of academic and personal achievements in terms of better grades, improved attendance, as well as the mentees getting on better with family members and taking on extracurricular activities and volunteering roles that they did not engage in before the mentoring relationship. Researchers such as Keller (2007) and Baier, Markman, and Pernice-Duca (2016) agreed that the presence of a caring mentor would prompt mentees in effectively coping with academic pressures and promoted positive changes.

The final research aim of identifying a link between the duration of mentoring and the effectiveness of mentoring did not become very clear, particularly because the length of mentoring relationships varied from 1.5 months to 18 months. Yet, each still showed a positive impact in their own right. There is a further need for research on the length of mentoring relationships and a possible emphasis on mentors being encouraged to aim for quality rather than quantity (Hernandez et al., 2017) in mentoring interactions to reap the greatest benefits. Certainly, this research revealed that the central aim for mentors was effectiveness and not how long their mentoring relationship lasted. Some mentors felt it was adequate to terminate after a few months because there had been evidence of positive outcomes and achievements, whereas others required longer support. Stelter, Kupersmidt, and Stump (2018) have suggested that mentoring that lasts one year or more is especially beneficial; however, considering the practicalities, resources, and time commitments of mentoring relationships, this ideal length differs from program to program. A study by Spencer, Drew, Walsh, and Kanchewa (2017) examined duration of youth mentoring relationships that lasted one year and found gender differences, with male mentors reporting stronger relationships than females. This suggests a further need for stronger clarity on the length and practice of mentoring relationships.

Discussion

This empirical research has made an original contribution to the field of mentoring in that it has shown evidence highlighting continued "mentor interaction" through befriending and expressive as well as pastoral support, and "mentee participation" through listening to mentors' advice, initiating conversations, and sharing their worries as the key components of mentoring interaction (see Figure 1).

The conceptual framework presented identifies mentee participation and mentor interaction as a two-way process in which both the mentor and mentee bring with them their individual experiences and *habitus* (Bourdieu &

Wacquant, 1992). This framework also links with the initial research question of how university HE student mentors and mentees engage in mentoring relationships. Some mentors bring with them a wealth of experience, are already highly confident, and are doing well in their personal and academic lives. Other mentors may not have such high self-efficacy or affluent backgrounds; however, they still come with an interest and passion for making a difference for vulnerable children, young people, and adults through their role as a mentor. Similarly, the mentees each have a unique background and individual *habitus* that interjects challenging behaviours and attitudes within the mentoring relationship, as well as a multitude of unique worries and concerns. However, the key aspect that moves the relationship forward is continued mentee participation and mentor interaction; whether this is limited, disruptive, and ineffective at first does not determine the end outcome of the relationship. As long as mentee participation and mentor interaction, through befriending and expressive modes, continue on a regular basis, there will be a gradual shift, over approximately two to eight weeks, into an attached and emotionally connected bond within the relationship. This finding is supported by Letkiewicz, Lim, Heckman, Bartholomae, Fox, and Montalto (2014), who reviewed retention rates in higher education and reported a significant improvement for those participating in mentoring programmes. Similarly, university student mentors in this study were able to evidence change in mentee behaviour over time, such as listening to advice, initiating conversations, and sharing more of their worries and concerns. At this point, mentor interaction may be sandwiched between befriending and pastoral support, and it may progress to instrumental goal setting and process-oriented interaction. Subsequently, once the friendship and connected relationship has been embedded into the relationship, mentees are quite easily persuaded to complete goals and targets without the need for great encouragement. This indicates, as Mitchell et al. (2015) suggest, that mentors are developing higher levels of attachment security and sharing attributes, hence creating a shift to a more engaged developmental relationship.

Conclusion

This research has identified several points that contribute to an emerging knowledge base, including the ideal average length of mentoring relationships of 6.5 months to ensure that maximum benefit and positive outcomes are achieved (see Figure 1). However, because of the uniqueness and individual aspect of mentoring relationships, duration has been very difficult to ascertain, hence the relatively modest claims in this paper. Some relationships in this study lasted three to four months, whereas a handful had long-lasting mentoring relationships for 12–18 months and beyond. This variation suggests a need for a more focused study in this area as this information will not only provide clarity and assurance to mentoring project coordinators regarding a required commitment from mentors, but it will also ensure that mentoring relationships are not terminated too early. The latter could cause further harm to vulnerable mentees and override the hard work and effort that may have been instilled in developing the relationship in its initial stages.

Further research on the approach of the termination stage in mentoring is also recommended. Although this research did identify expressive and informal interaction taking place during the exit strategy, there was evidence that it was a gradual process to the end. Erdem and Omuris (2014, p. 534) have suggested that the separation phase of mentoring does not occur immediately even if the

formal mentoring relationship is terminated. Hence, it would be useful to determine when the formal mentoring ends and when it enables the informal mentee participation and mentor interaction to commence. Future research direction on this phase of mentoring is important in determining whether mentors are being consciously careful of not upsetting mentees or whether they are not confident the mentees are able to continue without their support, thus highlighting the need for more formal mentoring to continue.

Finally, a recurring concept that goes beyond this research and requires some pertinent exploration is the aspect of e-mentoring. There are extensive investigations into the benefits of traditional face-to-face mentoring relationships (Bettinger & Baker, 2014; Young, 2014; Bunting & Williams, 2017) that highlight the processes and principles of established, effective partnerships. However, it is important to determine how interaction differs when embracing digital technology. Further research in this area (Neely, Cotton, & Neely, 2017; Sanyal & Rigby, 2017; Tinoco-Giraldo, Sanchez, & Garcia-Penalvo, 2020) will generate a deeper understanding of the concept of online mentoring approaches as well as support coordinators in confidently developing projects that incorporate the use of Skype, e-mail, or social media as a substitute for face-to-face interactions.

References

Baier, S. T., Markman, B. S., & Pernice-Duca, F. M. (2016). Intent to persist in college freshmen: The role of self-efficacy and mentorship. *Journal of College Student Development, 57*(5), 614–619.

Bear, S., & Jones, G. (2017). Students as proteges: Factors that lead to success. *Journal of Management Education, 41*(1), 146–168.

Beres, J. L., & Dixon, J. C. (2016). Examining the role of friendship in mentoring relationships between graduate students and faculty advisors. *Collected essays on learning and teaching, 9*, 111–124.

Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. B. (2014). The effects of student coaching: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student advising. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 36*(1), 3–19.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bunting, B., Dye, B., Pinnegar, S., & Robinson, K. (2012). Understanding the dynamics of peer mentor learning: A narrative study. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, 24*, 61–78.

Bunting, B., & Williams, D. (2017). Stories of transformation: Using personal narrative to explore transformative experience among undergraduate peer mentors. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 25*(2), 166–184.

Butz, A. R., Spencer, K., Thayer-Hart, N., Cabrera, I. E., & Byars-Winston, A. (2018). Mentors' motivation to address race/ethnicity in research mentoring relationships. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 12*(3), 242–254.

Bynum, Y. (2015). The power of informal mentoring. *Education*, *136*(1), 69–73.

Clayden, J., & Stein, M. (2005). *Mentoring young people leaving care: 'Someone for me.'* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Clutterbuck, D. (2004). *Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering Talent in Your Organisation,* (4th Ed.). London: The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Chester, A., Xenos, S., & Burton, L. (2012). Peer mentoring: An embedded model to support first year psychology students. In S. McCarthy, K. L. Dickson, J. Cranney, A. Trapp, & V. Karandashev (Eds.), *Teaching psychology around the world*, *3*, 133–150. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Colvin, J. W., & Ashman, M. (2010). Roles, risks, and benefits of peer mentoring relationships in higher education. *Mentoring & tutoring: Partnership in learning, 18*, 121–134.

Cousin, G. (2009). *Researching learning in higher education: An introduction to contemporary methods and approaches.* New York and London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Deutsch, N. L., & Spencer, R. (2009). *New directions for youth development, Chapter 3 – Capturing the magic: Assessing the quality of youth mentoring relationships.* Tokyo: Wiley InterScience.

Ellis, R., & Goodyear, P. (2010). *Students' experiences of e-learning in higher education: The ecology of sustainable innovation.* New York, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Erdem, F., & Omuris, E. (2014). Mentors' perception on the post mentoring relationships in academic organisations. *Universal Journal of Educational Research, 2*(8), 534–537.

Fox, M., Martin, P., & Green, G. (2007). *Doing Practitioner Research,* London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Gardiner, C. E. (2008). *Mentoring: Towards an improved professional friendship, Birmingham:* The Birmingham University of Birmingham, Department of Sociology.

Garvey, R., Stokes, P., & Megginson, D. (2009). *Coaching and mentoring: Theory and practice,* London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications.

Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world,* London: Sage Publications.

Hernandez, P. R., Estrada, M., Woodcock, A., & Schultz, P. W. (2017). Mentor qualities that matter: The importance of perceived (not demographic) similarity. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 85*(3), 450–468.

Jensen, D. (2017). Mentoring in a distributed learning social work program. *Journal of Social Work Education, 53*(4), 637–650, doi: 10.1080/10437797.2017.1287026.

Keller, T. E. (2007). Youth mentoring: Theoretical and methodological issues. In T. D. Allen, & L. T. Eby (Eds.). *The Blackwell handbook of mentoring: A multiple perspectives approach* (pp. 23–47). Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing.

Letkiewicz, J., Lim, H., Heckman, S., Bartholomae, S., Fox, J. J., & Montalto, C. P. (2014). The path to graduation: Factors predicting on-time graduation rates. *Journal of College Student Retention, 16*(3), 351–371.

Mantovani, N., Gillard, S., Mezey, G., & Clare, F. (2019). Children and young people 'in care' participating in a peer-mentoring relationship: An exploration of resilience. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 30*(2), 380–390.

Mitchell, M. E., Eby, L. T., & Ragins, B. R. (2015). My mentor, myself: Antecedents and outcomes of perceived similarity in mentoring relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 89*, 1–9.

Morrow, K. V., & Styles, M. B. (1995). *Building Relationships with Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters.* Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Neely, A. R., Cotton, J., & Neely, A. D. (2017). E-mentoring: A model and review of the literature. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction, 9*(3), 220–242

Newton, F. B., & Ender, S. C. (2010). *Students Helping Students: A Guide for Peer Educators on College Campuses,* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rhodes, J. E., & DuBois, D. L. (2006). Understanding and facilitating the youth mentoring movement. *Social Policy Report, 20*(3), 3–19.

Rowland, K. N. (2012). E-mentoring: An innovative twist to traditional mentoring. *Journal of Technology & Innovation, 7*(1), 228–237.

Sanyal, C., & Rigby, C. (2017). E-mentoring as a HRD intervention: An exploratory action research study within an international professional mentoring scheme. *Human Resource Development International*, *20*(1), 18–36.

Shook, J. L., & Keup, J. R. (2012). The benefits of peer leader programs: An overview from the literature. *New Directions for Higher Education,* 5–16.

Spencer, R., Collins, M. E., Ward, R., & Smashnaya, S. (2010). Mentoring for young people leaving foster care: Promise and potential pitfalls. *Social Work, 55*(3), 225–234.

Spencer, R., Drew, A.L., Walsh, J., & Kanchewa, S. S. (2017). Girls (and boys) just want to have fun: A mixed-methods examination of the role of gender in youth mentoring relationship duration and quality. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 39*, 17–35.

Stelter, R. L., Kupersmidt, J. B. (2018). Supporting mentoring relationships of youth in foster care: Do program practices predict match length? *American Journal of Community Psychology, 61*(3/4), 398–410.

Tinoco-Giraldo, H., Garcia-Penalvo, F. J., & Sanchez, E. M. (2020). E-mentoring in higher education: A structured literature review and implications for future research. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction, 9*(3), 1–23

Young, D. G. (2014). *National Context and Institutional Practice: Findings from a National Survey of Peer Leadership Experiences and Outcomes.* Presentation at the 2014 Institute on Peer Educators. Columbia, SC.

Young, D. G., Hoffman, D. E., & Reinhardt, S. F. (2019). An exploration of the connection between participation in academic peer leadership experiences and academic success. *Journal of Peer Learning, 12*, 45–60.

Young, D. G., & Keup, J. R. (2018). To pay or not to pay: The influence of compensation as an external reward on learning outcomes of peer leaders. *Journal of College Student Development, 59*(2), 159–176.

Zhang, Z., & Bayley, J. G. (2019). Peer learning for university students' learning enrichment: Perspectives of undergraduate students. *Journal of Peer Learning, 12*, 61–74.