UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Implementation of School-Based Peer Programs:

Successes, Challenges, and Solutions

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

by

Joshua Richard Morris Berger

2016

© Copyright by

Joshua Richard Morris Berger

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Implementation of School-Based Peer Programs:

Successes, Challenges, and Solutions

by

Joshua Richard Morris Berger

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Tyrone C. Howard, Co-Chair

Professor Linda P. Rose, Co-Chair

School-based peer programs have been shown to foster positive youth development, school connectedness, and academic achievement. They provide a wide range of social and academic support services for students, while addressing topics related to inclusion, mental health, substance use, bullying, cultural competency, conflict resolution, and study skills. Despite this positive potential, studies indicate that some peer programs can have a neutral or even a negative impact on mentees. Given the conflicting findings, this study sought to understand why certain programs are more successful than others.

Using a sequential mixed-methods approach, this study addressed the following research questions:

- What do peer program professionals identify as program strengths at their respective schools, and what factors do they identify as contributing to these program strengths?
- What do peer program professionals identify as challenges to the effective implementation of peer programs at their respective schools?
- What attempts to address these challenges have peer program professionals found to be effective? To what do they attribute their effectiveness?

Analysis of 13 expert interviews and 623 survey respondents revealed a variety of peer program benefits as well as key challenges affecting successful program implementation. Some of the strengths included easing school transitions, developing student leadership skills, increasing school connectedness, improving peer relations, and providing valuable academic and social/emotional services. Some of the challenges included insufficient time for program coordinators to plan, supervise, and evaluate their respective programs, difficulty with getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities, alternative programs competing for student interest, and insufficient time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees.

Recommendations for practice consist of schools and districts: (a) giving full support to the value of peer programs particularly through funding and scheduling; (b) selecting effective program coordinator(s); (c) prioritizing recruitment, selection, and training of student leaders; (d) developing a response protocol for occasions in which student leaders make mistakes; and (e) planning in advance for all facets of program structure such as the match process, outreach format, curriculum, facilities, program evaluation, and public relations.

Key words: peer program, mentoring, peer leadership, peer influence, positive youth development, school connectedness, program structure

The dissertation of Joshua Richard Morris Berger is approved.

Todd M. Franke

Rashmita S. Mistry

Tyrone C. Howard, Committee Co-Chair

Linda P. Rose, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mom and dad. Thank you for a lifetime of love and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

CERTIFICATION iv

DEDICATION v

LIST OF TABLES x

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xii

VITA xiii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

Background Information 1

Benefits of Peer Programs 2

Negative or Neutral Findings for Peer Programs 3

Study Purpose and Research Questions 4

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 6

Section 1: Defining Cross-Age Peer Mentoring and Related Mentoring Formats 6

Conceptual Framework Underlying Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Programs 9

Section 2: Benefits of Peer Programs 13

Benefits for Mentees 14

Benefits for Academically At-Risk and Immigrant Mentees 16

Benefits for Student Leaders (Mentors) 17

Economic Benefits 18

Section 3: Negative and Neutral Findings for Youth Mentoring 19

School-Based Mentoring 19

Peer Mentoring 21

Section 4: Best Practices in Mentoring Programs ... 23
Program Coordinators ... 23
Student Leaders ... 24
Program Support ... 30
Program Structure ... 31
Section 5: Gaps in the Research ... 37
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS ... 40
Introduction ... 40
Research Questions ... 40
Research Design ... 41
Participants ... 41
Data Collection ... 48
Data Analysis ... 55
Credibility and Trustworthiness ... 56
Ethical Issues ... 58
Summary ... 58
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ... 59
Introduction ... 59
Overall Strengths Ratings from Survey ... 60
Overall Challenge Ratings from Survey ... 65
Four Findings: Overview ... 72
Finding 1: Importance of Program Coordinators ... 77
Introduction ... 77
Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Coordinator Selection ... 77

Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Coordinator Sustainability 82

Finding 2: Importance of Student Leaders...83

Introduction...83

Challenges and Solutions Related to Recruitment and Selection 84

Challenges and Solutions Related to the Training of Student Leaders 88

Challenges and Solutions Related to Student Leaders Making Mistakes..........................91

Finding 3: Importance of School Support...95

Introduction...95

Challenges and Solutions Related to a General Lack of Support from Faculty and Administration...96

Challenges and Solutions Related to Funding 101

Challenges and Solutions Related to Scheduling...104

Finding 4: Importance of Program Structure 134

Introduction...134

Challenges and Solutions Related to Curriculum 134

Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Evaluation 137

Challenges and Solutions Related to Making the Match 139

Challenges and Solutions Related to Facilities...139

Challenges and Solutions Related to One-On-One, Group, and Varied Outreach Formats 141

Challenges and Solutions Related to One-On-One Outreach Programs..........................145

Challenges and Solutions Related to Group Outreach Programs 146

Strengths and Challenges Related to Program Design 148

Strengths and Challenges of Outreach Format Related to Mentees 151

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION 156

Introduction 156

Five Recommendations for Practice 157

Recommendation 1: Schools/Districts Should Give Full Support to the Purpose and Value of Peer Programs Prior to Their Implementation 157

Recommendation 2: Select Effective Program Coordinator(s) 158

Recommendation 3: Prioritize Recruitment, Selection, and Training of Student Leaders 159

Recommendation 4: Schools Need a Response Protocol When Student Leaders Make Mistakes 161

Recommendation 5: Program Coordinators Should Establish the Program Structure Prior to Implementation 162

Limitations 165

Directions for Future Research 166

Final Remarks 168

APPENDICES 169

REFERENCES 184

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Background Information on Program Coordinators, Student Leaders, and Mentees 45

Table 3.2: Contextual Characteristics of Respondents' Peer Programs 47

Table 3.3: Design of Respondents' Peer Programs 48

Table 3.4: Survey Strength and Challenge Descriptors....51

Table 4.1: Descriptive Ranking of Overall Strengths....62

Table 4.2: T-Tests and Descriptive Strength Statistics by Bridge and Non-Bridge Respondents 63

Table 4.3: Descriptive Ranking of Overall Challenges....68

Table 4.4: T-Tests and Descriptive Challenge Statistics by Bridge and Non-Bridge Respondents 69

Table 4.5: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Program Age 74

Table 4.6: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Program Age 75

Table 4.7: Free Response Rankings 79

Table 4.8: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Coordinators' Years of Experience 81

Table 4.9: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Programs with a Dedicated Class Compared to Those Without One....107

Table 4.10: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Programs with a Dedicated Class Compared to Those Without One....108

Table 4.11: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Programs with and without a Designated Peers Class....111

Table 4.12: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders 114

Table 4.13: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders 116

Table 4.14: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Program Coordinator and Student Leader Meeting Time Slot....117

Table 4.15: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Student Leaders and Mentees....119

Table 4.16: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Frequency for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders....121

Table 4.17: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Frequency for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders....122

Table 4.18: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Frequency of Meetings Between Program Coordinators and Student Leaders....124

Table 4.19: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Frequency Between Student Leaders and Mentees....128

Table 4.20: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Frequency of Meetings Between Student Leaders and Mentees....130

Table 4.21: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Length Between Program Coordinator(s) and Student Leaders....133

Table 4.22: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on a One-On-One, Group, or Varied Outreach Format....142

Table 4.23: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on a One-On-One, Group, or Varied Outreach Format....144

Table 4.24: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Programs Designed to Reach Specially Identified Students Compared to an Entire Group of Students....149

Table 4.25: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Programs Designed to Reach Specially Identified Students Compared to an Entire Group of Students....150

Table 4.26: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Age of Mentees....152

Table 4.27: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Number of Mentees....154

Table 4.28: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Number of Mentees....155

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my committee members for all the energy and expertise they put into this dissertation. A special thank you goes to my co-chairs, Drs. Howard and Tucker, for being a steady source of guidance throughout this process. Their commitment made a huge impact on the final work and on me personally. Thanks also to Drs. Franke and Mistry for all the effort they put into our many survey development and analysis meetings. I appreciate each of the professors in UCLA's Educational Leadership Program and feel particularly indebted to Dr. Kratzer for her help designing the qualitative aspects of this study.

Thank you to the peer program experts and program coordinators who made time to participate in this research. I admire your work and deeply appreciate your generously sharing such valuable insights.

Additionally, thanks to Jennie for her editing prowess, and to Alana and Meredith for their statistical aptitude.

Learning each week with Cohort 20 was an ELP highlight, and I would like to thank my colleagues for their inspiration, knowledge, and camaraderie. A special thank you to my study group, Brian, Mary-Jo, and Miguel for all their care and laughter.

To my family and friends, thank you for your steadfast encouragement and for understanding my absence during this experience. I am especially grateful to my mom, dad, Sandra, Fred, Linda, Ron, Mike, and Marsha for their continual support.

Lastly, and most importantly, I am grateful to my wife, Lauren, for her immense love and patience throughout these years. I cannot thank her enough for all her support during a period that coincided with our marriage and the birth of our beloved daughter, Matsumi.

VITA

EDUCATION

2016	Doctor of Education Candidate, Educational Leadership University of California, Los Angeles; Los Angeles, CA
2003	Masters of Arts, English University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
2000	Bachelor of Arts, English *Magna Cum Laude* Duke University, Durham, NC

CREDENTIALS

2013	California Administrative Services Credential
2009	California Single Subject Teaching Credential, English
2000	North Carolina Secondary School Teacher Certification, English Graduate of Duke University's Teacher Preparation Program

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2008 - Present	Director of Student Life Peer Leadership, Peer Tutoring, Educational Leadership, Civic Leadership programs Brentwood School, Los Angeles, CA
2014	Workshop Co-Facilitator, Effective Advising In and Out of the Classroom California Teacher Development Collaborative San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA
2006-2008	Teacher, American Literature, World Literature, Ethics, Applied Psychology Founder and Co-Director, Peer Leadership Program Brentwood School, Los Angeles, CA
2008	Workshop Co-Presenter, Teaching a Senior Seminar in Ethics California Association of Independent Schools, Los Angeles, CA
2006	Leadership Instructor Duke University's Talent Identification Program, Durham, NC
2003-2006	Teacher, American Literature, World Literature, Applied Psychology Co-Director, Peer Leadership Program Head Varsity Boys Basketball Coach Pace Academy, Atlanta, GA
2000-2003	Men's Basketball Director of Player Development University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

School-based peer programs have been linked to decreases in dropout rates, bullying, stress, depression, suicide, substance use, gang violence, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and eating disorders. They have also been shown to increase the academic achievement, self-esteem, conflict resolution skills, cultural competencies, responsibility, and leadership of participating students (Tindall & Black, 2008). Despite the positive potential of peer programs, multiple studies have demonstrated their having a neutral or negative impact on youth, and more research is needed on the best practices for program implementation. This study sought to understand the successes, challenges, and corresponding solutions peer program professionals encounter when attempting to implement such programs.

Background Information

Academically, the United States has a high school graduation rate that is consistently lower than 80% for the general population, and as low as 50% for minority youth (Dynarski & Gleason, 2002; Rumberger, 2011). One-third of all high school students report being the target of frequent and serious bullying (Nansel et al., 2001). Suicide continues to be the third-leading cause of death for young people (15-25 years old), and the second-leading cause among college-age students (Tindall, 2007). Drinking and texting while driving contribute to the number one killer of youth: motor vehicle crashes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). From a sexual health perspective, the U.S. has the highest teenage pregnancy rate of any industrialized

nation despite declines in recent years (Strasburger, 2007), and almost half of all teen mothers end up on welfare (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Benefits of Peer Programs

Peer programs have been shown to positively address several of these critical issues in a cost-effective manner (Forouzesh, Grant, & Donnelly, 2001). From an academic standpoint, Rohrbeck, Ginsburg-Block, Fantuzzo, and Miller’s (2003) 90-study meta-analysis of peer-assisted learning interventions with elementary school students pointed to significant achievement gains particularly with urban, low-income, and minority students. Students participating in a variety of mentoring formats, such as peer tutoring (Viadero, 2007) and peer transition programs (Johnson, Simon, & Mun, 2013), have also achieved substantial academic improvements.

Outside of the academic realm, there is evidence that cross-age peer programs are an effective strategy to prevent substance abuse (Tindall & Black, 2008). One meta-analysis of 143 drug abuse prevention programs found that programs using peer influence were superior to those that primarily emphasized knowledge about drugs or personal growth (Tobler, 1986). Similar prevention results have been found in higher education (Butler et al., 2006; Hunter, 2003).

Peer mentoring has also been shown to have a positive impact on school culture. Schools with effective peer mediation programs experience a significant decline in fighting by as much as 75%, and a decline in referrals by as much as 50% (Salmon, 1992; Tindall, 2006). Peer programs may also be particularly helpful to immigrant students by making the school environment more welcoming and supportive (Birman & Morland, 2013). Connections with either U.S.-born or immigrant mentors can help foster school belonging and attachment in mentees, important qualities for the healthy psychological adjustment of immigrant youth (Kia-Keating & Ellis,

2007; Steinman, 2006).

Another strength of cross-age peer programs involves the benefits for student leaders. From the prevention of risk-taking behaviors to the fostering of positive youth development, numerous studies describe teen mentors increasing their academic engagement and connectedness, self-esteem, cultural competencies, responsibility, leadership, and hopefulness (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2011). The empathy skills such programs foster have also been linked to increases in academic performance (Attili, 1990; Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Kohn, 1991).

Negative or Neutral Findings for Peer Programs

Despite the positive potential for peer programs, some studies indicate mixed results (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2009; Hughes et al., 2005; Whiting & Mallory, 2007). As adolescents focus on their own identity development, it can be challenging for them to fully support their peers (Rhodes, 2004). Additionally, influence works both ways. One substance abuse program was found to have a positive impact on mentees whose friends were not previously using substances, but a negative impact on students whose friends were already using substances (Valente et al., 2007). These types of studies reveal the ways in which peer programs can have unexpected results (Ginsburg-Block, Rohrbeck, & Fantuzzo, 2006).

The potentially negative effects of peer mentoring are also tied to concepts of "deviancy training" in which antisocial behaviors get reinforced by older peers (Karcher, 2013; Spencer 2007). These adverse effects are likely to occur within a dearth of supervision or structure (Dodge, Dishion, & Lansford, 2006). In these instances, mentees could actually have better results with no peer program at all (Latham, 1998; Lewis & Lewis, 1998).

Study Purpose and Research Questions

Given the conflicting evidence, more studies are needed to identify specific processes through which peer programs lead to positive outcomes (Cavell & Elledge, 2013; Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). As an example, research indicates that planned activities and themed curricula prove beneficial for both student leaders and mentees; however, the specific types of activities have not been identified nor have the specifics regarding program format, meeting location, time, and duration (Karcher, 2013). Noting that mentors need training in "skill development" is not the same as describing specifically what those skills are and how they are best developed. Further, little is known about the challenges peer program professionals face at their respective schools, and how these challenges may lead some programs to be more successful than others. How is the context or the implementation different? Why do programs not use previously-established best practices? (Rhodes, 2004).

This study investigated some of these questions and identified recommendations for creating and improving school-based peer programs. Given the thousands of peer programs in high schools and the millions of students impacted by them annually, it is important that researchers continue to explore these best implementation practices. As such, this study addressed the following questions:

1. What do peer program professionals identify as the program strengths at their respective schools, and what factors do they identify as contributing to these program strengths?
2. What do peer program professionals identify as challenges to the effective implementation of peer programs at their respective schools?

3. What attempts to address these challenges have peer program professionals found to be effective? To what do they attribute their effectiveness?

To answer these questions, I conducted a sequential, mixed methods study, described in more detail in Chapter 3. The literature review in Chapter 2 further illustrates the need for ongoing research related to this study.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review on school-based peer programs is broken down into five parts. In Section 1, I define cross-age peer mentoring and additional related forms of youth mentoring. I also introduce the conceptual framework behind school-based peer programs. In Section 2, I describe some of the societal issues facing America's youth and review how peer programs have successfully addressed these issues. I also examine the benefits of peer programs for both student leaders and mentees. In Section 3, I synthesize research regarding the negative or neutral impact of peer programs that appear to contradict the findings from Section 2. In Section 4, I present what we know about the different formats and best practices regarding peer programs, focusing on why some of the programs have had positive results while others have had neutral or negative results. In Section 5, I focus on the gaps in the research based on the previous four sections in order to establish the need for my study.

Section 1: Defining Cross-Age Peer Mentoring and Related Mentoring Formats

Cross-age peer mentoring refers to a systematic approach to delivering mentoring services through the use of trained peers who are generally at least two years older than the mentees they serve (Karcher, 2013). Peer mentoring fits under the larger category of *youth mentoring* which is defined as "structured and trusting relationships... with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing [youth's] competence and character" (MENTOR, 2009, p. 9). In youth mentoring, the mentor is frequently a trusted adult rather than a peer. Despite this distinction, DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine's (2011) meta-analysis of youth mentoring programs did not find any statistical

differences between program outcomes when mentors were teenage peers rather than adults. This led scholars in the peer mentoring field to conclude that many of the best practices identified for youth mentoring applied to peer mentoring as well (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002; Karcher, 2013). This finding is particularly significant given that exponentially more research has been conducted on youth mentoring, and 45% of youth served by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS) are mentored by teenagers (Herrera et al., 2008).

School-based mentoring also overlaps with the peer mentoring field. By relying on teacher- rather than parent-referrals, school-based mentoring identifies struggling mentees who may not otherwise sign up for community-based mentoring. It provides support through adults or older peers connected to the school community. Cavell (2012) and Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman, McMaken, and Jucovy (2007) reported that, between 1999 and 2006, the number of school-based matches increased fivefold from 27,000 to 126,000. These increases were concurrent with BBBS training their initial teen "Bigs" (i.e., older teen mentors).

Group mentoring refers to a mentor connecting simultaneously with multiple mentees. The vast majority of youth mentoring research focuses on one-to-one outreach, though 20% of youth mentoring organizations employ group mentoring (Sipe & Roder, 1999), as do thousands of schools throughout North America. As with youth mentoring, group mentoring can involve a peer mentoring format in which older students lead groups of younger peers. Group programs have the potential to reach exponentially larger numbers of mentees while helping youth navigate multiple social relationships in ways that are not possible with a one-to-one format.

Having now considered how school-based, cross-age peer mentoring programs fit under the larger umbrella of youth mentoring, it is equally important to note the numerous structural formats within peer programs research. Some of the most common peer programs include *peer*

tutoring (focused on academic development); *peer education* (raising awareness about important topics in youth development such as risk-taking behaviors, etc.); *peer support/transition* (providing student support, especially for those transitioning into a new community); *peer service-learning* (mentors and mentees doing service together); and, *peer mediation* (older students mediating conflicts between peers) (Klyver, 1983). While the missions of these programs may vary, they share numerous similarities. For example, outreach structure and student leader training are frequently comparable across programs regardless of their specific mission. Further, many peer programs have student leaders participate in some combination of these services, making it difficult to distinctly categorize them. This partially explains why prominent scholars in the field frequently discuss all types of peer programs together in journal articles, training manuals, and professional conferences. It is also why researchers conducting large-scale surveys frequently lump these formats (and their corresponding findings) together under the general "peer program" definition.

The work of Drs. David Black and Judith Tindall, two peer program scholars and practitioners, reflects these sentiments, noting that the terms *helper*, *tutor*, *lay helper*, *mentor*, *peer helper*, *peer mediator*, *peer leader*, *peer health educator*, *peer facilitator*, *peer counselor*, and *paraprofessional* are often used interchangeably in the literature. For the purposes of this study, the term *student leader* was used, and is defined as a nonprofessional person who has learned interpersonal skills in order to aid peers (Tindall & Black, 2008, p. 10).

It is worth noting that some scholars believe the individual terms, and corresponding research studies, need to be separated. Michael Karcher, editor of The *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2013), believes cross-age peer mentoring is substantially different than peer education or peer tutoring because "mentoring" implies a focus on the relationship rather than an

emphasis on information or skills (Dubois & Karcher, 2013). Others also note that many peer helping, tutoring, or supporting programs involve same-age peers when the very definition of "mentor" implies being older and wiser (Rhodes, 1994). Regardless of the specific mentoring structure, in 2005 Keller suggested there were five common stages of youth mentoring: "*contemplation* (which refers to the initial stage of anticipating and preparing for the relationship), *initiation* (beginning the relationship and becoming acquainted), *growth and maintenance* (meeting regularly and establishing patterns of interaction), *decline and dissolution* (addressing challenges to the relationship or ending it), and *redefinition* (negotiating terms of future contact or restarting the relationship)" (Balcazar & Keys, 2013, p. 84).

Conceptual Framework Underlying Cross-Age Peer Mentoring Programs

<u>The power of peer influence</u>. The conceptual framework underlying the benefits of peer programs is linked to theories of peer influence, positive youth development, and school connectedness. The power of peer influence in adolescence has been well established by social psychologists, sociologists, and marketing researchers. Through the process of socialization, affiliation with peers impacts a variety of positive and negative behaviors (Prinstein & Dodge, 2008). The research of Prinstein and Dodge (2008), among others, illustrates these correlations in respect to: delinquency; unsafe driving; violence; antisocial behaviors; early and high-risk sexual behaviors; substance use behaviors; weight-related behaviors; depression; and, self-injurious behaviors. Recent evidence also suggests links to pro-social behaviors (such as volunteer work, academics, and altruism) and health-promoting behaviors (such as exercise and fitness-related behaviors).

Some adolescents *conform* their behaviors to perceived social norms in order to align with a desired group of peers (Dishion, Poulin, & Burraston, 2001). Conformity increases when

individuals lack a defined sense of self-identity and is more prevalent during times of school transitions. Conformity also increases when youth are around others of a perceived higher status with perceived social rewards (Cohen & Prinstein, 2006). This research demonstrates part of the value of cross-age peer programs in which mentees are frequently going through some form of transition and older peers use their "higher status" to positively influence younger peers and set healthy social norms (Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003).

While there are more studies on the potential negatives associated with peer influence, an examination of the research indicates that peer influence can also have multi-directional and positive outcomes (Brown et al., 2008). Positive peer pressure can be a highly-effective way of influencing behavioral change (Tindall & Black, 2008). Peers are often the first to notice when a friend is having difficulties (Johnson & Johnson, 1987); they have credibility and an understanding of the pressures facing adolescents, as compared to adult professionals (Finn, 1981; Forouzesh, Grant, & Donnelly, 2001; Klepp-Knut, Halper, & Perry, 1986). This understanding enhances peers' ability to engage the target group in a discussion for purposes of changing behavior, transmitting information regarding pro-social skills, decision-making, and self-efficacy (Angaran & Beckwith, 1999; Anticoli, 1997). It also enables peers to be effective role models of desired behaviors (Flay, 1985; Perry et al., 1986; Tindall, Taylor, & Williams, 2003).

<u>Positive youth development</u>. *Positive youth development* (PYD) takes a strength-based perspective of adolescence in which youth are not viewed as problems needing repair (Roth et al., 1998), but rather as resources to be developed (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). PYD describes youth as having unique potential to significantly change behavioral skills, cognitive abilities, and psychological characteristics (a capacity termed "plasticity"). Research

suggests the key to optimizing PYD is to align youth's strengths with resources, termed "developmental assets," in their families, schools, and communities (Benson et al., 2006; Lerner et al., 2005). When these strengths are aligned with corresponding opportunities for growth, youth develop the "Five Cs": competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). They also generate life skills that are helpful for future employment in areas such as communication, decision-making/problem-solving, and conflict resolution (Forouzesh, Grant, & Donnelly, 2001).

Support for theories related to PYD is found in numerous psychological, biological, and sociological fields (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Baltes, Lindenberger, & Staudinger, 1998; Elder, 1998; Gottlieb, 1997). All of these fields demonstrate the possibility of optimizing individual and group change by altering relations between individuals and their surrounding environments (Lerner et al., 2005). As an asset-based model, PYD revolves around primary rather than secondary or tertiary prevention (Lerner et al., 2005; Trickett, Barone, & Buchanan, 1996).

Increasingly, research indicates targeted prevention programs that focus on youth's strengths have the potential to promote PYD (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Lerner, 2004). The most effective programs involve positive and sustained relationships, youth skill-building activities, and opportunities for youth participation and leadership in community-based activities (Blum, 2003; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Lerner et al., 2005). Quality peer mentoring programs include all of the descriptors above and also promote values commonly associated with positive youth development such as: social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral competence; resilience, self-determination, self-efficacy, positive identity, and belief in the future; and, opportunities for pro-social involvement and bonding (Catalano et

al., 2007). Karcher (2009) found that participation in peer mentoring programs promote youth's societal contributions and increase their academic self-esteem and connectedness.

School connectedness. A closely related theoretical underpinning of peer programs revolves around the concept of *school connectedness*. While definitions for school connectedness can vary, they all generally refer to "the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment" (Goodenow, 1993, p. 80). School connectedness plays a particularly important role during early adolescence when the need for interpersonal affiliation and intimacy with non-familial adults and peers intensifies (Buhrmester, 1990). It also serves as a protective factor buffering youth from negative outcomes and increasing their likelihood for healthy development (Coie et al.,1983; Kazdin et al.,1997; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994).

Peer programs are generally designed to impact a school's social context thereby enhancing school connectedness. An increase in school connectedness is positively associated with school retention, academic motivation and achievement (Goodenow, 1993; Wentzel, 1998; Wentzel et al., 2010), and emotional and physical health and well-being (McLellan et al., 1999; Shochet, Smyth, & Homel, 2007). Similarly, a decrease in school connectedness is negatively associated with depressive symptoms and anxiety (Shochet et al., 2006), risk-taking behaviors including substance use (Chapman et al., 2011), violent and delinquent behavior, and gang membership (Bond et al., 2007; Dornbusch et al., 2001; Loukas, Ripperger-Suhler, & Horton, 2009; Shochet et al. 2007). Longitudinal research also indicates that school connectedness is related to reducing risk-taking behaviors later in adolescence and buffering the impact bullying and harassment can have on victims (Loukas & Pasch, 2013).

One of the reasons peer programs are important in this respect is that historically school

connectedness decreases throughout adolescence (Monahan, Oesterle, & Hawkins, 2010; Whitlock, 2004). The potential for peer programs to modify the school environment and sustain adolescent feelings of connectedness is a significant contribution (Eggert & Kumpfer, 1997).

Section 2: Benefits of Peer Programs

In order to understand how the conceptual framework behind peer programs translates into tangible benefits, one first needs to recognize the numerous issues facing America's youth. Academically, the U.S. has a high school graduation rate consistently lower than 80% for the general population and as low as 50% for minority youth (Dynarski & Gleason, 2002; Rumberger, 2011). Eighty-five percent (85%) of students entering high school as "low achievers" are failing to change their academic trajectories (Cappella & Weinstein, 2001), and 40% to 60% of all students—urban, suburban, and rural—are chronically disengaged from school (Klem & Connell, 2004). Students from low-income families drop out at six times the rate of those from wealthy families, a particularly noteworthy statistic given that dropping out has been associated with physical and mental health issues, future illegal activity, receiving social aid, and becoming parents of future dropouts (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009). High school dropouts make up 30% of federal and 40% of state prison inmates.

Shifting to a mental and physical health lens, one-third of all high school students report being involved in frequent and serious bullying (Nansel et al., 2001), and suicide continues to be the third-leading cause of death for young people (15-25 years old) and the second-leading cause among college-age students (Tindall, 2007). Traffic crashes are the number one killer of youth, with many of these deaths linked to drinking or texting while driving. Drugs, alcohol, and tobacco continue to pose major problems, with binge alcohol use starting as early as 12 years of age old and peaking at 21-25 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

In terms of sexual health, the U.S. has the highest rate of teen pregnancy of any industrialized nation, despite declines in recent years (Strasburger, 2007). Teenage pregnancy continues to be correlated with socio-economic status, as poor women are more likely to become pregnant at an early age. Further, less than one-third of teens who have babies before the age of 18 finish high school, and almost half of all teen mothers end up on welfare (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Benefits for Mentees

Having established some of the critical issues facing American youth today, I now review the positive influence peer programs have with assisting youth in confronting these societal challenges. Two state surveys from Wisconsin and California speak to this positive impact. A Wisconsin study of 230 advisors found that peer programs reduced student health risks, provided additional leadership opportunities, involved participants in a positive after-school environment, and enhanced learning climates. The California survey of 510 schools found these programs increased violence prevention, conflict resolution, decision making, problem solving, and communication skills (Tindall & Black, 2008).

From an academic standpoint, Rohrbeck et al. (2003) 90-study meta-analysis of peer-assisted learning interventions with elementary school students pointed to significant achievement gains, particularly with urban, low-income, and minority students. Another meta-analysis of 36 studies conducted by Viadero (2007) indicated that students taking part in peer tutoring programs spent more time on-task, exhibited better social skills, and expressed more motivation and less frustration than did counterparts in teacher-directed classrooms. Similarly, the Teen Outreach Program, a national youth development program, found that that peer tutoring resulted in better school attendance, higher academic performance, healthier peer and adult

interactions, improved decision-making abilities, and less substance use and risky sexual behavior (Catalono et al., 2007).

Another example of an effective peer tutoring program is the St. Louis Job Corps, a training program for disadvantaged youth aged 16 to 25. This mentoring program was set up to help students feel connected and receive tutoring in basic skills; it had significant results with the dropout rate of those involved shifting from 85% to about 17% throughout the course of the program (Tindall, Taylor, & Williams, 2003). Additionally, significant academic gains were achieved by students participating in a peer group mentoring format focused on students transitioning into middle or high school. In one relevant study, 16 seniors were trained as peer leaders and assigned in pairs to work with small groups of 12 freshman students. A longitudinal analysis of the high-risk boys demonstrated that these students were three times more likely to graduate if they participated in the program (Johnson, Simon, & Mun, 2013).

Outside of the academic realm, there is also evidence that cross-age peer programs are an effective strategy to prevent substance abuse (Tindall & Black, 2008). One meta-analysis of 143 drug abuse prevention programs found that those utilizing peer mentoring were superior to those that primarily emphasized knowledge about drugs or personal growth (Tobler, 1986). Similar results translate to higher education wherein peer programs have been successfully implemented to reduce the rate of alcohol use, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases among students (Butler et al., 2006; Hunter, 2003).

Peer mentoring has also had positive results in conflict resolution and mediation programs. Schools with developed peer mediation programs experience significant shifts in school culture, with a decline in fighting by as much as 75% and a decline in referrals by as much as 50% (Salmon; 1992; Tindall, 2006). Wilson (1992) summarized the data from 15

districts in California and established that peer conflict resolution programs also significantly reduced crime in middle and junior high schools by teaching student leaders and mentees how to deal with problems in a nonviolent manner.

In 2003, the national mediation program, Peers Making Peace, used a pre-post, quasi-experimental design with 6 experimental and 6 comparison schools that were regarded as similar based on demographics. Results demonstrated that experimental schools experienced: a) a drop of 34% in initial drug use, whereas comparison schools experienced an increase of 12%; b) a drop of 74% in expulsions, whereas comparison schools experienced an increase of 6.2%; c) a drop of 90% in assaults, whereas comparison schools experienced an increase of 33%; and, d) a drop of 58% in discipline referrals, whereas comparison schools experienced an increase of 8.4%. Results were uniformly positive in experimental schools and also reflected an increase in grade point average for students participating in the treatment group (Tindall & Black, 2008). Overall, peer helpers with strong training were found by Carkhuff (2000) to be “as helpful” or “more helpful” than the typical credentialed adults. They also enhanced the cognitive and social skills of their mentees, bolstered their emotional well-being, and served as role models and advocates (Rhodes, 2004).

Benefits for Academically At-Risk and Immigrant Mentees

Youth mentoring programs have been shown to academically benefit at-risk students (Larose & Tarabulsy, 2013; Tindall & Black, 2008). These pupils are generally more likely to feel disconnected from school (Herrera & Karcher, 2013), view teachers in a negative light (Pianta, Stuhlman, & Hamre, 2002), struggle to access available resources (Richman, Rosenfeld, & Bowen, 1998), and fail to develop necessary study skills (Larose & Roy, 1995; Larose & Tarabulsy, 2005). School-based mentors can provide these students with a positive outlook and

help them develop a stronger rapport with their teachers (Karcher, Herrera, et al., 2010). These mentoring relationships are similarly associated with outcomes such as improved attendance, goal-setting, and academic performance; increased participation in school activities; and, a general liking of school (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Forneris, Danish, & Scott, 2007).

Cross-age peer programs may also be particularly helpful to immigrant students. Research indicates that interventions for immigrant youth are more beneficial when they address school culture rather than specific individual concerns (Trickett & Birman, 1989). Peer programs have the potential to make the school environment more welcoming and supportive (Birman & Morland, 2013). Connections with either U.S.-born or immigrant mentors can help foster school belonging and attachment in mentees, important qualities for the healthy psychological adjustment of immigrant youth (Kia-Keating & Ellis, 2007; Steinman, 2006). In one study, Yeh, Ching, Okubo, and Luthar (2007) implemented a short-term peer program that demonstrated a significant increase in school attachment on behalf of the immigrant mentees. Though in this case the program was comparatively short in length, the dosage (number of contacts) was high. Longer program duration is generally preferable, but this study suggested that, with acculturation of immigrant youth, a high dosage can be a key element in establishing a successful intervention.

Benefits for Student Leaders (Mentors)

Another strength of cross-age peer programs involves the benefits for student leaders. From the prevention of risk-taking behaviors to the fostering of positive youth development, numerous studies describe teen mentors increasing their academic engagement and connectedness, self-esteem, cultural competencies, responsibility, leadership, and hopefulness (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2011). Peer mentors also make healthier choices about substance use and develop empathy skills, an important aspect of cognitive and social development (Attili,

1990). Research shows a high correlation between developing empathy and academic performance in students (Johnson & Johnson, 1987; Kohn, 1991).

In a study conducted by the Search Institute of Minneapolis involving more than 49,000 6th – 12th graders across the Midwest, those students engaged in programs to help others were less likely than non-helpers to report at-risk behaviors (Benson, 1990; Roehlkepartain, 1996). In another quasi-experimental comparative study of 111 rural high school students, those who served as peer leaders reported gains across one academic year on multiple measures of academic connectedness, self-esteem, and empathy (Karcher, 2009). It should be noted, however, that student leaders with the most challenging mentees actually reported declines in school connectedness. This speaks to some of the difficulties associated with peer programs and the importance of bolstering student leader resistance so they can persist through these struggles (Karcher & Lindwall, 2003).

One final aspect of the benefits to student leaders involves immigrant youth. Studies show immigrant students can, at times, experience a lower sense of self-efficacy as they struggle to learn a new language and culture (Rhodes, 2002; Suarez-Orozco, Rhodes, & Milburn, 2009). Taking on a leadership role as a peer mentor can have an empowering effect that bolsters students' sense of self-worth (Shadduck-Hernandez, 2006).

Economic Benefits

Peer programs provide an economical means to reach widespread populations of youth. More than 50 years ago, Albee (1959) concluded that the U.S. would never have enough professionals to meet all the needs of youth, and suggested that trained mentors could provide an efficient way to fill that gap (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). During an era of increased demands and limited funds, one-to-one professional assistance is expensive and can be difficult to justify given

the effectiveness of peer helpers in the areas of mediation, mentoring, tutoring, and conflict resolution (Forouzesh et al., 2001); this is particularly relevant in schools with limited counseling staffs and resources. School-based mentoring is less expensive than community-based mentoring and has the heightened benefits of shared knowledge, referrals, supervision, and support of adults and peer leaders already in that setting (Rhodes, 2004).

Section 3: Negative and Neutral Findings for Youth Mentoring

School-Based Mentoring

While the preceding sections illustrate the benefits of youth mentoring generally, and peer mentoring specifically, there is also significant research suggesting that youth mentoring programs can actually have a negative or neutral impact on mentees (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; McCord, 2003). Wheeler, Keller, and DuBois (2010) examined school-based mentoring studies (e.g., Herrera, et al., 2007; Karcher, 2008) and concluded that while there appears to be modest effects on truancy and school misconduct, there is less of an impact on academics and other areas of adjustment. Some researchers speculated that these limited effects are due to an academic calendar that frequently terminates matches during the summer months, a time during the year in which many youth struggle with their expanded freedom (Rhodes, 2004). Others viewed the school structure as an obstacle to mentors and mentees developing deep relationships given the constraining class schedule and the primarily academic focus. To this point, Sipe and colleagues found that “significantly more community-based mentors felt ‘very close’ to their protégés than did school-based and work-based mentors (45% versus 32%, respectively)” (Rhodes, 2004).

In an attempt to significantly grow and evaluate school-based mentoring, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) conducted a randomized trial of its Student Mentoring Program (Bernstein, et al., 2009). The study followed 2,573 students for one school year in 32

school-based mentoring programs funded by the Department. Programs selected were meant to be representative of the 255 mentoring programs funded in 2004-2005. The lifespans of the programs ranged from many years to nascent. They also varied widely in terms of the type of agencies overseeing their services. Findings indicated that the Student Mentoring Program did not result in a statistically significant impact on academics, interpersonal relationships, or high-risk behaviors, and was later cited in the decision to cut USDOE funding for school-based mentoring (Boyle, 2009; Wheeler et al., 2010).

Other researchers have since critiqued these findings, suggesting that they do not reflect the entire story derived from the data. The effect sizes for some of the factors, such as school connectedness, self-efficacy, and bonding, varied a great deal between schools, indicating that some programs had large positive effects, while others had large negatives. This "begs the question of what might account for such differences" (Herrera & Karcher, 2013, p. 209). Further, little attention was given to whom was mentored, for how long, with what support, and/or for what purposes (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008), making the study a poorly conducted effectiveness trial (Boyle, 2007; DuBois et al., 2006; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Wheeler, Keller, & DuBois, 2010).

Another significant study of school-based mentoring (Karcher, 2008) yielded mixed results, revealing a beneficial impact on students' self-esteem and peer connectedness but a wide range of disparate results based on gender and age. Outcomes were generally positive for younger boys and teenage girls; older boys actually appear to have been negatively impacted by the experience, particularly as it pertained to connectedness with teachers. As there are limited studies on high school aged participants in school-based mentoring, the results are not definitive

but raise some questions, particularly for boys who may feel stigmatized by school-based interventions as a form of mental health treatment (Herrera & Karcher, 2013).

They also raise concerns related to academically at-risk youth. An earlier section in this literature review summarized some of the potential benefits youth mentoring programs could provide these students. It is also important to note that a meta-analysis of mentoring impact on academically at-risk students reveals modest effects that can even turn negative in certain conditions (Blinn-Pike, 2007; Eby, et al., 2008; Wood & Mayo-Wilson, 2012). In a BBBS school-based mentoring study involving 10 agencies across the U.S. (Herrera et al., 2007), researchers found no long-term impact on the majority of academic or non-academic outcomes. Though academically at-risk students are often in need of a mentor given their lack of academic or social preparation, they are also the least likely to connect with a natural mentor within their community or accept formal mentoring opportunities that present themselves (Larose & Tarabulsy, 2013). A DuBois, Halloway, et al. meta-analysis (2002) also found that mentoring programs are not as effective for adolescents facing severe difficulties, a similar finding to both Grossman & Tierney (1998) and Johnson (1997) who determined that "adolescents overwhelmed by social or behavioral problems were less likely to benefit from mentoring regardless of the approach" (Rhodes, 2004).

Peer Mentoring

While the previous section outlines some general concerns with youth mentoring, there are also specific concerns for peer mentoring. Some studies suggest that high school and college student mentors actually struggle even more to produce positive results, especially with academically at-risk students (Converse &, 2009; Hughes et al., 2005; Whiting & Mallory, 2007). As peers, mentors often grapple with the same identity-related issues as do their mentees,

so it can be difficult for them to fully assist with adolescent transformations (Rhodes, 2004). One example of a peer-mentoring program having negative or neutral effects comes from examining an evidence-based substance use prevention program. Valente et al. (2007) found that for students who had friend networks that did not use substances, the program had a positive effect, but for those with peer circles who used substances, the students actually became more likely to increase usage. This suggests certain peer programs may have positive results for some mentees but negative ones for others, and reinforces a need for researchers to prepare for potentially unexpected effects when evaluating peer programs (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2006).

Spencer (2007) described the potential for adverse mentoring consequences, noting that they have been cited for almost 50 years though not regularly discussed. Iatrogenic results in peer programs can arise through a form of "deviancy training" in which peers display antisocial attitudes or behaviors and get positive reinforcement (verbal or nonverbal approval) from higher status or older peers. This kind of negative impact is most likely to take place when there is a lack of supervision and structure (Dodge, Dishion, & Lansford, 2006).

Additionally, some studies suggest high-school-aged volunteers are on average less effective as mentors, even when undergoing similar amounts of training (Herrera et al., 2008). A concerning study regarding the potential detrimental impact of peer mentoring programs revolves around an examination of suicide rates in Washington state. Lewis and Lewis (1998) sent a questionnaire to the Washington School Counselors Association and received responses from 305 public schools with a total enrollment of 208,000 students. Roughly 58% of the schools had a peer helping program and 69% of those programs were operated by certified school counselors or similarly credentialed professionals; the remainder of the programs were run by non-counselor teachers and administrators. The study showed that the rate of suicide attempts

increased with age, and, while there was no difference in the number of attempts between counselor and non-counselor related programs, the highest suicide rates were connected to those run by non-counselors (15.4/100,000); this was followed by no program at all (8.4/100,000), and lastly by those with counselors (5.4/100,000). These results indicate that peer programs run by non-counselors actually had a higher ratio of suicides than did schools with no program at all. It should be noted, however, that the study has some critics who have pointed out the high non-response rate (43%) and a failure to adjust for institution size when considering the ratio of suicides per program. Overall, the study raises concerns about the negative potential impact of peer programs run by noncertified counselors, as well as those that place too much responsibility on student leaders to help peers cope with potentially life-threatening mental health problems (Lewis & Lewis, 1998).

Section 4: Best Practices in Mentoring Programs

Program Coordinators

An effective program coordinator is a primary factor linked to successful peer programs (Tindall & Black, 2008). Research indicates student leaders will not acquire the necessary skills without a proficient teacher modeling the various lessons (Carkhuff, 2000). Some qualities associated with effective program coordinators include: adept and flexible problem-solvers; inspiring motivators and team builders; and, pragmatic and optimistic role models who understand the needs of mentees. Some of the primary behaviors practiced by strong program coordinators include: facilitation of participation by all group members, the setting of pro-social group norms, modeling effective communication, supporting student leaders with positive reinforcement, guiding appropriate practice activities, giving constructive feedback to student leaders, confronting harmful behaviors in a non-judgmental manner, and closing sessions

appropriately so students integrate what they have learned into other areas of their lives (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Student Leaders

Recruitment and selection. Another primary factor connected to strong peer programs relates to the effectiveness of student leaders. From a recruitment and selection standpoint, some characteristics associated with competent student leaders include proficient social and interpersonal skills, respect for mentees, optimism and confidence, emotional support, and an ability to cope with difficult situations while refraining from harsh judgments (Larose & Tarabulsy, 2013; Rhodes, 2004). Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, and Herrera (2010) found high school student leaders who scored higher on Crandall's (1991) social interest scale, viewing children as "fun" and "interesting," ended up having stronger and more enduring connections with their mentees. This positive view of youth is particularly important for mentors matched with academically at-risk students (Larose & Tarabulsy, 2013).

Finally, a student leader's commitment level was found to be paramount. Mentees frequently describe successful and enduring mentoring relationships less in terms of positive mentor characteristics and more in terms of the absence of negative ones. As an example, mentees feeling happy with their mentors was not a predictor of mentee satisfaction as compared to mentees feeling disappointed with their mentors. This emphasizes the damaging impact of disappointment or mistrust in a relationship and the importance of consistent connections between mentors and mentees (Rhodes, 2004). To ensure adequate vetting during the selection process, experts recommend utilizing teacher recommendations and conducting interviews to determine a mentor's suitability for such a position (Karcher, 2013).

Training of mentors. In addition to the importance of the recruitment and selection process, mentor training is essential to program success, regardless of the specific form of youth mentoring (peer mentoring, school-based mentoring, group mentoring, etc.) or the particular peer program structure (tutoring, mediation, transition, etc.) (Myric & Bowman, 1981; Tindall & Black, 2008). Given that mentor self-efficacy has consistently been found to impact the quality of mentoring relationships, one primary training goal is to increase mentors' belief in their own ability to make a positive impact (DuBois & Neville, 1997; DuBois, Neville et al., 2002; Hirsch, 2005; Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005; Morrow & Styles, 1995). Studies indicate that student leaders without any training can actually have a negative impact on their mentees (Foster, 1991; Sprinthall & Blum, 1980).

The training of student leaders generally occurs in two phases: pre-match training (introductory) and post-match training (advanced). The initial phase is compulsory for all mentors and introduces them to program goals and expectations (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013). The post-match training takes place after the student leader and mentee have met and when the peer program professional can monitor matches and use an applied training approach.

Pre-match training. During pre-match training, student leaders learn about the benefits of mentoring and the basic skills necessary to become successful mentors. Some of these basic skills include active listening, empathizing, and ethical conduct (Tindall & Black, 2008). In terms of the overall pre-match training approach, an interactive rather than a didactic model better fosters the requisite interpersonal skills (Karcher, 2013). *Active learning,* in which the student leaders physically become part of the lessons through role-playing, simulations, skits, discussions, video productions, and games, reinforces leadership lessons (Jackson, 1993, 1995, 2000). For the *skill-building portion*, program coordinators need to initially explain and model

the skill before providing time for student leaders to practice it, receive feedback, and apply the skills to their own lives.

Pre-match training length should be at least two hours and preferably closer to six hours (MENTOR, 2009). Mentors who attend training for fewer than two hours report fewer positive feelings of closeness and are less likely to spend time with their mentees. The standards for pre-match training vary vastly between programs and, according to various surveys, a large number of youth mentoring programs are not meeting even the two-hour benchmark (Wheeler & DuBois, 2009). Similarly, some studies previously indicated that roughly half of the school-based mentoring programs did not conduct two hours of training (Larose & Tarabusly, 2005). A more recent study of BBBS programs suggested that these numbers were not improving (Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 2009).

Cultural competency, the capacity to effectively work with individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds, is another important aspect of pre-match training (Sue, 2006). This generally includes the heightening of cultural awareness, along with topics related to class differences, microaggressions, stereotyping, prejudices, and implicit bias (Sánchez et al., 2013). For immigrant mentees specifically, cultural competency includes increasing cultural sensitivity related to the stress of oppression, poverty, and distance from family which frequently accompanies immigrant youth. Further, early termination of a mentoring match could be particularly painful for immigrant students who have conceivably already experienced loss during the immigration process (MENTOR, 2009). Program coordinators can assess the cultural competence of their student leaders through the Ethnocultural Empathy Scale (Wang et al., 2003) and the Cultural Sensitivity Scale (Sánchez & DuBois, 2006). Using the information gleaned from these assessments, program coordinators can design future trainings, effectively supervise

mentors, and successfully match mentors and mentees.

Another important element of pre-match training is the setting of realistic expectations. Programs should set clear expectations in terms of goals, requirements, and training for mentors (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002). Studies indicate that mentors frequently enter into programs with high personal expectations of making a difference (Balcazar & Keys, 2013). When these expectations go unfulfilled, and the work proves more challenging than initially anticipated, these mentors are more likely to terminate the mentoring relationship for fear of failure or perceived lack of appreciation (Spencer, 2007). Thus, during pre-match training mentors need to learn that some mentees enter the program appearing "indifferent, defiant, or resistant," which can thereby assuage mentors from unrealistic expectations that commonly include heroic fantasies of rescuing children from a difficult past (Rhodes, 2004). Alerting mentors to some of these anticipated challenges helps them avoid disappointment and build resilience before they ever meet their mentees.

In terms of ethical and behavioral expectations, the primary tenets of most mentoring programs revolve around the concepts of "do no harm, do good, respect others, and treat individuals fairly and honestly" (Kupersmidt & Rhodes 2003, p. 448). In order to "do good," effective mentors need to be empathetic. Empathetic mentors tend to have stronger relationships with their mentees and are more equipped to discuss sensitive and vulnerable topics (Spencer, 2006). Another primary behavioral expectation is that mentors are dependable. Mutually trusting matches are a cornerstone of effective mentoring (Liang et al., 2008; Rhodes, 2005), and dependable mentors foster an increase in mentees' self-esteem, social skills, and behavioral competence (Karcher, 2005). While cancellation of mentoring meetings may seem inevitable from a mentor's perspective, mentees can view these disappointments as a reflection of a

mentor's personal regard for him/her. Mentors need to honor their commitments and consistently communicate with mentees and program staff if they are ever unable to honor their commitments (Rhodes, Liang, & Spencer, 2013). They should be aware that their lack of attendance can negatively affects mentees' social skills, self-esteem, etc. (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005).

Aside from the importance of their commitment level, mentors should know they serve as important role models, giving mentees an example for regulating positive and negative emotions (Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Pianta, 1999; Spencer, 2007). Through this modeling, mentors help mentees learn how to approach negative experiences as opportunities for self-growth and deeper relationships. A responsible and committed approach can also help mentees learn the types of skills they will need to succeed in the workforce (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2013).

Conversely, youth mentors also need to learn about their potential negative impact during pre-match training. If they serve as poor role models by engaging in risky or unhealthy behaviors, or even talk about these topics in a neutral or joking manner, they can reinforce unhealthy behaviors in their mentees related to delinquency, substance abuse, etc. (Beam, Gil-Rivas et al., 2002; Dishion et al., 1996). Program coordinators must discuss the most common ethical violations in mentoring including "the misuse of power (e.g., exploitation; political or religious proselytizing), inappropriate boundaries (e.g., breaching confidentiality; improper disclosures), communication breakdowns (e.g., breaking commitments), and early or unexpected termination of the mentoring relationship" (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013, p. 444)

In addition to serving as an elder role model, mentors also take on the role of friend (Cooper et al., 1995). However, in their attempts to become a supportive and reliable ally, mentors should be aware of appropriate mentoring boundaries. As an example, mentors should

not feel responsible for the caregiving and emotional support best provided by a parent or social service provider (Darling, Hamilton, & Shaver, 2003). In these instances, a mentor's referral skills are of particular importance.

Given that pre-match training and mentor supervision are key practices that should not be neglected (particularly for adolescent student leaders) (Larose & Tarbulsy, 2013), schools need to figure out how to include training in their school day. To this end, numerous schools now offer courses for credit to train student leaders, a seemingly highly effective practice (Tindall & Black, 2008). Co-teaching is another effective training model particularly for programs with large numbers of student leaders.

Post-match training. In addition to an in-depth initial training, advanced training that continues once the mentoring relationship has begun is also very important. Once student leaders take on mentoring responsibilities, they are likely to encounter issues that can be aided by meeting with strong program coordinators and a group of supportive peers. Typical advanced training focuses on a review of previous activities and any accompanying challenges that arise; it also looks forward to goal-setting for upcoming meetings, including outreach planning, curricular training, and skill development (Tindall & Black, 2008). These follow-up meetings are an efficient way for program coordinators to stay abreast of the progress between the various matches and help repair any ruptures between student leaders and mentees (Balcazar & Keys, 2013).

One prominent topic associated with advanced training involves referral skills through which student leaders learn how to refer any health or safety concern to the counselor or program coordinator. Student leaders should never be placed in the untenable position of trying to counsel somebody in a crisis situation that goes beyond their training. They exhibit more confidence

knowing they do not need to take on topics beyond their capability, and communities have increased confidence in peer programs with strong referral practices (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Across a variety of mentoring programs, those mentors who receive ongoing support and supervision are more likely to continue in their positions and have more satisfying mentoring relationships that, in turn, increase positive youth outcomes (MENTOR, 2009; Rhodes, 2004). That said, programs frequently fail to provide advanced training due to funding, and an excessive demand on staff and mentors who have limited time and numerous responsibilities (Rhodes, 2004).

Student leaders making mistakes. Program coordinators must decide how to respond to situations in which student leaders make mistakes, weighing growth opportunities for mentors against any potential harm caused to mentees. Particularly when student leaders become overwhelmed and/or depressed themselves, the coordinator will likely need to take some form of action (Tindall & Black, 2008). From a recruitment and selection standpoint, studies reveal that dysfunctional adolescents can be attracted to helping roles even though they may not be equipped to handle the demands. This makes the screening and selection process, along with ongoing advanced training and supervision, even more essential (Latham, 1998).

Program Support

Successful mentoring programs receive strong institutional support. As a starting point, all programs need motivated coordinators who will continue to supervise and train student leaders throughout the duration of their respective matches. Beyond the individual coordinators, school-based programs also need a stakeholder team of adults to help review applications and recommendations, train students, evaluate the program, and provide professional development opportunities for the coordinators (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Funding is another key aspect of program support. Coordinators increase their likelihood of receiving adequate funding if they can prove that their program is functioning effectively. This typically involves collecting data that supports the program in accomplishing its defined goals. A public relations plan and a program evaluation should help generate these reports (Weinberger, 2013). Without necessary support, some studies suggest schools should refrain from initiating peer programs given the research that adolescent student leaders can have potentially deleterious effects on their mentees without the proper structures and training in place (Karcher, 2013).

Program Structure

Recruitment of mentees. Studies indicate that mentees who are marginally less successful academically and have moderately lower levels of family support stand to benefit the most from mentoring programs. Low socio-economic status (SES) youth with severe behavioral or psychological issues (as well as well-adjusted middle class youth) tend to glean comparatively fewer benefits (Rhodes, 2004). Mentees also report not knowing what to expect from a mentoring program, so it is helpful for the program coordinator to review ways in which it could be beneficial (MENTOR, 2009).

Curriculum. In terms of curriculum, the literature reflects a balance between the need for structure and flexibility. Goal-oriented activities are particularly important for adolescent youth. Fewer negative outcomes are found in structured programs wherein teens meet regularly in the context of a joint goal-directed activity beyond purely social interaction (Dodge et al., 2006), Hamilton & Hamilton, 2013). Some common curricular topics include substance abuse, stress management, leadership training, sex education, tutoring, coping with loss, traffic safety,

character education, bullying/harassment, gambling, low academic achievement, gangs, and depression (Tindall & Black, 2008).

The advantages that accompany a structured curriculum can be compromised if the overall approach is not collaborative in nature (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013). Younger mentees tend to appreciate a focus on building relationships and exploring their interests. A top-down mentoring curriculum can feel unilateral and prescriptive to mentees, hindering deep relational connections (Karcher & Hansen, 2013). A youth-centered, flexible approach that emphasizes a young person's interests would be characterized in the positive youth development field as "voice and choice" (Lerner et al., 2013). Both the student leaders and mentees are likely to invest more when they each have some voice in creating the curriculum (Karcher & Hansen, 2013). Liang et al. (2008) described effective mentoring as mentors supporting mentees while doing shared activities they both find fun.

Match fit. In both one-on-one and group mentoring contexts, research on best practices emphasizes the *match fit* between mentor and mentee (Pryce, Kelly, & Guidone, 2013). In the meta-analysis conducted by DuBois and colleagues (2011), it was found that program effectiveness was significantly enhanced when matches were made based on similarity of interests (Dubois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2004). The use of interest surveys in the match process has become one of the most popular matching methods (O'Hara, 2011). Another approach involves the "meet and greet" wherein mentors and mentees interact in a group prior to establishing matches. Afterwards, the mentees and mentors help program staff generate potential matches by letting them know with which people they felt possible connections (Karcher, 2012).

Research on the significance of racial and cultural similarities in the match process is somewhat convoluted. In general, the literature suggests minority mentors may be best able to

serve as role models and provide support to minority youth" (Jucovy, 2002). Based on their experiences with discrimination, some youth have deeper levels of trust and cooperation with mentors who share their cultural background, and have developed a cultural mistrust of people outside of their race/ethnicity. White mentors can experience a sense of guilt or defensiveness when dealing with topics related to racial oppression (Rhodes, 2004). In two studies of diverse students matched with White mentors, researchers found that youth who reported cultural mistrust of Whites were more likely to view their mentors as not culturally-competent and thus assign a lower rating to their mentoring relationships (Sánchez et al., 2013). Research has also been conducted on parent preferences: in multiple studies both the students and their parent(s) have favored mentors from the same ethnic minority group (Schippers, 2008; Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, & Lewis, 2011). Some researchers suggest mentoring pairs of the same race form connections due, in part, to shared cultural background (Shotton, Oosahwe, & Cintrón, 2007).

Despite studies that suggest youth could potentially be better served by role models from a similar race or ethnicity, it is important to note such research is still underdeveloped and several scholars disagree with these findings. Spencer, et al. (2011) reported that parents valued personal characteristics, such as trustworthiness and caring, over race, and sometimes felt that cross-race mentoring was preferable because it would expose their children to different cultures. Other scholars believe it is more of an "unstated assumption" that programs need to match mentors and mentees based on similarities connected to race, ethnicity, gender, and age (DuBois, et al., 2011). They point out the overall comparison of cross-race and same-race matches have actually found few, if any, differences in the development of relationship quality or in other positive mentoring outcomes. These researchers suggest that race is not a critical dimension for successful mentoring relationships and advocate for matching mentor skills and interests over

cultural background (MENTOR, 2009). They view mentor training and the overall empathy of the mentor as most important, and note that cross-race matching can positively challenge stereotypes and bridge social differences (Rhodes, 2004).

Some researchers emphasize socioeconomic status during the match process. Studies indicate that when middle-class adults attempt to connect with low-SES youth, mentors' worlds can seem disconnected from mentees' daily realities, and thus the mentors' goals can appear naïve. Ultimately, more research is needed in this area, and in the case of peer mentoring programs, matches are frequently made by the constraining necessities related to school scheduling and availability (Hughes & Carter, 2008).

Match length. Once the match is made, the next question involves the optimal match length. Numerous studies confirm that the length of mentoring relationships matter. Grossman and Rhodes (2002) found correlations between positive youth outcomes (academically, psychologically, and behaviorally) and the duration of these relationships. Generally, findings indicate that the longer the match, the stronger the connection and outcome. Mentoring relationships lasting at least one year are optimal, those lasting 6-12 months do not have as many positive outcomes, and relationships terminated quickly actually proved detrimental (Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & Roffman, 2003). The disadvantages of short-term relationships do not apply as much to programs that coincide with the school calendar and have predictable end points that mentees can anticipate (Rhodes, 2004). Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health indicate that adolescents in grades 7-12 who had stable mentors from the age of 14 onward, as compared to those who had not, enjoyed better educational outcomes, mental health, and physical health. These students also engaged in less risk-taking behaviors such as gang membership and fighting (DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005).

Match end. How relationships end can influence the way mentees reflect on their overall experience. A well-executed ending can provide a healthy future example of closure, reinforce the positive aspects of the relationship, and limit feelings of abandonment, loss, or negativity toward future relationships (Rhodes, 2004; Shaver et al., 2009). Premature termination of a match can have a negative impact on mentees emotionally, behaviorally, and/or academically, and be construed by the mentee as a personal failure or rejection (Downey et al., 1998; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2007). In two large random assignment studies, mentees in matches that ended early displayed an increase in concerning behaviors such as substance use (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2007; Rhodes, 2004). Mentees can also develop feelings of disappointment, rejection, and abandonment when their relationship ends early (DuBois, Neville et al., 2002; Karcher, 2005; Spencer, 2007). Given these studies, mentors should be provided with clear guidelines, activities, and rituals on ending the match, and activities should be given to help mentors review the relationship, address issues of loss, think about what they might do differently in the future, and frame a positive and celebratory ending (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013). Additionally, programs should recognize and appreciate the efforts of their mentors prior to match closure.

Group outreach format. Despite roughly 80% of mentoring programs having a one-on-one outreach format (Rhodes, 2004), a meta-analysis of youth mentoring indicates that group programs did not vary greatly in their effectiveness and had the additional benefit of reaching widespread student populations (DuBois et al., 2011). Studies indicate that a group format is preferred over a one-on-one format by many students, and may be particularly preferred by ethnic minority youth (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002; Lindsay-Dennis, Cummings, & McClendon, 2011; Utsey, Howard, & Williams, 2003). Group mentoring is also cost-effective

and can be brought to scale more easily compared to one-on-one approaches (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002).

Notwithstanding the positive potential for the peer group format, increasing research indicates the challenges that accompany unstructured group mentoring. To minimize "deviancy training," wherein peers reinforce anti-social or anti-authority attitudes, peer group programs require additional structured activities (Cavell, 2012; Karcher, Hansen, & Herrera, 2010; Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999). "Pluralistic ignorance" can develop when unstructured groups become intimidated by an inappropriate peer. To counter these effects, early group meetings should revolve around the setting of ground rules related to confidentiality and respect (Sherk, 2006). School-wide anti-bullying interventions should also target bystanders so that a large percentage of the student body population feels empowered to promote healthy social norms.

Another potential issue with the group format involves diminishing intensity and quality of the mentoring relationship when compared to the one-on-one format (e.g., Rhodes, 2002). Some researchers have addressed this by noting that intensity is offset by different types of interactions with additional group members (Kuperminc & Thomason, 2013). The group structure emphasizes interpersonal learning in which the group is a social microcosm and students learn through observing others and experimenting with new behaviors (Dies, 2000; Richmond, 2000). Hartup (1989) described this as the difference between "vertical relationships" between the mentor and mentee, in which the mentor has greater knowledge and social power, and "horizontal relationships" between same-age youth with similar amounts of social influence. The vertical relationships allow opportunities to set social norms by older students while the horizontal relationships offer opportunities to practice those new norms with same-age peers

(Kuperminc & Thomason, 2013). When considering challenges related to the group format, group size (ideally not more than ten mentees, per Sherk, 2006), mentor-mentee ratio, and the addition of co-facilitators can help mitigate any potential issues (Cavell, 2012; Karcher, Hansen, & Herrera, 2010).

Public relations. An effective public relations plan is important for a program's long-term sustainability. Some of the best promotional practices include program coordinators and student leaders outlining the benefits of the program at school board and faculty meetings, presenting at student assemblies, postering around campus, and hosting peer-sponsored events (Tindall & Black, 2008). Engaging entire families in mentoring relationships is also recommended (Griffith, Sawrikar, & Muir, 2009).

Program evaluation. Consistent evaluation of a program's clearly-specified goals is another best practice related to successful peer programs. Some potential evaluation collection sources include GPAs, attendance, graduation rates, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, descriptive narratives, and tallies of mentee referrals. From a measurement standpoint, some topics for assessment can include self-concept, locus of control, school climate, attitude changes, communication skills, academic achievement, substance use, and disciplinary incidents. Traps that can weaken program evaluation include program coordinators skewing the results to avoid negative feedback, or a lack of knowledge regarding effective program evaluation (Tindall & Black, 2008).

Section 5: Gaps in the Research

Despite some of the best practices reviewed in the prior sections, research on peer mentoring still needs additional attention. From a breadth standpoint, few cross-age peer programs have been the focus of more than one or two studies. They also frequently lack both

randomized statistical controls and follow-up evaluations. Determining the validity of the existing studies can be difficult because peer interventions often include confounding variables that complicate potential one-to-one correlations (e.g., Crooks et al., 2010; Willis et al., 2012). Further, existing studies often lack a “counterfactual” comparison group of mentees who do not participate in the respective programs. This makes it challenging to determine the program’s validity (Grossman, 2005). There is also a gap in follow-up with the long-term outcomes of these programs, especially given that prevention sometimes produces delayed effects (Coie et al., 1993; DuBois et al., 2011).

Perhaps the biggest gaps relate to best practices in program implementation and its accompanying challenges. Though we know general recommendations regarding program structure, more studies are needed to identify specific processes through which mentoring relationships lead to positive outcomes (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). As an example, research has indicated that planned activities and themed curricula have proven beneficial for both mentors and mentees, but the specific types of activities have not been identified, nor have been the specifics regarding program format, meeting location, time, and duration (Karcher, 2013). Noting that mentors need training in “skills development” is not the same as specifically describing what those skills are and how they are best developed. To this point, a lack of research exists on how to most effectively communicate with teens, address diversity-related topics, and anticipate/manage match terminations (Rhodes, 2004). In terms of program structure, the majority of mentoring research has focused on one-on-one mentoring, therefore less is comparatively known about the potential and effectiveness for group mentoring (DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Karcher, et al., 2006).

A few questions still open in the field relate to the substantial variation in the effectiveness of different programs across various studies. What challenges do peer program professionals face at their respective sites that lead some programs to be more successful than others? How is the context or the implementation different? Why do programs not use the best practices that have been previously established? (Rhodes, 2004). Through the methodology presented in Chapter 3, this study seeks to address some of these open inquiries in the peer programs field.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

School-based peer programs have been shown to enhance positive youth development, school connectedness, and academic performance. They also provide a wide range of social and emotional services, in addition to peer education, about topics related to substance use, conflict resolution, wellness, and sexual health. Despite this positive potential for peer programs, another set of studies suggests peer mentors can actually have a neutral or even negative impact on mentees. Given the conflicting findings and the lack of research on challenges professionals face when coordinating these programs, this study sought to understand why certain programs were more successful than others and then provide best practices for implementing improvements.

Research Questions

The study focused on three research questions:

1. What do peer program professionals identify as the program strengths at their respective schools, and what factors do they identify as contributing to these program strengths?
2. What do peer program professionals identify as challenges to the effective implementation of peer programs at their respective schools?
3. What attempts to address these challenges have peer program professionals found to be effective? To what do they attribute their effectiveness?

Research Design

I employed a sequential mixed methods design for this study. To provide initial open-ended data on the strengths, challenges, and corresponding solutions associated with the implementation of peer programs, I reviewed the relevant literature and interviewed 13 experts in the peer programs field. Based on this research, I finalized a survey instrument with sound psychometric properties to distribute to peer program professionals for the quantitative portion (Creswell, 2014; DeVellis, 2012).

This design fit into a pragmatist worldview that relied on multiple methods for data collection in order to best explore the research questions and triangulate my data. As a pragmatic researcher interested in questions of "what" and "how," I explored what the differences were between the implementation of a variety of peer programs and how those differences shaped their effectiveness (Creswell, 2014).

Participants

The sample population for this study was comprised of peer program professionals and individuals with tangible experience implementing high school and middle school peer programs. Participants were categorized into one of two categories: "experts" and "program coordinators."

Fifteen (15) national experts were identified for pre-survey interviews from the following groups: (a) those publishing peer programs research; (b) those in a current or former executive role in a peer program professional association; and, (c) those leading established peer "train the trainer" programs. Thirteen (13) of the 15 agreed to be interviewed during the data collection period.

Program coordinators at their respective school sites participated as survey respondents.

They were selected based on their association with a variety of well-established national peer programs. These national organizations agreed to send out the survey to their own listservs. Given that the schools connected to these listservs were generally public, I also sent my survey to the National Association of Independent Schools and the Independent School Data Exchange listservs. When administrators from the independent school listservs responded to me with their program coordinators' contact information, I sent the survey to the coordinators electronically.

Of a total number of 623 respondents, 538 (86%) fully completed the survey, while 85 (14%) completed only part of it. The overall response rate for the survey was difficult to determine for a few reasons: (a) not every national organization knew how many active e-mail addresses were connected to its listserv; (b) numerous e-mail addresses included on the listservs were outdated and/or the e-mail itself could have gone directly into spam folders; and, (c) an unspecified number of administrators and district office representatives were part of the listservs but were not eligible to complete the survey because they were not program coordinators (the first question on the survey asked participants to confirm their "program coordinator" status, and if they responded "no," the survey automatically closed).

Despite the potential for inaccuracies, the survey went out to roughly 8,100 email addresses. Through my discussions regarding the make-up of the respective listservs with representatives from the national peer program organizations, I determined that the response rate was approximately 10%.

Many of the survey respondents were comparatively new to the field: 46.7% were in their first three years of coordinating a peer program, while only 12% had more than 10 years of experience. Geographically, 40.1% of U.S. respondents came from the West Coast, 23.4% from the South, 22.6% from the Midwest, and 13.9% from the East. The top four states with

respondents included California (24.6%), Texas (13.7%), New York (8.4%), and Michigan (5.3%). Coordinators were 79% female and 86.2% White (see Table 3.1).

Regarding student leader participation in the surveyed peer programs, 68.4% were of high school age (grades 9 through 12) and 31.6% were of middle school age (grades 6 through 8). The number of student leaders per program varied, with 55.3% of the programs having 50 leaders or less, and 44.7% having more than 50 leaders. In terms of mentees, 59.4% were from high school (grades 9 through 12), 31.7% from middle School (grades 6 through 8), and 8.9% from elementary school (grades 1 through 5). The number of mentees per program also varied, with 55.4% having more than 200 mentees and 44.6% having 200 or less (see Table 3.1).

In terms of the contextual characteristics of the peer programs, 46.6% of coordinators were from public schools that received Title I funds, 36.8% from public schools that did not receive Title I funds, and 12.4% from independent schools. Almost one-third (30.5%) of the programs were within their first three years of existence, yet population sizes varied among the respective schools. Of these programs, 33.1% had 501-1000 students, 24.1% had 1001 to 1500 students, 23.6% had more than 1500 students, and 19.3% had less than 500 students (see Table 3.2).

Regarding characteristics related to program structure, there were some notable statistics given by program coordinators: 80.1% identified the primary purpose of their programs as "peer transition" or "peer mentoring"; 80.5% said their programs were designed to reach an entire group of mentees; and, 63.4% said outreach was conducted in a group setting (see Table 3.3). These numbers are high, in part because 68.1% of the respondents came from Bridge, a program that is designed to focus on transitioning an entire grade into middle or high school, and is largely conducted in a group format.

For scheduling characteristics of respondents' peer programs, 58% of program coordinators reported that they did not have a class dedicated to their peer program, while 42% did. In terms of the meeting length, the vast majority of program coordinators met with their student leaders for either 31-60 minutes (50.1%) or 0-30 minutes (38.1%). Their frequency of meetings varied significantly with 28.9% meeting more than once a week, and 27.9% meeting roughly once per month. The top outreach meeting time slots included homeroom or advisory periods (27.7%) or designated class time (26.5%) (see Table 3.4). Of the outreach meetings, 84.9% were less than 60-minutes long, with 50.2% being 0-30 minutes long and 34.7% being 31-60 minutes long. Regarding frequency of student leader and mentee outreach, the top four answer choices were close to evenly split between once a month (23.1%), once a week (21.5%), a few times per year (21%), and once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (18.2%).

Overall, the combination of expert interviews and survey responses yielded a cross-section of peer programs with enough respondents to disaggregate data from a variety of sub-categories discussed further in the data analysis section below. Participants' knowledge regarding the strengths, challenges, and solutions for peer programs helped clarify reasons for differentiation in program outcomes.

Table 3.1: Background Information on Program Coordinators, Student Leaders, and Mentees

Number of Years Coordinating Peer Programs		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
0-3 years	280	46.7
4-6 years	153	25.5
7-10 years	94	15.7
More than ten years	72	12.0
Total	599	100.0
Number of Program Coordinators by U.S. Geographic Region		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
West	225	40.1
South	131	23.4
Midwest	127	22.6
East	78	13.9
Total	561	100.0
Gender of Program Coordinators		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Female	467	79
Male	124	21
Total	591	100
Race or Ethnicity of Program Coordinators		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
White or European American	520	86.2
Latino/a or Latino/a American	28	4.6
Black or African American	24	4.0
Other	9	1.5
Asian or Asian American	7	1.2
Pacific Islander or Pacific Islander American	2	0.3
Native American	2	0.3
Total	592	100.0
Number of Student Leaders Per Peer Program		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
26-50 student leaders	192	30.9
Less than 25 student leaders	152	24.4
51-75 student leaders	120	19.3
76-100 student leaders	106	17.0
More than 100 student leaders	52	8.4
Total	622	100.0

(continued on next page)

(Table 3.1 continued)

Age of Student Leaders		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
High school	413	68.4
Middle school	191	31.6
Total	604	100.0
Number of Mentees Per Peer Program		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
101-200 mentees	146	23.4
Less than 100 mentees	132	21.2
More than 400 mentees	131	21
201-300 mentees	115	18.5
301-400 mentees	99	15.9
Total	623	100.0
Age of Mentee		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Upper school mentees	322	59.4
Middle school mentees	172	31.7
Lower school mentees	48	8.9
Total	542	100.0

Table 3.2: Contextual Characteristics of Respondents' Peer Programs

Type of Respondents' Schools		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
A public school that receives Title I funds	281	46.6
A public school that does not receive Title I funds	222	36.8
An independent school	75	12.4
Other	22	3.6
Total	600	100.0
Number of Students in School Population Per Respondent		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
501-1000 students	199	33.1
1001-1500 students	145	24.1
Less than 500 students	116	19.3
More than 2000 students	77	12.8
1501-2000 students	65	10.8
Total	602	100.0
Age of Respondents' Peer Programs		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
0-3 years	184	30.5
4-6 years	148	24.5
More than 10 years	138	22.9
7-10 years	111	18.4
I don't know	22	3.6
Total	603	100.0

Table 3.3: Design of Respondents' Peer Programs

	Frequency	**Valid Percent**
Designed to reach an entire group of mentees (such as an entire grade of students)	496	80.5
Designed to reach specially-identified students who are in need of additional peer support (individual students who are referred by adults or request support themselves)	120	19.5
Total	616	100.0
Student Leaders and Mentees Meet in a One-On-One, Group, or Varied Format		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
In a group	390	63.4
It varies	149	24.2
One-on-one	76	12.4
Total	615	100
Average Duration of Student Leader and Mentee Match		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
6 to 9 months	389	62.8
10 to 12 months	115	18.6
5 months or less	102	16.5
More than 12 months	13	2.1
Total	619	100

Data Collection

Expert interviews prior to the survey. By interviewing experts in the field, I was able to compare their analyses with the literature review and ensure the survey instrument I designed was appropriate for the program coordinators being surveyed (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, I was able to acquire more in-depth information than I received from the survey alone (Fowler, 2014).

On December 2, 2015, 15 experts were contacted via an introductory e-mail which included a brief overview of the study and an attached study information sheet (Appendix A). Thirteen (13) of the 15 experts were subsequently interviewed and recorded on speaker phone from December 3 through December 23, 2015. The recordings were stored on a password-

protected laptop and backed up using both Dropbox and an external hard drive. The interviews averaged 35 minutes in length in order to provide in-depth, exploratory responses, and followed the protocol outlined in Appendix B.

Thematic analysis from the interviews helped generate closed-ended questions for the survey instrument (Creswell, 2014). As an example, experts were asked to describe challenges they have seen or experienced when implementing peer programs. These challenges were then coded into categories for the survey, such as challenges related to recruitment and selection, school support, scheduling, etc. By completing the interviews in December 2015, I had time to analyze the results and adjust the survey prior to deploying it in March 2016.

From a validity and reliability perspective, I crafted the expert interview questions in a straight-forward manner, thus avoiding double-barrel questions and technical jargon (Fowler, 1995; Merriam, 2009). At the beginning of each interview, I restated the purpose of the study and assured participants of their anonymity so they would feel as comfortable as possible answering questions honestly (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). I also included warm-up questions to ease participants into the process, and relied on open-ended questions in order to draw out detailed anecdotes. If participants offered vague responses that required me to guess at their intended meaning, I used pre-established follow-up questions in order to guide them to be more specific. Questions about solutions were particularly well-suited for the interview format because of the numerous possible recommendations for each respective challenge (Fowler, 1995). During pre-interview testing, I checked to ensure I was receiving the types of meaningful answers I was hoping the questions would generate (Merriam, 2009).

Survey development. The three research questions were also addressed through an electronic Qualtrics.com survey distributed in March 2016 to those who currently, or within the

past three years, coordinated high school or middle school peer programs (see Appendix C). The survey link was emailed to the listservs of a variety of peer program organizations (Appendix D), along with the study information sheet (Appendix A), and respondents had roughly one month to respond. A reminder e-mail was sent to the various listservs approximately ten days after the initial e-mail was dispatched.

The survey was an appropriate method to collect these data because it allowed for a broad, numeric sampling of my sample population. By capturing the experiences of a wide range of peer professionals, the survey made the results more generalizable (Creswell, 2014). The respondents all had access to the Internet, along with related school e-mail addresses, and the self-administered approach allowed them the convenience of responding at a time most convenient for them (Fowler, 2014).

The survey asked respondents to rate the strengths and challenges of their respective peer programs using a Likert-like scale. There were 18 strength descriptors and 28 challenge descriptors (see Table 3.4). The challenge descriptors were divided into four categories: (a) recruitment and selection; (b) student leaders and mentees; (c) school support/scheduling; and, (d) program structure. I designed the questions and the categories by consulting research literature, peer program experts, pilot survey feedback, and personal experiences with peer programs. The majority of the questions were closed-ended so the respondents could more reliably answer the questions, and I could more reliably interpret the meaning of the answers (Schuman & Presser, 1981). The closed-ended questions also shortened the amount of time it took to complete the survey and likely increased the response rate.

There were a limited number of open-ended questions regarding solutions because the vast number of potential best practice recommendations could not be captured through a closed-

response format (Fowler, 1995, 2014). These questions asked for one or two best practice recommendations regarding: (a) recruitment and selection/training of student leaders; (b) program structure; (c) school support/scheduling; (d) biggest challenges; and, (e) desired areas for additional training.

Table 3.4: Survey Strength and Challenge Descriptors

Program Strengths Related to Outcomes
The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture
The program provides valuable services for students
The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community
The program improves school connectedness for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment)
The program improves peer relations for both student leaders and mentees
The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance, etc.)
The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus
The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees
The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees
The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees
The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees
The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)
The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees
The program strives to close the achievement gap
The program eases the transition into school for mentees
The program decreases stress for mentees
Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program
Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program
Program Challenges Related to Recruitment and Selection
A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program
A lack of interested mentees sign up or get referred to the program
The selection process for student leaders

(continued on next page)

(*Table 3.4 continued)*

Program Challenges Related to Student Leaders and Mentees
Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities
Getting student leaders to set a good example
Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees
Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)
Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times
Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health and safety arise
Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values
Mentees do not find the program worthwhile
Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders
Program Challenges Related to School Support and Scheduling
Other programs are competing for student interest
Lack of program funding
Lack of support from faculty
Lack of support from administration
Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders
Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees
Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities
Program Challenges Related to Program Structure
The lack of clearly defined program goals that address important needs for your particular school
The lack of a meaningful program curriculum
The lack of appropriate facilities for training and/or outreach
The lack of meaningful professional training for program coordinator
The lack of an effective program evaluation and improvement plan
The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program
The program is trying to accomplish too many different objectives
The match process between student leaders and mentees
The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program

While the self-administered email approach may not have yielded the highest possible response rate, this limitation was partially mitigated by my emailing the survey to a targeted group with a pre-existing interest in peer programs (Gallagher, Fowler, & Stringellow, 2005; Herberlein & Baumgartern, 1978; Jobber, 1984). I had also hoped to increase the sense of reward for participating by acknowledging respondents' vital contribution as practitioners and by raffling off three $50 gift cards to survey respondents. In order to maximize potential responses,

I had the national organizations resend the survey approximately ten days after the initial survey was deployed and stressed the importance of the study yielding a high response rate. I also reminded respondents that the information collected would be put to valuable use for improving peer programs (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008).

From a reliability and validity standpoint, the survey was an appropriate choice for data collection because sensitive information is more frequently and accurately reported in self-administered modes (Acquilino, 1994; Dillman & Tarnai, 1991; Tourangeau & Smith, 1998; Turner et al., 1998). This suggests peer professionals were more likely to respond honestly and consistently about the challenges they faced at their respective schools through this self-administered mode of data collection. The survey introduction described the importance of accuracy and emphasized there were no desired responses in order to limit respondents from thinking certain answers were more socially desirable than others. Participants were also more likely to respond honestly knowing that all answers would be treated confidentially and statistics would only be reported in the aggregate (Catania et al., 1990; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

Regarding the survey design, the layout was clear and uncluttered and the directions were self-explanatory. There were only a few question forms, and redundant information in the directions ensured clarity on behalf of the survey respondent (Fowler, 2014). When directions were required, they were provided before the question in order to increase the likelihood that respondents would read them. It also began with the most straight-forward inquiries in order to ease the respondent into the survey (Fowler, 2014). Since the vast majority of the questions were closed-ended, they provided more reliable, interpretable, and valid responses (Schuman & Presser, 1981). For the open-ended response section, there were a specified number of answers requested in order to avoid dramatic shifts in the number of replies between respondents (Fowler,

2014).

To ensure that the questions provided consistent measures and meant similar things to respondents, a 7-point scale was used in which each number was associated with a verbal category (0 = not at all a challenge; 1-2 = minor challenge; 3-4 = medium challenge; 5-6 = major challenge) (Belson, 1981; Fowler, 1992, 2014; Oksenberg, Cannell, & Kalton, 1991; Tanur, 1991; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Given that it can be difficult to break a subjective sense of quantity into more than four categories using adjectives alone, I added the numerical scale into the survey (Fowler, 1995).

I also used the 7-point scale because, when grouping responses for subjective states into ordered classes along a continuum, it is preferable to have more rather than fewer categories (Fowler, 2014). Though there is a limit to the precision that people can use to discriminate their feelings (generally ten categories or fewer), an increased variation in responses frequently came with increased validity (Andrews, 1984; Fowler, 2014). I considered an agree/disagree format but rejected it, in part because a direct rating scale of subjective states has been shown to yield increased validity while reducing the amount of time it takes respondents to complete a survey (Saris et al., 2010). By including adjective labels, I was able to consistently calibrate the scale points. While there is some evidence that respondents may be more likely to select the first point in the scale, doing so would not change validity in terms of the order of responses (Fowler, 1995).

Pre-survey results reinforced the selection of the 7-point scale. I asked respondents to give written and verbal feedback on any confusing directions or questions. I also asked how confidently they could accurately respond to the questions (Dillman & Redline, 2004). These respondents generally preferred the 7-point scale as compared to other 4-, 5-, and 10-point

options. They reported that it was detailed enough for them to distinguish between ratings, but not so detailed that each question seemed difficult to accurately answer.

In terms of verbiage, the survey initially utilized “major obstacles” on one end of the continuum and “major strengths” on the other, but respondents noted that strengths are not necessarily the opposite of obstacles. The word “obstacles” was changed to “challenges” during the pre-survey testing portion because respondents talked about challenges as “something that could be overcome with solutions,” whereas “obstacles” seemed like “permanent barriers.” Initially, there were also different labels for each numerical value, but respondents preferred the terms “not at all a challenge,” “minor challenge,” “medium challenge,” and “major challenge” as they seemed equidistant and clear.

Data Analysis

Once I completed all the expert interviews, I conducted an inductive analysis of the strengths, challenges, and solutions related to the implementation of school-based peer programs. Based on the categories that emerged, I adjusted the survey questions prior to sending the survey out to respondents.

After the surveys were sent out via listservs and submitted through a Qualtrics.com link, I analyzed the responses using SPSS Statistics software. Initially, I ran descriptive statistics on demographic variables and the overall strengths and challenges. Given that 68% of the respondents came from one national peer organization, Bridge, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare strength and challenge ratings of Bridge and non-Bridge coordinators. Data was explored for outliers, homogeneity of variance, and normality. When the data violated the assumption of normal distribution, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test was conducted and interpreted.

Next, an exploratory analysis was conducted to identify what program elements were associated with different ratings of strengths and challenges between program coordinators. Using 19 program elements in my survey (e.g., the amount of time program coordinators meet with student leaders, etc.) a Scheffe test was conducted on each item looking for significant results at the alpha = .01 level. The Scheffe test was used because the groups, based on program elements, were different sizes. The alpha was selected to be equal to .01 because of the large number of tests. A small number of items had violations to the normality assumption. However, due to the exploratory nature of this study and the fact that the violations were not major, no additional analyses were performed. For questions with only two answer choices, a simple ANOVA analysis was conducted.

Throughout the free response section of the survey, I used inductive analysis to code themes for each of the questions. In addition to only asking for one or two best practices, the most popular responses for some of the questions were less than 100 of the 600 participants (roughly 20% of responses). The overall findings revealed strengths, challenges, and corresponding solutions for the implementation of peer programs as reported through the expert interviews and the open- and close-ended questions on the survey.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

From the standpoint of credibility and trustworthiness, one limiting factor in this study was the reliance on program coordinators to self-report their reflections. Despite the efforts taken to standardize responses, respondents could interpret the scale in a variety of different ways or exaggerate their experiences. They may also have shown bias when describing their own peer programs. Additionally, the program coordinators themselves may have been the biggest challenge to the success of certain peer programs and that information would likely not be

revealed by participants.

The response rate for the email survey was approximately 10% despite the efforts listed above to increase it. Furthermore, by only conducting 13 expert interviews, that portion of the study was not widely generalizable. That said, I attempted to ask probing questions during the interviews in order to yield deep, specific, and tangible examples from the experts. The more widely distributed survey portion also provided quantitative analysis that could be compared against the qualitative interviews and provide data triangulation. This increased the overall validity and protected against faulty information coming from any singular data collection method (Creswell, 2014).

Potential reactivity was also taken into account in this study's design. Respondents may have told me what they thought I wanted to hear, whether they perceived it to be great or terrible aspects of their peer programs. These concerns are partially addressed by the aforementioned mixed methods design and my use of a systematic process for data collection to ensure all participants were asked the same questions. Moreover, I explicitly and repeatedly stated that all truthful responses on behalf of the respondents were helpful regardless of whether those responses depicted their respective peer programs positively or negatively.

Personal bias was another factor I considered in the design of this study. Given that I have coordinated peer programs for more than a decade, I could potentially be inclined to view results through a particular lens. To address concerns of bias, I used a variety of direct quotations from respondents so they were presented in their own words, and cited extensive numerical results derived from the survey data. Triangulating data from the variety of sources helped me confirm or contradict personal biases, and random sampling within sub-groups also strengthened the overall validity. Finally, I did a pilot survey to ensure peer program professionals did not

identify any biases in the survey questions themselves.

Ethical Issues

From an ethical standpoint, I assured the privacy of my respondents by not using their names or the names of their schools (Fowler, 2014). This hopefully empowered respondents to honestly complete the survey and answer interview questions without fear of facing negative consequences for criticizing their school's program.

I also reported my findings as objectively as possible; I recognized that my study could have tangible implications for the development of peer programs, so I needed to limit any personal biases I may have held based on my previous experience working with peer programs (Creswell, 2014). To ensure I did no harm, I explicitly addressed the limitations of my study so that readers could not overgeneralize my findings.

Summary

The sequential mixed-methods design described in this chapter provided rich data related to my three research questions. By relying on interview and survey data, I addressed elements of both breadth and depth when analyzing the implementation of school-based peer programs. The expert interviews provided critical details that could not be gleaned from the closed-response section of the survey. The survey respondents represented a wide cross-section of peer programs and further clarified these initial findings by providing additional information through the free response section.

CHAPTER 4:

RESULTS

Introduction

This study investigated best practices for creating and improving school-based peer programs. Through a sequential mixed methods study that included interviewing experts in the peer programs field and surveying a wide range of peer program coordinators, I addressed the following research questions:

1. What do peer program professionals identify as the program strengths at their respective schools, and what factors do they identify as contributing to these program strengths?
2. What do peer program professionals identify as challenges to the effective implementation of peer programs at their respective schools?
3. What attempts to address these challenges have peer program professionals found to be effective? To what do they attribute their effectiveness?

This chapter begins with a brief review of the overall strength and challenge ratings from survey respondents. The ratings were based on the survey's 0-6 scale and divided into the corresponding four categories: (a) "major," (b) "medium," (c) "minor," and (d) "not at all" (see Chapter 3). Given the large number of respondents from the national peer program, Bridge, the analysis includes: (a) the full data set, (b) a Bridge-only data set, and (c) a non-Bridge data set. This was done in order to avoid responses from one national program skewing the overall results. Following this review, I summarize the research findings from both the interviews and the

surveys into the four most commonly cited factors contributing to the success of school-based peer programs.

Overall Strengths Ratings from Survey

All 18 of the outcomes-based strength descriptors had a mean in the “major” or “medium strength” categories (see Table 4.1). The “major strengths” that rounded to a mean of 5.0 or higher based on the scale included:

a) easing the transition into school for mentees (M = 5.34; SD = 0.96);
b) student leaders developing lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program (M = 5.19; SD = 0.95);
c) mentees wanting to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program (M = 5.13; SD = 1.00);
d) the program improving school connectedness for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment) (M = 5.04; SD = 0.98);
e) the program improving peer relations for both student leaders and mentees (M = 5.00; SD = 0.97);
f) the program building a sense of community and positively impacting school culture (M = 4.89; SD = 0.98);
g) the program providing valuable services for students (M = 4.80; SD = 1.10);
h) the program decreasing stress for mentees (M = 4.79; SD = 1.12);
i) the program improving communication skills of student leaders and mentees (M = 4.78; SD = 1.04); and
j) the program enhancing self-esteem for leaders and mentees (M = 4.74; SD = 1.05).

The lowest “medium strengths” that rounded to 4.0 or below included:

a) improving conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees (M = 3.97; SD = 1.43);
b) raising awareness about important issues in the school and/or broader surrounding community (M = 3.90; SD = 1.44);
c) improving academic development for student leaders and mentees (M = 3.83; SD = 1.39);
d) striving to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees (M = 3.54; SD = 1.70); and
e) striving to close the achievement gap (M = 3.49; SD = 1.52).

Some of these lower-rated means might be explained through the goals of the respective programs. A peer-tutoring program may not seek to decrease substance use, and those running a universal peer program that extends to an entire grade of students may not be focused specifically on the achievement gap. The highest-rated strengths tended to be more general in their descriptions and thus more likely to cut across multiple types of peer programs (peer transition, peer tutoring, etc.), while the lowest-rated strengths tended to be more specific and easily associated with a particular type of peer program (such as peer education programs raising awareness about important issues in the school).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare Bridge and non-Bridge respondents’ strength ratings from the survey. Fourteen (14) of the 18 strengths were statistically significantly different between Bridge and non-Bridge samples, indicating that there was a substantive difference between Bridge and non-Bridge participants responding to these questions (see Table 4.2). For 12 of the 14 descriptors with statistically significant differences, non-Bridge

respondents had higher-rated strengths. This speaks generally to non-Bridge respondents giving higher overall strength ratings than did Bridge participants.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Ranking of Overall Strengths

	Rank	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**
The program eases the transition into school for mentees	1.00	5.34	0.96	558
Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	2.00	5.19	0.95	571
Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program	3.00	5.13	1.01	562
The program improves school connectedness for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment)	4.00	5.04	0.98	573
The program improves peer relations for both student leaders and mentees	5.00	5.00	0.97	572
The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	6.00	4.89	0.98	577
The program provides valuable services for students	7.00	4.80	1.10	569
The program decreases stress for mentees	8.00	4.79	1.13	564
The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	9.00	4.78	1.04	572
The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	10.00	4.74	1.05	567
The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	11.00	4.48	1.18	570
The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	12.00	4.32	1.21	557
The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	13.00	4.04	1.42	536
The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	14.00	3.97	1.43	564
The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	15.00	3.90	1.44	565
The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance, etc.)	16.00	3.83	1.39	567
The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	17.00	3.54	1.70	459
The program strives to close the achievement gap	18.00	3.49	1.52	504

Table 4.2: T-Tests and Descriptive Strength Statistics by Bridge and Non-Bridge Respondents

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Group							95% CI for Mean Difference			
	Bridge				Non-Bridge						
Item	Mean	SD	N		Mean	SD	N			t	df
The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	4.87	0.990	391		4.94	0.968	186	-0.237	0.105	-0.759	371.466
The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	3.67	1.381	383		4.59	1.325	181	-1.153	-0.671	*-7.418	562.000
The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	4.60	1.075	384		5.04	0.937	183	-0.627	-0.263	*-4.797	565.000
The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	3.93	1.393	372		4.29	1.444	164	-0.622	-0.103	*-2.745	534.000
The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	3.10	1.598	306		4.41	1.562	153	-1.609	-0.992	*-8.282	457.000
The program strives to close the achievement gap	3.26	1.498	348		4.01	1.455	156	-1.035	-0.473	*-5.331	306.476
The program eases the transition into school for mentees	5.54	0.743	389		4.85	1.198	169	0.497	0.889	*6.957	226.134
The program decreases stress for mentees	4.85	1.142	388		4.64	1.087	176	0.016	0.418	*2.12	562.000
Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program	5.17	0.931	384		5.04	1.156	178	-0.050	0.309	1.422	560.000
Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.13	0.969	387		5.33	0.889	184	-0.371	-0.039	*-2.423	569.000
The program provides valuable services for students	4.66	1.152	385		5.09	0.922	184	-0.604	-0.251	*-4.76	441.194
The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	3.63	1.425	384		4.48	1.306	181	-1.096	-0.604	*-6.792	563.000

* $p < .05$

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.2 continued)

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Group							95% CI for Mean Difference			
	Bridge				Non-Bridge						
Item	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**		**Mean**	**SD**	**N**			**t**	**df**
The program improves school connectedness for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment)	5.06	0.948	389		5.01	1.058	184	-0.117	0.229	0.639	571.000
The program improves peer relations for both student leaders and mentees	4.95	0.986	390		5.09	0.933	182	-0.313	0.029	-1.633	570.000
The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance, etc.)	3.66	1.32	385		4.19	1.478	182	-0.772	-0.287	*-4.290	565.000
The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.21	1.197	380		4.55	1.191	177	-0.557	-0.129	*-3.155	555.000
The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	4.61	1.073	389		5.14	0.844	183	-0.693	-0.367	*-6.402	443.808
The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.22	1.176	389		5.04	0.980	181	-1.003	-0.633	*-8.686	415.781

* $p < .05$

The biggest change in ranking between the data sets was that the previously number one-rated strength for both the overall data set and the Bridge data set, "the program easing the transition into high school" (M = 5.34, SD = 0.96 for the overall data set and M = 5.54, SD = 0.74 for Bridge data set), dropped to the tenth-rated strength in the non-Bridge data set (M = 4.85, SD = 1.20) (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The difference perhaps speaks to the fact that, as a transition program, Bridge has the explicit goal of transitioning students into middle or high school. That said, even in the non-Bridge data, this item rounds up to a "major strength," speaking to how highly-rated the strengths were generally across the board. The program strength that rose from being ranked ninth in the overall data set (M = 4.78; SD = 1.04) and the Bridge data set (M = 4.61; SD = 1.07) to second for non-Bridge respondents (M = 5.14; SD = 0.84) was the "program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees" (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Overall Challenge Ratings from Survey

None of the challenges listed had a mean in the "major challenge" category (see Table 4.3). Ten (10) of the 28 challenges had a mean in the "medium challenge" category:

a) not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate the program in addition to other responsibilities (M = 3.40; SD = 2.05);

b) getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities (M = 3.21; SD = 1.61);

c) getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees (M = 3.09; SD = 1.69);

d) other programs are competing for student interest (M = 2.98; SD = 1.98);

e) not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees (M = 2.98; SD = 2.08);

f) getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during program meeting times (M = 2.83; SD = 1.56);

g) the program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program (M = 2.82; SD = 2.10);

h) getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (M = 2.79; SD = 1.50);

i) lack of program funding (M = 2.74; SD = 2.10); and

j) getting student leaders to set a good example (M = 2.53; SD = 1.51).

Of those ten challenges, five were from the student leaders and mentees section, four were from school support and scheduling, and one was from program structure (see Chapter 3). While there were not any "major challenges," the "medium challenges" – taken in conjunction with the expert interviews and free response survey questions – provide worthwhile areas of exploration for peer program researchers.

The three lowest-rated challenges with means between 1.46 and 1.27 included: (a) the lack of a meaningful program curriculum (M = 1.46; SD = 1.62); (b) a lack of interested mentees sign-up or get referred to the program (M = 1.45; SD = 1.72); and (c) the lack of meaningful professional training for program coordinator (M = 1.27; SD = 1.62). The low challenge rating for (b) a lack of mentees sign-up for the program may, in part, speak to universal programs that automatically enroll an entire group of mentees, such as an entire grade level. Recruitment of mentees is not an issue when students are required to participate, thus making that challenge inapplicable for many program respondents.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare Bridge and non-Bridge respondents' challenge ratings from the survey. Eighteen (18) of the 28 challenges came up as statistically significantly different between the Bridge and non-Bridge samples, indicating a substantive difference between Bridge and non-Bridge participants responding to these questions (see Table 4.4). The breakdown of these statistically significant differences based on the categories from the survey include: 8 of the 9 items relating to student leaders and mentees; 6 of the 7 items relating to school support and scheduling; 4 of the 9 items relating to program structure; and 0 of the 3 items relating to recruitment and selection.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Ranking of Overall Challenges

	Rank	Mean	SD	N
Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.40	2.05	551
Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2	3.21	1.61	567
Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3	3.09	1.69	560
Other programs are competing for student interest	4	2.98	1.98	548
Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	5	2.98	2.08	544
Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	6	2.83	1.56	543
The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	7	2.82	2.11	542
Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	8	2.79	1.50	566
Lack of program funding	9	2.74	2.10	540
Getting student leaders to set a good example	10	2.53	1.51	561
The selection process for student leaders	11	2.49	1.73	563
Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	12	2.23	2.02	547
The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	13	2.18	1.79	527
A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	14	2.13	1.86	569
Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	15	2.09	1.52	552
Lack of support from faculty	16	2.08	1.80	546
Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	17	1.99	1.65	535
The lack of an effective program evaluation and improvement plan	18	1.92	1.69	533
Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	19	1.91	1.57	552
The program is trying to accomplish too many different objectives	20	1.78	1.74	535
The lack of clearly defined program goals that address important needs for your particular school	21	1.74	1.66	541
The lack of appropriate facilities for training and/or outreach	22	1.71	1.78	540
Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	23	1.69	1.58	524
The match process between student leader and mentee	24	1.60	1.61	528
Lack of support from administration	25	1.50	1.79	543
The lack of a meaningful program curriculum	26	1.46	1.62	532
A lack of interested mentees sign up or get referred to the program	27	1.45	1.72	471
The lack of meaningful professional training for program coordinator	28	1.27	1.62	533

Table 4.4: T-Tests and Descriptive Challenge Statistics by Bridge and Non-Bridge Respondents

PROGRAM CHALLENGES	Group							95% CI for Mean Difference			
	Bridge				Non-Bridge						
	M	SD	N		M	SD				t	df
Challenges: Recruitment and Selection											
A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	2.17	1.84	388		2.06	1.89	181	-.22	.435	.63	567.00
A lack of interested mentees sign-up or get referred to the program	1.36	1.66	310		1.63	1.81	161	-.60	.05	-1.63	469.00
The selection process for student leaders	2.55	1.67	383		2.38	1.83	180	-.13	.47	1.07	561.00
Challenges: Student Leaders and Mentees											
Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3.55	1.46	385		2.47	1.66	182	.79	1.36	*7.49	317.94
Getting student leaders to set a good example	2.65	1.46	382		1.56	2.28	179	.10	.64	*2.76	559.00
Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3.58	1.48	383		2.04	1.62	177	1.26	1.81	*11.05	558.00
Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	3.07	1.40	385		2.20	1.52	181	.59	1.12	*6.43	327.24
Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	3.07	1.51	371		2.31	1.55	172	.48	1.03	*5.37	541.00
Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.92	1.60	355		1.20	1.39	169	.45	.99	*5.24	376.26
Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	2.06	1.66	365		1.83	1.62	170	-.06	.53	1.52	533.00
Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	2.16	1.56	379		1.37	1.44	173	.51	1.06	*5.59	550.00
Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	2.28	1.50	379		1.68	1.46	173	.33	.87	*4.43	550.00

* p < .05.

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.4 continued)

PROGRAM CHALLENGES	Group							95% CI for Mean Difference		t	df
	Bridge				Non-Bridge						
	M	SD	N		M	SD	N			t	df
Challenges: Program Structure											
The lack of clearly defined program goals that address important needs for your particular school	1.83	1.67	362		1.56	1.63	179	-.03	.56	1.74	539
The lack of a meaningful program curriculum	1.44	1.61	358		1.52	1.64	174	-.38	.20	-.58	530
The lack of appropriate facilities for training and/or outreach	1.85	1.79	365		1.42	1.70	175	.10	.74	*2.60	538
The lack of meaningful professional training for program coordinator	1.32	1.64	361		1.17	1.56	172	-.15	.43	.94	531
The lack of an effective program evaluation and improvement plan	2.05	1.73	360		1.64	1.58	173	.10	.71	*2.62	531
The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	2.33	1.75	357		1.88	1.82	170	.12	.77	*2.74	525
The program is trying to accomplish too many different objectives	1.90	1.73	360		1.54	1.72	175	.05	.67	*2.29	533
The match process between student leader and mentee	1.62	1.59	363		1.55	1.63	165	-.23	.36	.43	526
The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	2.92	2.11	368		2.62	2.07	174	-.08	.67	1.52	540

* $p < .05$.

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.4 continued)

PROGRAM CHALLENGES	Group							95% CI for Mean Difference			
	Bridge				Non-Bridge						
	M	SD	N		M	SD	N			t	df
Challenges: School Support and Scheduling											
Other programs are competing for student interest	3.08	1.94	373		2.78	2.05	175	-.05	.65	1.64	546.00
Lack of program funding	3.15	2.05	370		1.85	1.92	170	.93	1.66	*6.96	538.00
Lack of support from faculty	2.42	1.82	370		1.37	1.52	176	.76	1.34	*7.06	405.02
Lack of support from administration	1.71	1.88	368		1.07	1.45	175	.34	.92	*4.29	432.08
Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	2.45	1.99	371		1.78	1.99	176	.31	1.03	*3.67	545.00
Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3.50	1.90	370		1.89	2.00	174	1.25	1.95	*9.01	542.00
Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	3.82	1.88	374		2.51	2.08	177	.95	1.67	*7.11	316.48

* $p < .05$.

For all 18 of the descriptors with statistically significant differences, non-Bridge respondents had lower-rated challenges. This speaks to the challenge means for non-Bridge respondents being generally lower overall than the challenge means of Bridge respondents. Another illustration of this is that 11 of the Bridge respondents' challenges were ranked in the "medium challenge" category, as compared to only 3 from non-Bridge challenges. "Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees" dropped from being the third-highest-rated challenge overall (M = 3.09; SD = 1.69) and the second-highest-rated challenge from Bridge respondents (M = 3.58; SD = 1.49) to the tenth-rated challenge in the non-Bridge data set (M = 2.04; SD = 1.63).

Four Findings: Overview

In describing the most important strengths, challenges, and solutions for the implementation of peer programs, the experts identified four primary categories pertaining to the quality of the: (a) Program Coordinator; (b) Student Leaders; (c) Support from the School; and (d) Program Structure. These categories were also used in part to create the finalized version of the survey.

Prior to describing the four categories, it is worth noting that there were not systematically statistically significant differences between coordinators' strength or challenge ratings based on school size or type of school. The only program characteristic correlated with systematic differences that did not fall under the four primary findings related to program age. Coordinators from programs that have existed for three years or less gave statistically significantly lower strength ratings as compared to programs that have existed for ten years or more (7 of the 18 items) (see Table 4.5). Similarly, coordinators from newer programs rated challenges related to student leaders and mentees statistically significantly higher than more

established programs (7 of 9 items compared to programs older than ten years) (see Table 4.6). There are also differences related to school support and scheduling with coordinators of programs older than ten years reporting lower-rated challenges as compared to coordinators with programs of 0-3 years (4 of 7 items) or 4-6 years (3 of 7 items) (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.5: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Program Age

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean difference	Significance (p<.01)
0-3 years (Group 1) compared to 10+ years (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	4.74	0.965	175.00	5.16	0.886	133.00	-0.421	0.003
	The program provides valuable services for students	4.57	1.149	174.00	5.19	0.965	130.00	-0.618	0
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	3.63	1.455	172.00	4.36	1.426	132.00	-0.736	0
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.43	1.122	171.00	4.96	1.08	132.00	-0.535	0.001
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	3.31	3.310	137.00	4.24	1.726	112.00	-0.927	0
	Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program	4.86	1.127	163.00	5.33	0.863	131.00	-0.469	0.001
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.00	0.985	170.00	5.48	0.736	132.00	-0.477	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	4.6	1.009	171.00	5.04	0.972	131.00	-0.442	0.004

Table 4.6: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Program Age

PROGRAM CHALLENGES: STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
0-3 years (Group 1) compared to 10+ years (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3.60	1.461	171	2.62	1.595	132	0.981	0
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3.55	1.539	168	2.33	1.725	129	1.214	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	3.20	1.341	171	2.20	1.470	131	1.006	0
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	3.15	1.415	160	2.34	1.444	130	0.812	0
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	2.04	1.642	150	1.20	1.386	127	0.843	0
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	2.30	1.619	162	1.41	1.367	129	0.892	0
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	2.39	1.553	165	1.61	1.328	127	0.788	0.009

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.6 continued)

PROGRAM CHALLENGES: SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
0-3 years (Group 1) compared to 10+ years (Group 2)	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	2.54	1.977	166	1.47	1.708	127	1.070	0
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3.27	1.934	163	2.18	2.080	126	1.087	0
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school	3.83	1.860	165	2.77	2.149	128	1.057	0
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3.18	2.007	134	2.18	2.080	126	0.997	0.001
4-6 years (Group 1) compared to 10+ years (Group 2)	Lack of program funding	3.07	2.001	135	2.18	2.170	126	0.884	0.009
	Lack of support from faculty	2.40	1.913	135	1.57	1.570	128	0.830	0.003
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3.18	2.010	134	2.18	2.080	126	0.997	0.001

Finding 1: Importance of Program Coordinators

Introduction

To implement a strong peer program, the first factor described by all 13 of the experts was the "importance of an effective program coordinator." This is the one area wherein the results come almost exclusively from the expert interviews because the quantitative survey did not ask the peer program coordinators to evaluate themselves. Throughout the expert interviews, the importance of the program coordinator was continually emphasized:

> I think the number one reason for success is a strong adult peer professional... whoever is in charge of the program has really got to understand peer programs, has got to believe in them, has got to have skills in terms of management of programs, understanding how to get through the system, make things happen... the peer professional is extremely important.
>
> The primary number one factor is having the right people trained to run the program on school sites. That's the number one. You have to have the right team in place... People who are truly, truly interested in helping change not only the culture of their school but the experience of those students going into high school and middle school. If you don't have those people, you will not have a successful program, so I would say that's the number one factor.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Coordinator Selection

One of the biggest challenges the experts referenced was "selecting unsuccessful program coordinators." This occurs particularly in instances when the coordinator does not express an interest in leading the program but the district office or school administrator assigns them the position anyway:

> That's the worst thing you can do... You want these people to volunteer, to really be passionate and want to take part in it and not just be assigned... In some districts they have not listened to us and they send 45 or 50 people, and the success rate from there is extraordinarily low. As a teacher the last thing you want is your administrator or your district officer to say "Hey, you've got to do this now, too." You really want to select people who are passionate about the position, receive good training and adequate support.

Passion for peer programs was also emphasized by numerous program coordinators:

> This has been one of the most rewarding classes I have taught in the last 16 years! I am truly fortunate to have a job that allows such rewards!
> I love this program, what it represents, and the kids I get to work with every year!!!
>
> I love Bridge; it is one of my favorite parts of teaching. I would never give up this program!!! Never.

In addition to selecting coordinators who have a passion for peer programs, some of the solutions for program coordinator selection revolve around personality and training. In describing the characteristics of quality adult leaders, 7 of 13 experts referenced specific personality traits. They discussed the importance of the leader's commitment level, organizational skills, approachability, communication skills, and role model status. "Commitment level" and "organizational skills" were the most commonly referenced traits as experts noted the importance of program coordinators being constantly available, having a high motivation for the work, coordinating many logistics, and providing good supervision:

> What makes the programs successful? First of all, a committed adult is probably close to 70% of the ball game. You can't just assign a teacher to do this. It's a lot of work... I've been retired three years; I [still] get calls for reference letters, or somebody says, "My uncle is on crack and he just went berserk"... I have been called nights, weekends, whatever. Nothing has ever been frivolous. The adults have got to be very focused... accessible and open, and you've got to be a good role model. If you're not going to do that, then don't do it.

Organizational skills were also stressed by the program coordinators themselves in the free response section of the survey. Seventy-seven (77) of them discussed the importance of planning the calendar in advance and communicating well with colleagues and mentees, the third highest-rated response to this question (see Table 4.7). The over-committed students and highly scheduled facilities made advanced planning seem essential:

> Schedule events months ahead of time and make sure there is plenty of communication between you, office staff, and other faculty!

> I attend the calendar meeting in the spring every year to make sure my events get on the school calendar. I complete facility requests at the same time.
>
> Organization is key, as is good communication with student leaders. I use the "Remind" app to communicate with student leaders about upcoming events and meetings.

Six (6) of the 13 experts also referenced the importance of program coordinators being good trainers. This connects to coordinators receiving their own intensive initial training and continuing to seek out additional training throughout the years. Similarly, experts also referenced the value of coordinators being good coaches and knowing how to let go at times so that the students can take the lead.

Lastly, "experience" was another factor brought up via survey results. Specifically, there were statistically significant differences in strength ratings between coordinators with three years or less of experience when compared to those with ten years or more (10 of the 18 items) (see Table 4.8). On average, coordinators with more experience reported higher-rated strengths and lower-rated challenges.

Table 4.7: Free Response Rankings

Coordinators' Recommendations Regarding Recruitment, Selection, and Training of Student Leaders	**Rank**	**N**
Develop consistent and thorough recruitment and selection protocols (written applications, teacher/staff recommendations, interviews, grades/behavior/social media checks, creation of stakeholder committee)	1	285
Provide an in-depth training before school starts focused on teambuilding and skill development; continue with follow-up trainings throughout the year	2	96
Utilize veteran leaders to promote program, select, and/or train new leaders	3	68
Develop a contract or code of ethics outlining student leader expectations	4	51
Hold multiple promotional meetings to explain the program and its expectations	5	50
Develop a protocol for addressing student leader mistakes and/or bad judgement	6	46
Focus on personal qualities during selection process (strong communication and problem solving skills, caring, stable and responsible, able to make a commitment and work well with adults, can be both serious and playful, role model, etc.).	7	45
**only responses given by 40 or more coordinators included above*		

continued on next page)

(Table 4.7 continued)

Coordinators' Recommendations Regarding Program Structure	Rank	N
Provide an initial in-depth training and continue with follow-up trainings throughout the year	1	99
Utilize a standardized national curriculum	2	71
Design a system to successfully match student leaders and mentees	3	69
Facilitate training and outreach during the school day	4	60
Form a stakeholder team responsible for program's success	5	57
Design an individualized program and corresponding curriculum based on the needs of the specific community	6	55
Finalize everything in advance and be organized	7	47
**only responses given by 40 or more coordinators included above*		
Coordinators' Recommendations Regarding School Support and Scheduling	**Rank**	**N**
Provide an in-depth training before school starts focused on teambuilding and skills development; continue with follow-up trainings throughout the year	1	181
Plan and publicize the calendar well in advance	2	77
Develop a thoughtful public relations plan that illustrates the impact of the program	3	75
Create a peers class dedicated to your program	4	59
Train before outreach and throughout year	5	57
**only responses given by 40 or more coordinators included above*		
Coordinators' Biggest Challenges	**Rank**	**N**
Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	137
Scheduling training for program coordinator and student leaders	2	127
Scheduling meeting time for student leaders and mentees to meet	3	102
Behavior of student leaders	4	93
Lack of program funding	5	73
Lack of support from faculty and administration	6	65
Competition for student interest from alternative programs/classes	7	59
**only responses given by 40 or more coordinators included above*		
Areas for Which Coordinators Would Like Additional Training	**Rank**	**N**
Setting-up a successful program structure	1	79
Curriculum and additional ideas for outreach/events	2	73
Training student leaders	3	70
**only responses given by 40 or more coordinators included above*		

.

Table 4.8: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Coordinators' Years of Experience

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
0-3 years (Group 1) compared to 10+ years (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	4.68	1.03	265	5.20	0.98	71	-0.522	0.001
	The program provides valuable services for students	4.60	1.15	263	5.20	0.96	69	-0.602	0.001
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	3.69	1.49	260	4.39	1.40	70	-0.697	0.005
	The program improves school connectedness for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment)	4.84	1.06	264	5.31	0.84	70	-0.477	0.004
	The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.14	1.28	255	4.72	1.17	68	-0.579	0.006
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	4.66	1.03	263	5.15	0.98	71	-0.493	0.005
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	4.57	1.08	262	5.06	0.90	70	-0.488	0.007
	The program decreases stress for mentees	4.51	1.19	256	5.09	0.94	69	-0.579	0.002
	Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program	4.84	1.14	253	5.41	0.86	70	-0.572	0
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	4.96	1.03	260	5.45	0.95	71	-0.493	0.001

Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Coordinator Sustainability

Another primary challenge involves questions of program sustainability when current coordinators leave the program by either transitioning to another school or stepping down from their positions. This speaks to a medium-rated challenge on the survey: “The program would struggle if the coordinator ever left the school because he/she is the only person who knows the details of the program” (M = 2.82; SD = 2.11). This challenge was the seventh-highest rated with the full data set (see Table 4.1), the highest rated for programs in which the coordinators had more than ten years of experience, and the second-highest rated for non-Bridge respondents. Six (6) experts also mentioned this issue:

> The biggest challenge I’ve seen is when there’s a change of the adult coordinator. You have someone who’s running a really great program and then that person leaves and so much of it was dependent on an individual. Programs suffer from that.

Multiple experts described how previously-established programs faded when the coordinator left because that adult “made it seem effortless” and the school did not understand, as one respondent explained “…what it really takes to train these kids. This is one of the issues when one or two teachers or administrators end up leading the entire program and [it] becomes an island… because when there’s personnel changes, there’s a significant loss of sustainability.”

One of the solutions experts offered to address this issue involved creating stakeholder teams committed to the social and emotional well-being of their students. This group could include counselors, administrators, and other faculty who participate in aspects of the program and serve as an advisory board. Some stakeholder groups stay regularly involved throughout the year, and others participate each year during the interview process and training of next year’s student leaders. This committee could provide institutional knowledge if a program coordinator ever departs or a new administrator comes to the school.

A related solution involved the idea of having a back-up person shadow the coordinator so he/she could step in if a coordinator ever departed. This person could also interface regularly with any student leaders in instances when the main coordinator did not have a connection with specific kids. One expert pointed out that training multiple people was good because:

> The back-up person doesn't have to wait until the coordinator is no longer the advisor. I was the back-up person so that my prep period aligned with when the program met. I was able to go in there. The coordinator was able to use me as a sounding board when it came to interviewing students. I was a part of all that.

Experts also referenced the importance of successful coordinators training their replacements in order to set-up good transitions when needed. The concept of "co-coordinators" is another popular solution discussed in greater detail during the "School Support" section.

Finding 2: Importance of Student Leaders

Introduction

All 13 of the experts referenced the importance of student leaders to the success of any peer program. As one described:

> You can do a lot with the right leaders even if you don't have the time that we suggest. Whether it's in or out of the classroom ...if you have the right leaders in place, those leaders will make the time throughout their day, and in ways that we as adults can't even predict. They will help those [younger students] be successful.

The medium-rated challenges related to student leaders included:

a) getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities (M = 3.21; SD = 1.61);

b) getting student leaders to develop strong connections with their mentees (M = 3.09; SD = 1.69);

c) other programs competing for student interest (M = 2.98; SD = 1.98);

d) getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times (M = 2.83; SD = 1.56);

e) getting student leaders to use effective communication skills such as active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc. (M = 2.79; SD = 1.5); and

f) getting student leaders to set a good example (M = 2.53; SD = 1.5) (see Table 4.3).

There were very few statistically significant differences between programs with student leaders in high school (9th through 12th grades) versus middle school (6th through 8th grades). Similarly, the overall number of student leaders in respective programs did not have a big impact on the strength or challenge ratings given by program coordinators.

When analyzing the overall challenges related to student leaders from both expert interviews and survey results, three primary areas emerged: (a) recruitment and selection, (b) training of student leaders, and (c) student leaders making mistakes.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Recruitment and Selection

Ten (10) of the 13 experts noted how important recruitment and selection is to the success of a peer program. They concurred that any process yielding ineffective student leaders is a significant problem, and identified numerous circumstances under which this could occur. In terms of the recruitment phase, competition for student interest could dilute the applicant pool and/or commitment level of student mentors. This medium challenge was ranked third overall by survey respondents (M = 2.98; SD = 1.98) (see Table 4.3) and first overall for non-Bridge respondents. Fifty-nine (59) coordinators also referenced this as one of their top-ranked challenges in the free response section (see Table 4.7). In addition to all the athletics, arts, service, and extra-curricular commitments, academic requirements were viewed as impacting the applicant pool:

> My greatest challenge is convincing some students that taking my class will not hurt their GPAs. Due to the many requirements for students, depending on the graduation plan of their choice, it is a challenge for students to find room in their schedules to take a class that is a "pure elective" like mine is.

A different issue that arose during the selection portion was schools picking pre-existing groups, like student government or students with exclusively high GPAs, rather than basing selections on what would best serve a particular peer program. Experts also warned against administrators forcing program coordinators to pick students for ulterior motives, even when those motives were benevolent, such as desiring a growth opportunity for a potential student leader. In making peer program selections, experts recommended thinking first about the mentees, and described those forced choices as consistently "working out badly."

Of the solutions offered in the free response section, 50 coordinators emphasized the need for multiple promotional meetings to explain the program and its expectations (see Table 4.7). Current student leaders' recounting the benefits of the program and answering questions about their own experiences was seen as a highly effective means of increasing applications by both experts and coordinators. In those instances where applicants had experienced the program themselves as mentees, they seemed more likely to "value the program and be highly interested in participating as a student leader."

In addition to these promotional meetings, coordinators also described the benefit of advertising through flyers, academic classes, assemblies, websites, videos, social media, and the school's PA system. Offering incentives for students, such as class credit, service hours, t-shirts, and even food, were also described as helpful during the recruitment phase. With programs that routinely have exponentially more applicants than spaces, these initial meetings may outline a process so challenging that some applicants self-select out. Programs that have not yet garnered as much student interest may need to create a simpler application process until their popularity

grows. Coordinators of these programs could also encourage particular students to apply based on faculty recommendations or their own experiences with potential leaders. This kind of proactive recruiting was specifically offered as a solution for programs with a shortage of male, minority, and low-SES students.

In terms of solutions for the selection process itself, the number one free response choice referenced by 285 program coordinators was enacting a series of standard protocols in order to yield the best possible group of student leaders (see Table 4.7). These protocols revolved around the implementation of:

a) a standard written application submitted via hard or electronic copy (occasionally video applications were submitted as well);
b) teacher, staff, and coach recommendations;
c) current student leader recommendations;
d) interviews in a group and/or individual format;
e) grade, behavior, commitment, and social media checks; and
f) the creation of a stakeholder committee to make selections.

Some programs even assigned a numerical value in each of these areas to end up with an objective rating for each applicant.

For faculty, staff, and coach recommendations, program coordinators discussed the importance of explaining the program in advance so that the adults did not only recommend students with high GPAs. Coordinators also emphasized the need to run this process during the spring of the previous school year so that teachers had enough experience with the applicants to offer meaningful feedback. The process was described as a way for the selection committee to see how applicants work with others, handle a variety of situations they could encounter as

student leaders, and reflect on their own successes and challenges. As one coordinator described it, the application process "gives us an idea of whether it is about them or if it is about the mentees."

Another primary solution offered by both experts and program coordinators involved selecting student leaders who represent a microcosm of the school. Having a group that includes students with a variety of interests, activities, backgrounds, academic records, personalities, and personal experiences builds a sense of credibility among potential mentees, making them more likely to feel connected with at least some of the student leaders. One expert described the importance of selecting students who really mirror the school "in every regard, from every social group, racial and ethnic [background], gender, everything... You need to have a group of students that really reflect the school. You don't necessarily want all your AP students."

In addition to selecting a wide variety of student leaders, experts and program coordinators recommended prioritizing certain personal qualities. Forty-five (45) program coordinators described these personal qualities in the best practices area of the free response section (see Table 4.7). They concurred with experts about the importance of selecting caring leaders with a drive to help others and an ability to work closely with adults. The coordinators also discussed recruiting positive role models who possess strong communication and problem solving skills, have proven their ability to make a commitment, are stable and responsible, and can be both serious and playful. One coordinator stressed the importance of avoiding those students "[who] are involved in so many things that it just becomes 'one more thing' on the resume. [Instead], try to encourage them to <u>want</u> to be there!" Another summarized her month-long selection process by stating, "You cannot go too far in finding out as much information as possible about selecting a student leader."

Challenges and Solutions Related to the Training of Student Leaders

After the recruitment and selection process is complete, student training was the next point of emphasis shared by experts and program coordinators to ensure an effective leadership group. Of the 13 experts, 9 discussed the importance of student training. Training was also the second-highest-rated free response recommendation regarding student leaders (96 coordinators), and the highest-ranked free response answer regarding program structure (99 coordinators) (see Table 4.7). Solutions to all of the top five challenges listed above relating to student leaders were at least partially addressed through training recommendations. The duration and frequency of training was repeatedly discussed (and will be explored further in the School Support section). One expert cited her own published academic research in which student leaders that were trained for at least six weeks had the most positive impact, while there was “actually a regression in mentees when mentors had no training at all.” Inadequate training was linked to student leaders presenting incorrect information. Even in situations where the leaders were trained in general skill sets, experts described programs in which the leaders did not receive enough training in the specific helping service. One expert noted, “If you’re going to put them in a tutoring situation, they need training in tutoring. If you’re going to put them in a mediation situation, they need training in mediation and so on.”

A solution to inadequate training emphasized by both experts and coordinators was a multi-day training retreat at the beginning of the school year. Ideally, having this initial in-depth training in an off-campus location generates teambuilding opportunities to “build relationships with your student leaders and creates a community [wherein] they can lean on each other in addition to leaning on you.” An expert described how ropes courses and group bonding activities may seem like games to others, but in reality they help break down barriers between students

who do not know each other very well, and improve communication and problem-solving skills.

In addition to these skills, coordinators describe this opening retreat as an opportunity to further teach vital characteristics of sound peer programs such as confidentiality (which one expert described as the "death nail of the program if it is broken"), active listening, and role play. Training manuals from national organizations, outside trainers with expertise on teen issues, and ongoing reflective journaling by student leaders regarding their challenges and successes were also described as helpful. As the year progresses, program coordinators recommended student leaders receive training on a particular outreach topic and then deliver that lesson to their mentees within the upcoming week.

One training area that 5 experts mentioned involved student leaders developing referral skills so they know when to break confidence and pass information along to an adult. This generally speaks to any time mentees are engaging in behavior harmful to themselves or others. One expert pointed out that while student leaders are not mandated reporters, they do have a "duty to inform, and that saves a lot of lives." Experts reported that the fears counselors occasionally have about peer programs dissipate if student leaders are effectively trained to report health and/or safety concerns to an appropriate adult.

One expert serving a large high school population created a checkbox form so student leaders could quickly document referrals regarding mental health, medical, violence issues, etc. These forms could also help coordinators illustrate the aggregated impact of their respective programs. Experts described this referral process working best when the program coordinator built trust with student leaders:

> All quality peer programs are a partnership between a caring adult and a caring youth working together. When that's done and the youth feel really comfortable with the adult that they're being trained by, they'll talk to them and they'll figure it out.

Another expert described working with a program in which student leaders felt comfortable confidentially referring potential problems on campus to the school officer based on their program's motto, "If you see something, say something":

> Student leaders stopped so many fights and weapons on campus because they were such a presence. These kids trusted them... Often when we would go out, a middle school kid would tell a peer helper, "Could you tell Officer Lynch that there's going to be something bad at the baseball diamond on the west side this weekend?" The peer helper would come back to school and go to his office and they'd say, "This is what one of the kids told me." [The officer] would never even ask the kid's gender. I mean he just knew that they needed to have some police presence there. They uncovered all kinds of drug deals, whatever, because we really had that good grapevine going, and kids were not afraid to inform because they knew their identities were protected.

Another training recommendation mentioned by the experts involved the setting of realistic expectations for student leaders regarding their connection with mentees. One expert told the story of unreasonably lofty expectations relayed to mentors from a national organization. He described an instance when he walked in to volunteer and the program coordinator said:

> "I know you signed up for a year, but really we think the biggest impact is when you mentor for life." They tell stories about these matches that went on forever and I thought, who are you? You invited me out here for a year of my life, and as soon as I walk in, I'm damned because I'm already going to fail. I thought, screw you, that's not fair. I've been pissed off about that ever since... It sets a bar unrealistically high, sets people up for failure. Lots of people think if that [lifelong connection] doesn't happen, they've wasted their time, and I don't think that's fair or productive. I wish that programs trained more about the importance of just being there.

This expert went on to describe research about the positive impact of just offering a stable presence for youth over the course of a year even if a longer connection does not flourish from it.

Another aspect of unreasonably high expectations concerned parental pressure. Experts warned against parents of mentees contacting student leaders. The adults sometimes use these opportunities to blame student leaders if a mentee's academic growth does not improve at a fast enough rate, even in those instances when academics are not the primary purpose of the program.

Experts made the point that mentees could be dealing with a myriad of issues far beyond the specific student leader:

> Some students were not eating at home. Another one had parents that were just divorced. I actually had an elementary kid, and we were constantly telling him, "Why won't you do your homework? Why won't you do your work? We're giving you everything we can to help you. What do you want?" He says, "Listen, I want a dad."

The take-away is that student leaders need to hear on the front end that they are not there to fix every problem for their mentees but instead are meant to be a stable peer helper who can provide a source of support. As one program coordinator put it, "Students need time to think through the obstacles; focusing on only the unicorn and the rainbow version doesn't prepare the leaders to handle the inevitable questioning by one or two of the kids they are working with."

Challenges and Solutions Related to Student Leaders Making Mistakes

The second-highest ranked overall challenge was student leaders not following through on their responsibilities (M = 3.21; SD = 1.61) (see Table 4.3). Experts and program coordinators described this medium challenge on a continuum: on one end are student leaders who do not complete the necessary preparatory work for successful outreach sessions; on the other end are adolescents who occasionally make significant mistakes that call their position as a role model into question. Eight (8) of the 13 experts discussed challenges along this continuum, and 93 program coordinators described this in the free response section as one of their biggest challenges (see Table 4.7).

In terms of not completing the necessary preparatory work or training, experts and program coordinators described student leaders as being spread thin with many extracurricular commitments. Between academics, athletics, arts, service, and other related clubs, many student leaders seemed to fall off on their commitment level, particularly during the second semester.

Said one coordinator: “I think as the year goes on, my students lose steam and forget why they are chosen for this class. Some tend to stray from the original goals, and enthusiasm to make a difference is lost.”

Experts noted that this lack of follow-through, even without some egregious mistake, could still have a notably negative impact on mentees:

> It’s important just to highlight that if you’re not there, you’re really affecting the kid. That was one of the things that I first saw... The more the mentor missed, the worse the [mentee] got... so the presence of the mentor is meaningful, and the absence of the mentor is meaningful. Even if that [deep] mentoring relationship doesn’t happen... [you could still be] signified as a very important person such that your not showing up is important.

In the most egregious instances, there were stories of student leaders acting in a manner directly in opposition to the goals of the program, whether through bullying, substance use, academic dishonesty, illegal activity, etc. Respondents discussed how, even if other students on campus were engaging in such behaviors, it did not give permission for student leaders to do the same.

A few different solutions for addressing these types of issues were discussed. Seven (7) of the 13 experts referenced a contract or code of ethics that student leaders and parents could agree upon prior to participating in the program. Fifty-one (51) program coordinators described this same document as a best practice, the third-most-popular free response regarding student leaders (see Table 4.7). A contract often addresses the importance of participating in all training and outreach sessions along with conducting oneself in accordance with the goals of the program. Given that training is such a vital part of student leaders’ understanding their responsibilities, coordinators were resolute regarding attendance:

> We have a two-day intense training in the summer right before school starts. Training is absolutely mandatory. If you miss any part of training, you cannot be a leader. No exceptions.

> Training time is sacred; any absence for any reason for any portion of the time disqualifies a leader from participation in the leadership group.

The contracts also emphasized deadlines, attendance, and accountability, in addition to the kinds of conduct infractions that could place a student leader's participation in jeopardy. In those cases in which a student leader had a significant lapse in judgment, 46 of the program coordinators discussed a probationary period in which the student leader was temporarily suspended from participating in the program (see Table 4.7). In the most extreme instances, leaders would be permanently removed. Those experts in favor of a probationary approach rather than expulsion made reference to restorative justice and positive youth development. The lead trainer for of one of the largest peer programs in the country talked about the "20%-risk-it kid":

> They're either going to hit the ground in this situation, and stick to the bottom, or they're going to gather themselves and bounce back. We talk about bouncing back, because again, learning from that mistake will also prepare them to be a great leader. Now they can learn from their experience... [we should] not abandon them because sometimes students want everyone to give up on them so they'll have a reason to quit. As long as that belief is there around them, for some reason they feel compelled that, "If you're going to continue to believe in me, I can't let go of myself."

Other experts echoed similar sentiments about not wanting to permanently remove student leaders unless the infraction was "incredibly severe." When discussing student leaders who smoked marijuana at a peer training conference, one expert talked about how her belief in restorative justice was at odds with the administration:

> They wanted to kick the kids out of the program. I wanted to handle it in a more restorative manner which is to bring the whole team together. We'd have to talk about how it impacted them, and why they made those choices to get high. In the end, the kids stayed and worked it through. They came up with a solution for how to handle the situation, and it was to pull their badges. The kids had worked for months and months and months to earn this privilege to go out and work with other people.

Others respondents took a more hardline approach when it came to serious violations of student conduct:

> We have a zero tolerance policy on alcohol and drug use by our student leaders. [In some years we have dismissed] as many as half the student leaders. We have lost some very good student leaders for a couple of beers at a party. The administration has asked us to overlook minor violations of the alcohol/drug policy, and I have refused to do that. But, some of the dismissed leaders have caused a leadership vacuum in our program.

> Students [who] violate the student code of conduct are removed from the program. It's one of the hardest things I have to do, but if you bend the rules for some, then the integrity of the program can be put in jeopardy. We spend a lot of time on this during student training. In the five years I've been leading this program we've only had five of 222, two percent, of student leaders be removed. Clear expectations and providing real life examples that can get them removed are important upfront.

The type of statistics presented by this previous coordinator were mirrored by others as well. For all the potential issues with peers, the numbers of students who needed to be expelled from programs seemed quite low. One coordinator reported having to remove only one student in eight years, and an expert said she had to remove only two out of 794 student leaders during her tenure. To make these decisions, experts discussed looping in the other student leaders when appropriate so that the situation could "provide a learning experience for them, too." They also described consulting the stakeholder committee for final decisions, and planning for flexibility by either having multiple peers assigned to a given group or having back-up peers who could step-in under extreme circumstances.

The concept of the "risk-applicant" refers to the original selection process. From one vantage point, experts lauded selections that represented a microcosm of the school. That said, this philosophy necessarily means accepting some students from comparatively high-risk crowds. Selecting such students boosts credibility with portions of the school population and can prove very valuable to the overall success of the program. Nevertheless, if the committee's

choices end up acting in a manner contrary to the mission of the program, it could hurt the program's overall reputation.

This raises questions during the selection process of how to evaluate students who previously made poor decisions. Experts discussed the importance of distinguishing between applicants who are currently dealing with an issue and those who have previously dealt with one. One expert gave specific parameters by suggesting that student leaders have to be stable for at least a year, adding that some students who attended rehab prior to that year could end up being some of their best leaders. Another added:

> If you have a smoker who has recovered and doesn't smoke anymore, [he/she] can be a very effective and powerful influence on [his/her] peers... Influence runs both ways. It can be positive or it can be negative. It doesn't mean that somebody that has engaged in the behavior can't be a positive role model if they have conquered the situation that they're talking about.

Finding 3: Importance of School Support

Introduction

All 13 of the experts discussed the importance of school support in building a successful peer program. According to the survey results, the number one-ranked challenge for program coordinators was not having enough time to plan, supervise, and evaluate their program in addition to other responsibilities (M = 3.4; SD = 2.05) (see Table 4.3). This was also the top challenge in the free response section with 137 coordinators listing it as one of their biggest challenges (see Table 4.7). The other medium-rated challenges related to school support were not having enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees (M = 2.83; SD = 1.56), and lack of program funding (M = 2.74; SD = 2.1) (see Table 4.3). In the free response section, the top-ranked challenges related to school support were scheduling training for coordinators and student leaders (127 coordinators), and scheduling time for student leaders and

mentees to meet (102 coordinators) (see Table 4.7). Regarding recommendations for best practices, 181 coordinators emphasized the need for school support:

> Administration has been very supportive. In order for a program to work, you need them on board hands down. I have a release period to do this program and another teacher has four release periods to coordinate this because it is so important.
>
> We have outstanding support from our administration who recognize the value of Bridge as it impacts 100% of our student body. The administration is unafraid to demonstrate their support with both their time and their money. We are the only organization I am aware of which does not have to complete any fundraising activities.

Challenges and Solutions Related to a General Lack of Support from Faculty and Administration

Eight (8) of the 13 experts and 65 program coordinators described the lack of support from administration and faculty as one of their top-rated challenges. That said, lack of support from administration only had a minor challenge mean of 1.5 (SD = 1.79) from survey respondents (see Table 4.3). One expert said:

> I've seen lack of community involvement and support ruin a program... If you can't bring your key administrators online because they don't understand the value and they're not going to support it, you're going to have a mighty difficult time sustaining or developing a program.

Administrators were described at times as being out of touch with the inherent challenges of running a peer program. Stories were told of principals wanting student leaders to start providing helping services at the beginning of the year prior to their receiving proper training.

Another primary school support challenge referenced by the experts related to the high turnover rates of school administrators and their varying support for peer programs:

> One of my principals said, "I didn't become a principal to run a mental health hospital. Okay, I came to teach," meaning, why are we dealing with all these social emotional issues of kids? I became a principal to run a high school. On the other hand, I had principals who were so supportive... and the district office brought the programs into all five comprehensive high schools and the alternative

> school. It's interesting because you can run the gamut. My biggest challenge was always with administrators changing.

A program coordinator concurred, noting the importance of administrative buy-in: "We started our program with a very supportive administrator, and then we got a new principal that did not understand the program... it has been a disaster."

Colleagues matter as well, and a lack of support from faculty had a minor challenge mean of 2.08 from survey respondents (see Table 4.3). Experts reported faculty resentment when mentees were pulled out of class to participate in peer services or when student leaders requested to make program announcements during class time. Other faculty members were depicted as just generally having a negative demeanor toward peer programs:

> One of the biggest challenges I faced were the naysayers, people who found this to be very touchy-feely. "Why are we doing this? This is ridiculous. Oh see, I told you so. The kids screwed up." Then, of course, the kids are under a microscope, and they're just teenagers... Also, I had teachers who just bad-mouthed the program. It's really too bad because it's the kind of thing where it's so destructive. You have teachers who may think that they're hurting you or hurting the program; they're hurting the kids. That's the thing. These kids work so hard and there are people who want to split; like one teacher for whatever reason didn't like the program and a number of those kids in his class were peer advocates who really liked him, really liked me, and really liked the program. They felt really conflicted, like, "Why I am sitting in this classroom with this teacher who's putting down something that is so valuable to me?" So it hurt.

In conjunction with faculty, counselors were also described as occasionally having concerns that peers would receive important information about their mentees and not pass that information to the appropriate adults.

One potential solution to this lack of support involves administrators investing personal time in the program by going to their own training and participating on the school's stakeholder team. Ten (10) of the 13 experts recommended principals become involved in this way, noting that administrators who attended their own training became more invested in the program and

vocally prioritized its development and sustainability. This verbal support was emphasized as especially important for new programs that will inevitably face criticism during their initial launch. If administrators cannot attend their own trainings, at least visiting another school with a thriving peer program was viewed as helpful to gain school support. One expert described the strongest programs as always having this buy-in:

> What makes a really strong program possible is local institutional support at the school itself. If it means that [its] administrator is fully on-board and believes in young people and their voice or really trusts the coordinator, that's important; or if it means that there's a really strong cohort or critical mass of teachers who understand the program or feel its benefits and support it. That there is some level of institutional support at the school makes a difference. Without it, there are a lot of barriers.

Another primary solution to a lack support for the program involves a thoughtful public relations plan that illustrates the impact of the program. Eight (8) of the 13 experts discussed the importance of having such a plan, and 75 of the program coordinators cited it as a best practice in the free response section, the third-highest response for that question (see Table 4.7). The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program had a minor challenge mean of 2.18 (SD = 1.79) (see Table 4.3).

Some characteristics of these public relations plans involved summarizing the benefits of the program in a persuasive manner for administration and faculty. One national program provides all coordinators with an information packet they are to submit to administration annually, highlighting both the quantitative and qualitative outcomes from the past year. This requires the peer professional to:

> [R]eally track how these students are impacting the school or the organization. Increased attendance, better grades, less fights, whatever it is because that's going to really be fuel for that administrator to keep that program when the going gets tough.

Another expert described training all program coordinators on a specific program evaluation model that documented the frequency with which a student leader met with a mentee, the corresponding topics they discussed, the longevity of their connection, and the number of total referrals submitted by each student leader.

In addition to quantitative measures a school is already tracking, experts referenced qualitative stories as also having a powerful impact. One expert described her interviewing principals that were lauding positive changes to their school culture brought about by their peer program:

> "Well for one thing, before we had this program, kids were not in class. Now the halls are empty during class time. Kids are in class. There were fights, lots of fights. Now there are no fights." Some of evaluation can be stories like this in my mind. Some can be hard data, but some kind of qualitative evaluation I think is important.

Another described the power of faculty:

> … seeing a change in the culture of the school. They see upperclassmen and freshmen socializing more. They see upperclassmen going out of their way to reach out to and support a younger person who is either having some academic difficulty of some emotional challenge. When they see and experience a level of kindness on the part of upperclassmen, when they hear and see a growth in confidence and articulation and responsibility on the part of a select group of upperclassmen and become impressed that something is making a difference... when they see, in some cases, an improved academic performance among the upperclassmen and the freshmen as a result of this kind of programming, I think they're impressed.

Part of this public relations solution involves the scheduling of consistent presentations to the faculty (both the full faculty and, specifically, new faculty), the parents, the district office, and/or the school board. Coordinators described these meetings as having a significant influence on buy-in because interested parties learn about the types of important issues being addressed by student leaders and the number of mentees being served on a consistent basis. If meetings are not possible, other coordinators recommended assembly announcements, school

bulletins/newsletters, and direct emails to faculty in order to promote the work.

In addition to these presentations and announcements, another solution referenced by both the experts and the program coordinators involved intentionally “building bridges” and forging relationships with administration and faculty. One expert suggested the best way to “get the administrator on-board from the very beginning is to figure out what it is the administrator really wants to change in [its] school,” and make it a point of emphasis for the peer program. As an example, if the administrator is interested in bullying prevention, figure out a way to incorporate anti-bullying measures into the program. Experts also recommended inviting counselors and school resource officers into the class in order to aid with training and to reassure them that student leaders would appropriately refer any concerns about the health of their mentees to the appropriate adults.

Forming partnerships with faculty members who would be willing to incorporate the program into their classes was stressed as another possible solution. Health classes focused on drugs and alcohol, or English classes discussing themes of inclusion, could both be good options for student leader outreach. The overall objective is for teachers to view the student leaders as potential resources for any natural overlap in academic curriculum and the mission of the respective peer program. To further solidify faculty support, experts recommended pulling mentees from classes as infrequently as possible and not retaliating against those bad mouthing the program.

Ultimately, experts emphasized the importance of a sustained commitment by administration:

> Any new program takes three and five years to become part of the culture. People are very impatient and don’t want to wait for that but if they are willing, they can actually become a part of what makes a difference.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Funding

Lack of program funding had a medium challenge mean of 2.74 (SD = 2.1) (see Table 4.3), and 73 coordinators described it as one of their highest-ranked challenges (see Table 4.7). Coordinators discussed not being paid for all the summers, weekends, and weeknights they put into the program, and having to "fight to claim extra duty hours" even though their programs welcomed new students and trained them to be successful in middle and high school. Beyond payment for the coordinator, a lack of funding also impacts the program itself. Coordinators described programs receiving zero funding and having to charge students for their participation:

> It is very difficult to have a successful program without administrative support. We have no funding. I pay all start-up costs out of my own pocket each year. I own all supplies. I coordinate and host all events. I do this on my own time. Students have no planning time or organized time to work on events. We coordinate through Facebook and Twitter and hit-and-run meetings during lunch or after school to quickly touch base once the school year has begun.
>
> I am facing program deletion due to scheduling and financial commitment constraints, so I have no recommendations on how to manage it. It seems that when the dollars are hard to find, the program disappears.

The biggest problem with program funding relates to the number one-ranked overall challenge: program coordinators not having enough time to plan, supervise, and evaluate their programs in addition to their other school responsibilities. This was also ranked as the highest overall challenge in the free response section with 137 coordinators referencing it (see Table 4.7). Experts described the perpetual workload associated with coordinating peer programs: "As a teacher, I didn't really ever have down time and that's one of the issues. It doesn't ever stop." Another described similar dynamics in which the program coordinator was overwhelmed, trying to oversee all the logistical and personal demands of the position. Coordinators echoed the sentiments of the experts. One noted the challenge of being the only coordinator for 177 student

leaders and 600 freshmen students. Others described their programs as suffering due to their inability to give them the full attention they deserve:

> It is really difficult to keep up with program tasks and other assigned job duties; some of the things I'd like to do for the program get pushed to the side because of other commitments for my counseling position. Sometimes I feel like I am doing the bare minimum to keep things going and don't have time to do things to make it better or get ahead, unfortunately.
>
> I am also the Activities Director and I just have too many irons in the fire to be focused on our peer programs and make them all that they could be.
>
> I <u>have</u> to get more teachers/faculty to help me run this program. Right now I am doing it all by myself, and there are not enough hours in the month.

While potential solutions to a lack of funding may not ensure the desired end result, experts and coordinators provided a variety of options. First, they reemphasized the previously-described public relations efforts as a crucial tool that could help convince school administrators to provide additional funding. If there are no additional funds available at the school level, experts recommended pivoting to district, state, and federal grants, as well as private foundations. Sixteen (16) program coordinators described doing fundraisers at their respective schools, and recommended social media via "go-fund-me" websites. Those programs with district funding were depicted as less vulnerable to sudden shifts in administration from a particular school.

Experts also discussed a hybrid model in which a portion of the funding came from the school district and another portion came from outside organizations. One of the advantages of this set-up is that the outside organizations apply some positive pressure on the schools to ensure the program receives adequate support. Those coordinators who received appropriate funding had a markedly different tone in the free response section:

> I am so fortunate to have an administration who is willing to use Title I funds to assist with my program. They have seen the benefit through the years with high

> school to elementary school mentoring, especially when training is provided before the match. When we go to the State Conference, our school doesn't have to worry as some do about raising money because our school district pays for registration, travel, and hotel.

The primary solution to coordinators feeling overwhelmed revolved around additional funding that could enable additional adults to join the program and provide release time for the current coordinator. This co-advisor partnership with additional personnel was described by coordinators as vital to their giving adequate attention to their respective programs:

> I can't imagine just one person doing it alone!!
>
> Given my other responsibilities, I do not always have enough time to focus on peer leadership, but I have a co-facilitator, so between the two of us, we get it done.
>
> It is important to divide the tasks so that one person is not responsible for everything. There are four of us, and we each have a focus area of planning for the leaders: social; academic; assemblies; and touching base [with mentees].
>
> [Additional] staff can observe matches, deal with angry bus drivers, deal with the parent who shows up early, deal with the kid who's crying because there was a death in the family and is going off in the corner because their mentor is not there that day, because you're too busy running the program.
>
> We have stakeholders (assistant principal and another counselor) who coordinate the major activities and accompany us on the retreat (weekend training and bonding for student leaders), activity day (whole day of activities for bonding between student leaders and mentees), and Family Night (evening when we introduce the parents to the program and do a communication activity with them). If we did not have the support of the administration, this program would not work.
>
> At first we had only one counselor trained and now we have two. It took a lot of asking and planning to get the funding to train another person. [The administration] didn't realize that if that one person leaves, no one is trained or has the tools. The program disappears.

For programs that have multiple adults assigned to facilitate the program, coordinators discussed the importance of sharing common planning time during the week in order to

communicate about all necessary logistics and curriculum. They recommended this time be intentionally set-up lest it become difficult for those adults to connect.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Scheduling

Not having enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees was tied for the fourth-highest overall challenge by survey respondents with a medium challenge mean of 2.98 (SD = 2.08) (see Table 4.3). Nine (9) of the 13 experts also referenced scheduling as one of the most important aspects of successful peer programs. In the free response section, 127 coordinators described scheduling time for coordinators and student leaders as one of their top-ranked challenges, as did 102 for scheduling time between student leaders and mentees (see Table 4.7). These were the second and third overall highest-ranked free response challenges. As one expert put it, “If you don’t have the support of those people who are responsible for running schedules in the school, you can hang it up. It’s not that it’s going to end... but it’s always an uphill battle." Program coordinators concurred:

> Scheduling is a nightmare.
>
> My biggest disappointment is that there is no time in our school schedule for me to meet with all 100 student leaders at one time.
>
> My school refuses to [structure regular meetings between student leaders and program coordinators] and, as a result, we are ending our program. I cannot work with kids in 15-minute random lunch periods that they may attend with true effectiveness and credibility.

The other primary scheduling challenge involves time for the student leaders to meet with mentees. Nine (9) of the 13 experts described the importance of figuring out a way to connect the older and younger students during the school day. One expert noted that a peer mediation or tutoring program without designated time for mediators or tutors to meet with mentees is “a

waste of time." Finding the outreach slot during the day was described by another expert as very difficult:

> If you take, for example, time that might otherwise be for health or physical education, and you're pushing for the upperclassman to meet with the freshmen during that time, you have to build the kind of understanding among the health and physical education teachers about the importance of this program.
>
> Additionally, if you have older peers such as high school students traveling to middle or lower schools, you have to consider transportation and look for overlapping opportunities in the schedule to see what time works best for your middle school or lower school partner.

Scheduling is one of the biggest challenges regarding school support for a variety of reasons. Both the myriad of logistics and the sacrifices that need to be made in order to prioritize the program can cause problems. Coordinators described lunches as frequently too busy, after school as conflicting with extra-curricular activities, and outreach during class as requiring a major commitment from the school. When you add scheduling over-booked facilities, "it just seems to be a logistical nightmare at times trying to figure out an easy way to do this."

Additionally, the implementation of any peer program takes valued time and resources away from others. As one expert put it, starting a peer program:

> … usually means that somebody else is going to lose time because the school is already pretty busy. Even when there's an agreement on the part of many people about the value in the mentorship program utilizing upperclassman... there's a difference between agreeing in principle and then agreeing in practice. There's always some level of sacrifice that somebody needs to make... I think, also, there are times that very busy heads of school listen to what the specific things are that need to be adjusted to implement a comprehensive, well thought out program, and they say "Yes, yes, yes!" They like it, they like it, they like it, and say, "Yes we can do that, we can do that, we can do that," but then they don't... They surround themselves with people who are probably more detail-oriented and those folks are also "Yeah but, yeah but, yeah but," because it's not so easy to do.

Overall, coordinators felt there had to be consistent administrative support from a scheduling standpoint or the program would ultimately falter. Principals were described as often

giving exclusively verbal support without taking the subsequent actions necessary to run a successful program. One coordinator expressed that scheduling frustrations led to her terminating the program:

> When I have pushed for systemic support, it has not been valued and we have lost our time to work with the student leaders. As a result, I can no longer provide a program that I don't believe in. The student leaders are expected to learn lessons and support their mentees...by only getting info electronically or in the last 15 minutes of lunch. This doesn't work and as a result, we are ending the program. I'm very sad and disappointed.

The primary scheduling solution for any effective peer program revolves around the creation of a for credit class through which student leaders can be trained. Program coordinators with a dedicated class rated their program statistically significantly higher on 15 of 18 strength descriptors than those without one (see Table 4.9). They also rated their challenges statistically significantly lower than those without a class on 5 of the 9 items related to student leaders and mentees, and 3 of 7 items related to school support and scheduling (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.9: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Programs with a Dedicated Class Compared to Those Without One

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Items	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Significance (p<.01)
Academic or elective class dedicated to program (Group 1) compared to no academic or elective class dedicated to program (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	5.09	0.87	244	4.74	1.04	332.00	16.855	1	16.855	17.941	0
	The program provides valuable services for students	5.02	1.03	241	4.64	1.13	327.00	19.882	1	19.882	16.845	0
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.40	1.33	242	3.52	1.42	322.00	106.772	1	106.772	56.266	0
	The program improves peer relations for both student leaders and mentees	5.12	0.93	242	4.90	0.99	329.00	7.013	1	7.013	7.53	0.006
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.24	1.35	241	3.52	1.35	325.00	71.87	1	71.87	39.463	0
	The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.59	1.21	234	4.11	1.16	322.00	31.108	1	31.108	22.289	0
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.07	1.06	241	4.56	1.06	330.00	37.245	1	37.245	36.916	0
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.88	1.04	243	4.18	1.19	326.00	68.96	1	68.96	54.074	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.47	1.30	240	3.59	1.40	323.00	105.759	1	105.759	57.067	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.04	0.92	241	4.52	1.09	325.00	37.634	1	37.634	36.055	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.44	1.33	230	3.74	1.41	305.00	64.511	1	64.511	34.055	0
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.07	1.67	210	3.09	1.60	249.00	108.141	1	108.141	40.711	0
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	3.98	1.42	220	3.11	1.50	284.00	93.647	1	93.647	43.758	0
	The program eases the transition into school for mentees	5.18	1.02	234	5.45	0.90	323.00	10.165	1	10.165	11.245	0.001
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.05	0.86	327	5.05	0.99	327.00	15.917	1	15.917	18.196	0

Table 4.10: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Programs with a Dedicated Class Compared to Those Without One

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Significance (p<.01)
Dedicated class (Group 1) compared to no dedicated class (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.93	1.73	240	3.40	1.48	326	31.837	1	31.837	12.546	0
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.63	1.82	237	3.42	1.50	322	85.083	1	85.083	31.476	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.44	1.55	239	3.04	1.40	326	50.943	1	50.943	23.779	0
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	2.53	1.63	236	3.06	1.47	306	37.909	1	37.909	15.946	0
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.45	1.53	230	1.88	1.59	293	23.645	1	23.645	9.656	0.002
PROGRAM CHALLENGES SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	**Item**	**Group 1 Mean**	**Group 1 SD**	**Group 1 N**	**Group 2 Mean**	**Group 2 SD**	**Group 2 N**	**Sum of Square**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Significance (p<.01)**
Dedicated class (Group 1) compared to no dedicated class (Group 2)	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	1.67	1.88	231	2.64	2.02	315	125.464	1	125.464	32.54	0
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3.65	1.88	313	3.65	1.88	313	338.735	1	338.735	91.95	0
	Not enough time for program	2.86	2.12	235	3.81	1.89	315	121.179	1	121.179	30.579	0

Fifty-nine (59) program coordinators listed the creation of a class as one of their best practices for school support in the free response section, the fourth-highest rated category for that question (see Table 4.7). Eight (8) of the 13 experts also referenced the importance of creating a class for credit that gives the coordinator "a dedicated time to consistently train people, supervise people, and most importantly, implement peer helping projects and services." Another expert concurred, suggesting the creation of a dedicated peers class that includes release time for the program coordinators demonstrates the school's commitment to the program's future success. In some schools there was one designated class per day, while others had a peers class offered every period in order to meet the needs of all possible mentees. The classes were described as providing ongoing in-depth training, something 99 coordinators emphasized as a best practice in the free response section related to program structure, the number one overall response to this question (see Table 4.7). Class also gives time to divide student leaders into sub-committees focused on weekly curriculum, lunch and after school activities, fundraising, publicity, and outreach reflection. Said one coordinator:

> Having a class is the best way of scheduling the program. It allows training and mentoring to be done in a class setting during the school day, allowing all qualified students the opportunity to be in the class without it interfering with extracurricular activities or jobs.

For those programs with more influence over the daily schedule, block periods were recommended by experts, especially when they are placed in the schedule next to lunch. This provides an extended period of time for a prolonged lunch activity or for high school students to travel to their corresponding middle or lower schools for outreach.

One of the greatest benefits of a class dedicated to a peer program is the flexibility it gives for scheduling meeting times between mentors and mentees. Coordinators recommended aligning free periods, study hall, and PE or health classes with the peers' classes in order to

enable frequent connections between student leaders and mentees. Creating these consistent meeting times was the second-highest-ranked challenge for programs without a designated peers class and only the 14th highest-ranked challenge for those with one (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Programs With and Without a Designated Peers Class

Is there an academic or elective class at your school in some way dedicated to your peer program?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
No	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.81	1.89	315
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2	3.65	1.88	313
Yes	Other programs are competing for student interest	1	2.99	2.02	230
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2	2.93	1.73	240
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	3	2.86	2.12	235
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	4	2.84	2.15	232
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	5	2.63	1.82	237
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	6	2.53	1.63	236
	Lack of program funding	7	2.50	2.03	232
	The selection process for student leaders	8	2.45	1.75	239
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	9	2.45	1.62	236
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	10	2.44	1.55	239
	A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	11	2.26	1.89	240
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	12	2.13	1.87	224
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	13	2.06	1.70	235
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	14	2.06	1.98	230

*only includes rankings up to relevant item.

Despite these potential benefits, not every school is able to create a class or align the schedule so that outreach can take place during a class period. In these instances, the program generally functions in a club format that meets during non-academic time slots. While it becomes more difficult to schedule regular training time or outreach sessions in this format, experts still talked about the significant impact peer programs can have when operated in this manner. They suggested starting small before eventually growing into a class, and they still stressed the importance of a beginning-of-the-school year training retreat. They also recommended at least one in-depth follow-up training during the school year. Some potential meeting times for student leaders and mentees in a club format (or for peers' classes that cannot do outreach during class time) included: advisory, homeroom, lunch, before-school, after-school, free tracks, or release time from willing teachers. For the after-school slot, coordinators recommended working with the athletics, arts, and service departments so that their mutual students were not "pulled in different directions." One expert described how, even in a time as short as homeroom, student leaders were able to help mentees get organized for their day, do a little tutoring, and refer issues related to drugs and alcohol. Program coordinators concurred, noting:

> The best thing we ever did was [have] admin put into our master schedule two homeroom classes with all of the 8th grade student leaders and the 6th graders they help. The two groups met every day.
>
> One of the greatest moves we've made in the last few years is grouping kids based on their advisory group... By taking the time to put them together by advisory, it has made it a lot easier for us to be intentional about [student leaders and mentees] meeting and connecting. Their lockers are near each other, and it gives the leader one place to visit.

Other scheduling options included identifying classes that all freshmen take (such as Health) and conducting outreach during relevant units. One expert discussed topics relating to drugs, alcohol, and/or STDs as good opportunities for peer education.

When comparing all of these time slot possibilities, the designated class still emerges as the best option. For programs in which the coordinators and student leaders met during a class instead of on an "as needed basis" or "during lunch," their strength ratings were statistically significantly higher on 13 of 18, and 9 of 18 items, respectively (see Table 4.12). Similarly, their challenge ratings were statistically significantly lower on 3 of the 7 items related to school support and scheduling (see Table 4.13). The lack of a consistent meeting time between student leaders and mentees was the second-most highly-ranked challenge for those programs that met during lunch, Nutrition class, activities, after school or infrequently, and only the 16th-ranked challenge for those that had a class (see Table 4.14). That said, there were very few statistically significant strength differences between those programs in which the coordinators met with student leaders during a class as compared to after school.

Table 4.12: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
During class (Group 1) compared to an as needed basis (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	5.09	0.89	191	4.41	1.12	73	0.678	0
	The program provides valuable services for students	5.08	0.98	189	4.39	1.23	72	0.690	0
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.54	1.22	190	3.18	1.49	71	1.354	0
	The program improves peer relations for both student leaders and mentees	5.17	0.91	191	4.52	1.11	73	0.647	0
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.27	1.37	188	3.28	1.26	72	0.993	0
	communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.12	0.89	188	4.31	0.97	72	0.817	0
	The program improves problem solving and decision making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.94	0.98	190	4.00	1.27	72	0.937	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.60	1.16	188	3.16	1.38	70	1.444	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.05	0.94	188	4.18	1.13	72	0.873	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.40	1.37	181	3.39	1.46	67	1.015	0
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.23	1.51	167	2.58	1.74	50	1.654	0
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.11	1.42	169	2.91	1.63	64	1.206	0
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.43	0.72	190	4.63	1.14	71	0.793	0

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.12 continued)

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
During class (Group 1) compared to during lunch, nutrition break, or activities period (Group 2)	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.54	1.22	190	3.62	1.42	172	0.915	0
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.27	1.37	188	3.51	1.32	171	0.757	0
	The program improves communication skills of student	5.12	0.89	188	4.62	1.05	175	0.505	0
	The program improves problem solving and decision making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.94	0.98	190	4.24	1.13	173	0.694	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.60	1.16	188	3.68	1.38	173	0.925	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.05	0.94	188	4.61	1.02	172	0.443	0.002
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.40	1.37	181	3.84	1.39	164	0.562	0.007
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.23	1.51	167	3.15	1.63	143	1.087	0
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.11	1.42	169	3.16	1.39	152	0.955	0

Table 4.13: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders

PROGRAM CHALLENGES SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
During class (Group 1) compared to an as needed basis (Group 2)	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	1.58	1.89	180	2.63	2.07	70	-1.045	0.007
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1.84	1.89	179	4.01	1.80	70	-2.171	0
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	2.74	2.09	184	4.20	1.90	70	-1.455	0
During class (Group 1) compard to during lunch (Group 2)	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	1.58	1.89	180	2.64	1.95	172	-1.056	0
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1.84	1.89	179	3.64	1.92	171	-1.794	0
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	2.74	2.09	184	3.70	2.00	171	-0.951	0.0001

Table 4.14: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Program Coordinator and Student Leader Meeting Time Slot

When do you, the program coordinator, generally meet with student leaders?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
As part of a club that meets during lunch, nutrition break, or activities period	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.70	2.00	171
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2	3.64	1.92	171
As part of a club that meets after school	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.62	2.03	47
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2	3.40	1.94	45
We meet infrequently on an "as needed" basis	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	4.20	1.90	70
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2	4.01	1.80	70

When do you, the program coordinator, generally meet with student leaders?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
As part of a class that is dedicated to your program	Other programs are competing for student interest	1	3.02	2.04	181
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	2	2.75	2.11	182
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3	2.74	1.69	188
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	4	2.74	2.09	184
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	5	2.56	1.69	184
	The selection process for student leaders	6	2.50	1.74	187
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	7	2.45	1.82	185
	Lack of program funding	8	2.44	2.01	181
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	9	2.43	1.55	185
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	10	2.38	1.54	187
	A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	11	2.20	1.85	187
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	12	2.15	1.88	176
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	13	2.11	1.74	186
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	14	2.02	1.60	185
	Lack of support from faculty	15	1.94	1.86	182
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	16	1.84	1.89	179

**only includes rankings up to relevant item.*

Regardless of the specific meeting time slot, coordinators emphasized, “It is imperative to have a regularly scheduled meeting time during the school day for the adults and student leaders to meet. If this does not exist, it is too much to expect student leaders to rely on only two days of completed training before freshman orientation.”

The meeting time slot for outreach sessions between student leaders and mentees also appeared significant. Coordinators with student outreach sessions that met during designated class time rated challenges related to student leaders and mentees statistically significantly lower compared to those coordinators with programs that met during homeroom or advisory (4 of 9 items) (see Table 4.15). Once again, there were few statistically significant differences between programs that with outreach during class compared to programs that met after school.

Table 4.15: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Time Slot for Student Leaders and Mentees

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
Designated class time (Group 1) compared to homeroom or advisory (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.43	1.54	145	3.17	1.41	150	-0.738	0.001
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	2.51	1.68	142	3.38	1.47	146	-0.867	0
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	1.46	1.55	145	2.40	1.61	145	-0.938	0
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	1.92	1.50	143	2.58	1.52	148	-0.661	0.006

Frequency of meetings seemed to be more important than the number of minutes coordinators and student leaders spent together. Generally, coordinators who met more frequently with student leaders rated their program strengths higher. As an example, coordinators who met more than once per week with their student leaders had statistically significantly higher strength ratings compared to coordinators who met only a few times per year (13 of 18 items) (see Table 4.16). Similarly, in terms of challenges, those coordinators who met with student leaders more than once a week rated challenges related to student leaders and mentees lower than did those who met once every two weeks (5 of 9 items,) once a month (4 of 9 items), and a few times a year (4 of 9 items) (see Table 4.17). Consistent meeting times between student leaders and mentees was the 13th and 16th ranked challenges respectively for programs that met once per week or more than once per week, but the first- or second-ranked challenge for programs that met once per month, a few times per year, or once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.16: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Frequency for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
More than once per week (Group 1) compared to a few times a year (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	5.08	0.92	169	4.44	1.07	68	0.636	0.001
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.50	1.26	167	3.10	1.48	67	1.399	0
	The program provides valuable services for students	5.05	0.99	167	4.40	1.22	65	0.654	0.005
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.23	1.42	166	3.31	1.41	67	0.922	0.001
	The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.66	1.17	163	3.79	1.42	67	0.872	0
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.16	0.90	166	4.39	1.03	67	0.769	0
	The program improves problem solving and decision making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.97	1.02	168	3.88	1.40	67	1.090	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.61	1.20	166	3.15	1.52	66	1.457	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.06	0.97	166	4.22	1.22	68	0.840	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.43	1.40	160	3.47	1.61	64	0.956	0.001
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.10	1.58	145	2.65	1.70	52	1.450	0
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.03	1.48	149	2.87	1.69	61	1.158	0
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.46	0.76	169	4.91	0.94	66	0.547	0.007

Table 4.17: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Frequency for Program Coordinators and Student Leaders

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
More than once per week (Group 1) compared to once every two weeks (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.74	1.67	166	3.71	1.43	65	-0.967	0.004
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.43	1.80	162	3.69	1.54	65	-1.266	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.29	1.49	165	3.28	1.44	65	-0.986	0.001
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	2.40	1.65	162	3.33	1.59	60	-0.938	0.006
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.16	1.39	160	2.44	1.68	57	-1.282	0
More than once per week (Group 1) compared to once a month (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.43	1.80	162	3.56	1.38	149	-1.138	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.29	1.49	165	3.03	1.36	150	-0.736	0.001
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.16	1.39	160	1.85	1.60	138	-0.692	0.01
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.74	1.67	166	3.52	1.53	150	-0.779	0.002

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.17 continued)

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
More than once per week (Group 1) compared to a few times a year (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.43	1.80	162	3.66	1.50	67	-1.231	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.29	1.49	165	3.18	1.40	68	-0.886	0.003
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.16	1.39	160	2.20	1.60	60	-1.044	0.001

Table 4.18: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Frequency of Meetings Between Program Coordinator and Student Leaders

On average, how frequently do you, the program coordinator, meet with the student leaders?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
Once per week	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.06	1.98	63
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	2	2.93	1.34	60
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	3	2.90	1.50	63
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	4	2.86	1.65	63
	Other programs are competing for student interest	5	2.77	1.93	62
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	6	2.75	2.04	61
	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	7	2.75	2.07	63
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	8	2.63	1.63	62
	The selection process for student leaders	9	2.60	1.71	60
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	10	2.58	1.48	62
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	11	2.40	1.79	57
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	12	2.34	1.64	58
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	13	2.32	1.82	63

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.18 continued)

On average, how frequently do you, the program coordinator, meet with the student leaders?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
More than once per week	Other programs are competing for student interest	1	2.92	2.05	160
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	2	2.82	2.17	162
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3	2.74	1.67	166
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	4	2.71	2.03	161
	Lack of program funding	5	2.61	2.06	160
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	6	2.43	1.80	162
	The selection process for student leaders	7	2.42	1.73	166
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	8	2.40	1.59	162
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	9	2.40	1.65	162
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	10	2.29	1.49	165
	A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	11	2.21	1.88	165
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	12	2.02	1.61	163
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	13	1.99	1.89	157
	Lack of support from faculty	14	1.95	1.82	159
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	15	1.90	1.68	163
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	16	1.75	1.88	157

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.18 continued)

On average, how frequently do you, the program coordinator, meet with the student leaders?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
Once per month	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1	3.84	1.86	142
A few times per year	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1	4.17	1.77	64
Once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.94	1.77	53
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2	3.52	1.78	54

The frequency of meeting times between student leaders and mentees may also have mattered. Coordinators whose student leaders and mentees met once per week gave statistically significantly higher strength-ratings than did coordinators whose students met a few times per year or once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (10 of the 18 items and 7 of the 18 items respectively) (see Table 4.19).

For programs in which the student leaders and mentees met once per week or more, their program coordinators ranked frequency of meeting time between students as the 20th and 14th rated challenges respectively. This ranking moved up into the top four for programs in which the student leaders and mentees met once per month, a few times per year, or once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (see Table 4.20).

Length of meetings appeared to be significantly less important. There were no statistically significant differences in strengths between programs in which coordinators and students leaders met for longer or shorter amounts of time. There were also minimal challenge differences, other than coordinators rating challenges lower on average, when they met for 61-90 minutes compared to 0-30 minutes (3 of the 7 schools support and scheduling items) (see Table 4.21). No statistically significant differences in strengths or challenges appeared based on the number of minutes the student leaders and mentees met together.

Table 4.19: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Meeting Frequency Between Student Leaders and Mentees

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
Once per week (Group 1) compared to a few times per year (Group 2)	The program builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture	5.13	0.91	127	4.60	1.06	118	0.524	0.124
	The program provides valuable services for students	5.21	0.93	126	4.46	1.21	114	0.758	0.139
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.42	1.41	126	3.26	1.32	115	1.160	0.17
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.10	0.92	126	4.46	1.06	118	0.646	0.129
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	5.02	1.02	125	4.01	1.24	116	1.007	0.145
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.53	1.28	123	3.58	1.38	115	0.970	0.196
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.10	0.97	126	4.40	1.16	116	1.222	0.237
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.45	1.46	116	3.65	1.38	110	0.794	0.185
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.23	1.71	108	2.99	1.69	91	1.242	0.229
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.18	1.56	111	2.95	1.45	99	1.231	0.203

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.19 continued)

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
Once per week (Group 1) compared to once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (Group 2)	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.40	1.30	126	3.64	1.40	103	0.996	0.249
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude,	4.42	1.41	126	3.53	1.37	104	0.892	0.175
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.10	0.92	126	4.58	1.20	106	0.528	0.133
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	5.02	1.02	125	4.26	1.15	105	0.759	0.149
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.53	1.28	123	3.61	1.50	105	0.919	0.181
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.10	0.97	126	4.51	1.12	104	0.586	0.135
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.18	1.56	111	3.11	1.55	95	1.075	0.203

Table 4.20: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Frequency of Meetings Between Student Leaders and Mentees

On average, how frequently do your student leaders meet with their mentees?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
More than once per week	Other programs are competing for student interest	1	2.71	1.942	42
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	2	2.5	2.074	44
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3	2.42	1.588	45
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	4	2.36	2.058	44
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	5	2.34	1.38	44
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	6	2.3	1.264	43
	A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	7	2.2	1.938	45
	Lack of program funding	8	2.2	2.159	41
	The selection process for student leaders	9	2.09	1.893	45
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	10	2.07	1.338	45
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	11	2	1.778	44
	A lack of interested mentees sign up or get referred to the program	12	1.93	1.81	44
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	13	1.88	1.721	43
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	14	1.84	1.509	44
	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	15	1.7	2.007	44
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	16	1.61	1.434	44
	Lack of support from faculty	17	1.59	1.53	44
	The program is trying to accomplish too many different objectives	18	1.45	1.532	44
	The lack of a meaningful program curriculum	19	1.41	1.589	44
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	20	1.41	1.743	44

*only includes rankings up to relevant item.

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.20 continued)

On average, how frequently do your student leaders meet with their mentees?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
Once per week	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	2.82	2.148	122
	Other programs are competing for student interest	2	2.64	2.11	121
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3	2.63	1.742	126
	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	4	2.59	2.047	118
	The selection process for student leaders	5	2.56	1.772	122
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	6	2.46	1.685	123
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	7	2.37	1.629	125
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	8	2.22	1.579	125
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	9	2.18	1.742	123
	Lack of program funding	10	2.12	2.026	121
	The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	11	2.11	1.842	117
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	12	2.04	1.544	123
	Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	13	2.03	1.628	121
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	14	1.88	1.908	120

**only includes rankings up to relevant item.*

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.20 continued)

On average, how frequently do your student leaders meet with their mentees?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
Once per month	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.71	1.793	124
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2	3.52	1.447	128
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	3	3.49	1.839	123
A few times per year	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1	4.01	2.002	109
Once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	1	3.64	1.582	105
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	2	3.6	1.97	101
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3	3.58	1.486	104
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	4	3.43	1.904	101

**only includes rankings up to relevant item.*

Table 4.21: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Meeting Length Between Program Coordinator(s) and Student Leaders

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	P-Value ($p<.01$)
0-30 minutes (Group 1) compared to 61-90 minutes (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3.45	1.54	215	2.17	1.55	41	1.276	0
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3.42	1.53	212	1.95	1.58	41	1.473	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	3.10	1.46	215	2.07	1.42	41	1.025	0.005

Finding 4: Importance of Program Structure

Introduction

Twelve (12) of the 13 experts brought up program structure as a vital characteristic to the success of a peer program. Seventy-nine (79) program coordinators also listed setting-up a successful program structure as the top-rated area in the free response section for which they would like additional training (see Table 4.7). That said, except for the previously-discussed medium challenge of a program struggling if the coordinator ever left the school (M = 2.82; SD = 2.1), every other structural characteristic on the survey had a mean in the minor challenge category (see Table 4.3).

Challenges and Solutions Related to Curriculum

Eleven (11) of the 13 experts discussed the importance of program curriculum. While the lack of a meaningful curriculum received only a minor challenge rating of 1.5 by survey respondents, 73 program coordinators named curriculum as the primary item for which they would like additional training, the second highest-rated response to that question (see Tables 4.3 and 4.7). Nine (9) of the 13 experts emphasized the importance of having a structured curriculum with a consistent outreach plan. However, while most agreed on the need for structure, respondents were divided between those advocating for a standardized national curriculum and those emphasizing the need for flexibility in order to meet the individual needs of their respective programs. Seventy-one (71) coordinators discussed how helpful it was to have a national standardized curriculum to follow, the second-highest free response to best practices regarding program structure (see Table 4.7).

One expert from a national peer organization in favor of a set curriculum described the issues with program coordinators that:

> Think they know better, and then they make changes to our recipe, and it never goes well. I would say that is the biggest challenge… they come with the attitude of "Okay, this will never work at my school. I'm going to do what I think works at my school, and... I'm going to change these four factors." We inevitably get the phone call that says it didn't work for us... They've made key choices that result in not only a logistical nightmare, but a total implosion of the intent of the program.

Numerous program coordinators agreed with this assessment, discussing their fidelity to the original national curriculum: "We were told in the training [to adhere to it exactly] and they were correct... We follow the curriculum and the processes they trained us on. They work!"

Similarly, experts also described the need for universal aspects to the program curriculum, referencing the standards associated with the National Association for Peer Program Professionals (NAPPP). These experts felt peer programs sometimes got a bad reputation because specific programs included little training in content, skills, or ethics. One expert connected with a city-wide program set expectations that in the first six to eight weeks, all of their programs would review a set of core curricular skills such as "active listening, problem solving, decision making, and teamwork, with an anti-oppression lens."

Differing from those advocating a national curriculum, 6 of 13 experts and 55 of the coordinators in the free response section emphasized the need to design a program and corresponding curriculum based on the needs of a particular community (see Table 4.7). While consulting for a school that had requested a peer mediation curriculum, one expert recalled asking the administrators why, in a school with little fighting and comparatively few verbal conflicts, the establishment of a peer mediation program was a priority? The school representative responded, "Because all the schools around us are doing it." As they talked more about the needs for that particular school, they realized students were under a lot of pressure academically and shifted their focus to setting up a peer program based on stress management,

active listening, and one-on-one helping.

This flexible framework for curriculum offers tailored solutions through which coordinators pull from various places and create their own content. Both experts and individual coordinators expressed this perspective:

> I'm troubled with those coordinators who buy my book and think that's going to fit everything. That's not going to fit everything. You have to adjust to your peer helpers to whatever it is you're trying to do. You have to have a lot of skills as the adult professional to pick appropriate curriculum and then appropriately utilize it. [expert]

> I found curriculum resources to be limited and ended up making up my own curriculum for my classes. [program coordinator]

Experts also discussed the importance of empowering teens to help create their own curriculum. Encouraging students to take ownership over portions of curriculum development was described as fostering responsibility and addressing local needs so that "mentors could, with conviction, present the activities because they created them, are enthusiastic about them, believe in them, and know them. It's not imposed from outside." Another expert concurred: "One of the best parts of the program structure is that the ideas are created from the students. Amazing creativity comes from this!" The danger of not allowing for this flexibility is the potential for lessons to feel "dictated" by the administration and not "teen-focused." Coordinators described national programs as sometimes feeling "scripted," so there seemingly was a need to adapt them to the individual needs of a particular community.

Though this section thus far has set-up a dichotomy between standardized and flexible curriculum, both experts and program coordinators noted this differentiation was not necessarily so pronounced. Some programs used a national curriculum for the skill-building portion and a custom curriculum for the specific outreach area. For example, one might have used pre-established lesson plans for listening, problem-solving, and referrals, while tailoring their

outreach curriculum for stress management, diversity, bullying, or substance use. Others may have used a set curriculum as the foundation for all aspects of their programs, but still incorporated additional resources into specific lessons when appropriate.

Regardless of whether a program relies on a standardized curriculum, both experts and coordinators agreed on three aspects. First, student leaders need to prioritize relationship building. As one expert put it:

> They have to be trained to let [the curriculum] go. When the opportunity comes up to talk or to look at each other and share interests, they should drop the curriculum and do that. They don't need the permission to drop... Really, attending to a relationship, making sure program staff get that it's about the relationship and not about the activity.

Second, closing rituals are important. The power behind the "gift of a good-bye" was stressed by multiple experts. Kids are constantly changing schools, classrooms, and/or contexts so "learning how to say good-bye and feeling like that's okay is such a great life lesson. Here you have a little micro-relationship that's real… to teach the power of good-bye and how to embrace it." Third, experts and coordinators spoke about the importance of not expanding the scope of a program curriculum beyond its specified goals. Student leaders were described as needing protection from becoming the default group for school events that do not connect to the mission of the particular peer program. As one coordinator put it, "Maintain the purpose of your program; frequent requests for additional unrelated activities can tax and stress leaders, detrimentally affecting the integrity of the group." Another coordinator concurred, noting, "Often requests will come in to do X and Y which are not in direct alignment with our goals. Guard the boundaries so as to not overextend the program."

Challenges and Solutions Related to Program Evaluation

The lack of an effective program evaluation plan received a minor challenge mean of

1.92 (SD = 1.69) and only 4 coordinators listed it as one of their biggest challenges (see Tables 4.3 and 4.7). Thirteen (13) offered best practices related to evaluation implementation, and the majority of the experts described its importance. One of the biggest evaluation challenges experts noted involved tracking seemingly immeasurable contributions. Stories were told of student leaders intervening during harsh disagreements between peers and comforting mentees in times of severe duress. What would the outcome have been if mentees had not been meeting regularly with mentors? One expert talked about a suicidal student who originally revealed his depression to his student leader:

> How do you measure that? How do you measure the kid that gives the balloon to his 6th grader because his mom has cancer? You can't. How do you measure prevention?... Every story that I hear like that, there are probably at least two or three stories of kids who were either going to commit suicide or were struggling, and a student leader reached out and we don't even know.

As solutions for program evaluation, experts recommended adopting a pre- and post-model that was "not overly complex or expensive" and identifying a manageable number of outcomes from the outset of the program. Quantitative and qualitative evaluations were both recommended through surveys, interviews, data records, anecdotes, and positive word of mouth. Some of the broad evaluation categories included student engagement, school connectedness, mindset toward graduation, ability to make healthy decisions, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and appreciation of differences amongst peers. Measuring that which schools already track was described as another comparatively easy way to assess a particular program. This could include variables such as test scores, disciplinary referrals, attendance, grades, dropout rates, tardies, etc. Surveying mentees mid-year "to determine which subjects were interesting and well-presented" was also recommended by program coordinators. Additional resources included outside experts, evaluation texts, online tools, and NAPPP programmatic

standards.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Making the Match

Making the match between student leaders and mentees was described by experts as a structural challenge. Though it received a minor challenge rating from survey respondents of only 1.6 (SD = 1.61), 69 coordinators mentioned it in the free response section related to best practices for program structure, the third highest-rated response rate (see Tables 4.3 and 4.7).

Some of the solutions offered by program coordinators included: consulting with counselors and other relevant staff members during the match process, using an interest survey, considering gender and/or race, keeping the ratio of student leaders to mentees low, and randomly pairing. Coordinators also recommended asking student leaders about people they could not work with just in case there are family members or friends with whom they should not be paired. Match length was discussed by experts who noted that pairings lasting only a few months may not be as effective, though the survey did not reveal many statistically significant differences based on this factor.

Lastly, program coordinators referenced the problem of mentees occasionally skipping meetings because the "sessions are free and sometimes taken for granted by parents and students." In these instances, the coordinator may need to end the match after a number of warnings out of respect for the student leader and the goals of the program.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Facilities

The lack of appropriate facilities for training or outreach had a minor challenge mean of 1.71 (SD = 1.78) (see Table 4.3). Fifteen (15) coordinators described it as one of their biggest challenges in the free response section, and 17 coordinators offered facilities advice for best practices. Universal programs designed to reach a full grade of mentees had the challenge of

requiring numerous simultaneous meeting locations. Some programs also needed the use of large meeting spaces. Said coordinators about facilities:

> It can be challenging to find a location on campus to hold our meetings and trainings. There always seems to be a fight to use the cafeteria and theater... the only two spots on campus that can accommodate over 100 people.
>
> We do not have space anywhere …our 8th grade group has to meet in the library for advisory class, and when it is busy, they are usually outdoors.

The challenge of inadequate facilities did not have any easy solutions. As described in the program coordinator section above, having a good rapport with the master facilities scheduler is a priority for peer program coordinators. Additionally, booking facilities well in advance was described as extremely important. When possible, coordinators discussed finding a central resource center, such as a room next to the cafeteria where students could get their lunch and easily head over. Another expert described the importance of this being a "very humanizing space" with sofas and tables for students so that new students would always have a welcome center of sorts once they came to campus.

An additional recommendation was to always pick a location within earshot of an adult, even for programs that stressed confidentiality. This was seen as especially important for one-on-one programs in which student leaders were more vulnerable to accusations of improper conduct with mentees. One-on-one programs sometimes scheduled multiple pairs in the same location to avoid these types of issues. As one coordinator put it, "The best facility is one that I have now: a huge room with several smaller offices. Groups and individual counseling sessions can be held there under my supervision."

Lastly, multiple coordinators discussed the value of placing the lockers of mentees near the lockers of student leaders. This was described as increasing the number of times older and younger students connected around campus: "One of the most important things we do is put

student leaders and their freshmen lockers right next to each other. This creates an opportunity for random meetings during the day: 'the water cooler effect.'"

Challenges and Solutions Related to One-On-One, Group, and Varied Outreach Formats

One key aspect of program structure relates to outreach format. Based on the survey results, coordinators with programs that met in a group format had statistically significantly lower strength ratings than did those who met in a one-on-one or varied format (9 of the 18 items and 11 of the 18 items respectively) (see Table 4.22). In terms of challenges related to student leaders and mentees, coordinators with programs whose students met in a group outreach format had statistically significantly higher-rated challenges as compared to one-on-one or varied outreach formats (5 of the 9 items and 4 of the 9 items respectively) (see Table 4.23). Though the survey results illustrate the strengths of programs with a one-on-one or varied format, experts lauded the potential benefits of group outreach as well. Ultimately, they emphasized the unique strengths, challenges, and solutions for each option and encouraged schools to consider their particular needs when determining an outreach format.

Table 4.22: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on a One-On-One, Group, or Varied Outreach Format

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
In a group (Group 1) compared to one-on-one (Group 2)	The program strives to close the achievement gap	3.18	1.55	309	4.06	1.36	65	-0.877	0
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders	3.17	1.69	291	4.48	1.49	54	-1.310	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	3.82	1.43	336	4.51	1.47	65	-0.692	0.001
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	4.56	1.06	357	5.06	1.05	70	-0.497	0.001
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	3.73	1.41	354	4.39	1.51	69	-0.657	0.002
	The program improves problem solving and decision making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.28	1.21	360	4.88	1.06	68	-0.605	0
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	3.51	1.33	356	4.59	1.29	70	-1.072	0
	The program provides valuable services for students	4.64	1.15	355	5.14	1.06	71	-0.504	0.002
	Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	5.11	0.93	357	5.20	1.24	71	-0.313	0.005
	*The program eases the transition into school for mentees **in a group is highest*	5.48	0.81	358	4.83	1.22	65	0.650	0

(continued on next page)

(Table 4.22 continued)

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
In a group (Group 1) compared to it varies (Group 2)	The program strives to close the achievement gap	3.18	1.55	309	3.96	1.35	125	-0.776	0
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders	3.17	1.69	291	4.03	1.55	109	-0.856	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	3.82	1.43	336	4.42	1.24	130	-0.6	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	4.56	1.06	357	5.06	0.96	134	-0.499	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	3.73	1.41	354	4.33	1.32	135	-0.599	0
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	4.28	1.21	360	4.81	1.06	135	-0.530	0
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	4.64	1.02	360	5.02	1.06	136	-0.383	0.001
	The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.20	1.21	352	4.60	1.09	132	-0.402	0.004
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	3.51	1.33	356	4.27	1.35	134	-0.755	0
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	3.72	1.47	357	4.19	1.34	132	-0.467	0.006
	The program provides valuable services for students	4.64	1.15	355	5.06	0.89	136	-0.422	0.001

Table 4.23: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on a One-On-One, Group, or Varied Outreach Format

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	P-Value (p<.01)
Group outreach (Group 1) compared to one-on-one outreach (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3.39	1.59	353	2.34	1.75	68	1.053	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.99	1.46	357	2.32	1.55	69	0.676	0.003
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	3.08	1.55	344	2.02	1.43	65	1.063	0
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.89	1.61	328	1.06	1.26	63	0.827	0.001
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	2.32	1.54	351	1.64	1.45	66	0.686	0.003
Group outreach (Group 1) compared to varied outreach (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	3.39	1.59	353	2.68	1.71	134	0.712	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.99	1.46	357	2.50	1.51	133	0.498	0.004
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	3.08	1.55	344	2.60	1.50	129	0.482	0.01
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	2.32	1.54	351	1.72	1.35	130	0.599	0.001

Challenges and Solutions Related to One-On-One Outreach Programs

For one-on-one programs, experts highlighted the potential for fostering deep connections between student leaders and mentees, as well as their specific benefit to mentees in need of sustained contact time. As one expert coordinator of a national program described:

> [The] one-on-one format seems to be more effective to me. Students open up more, and you need to confront and deal with things that they're going through. One-on-one is almost – not 100% but almost – a guaranteed opportunity where the students are going to get what they need to succeed, as opposed to basically hiding in a crowd and going through the motions.

From a challenges perspective, one-on-one programs have a couple of specific difficulties. The individual match may not work out between the student leader and mentee, and there are no co-leaders or additional mentees to mitigate that lack of connection. Additionally, the student leader or mentee could fail to attend on any particular week due to scheduling conflicts, illness, or simply forgetting the appointment. Perhaps the biggest drawback referenced by the experts involved the limited number of mentees potentially benefitting from the program because student leaders could only work with so many students individually. As one expert stated:

> Given the incredibly busy lives of most adults and most students in the school, one-on-one programs really don't give much opportunity for [a student leader] to connect in that way with more than a handful of students. Similarly, the matching process is time consuming for the coordinator and a greater percentage of re-matching is likely to occur.

Program coordinators also struggle to know exactly how many student leaders they will need given shifts in the number of mentees throughout the school year. Additionally, even in the instances where there is a fantastic match and the mentee feels extremely comfortable with the student leader, s/he might be more likely to share intimate information that goes beyond the capabilities of a student leader.

For solutions to these concerns, experts discussed the importance of developing back-up plans for the no-show students. This might include back-up student leaders who can step-in as a replacement, along with continuous reminders to both the student leaders and mentees in order to limit the number of forgotten meetings. One-on-one programs may also need to be smaller in scope or have additional coordinators assisting in order to give adequate support and supervision for an expanded number of matches. The supervision aspect is particularly important given the additional safety concerns that accompany one-on-one matches. They generally require facilities connected to public areas or the program coordinator’s office. Developing strong referral programs in which older students routinely pass along any concerning information regarding their mentees is also important given the potential depth of the connections. Lastly, program coordinators need to focus on making particularly thoughtful matches in the one-on-one format, realizing that the success of the program relies in part on the bond between individual student leaders and mentees.

Challenges and Solutions Related to Group Outreach Programs

Peer programs with a group outreach format have the inherent potential benefit of reaching large numbers of mentees. Experts talked about the positive potential for reaching entire student populations through group outreach. Said one expert:

> In the spirit of building community and connectedness, if you can utilize two adults on a daily basis who work with 20 upperclassmen who serve 120 freshmen, then you are utilizing two faculty members who are touching and impacting the lives [and] the social and emotional well-being of 140 plus young people. That’s a pretty cost efficient way of increasing school connectedness and impacting the school environment by utilizing the most under-utilized resource in schools: the upperclassmen.

Groups also provide the opportunity for student leaders to model positive social norms in a realistic setting and for lasting relationships to grow between the mentees in the group.

From a challenges perspective, the group outreach format poses a number of difficulties. Experts noted that groups can be hard to manage and less likely to foster sustained, deep relationships. Reflecting on the potential for deviancy training when a student leader sets a negative example for a mentee, one expert noted:

> Training in groups is fine, but we usually encourage our peer helpers to work one-on-one and not in groups... Group work can be very divisive, especially if you have a strongly opinionated [mentee] who has views different than those espoused by the trained peer helper. They can override all the positives that you're trying to accomplish if they demonstrate stronger leadership skills than the peer helper.

Other experts discussed relational connections not being as strong in the group format as it is easier for mentees to remain hidden:

> Ninth grade, it's this age where their peers are so much more important than anything else. Some of the kids in big groups were not as apt to speak up because they're embarrassed in front of their peers who were also there.
>
> I see programs that are called "group peer mentoring" and my belief is often what happens is the mentors click with one or two of these kids. There may be eight kids and the other ones are just sort of there. There's no mentoring happening. They're just there. You know what I mean?

From a solutions standpoint, experts noted that group outreach programs need to focus on group facilitation and team-building skills. This includes experiential role play focused on drawing all mentees into a group; setting and reinforcing positive group norms; and, responding to mentees who are acting out. Additionally, experts discussed the importance of providing opportunities for mentees to follow up with mentors in individual settings in case they did not feel comfortable sharing in the group. Experts also recommended student leaders identify positive mentees to set an upbeat tone or, as one expert described, "permission givers" to share and model pro-social behaviors.

One solution to challenges for both group and one-on-one programs noted by multiple experts involved combination programs that utilize a variety of outreach formats. One expert

described the effectiveness of this approach:

> You can’t have one without the other. If you don’t do the large group stuff where people have a chance to interact, engage, and establish this group norm, you certainly can’t have the smaller interactions. It’s a yin and a yang. I think a lot of programs say, “Hey, we’re going to do this great peer mentoring thing. We’re going to pair you up with this one person or two other people or whatever and here you go.” They have no relationship though... which is why we build the relationship of the community first and then we slowly break it down, so that you can get to the point where it’s safe for a student leader to approach a freshman one-on-one because that larger relationship has been established. Do I place more value on one other than the other? If I had to, I would say that the larger group experiences are what create the relationship and the safety that allow the smaller one-on-one experiences to be successful; but if you create a larger group experience, and you don’t follow it up with the smaller one-on-one interaction, the program is empty.

Strengths and Challenges Related to Program Design

Another structural aspect to the outreach format involves program design. Those set up to reach specially-identified students had statistically significantly higher strength and lower challenge ratings than did those designed to reach an entire group of students, such as a whole grade level (11 of the 18 strength items; 8 of the 9 challenge items related to student leaders and mentees; and, 5 of the 7 challenge items related to school support and scheduling) (see Tables 4.24 and 4.25).

Table 4.24: Statistically Significant Strength Differences Based on Programs Designed to Reach Specially Identified Students Compared to an Entire Group of Students

PROGRAM STRENGTHS	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Significance (p<.01)
Specially identified students (Group 1) compared to an entire group of students (Group 2)	The program provides valuable services for students	5.26	0.85	113	4.68	1.13	450	29.801	1	29.801	25.598	0
	The program raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community	4.39	1.29	110	3.77	1.45	449	34.487	1	34.487	17.08	0
	The program improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	4.49	1.38	112	3.65	1.34	449	63.361	1	63.361	34.721	0
	The program enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus	4.60	1.16	108	4.26	1.20	443	10.442	1	10.442	7.311	0.007
	The program improves communication skills of student leaders and mentees	5.14	0.90	112	4.68	1.05	454	19.195	1	19.195	18.337	0
	The program improves problem-solving and decision-making skills for student leaders and mentees	5.08	0.99	111	4.33	1.18	453	50.439	1	50.439	38.397	0
	The program improves conflict resolution skills of student leaders and mentees	4.67	1.31	110	3.79	1.40	448	68.094	1	68.094	35.606	0
	The program enhances self-esteem for student leaders and mentees	5.16	0.91	112	4.63	1.06	449	25.646	1	25.646	24.124	0
	The program decreases disciplinary issues for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	4.48	1.36	103	3.93	1.41	427	24.737	1	24.737	12.637	0
	The program strives to decrease substance use for both student leaders and mentees	4.55	1.40	87	3.28	1.67	367	113.137	1	113.137	42.899	0
	The program strives to close the achievement gap	4.20	1.32	98	3.31	1.52	402	63.554	1	63.554	28.844	0
	*The program eases the transition into school for mentees ** entire group is highest*	4.59	1.22	102	5.50	0.80	451	69.322	1	69.322	86.524	0

Table 4.25: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Programs Designed to Reach Specially Identified Students Compared to an Entire Group of Students

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Significance (p<.01)
Specially identified students (Group 1) compared to an entire group of students (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.47	1.76	112	3.41	1.51	449	78.258	1	78.258	32.158	0
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	2.15	1.62	109	2.63	1.47	446	20.078	1	20.078	8.968	0.003
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.01	1.63	109	3.37	1.59	445	161.255	1	161.255	63.206	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.06	1.49	111	2.97	1.44	449	73.373	1	73.373	34.721	0
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	2.06	1.45	107	3.03	1.54	430	80.534	1	80.534	34.905	0
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	1.07	1.26	104	1.85	1.605	414	50.637	1	50.637	21.313	0
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	1.30	1.46	108	2.08	1.56	438	53.51	1	53.51	22.538	0
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	1.54	1.40	109	2.24	1.51	437	42.068	1	42.068	19.011	0
PROGRAM CHALLENGES SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	**Item**	**Group 1 Mean**	**Group 1 SD**	**Group 1 N**	**Group 2 Mean**	**Group 2 SD**	**Group 2 N**	**Sum of Square**	**df**	**Mean square**	**F**	**Significance (p<.01)**
Specially identified students (Group 1) compared to an entire group of students (Group 2)	Lack of program funding	2.21	2.02	104	2.87	2.09	430	35.773	1	35.773	8.276	0.004
	Lack of support from faculty	1.46	1.75	109	2.23	1.78	431	51.713	1	51.713	16.411	0
	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	1.75	1.96	108	2.34	2.01	433	30.038	1	30.038	7.491	0.006
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	1.81	1.93	108	3.27	2.01	430	183.899	1	183.899	46.192	0
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	2.40	2.08	109	3.67	1.95	436	140.279	1	140.279	35.992	0

One point to be aware of is that Bridge is a universal group outreach program with comparatively lower ratings that could potentially impact these results. Also, though universal programs may have lower-rated strengths and higher-rated challenges, they also have the potential to reach a far greater number of students.

Strengths and Challenges of Outreach Format Related to Mentees

The age of mentees is one additional structural aspect of the outreach format that impacts programs. When comparing programs with lower school mentees (1st through 5th grades), middle school mentees (6th through 8th grades), and upper school mentees (9th through 12th grades), a few patterns emerged. Coordinators of programs with lower school mentees rated challenges statistically significantly lower than those working with mentees in upper and middle schools (8 of the 9 items related to student leaders and mentees, and 5 of the 7 items related to school support and scheduling) (see Table 4.26). There also seemed to be a lesser correlation with program strengths as program coordinators working with lower school mentees reported statistically significantly higher-rated strengths when compared to upper school mentees (7 out of 18 items) and middle school mentees (6 out of 18 items).

Table 4.26: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Age of Mentees

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
Lower school mentees (Group 1) compard to middle and upper school mentees (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.00	1.62	39	3.07	1.48	152	-1.072	0
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	1.71	1.45	38	2.81	1.52	150	-1.103	0
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	1.54	1.37	39	3.30	1.62	151	-1.760	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	1.67	1.42	39	3.15	1.37	152	-1.485	0
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	1.82	1.39	38	3.03	1.43	145	-1.219	0
	Getting student leaders to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise	0.68	1.08	37	1.77	1.49	136	-1.096	0.001
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	0.64	0.90	39	1.59	1.37	144	-0.949	0.002
	Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	1.26	1.29	39	2.30	1.54	148	-1.041	0.001
PROGRAM CHALLENGES SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	**Item**	**Group 1 Mean**	**Group 1 SD**	**Group 1 N**	**Group 2 Mean**	**Group 2 SD**	**Group 2 N**	**Mean Difference**	**Significance (p<.01)**
Lower school mentees (Group 1) compared to middle and upper school mentees (Group 2)	Lack of program funding	1.60	1.82	35	2.83	2.05	143	-1.225	0.008
	Lack of support from faculty	0.84	1.26	38	2.15	1.77	144	-1.304	0
	Not enough time to meaningfully train student leaders	1.14	1.65	37	2.59	2.16	144	-1.455	0
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders	1.24	1.82	38	3.15	1.93	146	-1.914	0
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1.92	2.06	37	3.59	2.02	147	-1.666	0

One aspect of these numbers to be cognizant of relates to the fact that there were only 40 programs working exclusively with lower school mentees. Also, the vast majority of these were not connected to the national transition programs that made up much of the data set for the upper and middle school programs. This could have potentially skewed the numbers. The developmental behaviors of lower, middle, and upper school mentees should also be taken into account when reviewing this data.

The overall number of mentees is also a consideration for outreach structure though there were few differences in strengths based on this factor. Regarding challenges, there were a couple of areas worthy of further investigation. Programs coordinators with 301 to 400, or more than 400 mentees, rated challenges related to student leaders and mentees statistically significantly higher compared to programs with 100 mentees or less (4 of the 9 items and 5 of the 9 items respectively) (see Table 4.27). Similarly, when considering school support and scheduling, programs with 400 or more mentees rated challenges statistically significantly higher as compared to programs with less than 100 mentees (4 of the 7 items) (see Table 4.27). Of note, the number of consistent meetings for student leaders and mentees went from being the fourth-ranked challenge for programs with over 400 mentees to the twelfth-ranked challenge for programs with 100 or less mentees (see Table 4.28).

Table 4.27: Statistically Significant Challenge Differences Based on Number of Mentees

PROGRAM CHALLENGES STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES	Item	Group 1 Mean	Group 1 SD	Group 1 N	Group 2 Mean	Group 2 SD	Group 2 N	Mean Difference	Significance (p<.01)
Less than 100 mentees (Group 1) compared to 301-400 mentees (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.57	1.63	115	3.54	1.56	94	-0.969	0.001
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.17	1.61	112	3.49	1.54	94	-1.320	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.29	1.49	115	3.07	1.30	94	-0.788	0.006
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	1.28	1.40	109	2.11	1.59	91	-0.835	0.006
Less than 100 mentees (Group 1) compared to more than 400 mentees (Group 2)	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	2.57	1.63	115	3.67	1.43	119	-1.098	0
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2.17	1.61	112	3.68	1.50	119	-1.511	0
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	2.29	1.49	115	3.06	1.62	119	-0.772	0.003
	Getting student to refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health and safety arise	1.19	1.39	104	2.03	1.71	112	-0.834	0.004
	Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	1.28	1.40	109	2.33	1.59	117	-1.058	0
PROGRAM CHALLENGES SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING	**Item**	**Group 1 Mean**	**Group 1 SD**	**Group 1 N**	**Group 2 Mean**	**Group 2 SD**	**Group 2 N**	**Mean Difference**	**Significance (p<.01)**
Less than 100 mentees (Group 1) compared to more than 400 mentees (Group 2)	Lack of support from faculty	1.31	1.518	113	2.65	1.912	113	-1.345	0
	Lack of support from administration	1.02	1.519	111	2.02	2.061	114	-1.000	0.001
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	2.13	2.038	113	3.6	2.021	115	-1.467	0
	Not enough time for program supervisor to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	2.69	2.143	113	3.88	1.983	115	-1.188	0.001

Table 4.28: Descriptive Ranking of Challenges by Number of Mentees

Approximately how many student mentees participate in your program per year?		Rank	Mean	SD	N
Less than 100 mentees	The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because you are the only person who knows the details of the program	1	2.92	2.11	112
	Other programs are competing for student interest	2	2.70	2.04	112
	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	3	2.69	2.14	113
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	4	2.57	1.63	115
	Getting student leaders to address inappropriate behavior of mentees during the program meeting times	5	2.40	1.45	106
	Getting student leaders to use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)	6	2.29	1.49	115
	The selection process for student leaders	7	2.24	1.74	114
	Getting student leaders to set a good example	8	2.22	1.49	112
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	9	2.17	1.61	112
	Lack of program funding	10	2.15	2.04	107
	A lack of qualified student leaders apply to the program	11	2.13	1.86	115
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	12	2.13	2.04	113
More than 400 mentees	Not enough time for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities	1	3.88	1.98	115
	Getting student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees	2	3.68	1.50	119
	Getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities	3	3.67	1.43	119
	Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees	4	3.60	2.02	115

**only includes rankings up to relevant item.*

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a discussion exploring the strengths, challenges, and solutions for implementing school-based peer programs. The positive potential for peer programs was reaffirmed by this research particularly when resources were appropriately allocated to: (a) program coordinators, (b) student leaders, (c) school support, and (d) program structure. All 18 of the survey's strength descriptors were rated by respondents as "major" or "medium" strengths. A few of the benefits reflected in this study include: easing school transitions, developing leadership skills, increasing school connectedness, improving peer relations, providing valuable academic and social/emotional services, and, positively impacting school culture. That none of the individual challenge descriptors had a mean in the "major challenge" category further reinforces the successful portrayal of these programs. Findings also support the importance of this study's conceptual framework regarding peer influence (Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003; Prinstein & Dodge, 2008); positive youth development (Karcher, 2009; Lerner et al., 2005); and, school connectedness (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2011).

Both the experts and the program coordinators in this study spoke to the impact of peer programs:

> We know that peers are going to believe peers. They have far more credibility, and the research points out that peers can be as good as trained counselors and teachers. They are equivalent in their effectiveness. Research supports that as has research done by us on the same topic. (expert)

> Our peer program has proven to have incredible benefits for the students, staff, and our school community. Our student leaders are very active in all aspects of improving our school climate. (expert)

> The program can be as important for the leaders as it is for the mentees. School administrators need to recognize that student leaders can have far more impact than adults. It's great preventative care. (coordinator)

> I've been a teacher/school counselor and trainer of student peer helpers for over 30 years. Nothing I have done in these years has had a more positive, long-lasting impact on my student populations than peer helper training. (coordinator)

In the following section, I provide (a) five recommendations for practice, (b) the limitations of this study, and (c) areas for future research.

Five Recommendations for Practice

Recommendation 1: Schools/districts should give full support to the purpose and value of peer programs prior to their implementation.

Based on the myriad of benefits associated with peer programs, schools/districts should express their full support for them, particularly through funding and scheduling. Successful peer programs need funding to provide effective helping services. A prominent funding problem relates to the top-ranked medium challenge that emerged from this study: program coordinators do not have enough time to plan, supervise, and evaluate their program in addition to other professional responsibilities. Schools need to acknowledge that coordinator positions are demanding and provide funds for release time and additional co-coordinators so that adequate attention can be given to these programs. This co-advisor partnership was lauded as crucial to the success of daily operations. To obtain necessary additional funds, experts and coordinators recommended engaging in a variety of public relations efforts at the school level, and pursuing additional opportunities through private foundations and district, state, and federal grants (Tindall & Black, 2008).

This study also highlighted the need to support peer programs through adequate scheduling. Not having enough consistent meeting time between student leaders and mentees, or

between program coordinators and student leaders, resulted in logistical hurdles that had a negative impact on program efficacy and made it difficult for student leaders to develop strong connections with mentees.

The primary scheduling solution recommended in this study was the creation of a designated peers class that could provide ongoing, in-depth training. These classes could help address many of the primary challenges reported by program coordinators and provide valued flexibility for scheduling meetings between student leaders and mentees.

Experts acknowledged that despite these benefits, the formation of a peers class might not always be possible within a particular school community. This study affirms that while strengths are greatest, and challenges are least, within programs that have at least one designated course, there is still positive potential for programs that meet consistently as a club. In these cases, the administration should investigate additional scheduling options for the coordinator(s) and student leaders, and for the student leaders and mentees, to connect. Some of the meeting options included after or before school, advisory, homeroom, lunch, health class, free tracks, etc.

Recommendation 2: Select effective program coordinator(s).

Program coordinators were described throughout this study and accompanying literature as critical to the success of any peer program (Carkhuff, 2000). Schools and districts should not assign coordinators based on convenience, but instead select adults who have demonstrated: (a) a committed passion for youth development, (b) strong communication and organizational skills, and (c) positive role-modeling. These characteristics were viewed as particularly important given the high demands of the job and the multitude of accompanying logistics. An initial professional development training plan for these coordinators should also be in place prior to their working with student leaders, and ideally programs would have at least one experienced coordinator.

Whenever possible, the co-coordinators should share common planning time so they can consistently work through planning and curriculum together. Coordinators should also work to form a stakeholder committee responsible for overseeing the program's long-term success and sustainability. This group, made up of administrators, faculty, counselors, and/or staff, can attend its own training, advocate for the program to administration, provide valuable institutional history, and potentially include a back-up or co-coordinator who can mitigate the impact of a departing coordinator. The creation of this group vests the broader community in the success of the program in case there is turnover in school leadership.

Recommendation 3: Prioritize recruitment, selection, and training of student leaders.

This study and the accompanying literature affirm that peer programs are only as effective as their student leaders (Karcher, 2005; MENTOR, 2009). Recruitment is especially important given that students describe feeling over-scheduled by a multitude of other programs and obligations competing for their interest. For successful marketing, peer professionals talked about the importance of: (a) holding promotional application meetings, led in part by current student leaders; (b) advertising through a variety of mediums such as classes, assemblies, flyers, websites, videos, social media, and the school's PA system; and (c) and offering incentives such as class credit or service hours in order to enlarge the applicant pool. Programs with exponentially more applicants than spots available may want to increase the rigor of their selection process, while those programs yet to attract as much student interest may actually need surrogates to directly encourage specific students to apply.

A series of critical standard protocols for the selection process described in this study include: a written application, staff and current student leader recommendations, thorough checks of past behavior, and the formation of a committee to make final decisions. In order to

boost the program's credibility, selected student leaders should represent a microcosm of the school through their variety of interests, activities, backgrounds, academic records, personalities, and personal experiences. Regarding personal qualities, coordinators discussed the importance of selecting caring, positive role models that have the ability to make a commitment, communicate effectively, problem solve, and be both empathetic and playful.

Committees must decide how to deal with the "risk applicants" who have positive potential but may have struggled in the past with behavioral or mental health issues. Both experts and coordinators agreed that the distinguishing factor in these decisions should be whether the student is still dealing with the same difficulties (such as self harm or substance use). If those issues are in the past, the applicant is more likely to provide a stable, positive influence on the mentee (Beam et al., 2002).

Student training was also discussed in this study and accompanying literature as essential to any thriving peer program (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013; Myrick & Bowman, 1981); it was the primary referenced method to address implementation challenges. Experts noted that peer programs lacking in training could actually pose an overall detriment to mentees (Foster, 1991). A mandatory multi-day intensive training retreat (ideally off-campus) at the beginning of the year was advocated by both experts and coordinators. At these initial meetings, topics of confidentiality (and when to break it), active listening, problem-solving skills, referral skills, inappropriate behavior of mentees, cultural competency, and the mission of the specific peer program could be addressed (Sue, 2006; Tindall & Black, 2008). It could also provide an opportunity to set realistic expectations for student leaders about their role with mentees. This study—and prior research—illustrates the negative consequences of student leaders' exposure to unreasonably lofty expectations (DuBois, Holloway et al., 2002; Spencer, 2007). The school

needs to support consistent, mandatory training throughout the year that all student leaders attend, and the meeting schedule should be clearly articulated during the application process.

Recommendation 4: Schools need a response protocol when student leaders make mistakes.

Prior to launching a peer program, administrators and program coordinators need to discuss how they want to handle the mistakes student leaders will inevitably make. The second-highest ranked medium challenge reported in this study was student leaders not following through on their responsibilities. Some student leaders were portrayed as either not having adequate follow-through to complete the necessary preparatory work (particularly during the second semester), or making egregious mistakes that called into question their roles as mentors. Both of these situations were described as having a negative impact on mentees (Karcher, 2005; Spencer, 2007).

To address these challenges, experts and coordinators recommend creating some form of contract or code of ethics in order to limit the frequency of these lapses in judgment, and to ensure all student leaders receive proper training. Such documents usually address mandatory deadlines, attendance, and accountability, in addition to the types of infractions that could potentially lead to expulsion from the program. No consensus was offered on how to respond to more serious infractions when they did occur. As one coordinator explained:

> It's hard to hold people accountable for maintaining the expectations of the program (i.e., abstaining from drugs and alcohol). It's an issue each year because good, kind leaders end up not fulfilling some of the requirements, so it's a difficult tension to decide where and how you draw the line, and how to better empower kids to hold themselves accountable for doing what they say they're going to.

Coordinators and experts generally responded to these situations in one of two ways. Some took a restorative justice perspective and approached the mistake as an opportunity for the

student and his peers to grow while continuing to include the student in the program. Others dismissed the student, refusing to bend the integrity of their collective commitments based on the negative influence it could have on the program's reputation. Regardless of which perspective schools adopted, both experts and program coordinators reported having to permanently remove extremely few students due to serious conduct infractions. No one correct protocol emerges from the literature or this study, but transparent communication with the student leaders at the beginning of the year concerning expectations is important.

Recommendation 5: Program coordinators should establish the program structure prior to implementation.

This study and the literature (MENTOR, 2009) recommend that coordinators address questions related to curriculum, the match process, program evaluation, facilities, public relations, scheduling, and outreach format prior to a program's launch. While modifications will inevitably be made over the years, each of these structural categories requires significant forethought.

Curriculum. Despite broad agreement regarding the benefits of structured curriculum (Dodge et al., 2006), there was also divergence about whether it is best to follow a standardized national curriculum or create a flexible curriculum that can meet the individual needs of a particular community. Those in favor of a standardized approach describe the benefits of a proven syllabus, while those supporting a more individualized methodology discuss the value of empowering teens to take enthusiastic ownership over the lessons (Kupersmidt & Rhodes, 2013; Lerner et al. 2013). Hybrid models are also viable options, and both experts and coordinators agreed on the importance of: (a) prioritizing relationship-building over set topics, (b) providing closing rituals in the curriculum (Herrera et al., 2007), and (c) not broadening the curricular scope beyond the mission of the program.

Program evaluation. Program evaluation was described as valuable because it provided a plan for improvement and a tool to help increase buy-in and funding. Experts and coordinators discussed using qualitative data to address these types of contributions and focus quantitative data on more tangible variables that the school is already tracking. They also recommended simple surveys as a means of measuring student engagement, school connectedness, mindset toward graduation, ability to make healthy decisions, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, and appreciation of differences among peers.

Match process. To address challenges related to the match process, this study suggests coordinators consult with counselors and other relevant staff members, use an interest survey, keep the ratio of student leaders to mentees low, and check in with student leaders to make sure they are not paired with family members or friends (Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005).

Facilities. Facilities could prove challenging when programs are in need of multiple, simultaneous meeting places or large venues for activities. Though there were no easy solutions provided, experts and coordinators recommended booking facilities well in advance. They also suggested picking a location within earshot of an adult in order to avoid potential issues that could arise from two students being alone without supervision. When possible, coordinators advocated placing the lockers of student leaders and mentees together to naturally increase their number of daily connections.

Public relations. A thoughtful public relations impact plan was described as an important tool to foster buy-in from the broader school community. Having current student leaders summarize the program benefits to faculty, parents, the district office, and/or the school board was depicted as being particularly effective. When meetings are not possible, other means of communication such as assembly announcements, school bulletins, direct emails, and/or

pictures of peer events were recommended. Respondents also discussed the importance of increasing adult buy-in by connecting the mission of the peer program to some of the priorities already espoused by administration and faculty, and pulling students from academic classes as infrequently as possible.

Outreach format. In terms of outreach format, schools need to make decisions about: (a) one-on-one vs. group meetings, (b) program design, and (c) the total number and age(s) of mentees. The participants in this study discussed the unique strengths and challenges accompanying each of these outreach variables and encouraged schools to consider the needs of their particular communities when making outreach decisions.

Schools with mentees in need of sustained contact should consider a one-on-one format. The coordinators in this study rated one-on-one programs as having higher strengths and lower challenges on average than group programs, and experts highlighted their potential for fostering deep connections between student leaders and mentees. That said, some of the challenges referenced for one-on-one programs included the logistical hurdles of monitoring large numbers of individual matches, making back-up plans for absent student leaders or mentees, and dealing with matches that are not a good fit.

Unlike the one-on-one outreach format, group programs have the inherent potential benefit of reaching large student populations (Dubois et al. 2011). In addition to being a preferred format by significant numbers of youth (Herrera et al. 2002; Kuperminc & Thomason, 2013), group programs also provide opportunities for student leaders to model positive social norms in a group setting and to develop sustained relationships between the mentees themselves. Schools implementing group programs should prepare for the increased behavioral issues that can come from a group setting (Karcher, 2013). To this end, coordinators of group programs

need to focus on group facilitation, team-building, and classroom management skills. Survey results suggest they also might consider adding a one-on-one component in addition to the regular group outreach format.

Program design. In terms of program design, schools also need to decide whether they are trying to reach specially-identified or entire groups of students (such as a full grade level). This again refers to the mission of each individual program. Those focused on tutoring or mediation naturally lend themselves to outreach for specially-identified students, while transition programs are more likely to involve an entire grade level. When making these decisions, schools should consider the total number of mentees as survey results indicate those with 400 or more students might be more challenging to implement.

Limitations

This study includes a few limitations. First, it relies on peer professionals to self-report their reflections. Respondents could be biased when describing their own program, or hold a perspective that is not widely shared by other constituencies in their community. Despite efforts to standardize responses, survey participants might also interpret the scale differently. Second, the coordinators themselves could serve as one of the biggest challenges to the success of a peer program, and that information would not be revealed in this research. Third, while this is one of the largest peer program studies to date in terms of the number of programs surveyed, several different types of programs are included in the sample population. While I tried to account for this by disaggregating the data into sub-categories, some of the smaller groupings may include too few participants to be meaningful. Further, a disproportionate number of survey respondents in this study came from one national organization thereby potentially skewing the results. While I tried to account for this by creating an additional data set excluding the national organization, it

could still be a factor in some of the disaggregated categories. Despite these limitations, the findings from this study include several important recommendations for practice and future inquiry.

Directions for Future Research

This study serves as an exploration into the strengths, challenges, and solutions for the implementation of school-based peer programs. Future studies can build on the knowledge established here in a number of different ways.

It would be beneficial to investigate whether a replicated study would result in comparable strength and challenge ratings for the respective survey descriptors. Additionally, how might a different group of coordinators rank the solutions generated by this study's participants? In order to further triangulate the data, researchers might also want to engage different constituencies (such as student leaders, mentees, or administrators) while using the same research questions. This could help clarify whether the program coordinators and experts in this study share similar perspectives to other populations involved in peer programs. It could also help determine whether any supplementary strengths or challenges should be added to this survey for future use.

Exploring some of the findings from this study in greater depth could also prove valuable. Regarding school support, what are the differences in outcomes for programs in which the coordinator(s) feels they have adequate support versus those in which they do not? Similarly, how do programs with co-coordinators differ from those that lack one? How might schools give additional support to coordinators within their first three years facilitating a peer program?

In terms of scheduling, what are the specific differences between programs with a designated class compared to those meeting as a club? Further, for programs functioning as a

club, are there any meaningful differences between potential meeting time slots (e.g., lunch, after school, homeroom, etc.) for either coordinators and student leaders, or student leaders and mentees? Is the frequency of meetings more important than the number of minutes met as this study appeared to indicate? How frequently and for how long do these meetings need to take place for a program to be effective?

Questions also arise regarding student leaders and mentees. What are some of the best practices for getting student leaders to follow through on their responsibilities, and how do schools respond when they do not? Does the number of participating student leaders or mentees impact program efficacy? What can we conclude regarding the differences between programs designed to reach elementary versus middle or high school mentees?

In regard to program structure, further research is needed about outreach format. What are the specific strength and challenge differences between programs that meet in a one-on-one, group, or a varied outreach format? Do programs designed to reach specially identified students, rather than programs designed to reach an entire group of mentees (such as an entire grade level), impact the achievement gap differently, and how do these programs evaluate their progress? How do strength and challenge ratings compare for programs with a different focus (e.g., peer tutoring vs. peer mediation), and, additionally, how might a standardized versus a flexible curriculum impact these ratings?

Lastly, questions about school context need further investigation. How do school size and socio-economic status of respective school communities impact the successes, challenges, and solutions for the implementation of peer programs?

Final Remarks

In this study a wide variety of program coordinators and peer experts reinforced the benefits of school-based peer programs, particularly when resources were sufficiently allocated to program coordinators, student leaders, school support, and program structure. Overall, peers provide a cost-effective way to reach a wide range of students with valuable academic and social/emotional services that foster school connectedness and positive youth development.

Despite the array of potential benefits, influence can go both ways, and just because a school has a peer program does not, by default, mean it is having a positive impact. Additional research is needed on the successes, challenges, and solutions for implementing school-based peer programs. Prior to launching a peer program, schools should consider following the five recommendations presented in this study. By doing so, they will empower peers to improve school culture and fulfill the goals of their respective peer programs.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

University of California Los Angeles
Study Information Sheet for Survey And Interviews

The Implementation of School-Based Peer Programs:
Successes, Challenges, and Solutions

Joshua Berger, from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you currently coordinate, or have previously coordinated, a peer program. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to provide data on best practices for implementing peer programs and addressing corresponding implementation challenges.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Take an online survey via Qualtrics.com about the strengths, challenges, and corresponding solutions for the peer program you coordinate.
- You will also have the option to participate in a one-on-one interview to further explore these topics. If you choose to participate in the interview, you will provide contact information at the end of the survey (though your information will only be used to arrange the interview and will not be associated with your survey responses).

How long will I be in the research study?

The survey will take about 15 minutes. The follow-up interview (for those participants who choose to participate) will last about 20 minutes.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?

- Participants will provide valuable knowledgeable regarding the best practices for the implementation of peer programs.

- Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the successes, challenges, and corresponding solutions of their own peer program(s).
- Participants will potentially influence the practice of other educators coordinating peer programs.

Will I be paid for participating?

- Survey participants can submit their name for a random drawing of one of three $50 Amazon.com gift cards. Participation in the study is not required in order to participate in the raffle.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms when writing up the results of the study and codes rather than names will be used on documents.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
- If you participate in the one-on-one interview process, the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. You will have the opportunity to view and edit the transcription.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?

- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the research, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact: Joshua Berger, the researcher, at jberger.ucla@gmail.com or [redacted], Dr. Eugene Tucker, Faculty Sponsor, [redacted], or Dr. Tyrone Howard, Faculty Sponsor, at [redacted]

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol for Experts (Pre-Survey)

Introduction: Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this study. Do I have your permission to record our conversation? I am going to ask you some questions about the strengths, challenges, and solutions for the implementation of peer programs.

Questions:
1. "I wanted to contact you because I know you have had a lot of experience working with [AND/OR RESEARCHING] peer programs. Just to get started, could you please briefly give me an overview of your experience with peer programs?"

2a. "Thinking about the best peer programs you have been involved with, or seen from the sidelines, what made these programs strong? What were some of their primary strengths? Please be specific."

2b. IF ANSWER TO 2A IS VAGUE, ASK A FOLLOW-UP PROBE FOR STORIES OR ANECDOTES THAT REPRESENT THESE STRENGTHS. "I'm wondering if you could share a specific example that illustrates the strengths you described."

3a. "We know that things don't always work out smoothly. Could you tell me about some of the challenges you have heard about or experienced with peer programs? Please be specific."

3b. IF ANSWER TO 3A IS VAGUE, ASK A FOLLOW-UP PROBE FOR STORIES OR ANECDOTES THAT REPRESENT THESE CHALLENGES. "I'm wondering if you could share a specific example that illustrates one or more of those challenges?"

4a. "You mentioned the challenge of __________. What solutions have you seen schools implement to address that challenge?" (LET THEM ANSWER). How successful was the solution in your opinion?" (REPEAT AS NECESSARY DEPENDING ON HOW MANY CHALLENGES THEY ARTICULATE).

4b. IF ANSWER TO 4a IS VAGUE, ASK A FOLLOW-UP PROBE FOR STORIES OR ANECDOTES THAT REPRESENT THESE SOLUTIONS. "I'm wondering if you could share specific example that illustrates one or more of those solutions?"

5. "In your experience, what are the key differences, if any, between one-on-one and group mentoring programs?"

6. "In your experience, what are the key differences, if any, between peer mentoring programs in affluent vs. low-income communities?"

7. “Is there anything else you can tell me about strengths, challenges, or solutions for the implementation of peer programs?”

8. “What are some of the most widely used high school peer programs that you are aware of?”

9. “Is there anybody else you recommend I speak with?”

APPENDIX C

Electronic Qualtrics.com Survey

Peer Program Survey

INTRODUCTION

I would greatly appreciate if you would please fill out this survey on the best practices for implementing peer programs. As the coordinator of a peer program, you have extremely valuable knowledge to share. The survey also provides a great opportunity to reflect on successes, challenges, and solutions for your own program(s). Your responses will be confidential and only reported in the aggregate. I am raffling off three $50 Amazon gift cards as a small token of appreciation for your taking approximately fifteen minutes to complete this survey. Participation in the study is not required in order to participate in the raffle. Please respond as accurately and honestly as you can as there are no desired responses; all perspectives are equally helpful for advancing the field. Also, please only fill out this survey once for each peer program you oversee. You may click on the following link to read more about this study: Berger's UCLA Study. Thank you very much for your time and energy in completing this survey.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this survey:

- The term **"student leader"** refers to the students **giving help** and includes names such as mentor, tutor, helper, teaching assistant, etc.

- The term **"mentee"** refers to the students **receiving help** and includes names such as tutee, helpee, etc.

- The term **"peer program"** includes peer transition, peer mentoring, peer tutoring, peer teaching, peer mediation, peer counseling, peer education, peer advocacy, and peer service-learning programs, etc.

I am currently the coordinator of a peer program, or I have previously been the coordinator of peer program within the last three years

- Yes
- No

Background Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Which of the following is the **primary focus** of your peer program?
(Please check only one response)

- A peer transition or peer mentoring program
- A peer tutoring or peer teaching program
- A peer mediation program
- A peer counseling program
- A peer education or peer advocacy program (one example could be drug and alcohol education)
- Other/Combination (please briefly explain in the following box)

In what grade(s) are your **student leaders** generally?
(Please check all that apply)

- 12th grade
- 11th grade
- 10th grade
- 9th grade

- 8th grade
- 7th grade
- 6th grade

Approximately how many **student leaders** are in your program per year?

- Less than 25 student leaders
- 26-50 student leaders
- 51-75 student leaders
- 76-100 student leaders
- More than 100 student leaders

In what grade(s) are your **student mentees** generally (the population being served)?
(Please check all that apply)

- 12th grade
- 11th grade
- 10th grade
- 9th grade
- 8th grade
- 7th grade
- 6th grade
- 5th grade
- 4th grade
- 3rd grade
- 2nd grade
- 1st grade

Approximately how many **student mentees** participate in your program per year?

- Less than 100 mentees
- 101-200 mentees
- 201-300 mentees
- 301-400 mentees
- More than 400 mentees

Is the program primarily designed to reach an **entire group of mentees** (such as an entire grade of students) or is it primarily designed to reach **specially identified students** who are in need of additional peer support (such as individual students who are referred by adults or request support themselves?)

- Designed to reach an entire group of mentees (such as an entire grade of students)
- Designed to reach specially identified students who are in need of additional peer support (individual students who are referred by adults or request support themselves)

On average, how frequently do your **student leaders** meet with their **mentees**?

- More than once per week
- Once per week

- Once every two weeks
- Once per month
- A few times per year
- Once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

When do **student leaders** and **mentees** generally meet together?

- During designated class time
- During homeroom or advisory
- During lunch or nutrition break
- After school during the week
- On the weekends
- It varies (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

When **student leaders** and **mentees** meet together, for how many minutes do they usually meet?

- 0-30
- 31-60
- 61-90
- 91-120
- 121 or longer
- It varies (feel fee to briefly explain in the following box)

When **student leaders** and **mentees** meet, do they usually do so in a one-on-one or group format?

- One-on-one
- In a group
- It varies (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

On average, what is the duration of your match (in months) between **student leaders** and **mentees**?

- 5 months or less
- 6 to 9 months
- 10 to 12 months
- More than 12 months

On average, how frequently do you, **the program coordinator**, meet with the **student leaders**?

- More than once per week
- Once per week
- Once every two weeks
- Once per month
- A few times per year

◯ Once per week at the beginning of the school year but significantly less frequently after that (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

When do you, **the program coordinator,** generally meet with **student leaders**?

◯ As part of a class that is dedicated to your program

◯ As part of a club that meets during lunch, nutrition break, or activities period

◯ As part of a club that meets after school

◯ We meet infrequently on an "as needed" basis

◯ Other (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

When you, **the program coordinator**, meet with **student leaders**, for how many minutes do you usually meet?

◯ 0-30

◯ 31-60

◯ 61-90

◯ 91-120

◯ More than 120 minutes

◯ It varies (feel free to briefly explain in the following box)

Is there an academic or elective class at your school in some way dedicated to your peer program?

◯ Yes

◯ No

How long have you been involved coordinating peer programs?

◯ 0-3 years

◯ 4-6 years

◯ 7-10 years

◯ More than ten years

How long has the peer program you are currently leading existed?

◯ 0-3 years

◯ 4-6 years

◯ 7-10 years

◯ More than ten years

◯ I don't know

Which description best represents your school?

◯ A public school that does not receive Title I funds

◯ A public school that receives Title I funds

◯ A charter school that does not receive Title I funds

- A charter school that receives Title I funds
- An independent school without a religious affiliation
- An independent school with a religious affiliation
- Other (feel free to explain in the box below)

Approximately how many students are in your school?

- Less than 500 students
- 501-1000 students
- 1001-1500 students
- 1501-2000 students
- More than 2000 students

In what state is your school located?

What is your **primary job** at your school?
(please check all that apply)

- Teacher
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Coach
- Other (please list in the following box)

Optional: I identify as:

- Male
- Female

Optional: I identify as:
(please check all that apply)

- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Latino(a) or Latino(a) American
- Native American
- Pacific Islander or Pacific Islander American
- White or European American
- Other

Program Strengths

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

In a typical year, **how much of a strength** is the following for your peer program, if at all?

("Major strength" is 6 or 5, "medium strength" is 4 or 3, "minor strength" is 2 or 1, and "not at all a strength" is 0. Please click on the appropriate button for each statement below).

	Major strength		Medium strength		Minor strength		Not at all a strength	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
The program **builds a sense of community and positively impacts school culture**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **provides valuable services** for students	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **raises awareness about important issues in the school and/or the broader surrounding community**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves school connectedness** for both student leaders and mentees (the extent to which students feel accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves peer relations** for both student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves academic development** for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
The program **enhances diversity and inclusion efforts on campus**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves communication skills** of student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves problem solving and decision making skills** for student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **improves conflict resolution skills** of student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **enhances self-esteem** for student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **decreases disciplinary issues** for student leaders and mentees (fewer disciplinary referrals, fights, etc.)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
The program strives to **decrease substance use** for both student leaders and mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program strives to **close the achievement gap**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **eases the transition into school** for mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program **decreases stress** for mentees	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Student leaders develop lifelong leadership skills through their participation in the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

In a typical year, **how much of a challenge** is the following for your peer program, if at all?

("Major challenge" is 6 or 5, "medium challenge" is 4 or 3, "minor challenge" is 2 or 1, and "not at all a challenge" is 0. Please click on the appropriate button for each statement below).

	Major challenge		Medium challenge		Minor challenge		Not at all a challenge	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
A lack of qualified **student leaders** apply to the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
A lack of interested **mentees** sign-up or get referred to the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The selection process for **student leaders**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to STUDENT LEADERS AND MENTEES

In a typical year, **how much of a challenge** is the following for your peer program, if at all?

("Major challenge" is 6 or 5, "medium challenge" is 4 or 3, "minor challenge" is 2 or 1, and "not at all a challenge" is 0. Please click on the appropriate button for each statement below).

	Major challenge		Medium challenge		Minor challenge		Not at all a challenge	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
Getting student leaders to **follow through on their responsibilities**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting student leaders to **set a good example**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting student leaders to **develop strong connections with mentees**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting student leaders to **use effective communication skills (active listening, non-verbal support, questioning, summarizing, etc.)**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting student leaders to **address inappropriate behavior of mentees** during the program meeting times	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Getting student leaders to **refer mentees to an adult when concerns over health or safety arise**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Disciplining student leaders when they violate program goals or values	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mentees do not find the program worthwhile	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mentees do not behave appropriately during meetings with student leaders	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Challenges Related to PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to PROGRAM STRUCTURE

In a typical year, **how much of a challenge** is the following for your peer program, if at all?

("Major challenge" is 6 or 5, "medium challenge" is 4 or 3, "minor challenge" is 2 or 1, and "not at all a challenge" is 0. Please click on the appropriate button for each statement below).

	Major challenge		Medium challenge		Minor challenge		Not at all a challenge	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A

The lack of clearly defined program goals that address important needs for your particular school	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of a meaningful program curriculum	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of appropriate facilities for training and/or outreach	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of meaningful professional training for program coordinator	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of an effective program evaluation and improvement plan	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The lack of an effective public relations plan to keep the school community informed about the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program is trying to accomplish too many different objectives	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The match process between student leader and mentee	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The program would struggle if you, the coordinator, ever left the school because **you are the only person who knows the details of the program**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Challenges Related to SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING

Challenges for Program Coordinators Related to SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING

In a typical year, **how much of a challenge** is the following for your peer program, if at all?

("Major challenge" is 6 or 5, "medium challenge" is 4 or 3, "minor challenge" is 2 or 1, and "not at all a challenge" is 0. Please click on the appropriate button for each statement below).

	Major challenge		Medium challenge		Minor challenge		Not at all a challenge	
	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	N/A
Other programs are **competing for student interest**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of **program funding**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of **support from faculty**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of **support from administration**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Not enough time to **meaningfully train student leaders**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Not enough time for **consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Not enough time **for program coordinator to plan, supervise, and evaluate program in addition to other school responsibilities**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Free Response Section

Almost done! Only the free response section is left. Thank you for taking time to contribute your expertise.

FREE RESPONSE

Based on your experience, please bullet point in the box below **one or two best practices/recommendations** regarding the **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS and/or the TRAINING OF STUDENT LEADERS**. You may choose to address topics related to the recruitment and selection of student leaders and mentees, and/or the training of student leaders to set a good example, connect with mentees, confer with adults over

health/safety concerns, etc. You may also discuss how you address student leaders when they violate program goals.

Based on your experience, please bullet point in the box below **one or two best practices/recommendations** regarding **PROGRAM STRUCTURE.** You may choose to address topics related to program goals, the match process between student leaders and mentees, curriculum, facilities, and/or program evaluation.

Based on your experience, please bullet point in the box below **one or two best practices/recommendations** regarding **SCHOOL SUPPORT AND SCHEDULING.** You may choose to address topics related to building support from administration and faculty, funding, scheduling time to train student leaders, scheduling time for student leaders and mentees to meet, and/or scheduling time to coordinate program logistics given your other school responsibilities.

Please list **one or two of the biggest challenges** for your program in the box below:

Please list **one or two areas** for which you would like **additional training** in the box below:

Are you interested in entering the raffle?
(Three participants will be randomly selected, and each will receive a $50 Amazon gift card)

- Yes
- No

Are you interested in participating in a 20 minute one-on-one phone interview about best practices for the implementation of peer programs? Your confidential participation could influence other educators and give you a further chance to reflect on your own program.
(Sixteen participants will be selected for follow-up phone interviews, and each will receive a $25 Amazon gift card)

- Yes
- No

I am asking for the information below so I may contact you in case you win the raffle, or in case you agreed to be contacted for a follow-up phone interview. All information will be kept confidential.

Optional: Please list your name

Optional: Please list your e-mail address

Optional: Please list your phone number

Optional: What is the best way to reach you?

CONCLUSION

LAST QUESTION

Optional: Please list any additional comments or feedback below:

APPENDIX D

Survey Recruitment Email

Subject: Peer Programs Survey and Raffle (feedback requested)

Dear Peer Program Coordinators,

I hope this e-mail finds you well! Below is a link to a survey created by Josh Berger, a graduate student at UCLA. He is researching best practices for the implementation of peer programs in schools. As a current or prior program coordinator, your knowledge is invaluable and can positively impact additional educators and students. The survey also provides a great opportunity to reflect on successes, challenges, and solutions for your own programs. All responses will be kept confidential and only reported in the aggregate.

At the end of this survey, you have the option to submit your name for a random drawing of three $50 Amazon gift cards. Participation in the study is not required in order to participate in the raffle. Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact Josh at jberger.ucla@gmail.com or [redacted]

Kind regards,
BLANK
Contact Information

REFERENCES

Acquilino, W. S. (1994). Interview mode effects in surveys of drug and alcohol use: A field Experiment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *58(2)*, 210-240.

Albee, G. (1959). Mental health manpower trends. *Joint Commission of Mental Illness and Health, Monograph Series No. 3*. New York: Basic Books.

Andrews, F. M. (1984). Construct validity and error components of survey measures: A structural modelling approach. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *48(2)*, 409-422.

Angaran, S., & Beckwith K. (1999). Peer mediation in elementary schools. *Principal, 78,* 27-29.

Anticoli, D. J. (1997). School violence intervention: The role of peer mediation in diminishing disputant recidivism. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 79-03A, 0651.

Attili, G. (1990). Successful and disconfirmed children in the peer group: Indices of social competence within an evolutionary perspective. *Human Development, 33,* 238-249.

Balcazar, F. E., & Keys, C.B. (2013). Goals in mentoring relationships. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 83-98). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Baltes, P. B., Lindenberger, U., & Staudinger, U. M. (1998). Life-span theory in developmental psychology. In W. Damon (Series Ed.) & R. M. Lerner (Vol. Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 1: Theoretical Models of Human Development* (5th ed.), (pp. 1029-1144). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Beam, M. R., Chen, C., & Greenberger, E. (2002). The nature of adolescents' relationships with their "very important" nonparental adults. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *30*(2), 305–325.

Belson, W. A. (1981). *The Design and Understanding of Survey Questions*. Aldershot, UK: Gower.

Benson, P. L. (1990). *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th – 12th Grade Youth*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Sesma, A., Jr. (2006). Positive youth development: Theory, research and applications. In W. Damon & R. Lerner (Eds.) *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 1: Theoretical Models of Human Development* (6th ed.) (pp. 894-941). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Bernstein, L., Rappaport, C. D., Olsho, L., Hunt, D., & Levin, M. (2009). *Impact Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring Program: Final Report*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (2009). *Analysis of Responses to Agency Practices Survey for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's Community-Based Mentoring Program*. [Unpublished manuscript].

Birman, D., & Morland, L. (2013). Immigrant and refugee youth. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 355-368). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Black, D. R., Foster, E., & Tindall, J. (2012). *Evaluation of Peer and Prevention Programs: A Blueprint for Successful Design and Implementation*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Blinn-Pike, L. (2007). The benefits associated with youth mentoring relationships. In T. D. Allen & L. T. Eby (Eds.), *The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring: A Multiple Perspective Approach,* (pp. 165–187). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Blum, R. W. (2003). Positive youth development: A strategy for improving health. In F. Jacobs, D. Wertlieb, & R. M. Lerner (Vol. Eds.), *Enhancing the Life Chances of Youth and Families: Public Service Systems and Public Policy Perspectives: Vol. 2. Handbook of Applied Developmental Science: Promoting Positive Child, Adolescent, and Family Development Through Research, Policies, and Programs,* (pp. 237-252). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bond, L., Butler, H., Thomas, L., Carlin, J., Glover, S., Bowes, G., & Patton, G. (2007). Social and school connectedness in early secondary school as predictors of late teenage substance use, mental health, and academic outcomes. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 40*, 357.e359–357.e318. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17367730

Boyle, P. (2009, May 8). Obama budget cuts some youth programs, grows others: Mentoring, abstinence ed and juvenile justice lose, AmeriCorps wins, after school gets a tie. *Youth Today*. Retrieved from http://www.youthtoday.org

Boyle, P. (2007, January 1). The study that ignited (or diluted) mentoring: How the "Big Brothers" report became the most influential, most useful and most misused evaluation in youth work. *Youth Today*. Retrieved from http://www.youthtoday.org

Bronfenbrenner, U. (Ed.). (2005). *Making Human Beings Human: Bioecological Perspectives on Human Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brown, B. B., Bakken, J. P., Ameringer, S. W., & Mahon, S. D. (2008). A comprehensive conceptualization of the peer influence process in adolescence. In M. Prinstein & K. Dodge (Eds.), *Understanding Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents,* (pp. 17-44). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Buhrmester, D. (1990). Intimacy of friendship, interpersonal competence, and adjustment during preadolescence and adolescence. *Child Development, 61*, 1101-1111.

Butler, S. M., Hartzell, R. M., Przybyla, S., & Bickers Bock, L. B., (2006). Moving beyond peer education: Using peer advocates to increase condom availability on college campuses. *Perspectives in Peer Programs, 20,* 40-45.

Cappella, E., & Weinstein, R. S. (2001). Turning around reading achievement: Predictors of high school students' academic resilience. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *93*(4), 758–771.

Carkhuff, R.R. (2000). *The Art of Helping, Student Workbook.* Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press.

Catalano, R., Berglund, M. L., Ryan, J. A. M., Lonczak, H., & Hawkins, J. D. (2007). *Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs.* Seattle, WA: Social Development Research Group, University of Washington. Retrieved from http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/PositiveYouthDeve99/execsum.htm

Catania, J. A., Gibson, D., Chitwood, D., & Coates, T. (1990). Methodological problems in AIDS behavioral research: Influences on measurement error and participation bias in studies of sexual behavior. *Psychological Bulletin*, *108*(3), 339-362.

Cavell, T. A. (2012). *Teen Mentoring: Findings from Three Studies.* Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada National Convention, BMO.

Cavell, T. A., & Elledge, L. C. (2013). Mentoring and prevention science. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 29-42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015) *Injury Prevention and Control: Motor Vehicle Safety. Teen Drivers: Get the Facts*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Teen_ Drivers/teendrivers_factsheet.html

Chapman, R. L., Buckley, L., Sheehan, M. C., Shochet, I. M., & Romaniuk, M. (2011). The impact of school connectedness on violent behavior, transport risk-taking behavior, and associated injuries in adolescence. *Journal of School Psychology, 49*(4), 399–410.

Cohen, G. L., & Prinstein, M. J. (2006). Peer contagion of aggression and health-risk behavior among adolescent males: An experimental investigation of effects on public conduct and private attitudes. *Child Development, 77,* 967-983.

Coie, J. D., Watt, N. F., West, S. G., Hawkins, D., Asarnow, J. R., Markman, H. J., … Long, B. (1993). The science of prevention: A conceptual framework and some directions for a national research program. *American Psychologist, 48*, 1013– 1022. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1037 /0003-066X.48.10.1013

Converse, N. & Lignugaris/Kraft, B. (2009). Evaluation of a school-based mentoring program for at-risk middle school youth. *Remedial and Special Education, 30*, 33–46. http://dx. doi.org/10.1177/0741932507314023

Cooper, C. R., Jackson, J. F., Azmitia, M., Lopez, E. M., & Dunbar, N. (1995). Bridging students' multiple worlds: African American and Latino youth in academic outreach programs. In R. F. Macias & R G. Garcia Ramos (Eds.), *Changing Schools for Changing Students: An Anthology of Research on Language Minorities,* (pp. 211–234). Santa Barbara, CA: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Crandall, J. E. (1991). A scale for social interest. *Individual Psychology: Journal of Adlerian Theory, Research & Practice, 47 (Special Issue: Social Interest),* 106-114.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crooks, C. V., Chiodo, D., Thomas, D., & Hughes, R. (2010). Strengths-based programming for First Nations youth in schools: Building engagement through healthy relationships and leadership skills. *International Journal of Mental Health Addiction, 8*, 160–173.

Darling, N., Hamilton, S. F., & Shaver, K. H. (2003). Relationships outside the family: Unrelated adults. In G. R. Adams & M. D. Berzonsky (Eds.), *Blackwell Handbook of Adolescents* (pp. 349-370). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Denham, S., & Kochanoff, A. T. (2002). Parental contributions to preschoolers' understanding of emotion. *Marriage & Family Review, 34*, 311–343. DOI:10.1300/J002v34n03_06

DeVellis, R. F. (2012). *Scale Development: Theory and Application* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dies, K. (2000). Adolescent development and a model of group psychotherapy: Effective leadership in the new millennium. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy*, Vol. 10, 97–111. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1009426722846

Dillman, D. A., & Redline, C. D. (2004). Testing self-administered questionnaires; Cognitive interview and field test comparison. In S. Presser, J. N. Rothgeb, M. P. Couper, J. T. Lessler, E. Martin, J. Martin, et al. (Eds.), *Methods for Testing and Evaluating Survey Questionnaires,* (pp. 299-318). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D & Christian, L. N. (2008). *Internet Mail, and Mixed Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Dillman, D. A., & Tarnai, J. (1991). Mode effects of cognitively designed recall questions: A comparison of answers to telephone and mail surveys. In P. N. Biemer, R. M. Corres, L. E. Lyberg, M. A. Mathiowetz, & S. Sudman (Eds.), *Measurement Errors in Surveys,* (pp. 367-393). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Dishion, T. J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 54, 755–764. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.54.9.755

Dishon, T. J., Poulin, F., & Burraston, B. (2001). Peer group dynamics associated with iatrogenic effects in group interventions with high-risk young adolescent. In C. Erdley & D. W. Nangle (Eds.), *Damon's New Directions in Child Development: The Role of Friendship in Psychological Adjustment,* (pp. 79-92). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dodge, K. A., Dishion, T. J., & Lansford, J. E. (2006). Deviant peer influences in intervention and public policy for youth. *Social Policy Report, 20*(1), 3–18.

Dornbusch, S., Erickson, K., Laird, J., & Wong, C. (2001). The relation of family and school attachment to adolescent deviancy in diverse groups and communities. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 16*, 396–422.

Downey, G., Lebolt, A., Rincon, C., & Freitas, A. L. (1998). Rejection sensitivity and children's interpersonal difficulties. *Child Development, 4*, 1074–1091.

DuBois, D. L., Doolittle, F., Yates, B. T., Silverthorn, N., & Tebes, J. K. (2006). Research methodology and youth mentoring. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 657–676. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.2012

DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs: A meta-analytical review. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*, 157–197. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1014628810714

DuBois, D.L. & Karcher, M.J. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DuBois, D.L. & Karcher, M.J. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*, (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DuBois, D. L. & Karcher, M. J. (Eds.). (2013). Youth mentoring in the 21st century: Progress and prospects. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Eds.), (pp. 525-534), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

DuBois, D. L., Neville, H. A., Parra, G. R., & Pugh-Lilly, A. O. (2002). Testing a new model of mentoring. In G. G. Noam & J. E. Rhodes (Eds.), *A Critical View of Youth Mentoring, New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Practice, 93*, 21–57). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

DuBois, D. L., & Neville, H. A. (1997). Youth mentoring: Investigation of relationship characteristics and perceived benefits. *Journal of Community Psychology, 25*, 227–234.

DuBois, D. L., Portillo, N., Rhodes, J. E, Silverthorn, N., & Valentine, J. D. (2011). How effective are mentoring programs for youth? A systematic assessment of the evidence. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 12*, 57-91.

DuBois, D. L., & Silverthorn, N. (2005). Natural mentoring relationships and adolescent health: Evidence from a national study. *American Journal of Public Health, 95*, 518–524. http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2003.031476

Dynarski, M., & Gleason, P. (2002). How can we help? What we have learned from recent federal dropout prevention evaluations. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *7*(1), 43–69. doi:10.1207/S15327671ESPR0701_4

Eby, L. T., Allen, T. D., Evans, S. C., Ng, T., & DuBois, D. L. (2008). Does mentoring matter? A multidisciplinary meta-analysis comparing mentored and nonmentored individuals. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 72*, 254–267. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.04.005

Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 14, 10–43. http:// dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558499141003

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Eggert, L., & Kumpfer, K. L. (1997). *Drug Abuse Prevention for At-Risk Individuals.* Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Elder, G. H., Jr. (1998). The life course and human development. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology: Vol. 1, Theoretical Models of Human Development* (5th ed.), (pp. 939-991). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Finn, P. (1981). Institutionalizing peer education in the health education classroom. *Journal of School Health, 51,* 91-95.

Fisher, C. B. (2003). *Decoding the Ethics Code: A Practical Guide for Psychologists.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flay, B. (1985). Are social-psychological prevention programs effective? The Waterloo study. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 8,* 37-59.

Forneris, T., Danish, S., & Scott, D. (2007). Setting goals, solving problems, and seeking social support: Developing adolescents' abilities through a life skills program. *Adolescence, 42,* 103-114.

Forouzesh, M., Grant, K., & Donnelly, M. (2001). *California Association of Peer Programs: Comprehensive Evaluation of Peer Programs.* Pasadena, CA: California Association of Peer Programs.

Foster, E. (1991). A case for emotional development through elementary peer helping programs. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 8*(4), 17-20.

Fowler, F. J. (2014). *Survey Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fowler, F. J. (1995). *Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fowler, F. J. (1992). How unclear terms affect survey data. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *56* (2), 218-231.

Gallagher, P. M., Fowler, F. J., & Stringfellow, V. (2005). The nature of nonresponse in a Medicaid survey: Causes and consequences. *Journal of Official Statistics, 21*(1), 73-87.

Ginsberg-Block, M. D., Rohrbeck, C. A., & Fantuzzo, J. W. (2006). A meta-analytical review of social, self-concept, and behavioral outcomes of Peer Assisted Learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 98*, 732-749.

Goodenow, C. (1993). The psychological sense of school membership among adolescents: scale development and educational correlates. *Psychology in the Schools, 30*, 79–90.

Gottlieb, G. (1997). *Synthesizing Nature-Nurture: Prenatal Roots of Instinctive Behavior.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Griffith, M., Sawrikar, P., & Muir, K. (2009). Culturally appropriate mentoring for Horn of Africa young people in Australia. *Youth Studies Australia*, vol. 28, 32–40.

Grossman, J. B. (2005). Evaluating mentor programs. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring,* (pp. 251–265). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412976664

Grossman, J. B. & Rhodes, J. E. (2002). The test of time: Predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*, 199–219. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1014680827552

Hamilton, M. A., & Hamilton, S. F. (2013). Work and service-learning. In D. L. DuBois & M. J. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 291–300). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hartup, W. (1989). Social relationships and their developmental significance. *American Psychologist, 44,* 120-126.

Heberlein, T. & Baumgartner, R. (1978). Factors affecting response rates to mailed questionnaires: A quantitative analysis of the published literature. *American Sociological Review, 43*, 447-462.

Herrera, C., Grossman, J., Kauh, T. J., Feldman, A. F., McMaken, J., & Jucovy, L. Z. (2007). *Making a Difference in School: The Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Herrera, C., & Karcher, M. (2013). School-based mentoring. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 203-220). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Herrera, C., Kauh, T. J., Cooney, S. M., Grossman, J. B., & McMaken, J. (2008). *High School Students as Mentors: Findings from the Big Brothers Big Sisters School-Based Mentoring Impact Study*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Herrera, C., Vang, Z., & Gale, L. (2002). Group mentoring: A study of mentoring groups in three programs. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures. Retrieved from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications.asp?section_id=22

Hirsch, B. J. (2005). *A Place to Call Home: After-school Programs for Urban Youth*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association; Teachers College Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/11087-000

Hughes, C., & Carter, E. W. (2008). *Peer Buddy Programs for Successful Secondary School Inclusion*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Hughes, J. N., Cavell, T. A., Meehan, B., Zhang, D., & Collie, C. (2005). Adverse school context moderates the outcomes of two selective intervention programs for aggressive children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 73*, 731–736. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.73.4.731

Hunter, D. (2003). A case for peer education: An essential strategy for alcohol abuse prevention and other student health and safety initiatives. *The Peer Educator*, 4-10.

Jackson, T. (1995). *More Activities that Teach.* Cedar City, UT: Red Rock Publishing.

Jackson, T. (1993). *Activities that Teach.* Cedar City, UT: Red Rock Publishing.

Jackson, T. (2005). *Still More Activities that Teach.* Cedar City, UT: Red Rock Publishing.

Jobber, D. (1984). Response bias in mail surveys: Further evidence. *Psychological Reports, 54,* 981-984.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1987). Research shows the benefits of adult cooperation. *Education Leadership, 5,* 27-30.

Johnson, V. L., Simon, P., & Mun, E.-Y. (2013). A peer-led high school transition program increases graduation rates among Latino males. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *107*(3), 186–196. http://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2013.788991

Jucovy, L. (2002). *Same and Cross-Race Matching*. Northwest Educational Regional Library. Retrieved from http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/26_publication.pdf

Karcher, M. J. (2013). Cross-age peer mentoring. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp.233-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Karcher, M. J. (2012). *The Cross-Age Mentoring Program (CAMP) for Children with Adolescent Mentors: Program Manual*. San Antonio, TX: Developmental Press.

Karcher, M. J. (2009). Increases in academic connectedness and self-esteem among high school students who serve as cross-age peer mentors. *Professional School Counseling, 12*(4), 292–299.

Karcher, M. J. (2008). The Cross-Age Mentoring Program (CAMP): A developmental intervention for promoting students' connectedness across grade levels. *Professional School Counseling, 12(2)*, 137–143. http://dx.doi.org/10.5330/ PSC.n.2010-12.137

Karcher, M. J. (2005). The effects of school-based developmental mentoring and mentors' attendance on mentees' self-esteem, behavior, and connectedness. *Psychology in the Schools, 42*, 65–77. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pits.20025

Karcher, M. J., Davidson, A. J., Rhodes, J. E., & Herrera, C. (2010). Pygmalion in the program: The role of teenage peer mentors' attitudes in shaping their mentees' outcomes. *Applied Developmental Science, 14*, 212–227. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2010.516188

Karcher, M. J., & Hansen, K. (2013). Mentoring activities and interactions. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 63-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Karcher, M. J., Herrera, C., & Hansen, K. (2010). "I dunno, what do you wanna do?": Testing a framework to guide mentor training and activity selection. *New Directions for Youth Development, 126*, 51–69.

Karcher, M. J., Kuperminc, G., Portwood, S., Sipe, S., & Taylor, A. (2006). Mentoring programs: A framework to inform program development, research, and evaluation. *Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 34 , pp. 709–725. http://dx.doi.org/10. 1002/jcop.20125

Karcher, M. J., & Lindwall, J. (2003). Social interest, connectedness, and challenging experiences. What makes high school mentors persist? *Journal of Individual Psychology, 59*, 293–315.

Karcher, M. J., Nakkula, M. J., & Harris, J. T. (2005). Developmental mentoring match characteristics: Correspondence between mentors' and mentees' assessments of relationship quality. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 26*, 93–110. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1007/s10935-005-1847-x

Kazdin, A. E., Kraemer, H. C., Kessler, R. C., Kupfer, D. J., & Offord, D. R. (1997). Contributions of risk-factor research to developmental psychopathology. *Clinical Psychology Review, 17*, 375-406. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0272-7358%28 97%2900012-3

Kia-Keating, M., & Ellis, H. (2007). Belonging and connection to school in resettlement: Young refugees, school belonging, and psychosocial adjustment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 12*, 29–43. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1359104507071052

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health, 74*, 262– 273. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.x

Klepp-Knut, I., Halper, A., & Perry, C. (1986). The efficacy of peer leaders in drug abuse prevention. *Journal of Social Health, 56,* 407-411.

Klyver, N. (1983). Peer counseling for police personnel: A dynamic program in the Los Angeles Police Department. *The Police Chief, 50,* 66-68.

Kohn, A. (1991). Caring kids: The role of the schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72,* 496-506.

Kuperminc, G. P., & Tohason, J. D. (2013). Group mentoring. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 273-290). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kupersmidt, J. B., & Rhodes, J. E. (2013). Mentor training. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 439-456). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Larose, S., & Roy, R. (1995). Test of Reactions and Adaptation in College (TRAC): A new measure of learning propensity for college students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 87*, 293–306. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.87.2.293

Larose, S., & Tarabulsy, G. M. (2013). Academically at-risk students. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 303-314). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Larose, S., & Tarabulsy, G. M. (2005). Academically at-risk students. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (pp. 440–453). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412976664

Latham, A. S. (1998). The promise of peer counseling programs: A response to Black, Sciacca, Tobler, and Coster. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 15,* 86-87.

Lerner, R. M. (2004). *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. Theokas, C., Naudeau, S., Gestsdottir, S., . . . von Eye, A. (2005). Positive youth development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of positive youth development. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 25*(1), 17-71.

Lerner, R. M., Napolitano, C. M., Boyd, M. J., Mueller, M. K., & Callina, K. S. (2013). Mentoring and positive youth development. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 17-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lewis, M. X., & Lewis, A. C. (1998). Peer helping programs: Helper role, supervisor training, and suicidal behavior. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 15,* 64-75.

Liang, B., Spencer, R., Brogan, D., & Corral, M. (2008). Mentoring relationships from early adolescence through emerging adulthood: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 72*, 168–182. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2007.11.005

Lindsay-Dennis, L. A., Cummings, L., & McClendon, S. C. (2011). Mentors' reflections on developing a culturally responsive mentoring initiative for urban African American girls. *Black Women, Gender & Families*, vol. 5 (no. 2), 66–92. http://dx.doi.org/10.5406/blacwomegendfami.5.2.0066

Loukas, A. & Pasch, (2013). Does school connectedness buffer the impact of peer victimization on early adolescents' subsequent adjustment problems? *The Journal of Early Adolescence,* 33(2):245–266.

Loukas, A., Ripperger-Suhler, K. G., & Horton, K. D. (2009). Examining bidirectional relations between school connectedness and early adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 38*, 804-812.

McCord, J. (2003). Cures that harm: Unanticipated outcomes of crime prevention programs. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 587*, 16–30.

McLellan, L., Rissel, C., Donnelly, N., & Bauman, A. (1999). Health behaviour and the school environment in New South Wales, Australia. *Social Science & Medicine, 49*, 611–619.

MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership. (2009). *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: MENTOR. Retrieved from http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/elements_of_ effective_practice/

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Monahan, K., Oesterle, S., & Hawkins, J. D. (2010). Predictors and consequences of school connectedness: The case for prevention. *The Prevention Researcher, 17(3)*, 3–6.

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

Mrazek, P. J., & Haggerty, R. J. (Eds.) (1994). *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventative Intervention Research*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Myrick, R. D., & Bowman, R. P. (1981). *Children Helping Children: Teaching Students to Become Friendly Helpers*. Minneapolis, MN: Educational Media.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285,* 2094-2100.

O'Hara, D. (2011). The impact of peer mentoring on pupils' emotional literacy competencies. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 27*(3), 271–291.

Oksenberg, L., Cannell, C. F., & Kalton, G. (1991). New strategies for testing survey questions. *Journal of Official Statistics,7*, 349-365.

Perry, C., Klepp, K., Halper, A., Hawkins, K. G., & Murray, D. (1986). A process evaluation study of peer leaders in health education. *Journal of School Health, 56*(2)*,* 62-67.

Pianta, R. C., Stuhlman, M. W., & Hamre, B. K. (2002). How schools can do better: Fostering stronger connections between teachers and students. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice, Research, 93*, 91–107.

Prinstein, M.J. & Cillessen, A.H.N. (2003). Forms and functions of adolescent peer aggression associated with high levels of peer status. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly,* 49, 310-342.

Prinstein, M. J., & Dodge, K. A. (2008). *Understanding Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Pryce, J., Kelly, M. S., & Guidone, S. R., (2013). Mentor and youth matching. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.), (pp. 427-438). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Protection of Human Subjects. 45 C.F.R. § 46.101. (2005).

Rhodes, J. E. (2005). A model of youth mentoring. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring,* (pp. 30–43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412976664

Rhodes, J. E. (2004). *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rhodes, J. E.(2002). Group mentoring. Research Corner on the website of MENTOR. Retrieved from http://www.mentoring.org/access_research/group/

Rhodes, J. E. (1994). Older and wiser: Mentoring relationships in childhood and adolescence. *Journal of Primary Prevention, 14*(3), 187–196.

Rhodes, J. E., & DuBois, D. (2008). Mentoring relationships and programs for youth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 17*, 254–258. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00585.x

Rhodes, J. E., & DuBois, D. L. (2006). Social policy report: Giving child and youth development knowledge away. *Society for Research in Child Development, 10*, 3–19.

Rhodes, J. E., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. L. (2000). Agents of change: Pathways through which mentoring relationships influence adolescents' academic adjustment. *Child Development, 71*, 1662–1671. http:// dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00256

Rhodes, J. E., Liang, B., & Spencer, R. (2013). Ethical issues in youth mentoring. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rhodes, J. E., & Roffman, J. G. (2003). Nonparental adults as asset builders in the lives of youth. In R. M. Lerner & P. L. Benson (Eds.), *Developmental Assets and Asset-Building Communities: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice,* (pp. 195-209). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Richman, J. M., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Bowen, G. L. (1998). Social support for adolescents at risk of school failure. *Social Work, 43*, 309–323. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/sw/43.4.309

Richmond, L. (2000). Reflections on a thirty five-year experience with adolescent group psychotherapy. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy*, vol. 10, 110–118. http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1009478706917

Roehlkepartain, E. (1996). Rebuilding community: A vision for peer helping. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 13*(3), 12-19.

Rohrbeck, C. A., Ginsburg-Block, M., Fantuzzo, J. W., Miller, T. R. (2003). Peer-assisted learning interventions with elementary school students: A meta-analytical review. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95,* 240-257.

Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). What is a youth development program? Identification and defining principles. In. F. Jacobs, D. Wertlieb, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Enhancing the Life Chances of Youth and Families: Public Service Systems and Public Policy Perspectives: Vol. 2. Handbook of Applied Developmental Science: Promoting Positive Child, Adolescent, and Family Development through Research, Policies, and Programs,* (pp. 197-223). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roth, J. L., Brooks-Gunn, J., Murray, L., & Foster, W. (1998). Promoting healthy adolescents: Synthesis of youth development program evaluations. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 8*, 423-459.

Rumberger, R.W. (2011). *Dropping Out: Why Students Drop Out of High School and What Can Be Done About It.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Salmon, S. (1992). *Peer Mediation*. Presentation at National Peer Helpers Association, Chicago.

Sánchez, B., Colon-Torres, Y., Feuer, R., Roundfield, K., & Berardi, L. (2013). Race, ethnicity, and culture in mentoring relationships. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring,* (2nd ed.), (pp. 145-158). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sánchez, B., & DuBois, D. L. (2006). *Cultural Sensitivity Mentee Measure.* (Unpublished manuscript).

Saris, W., Revilla, M., Krosnick, J. A., & Scaeffer, E. (2010). Comparing questions with agree/disagree response options to questions with item-specific response options. *Methods Survey Research, 4*(1), 61-79.

Schippers, M. (2008). Doing difference/doing power: Negotiations of race and gender in a mentoring program. *Symbolic Interaction, 31*, 77–98. http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/si. 2008.31.1.77

Schuman, H., & Presser, S. (1981*) Question and Answers in Attitude Surveys*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Shadduck-Hernandez, J. (2006). Here I am now! Critical ethnography and community service-learning with immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and youth. *Ethnography and Education, 1*, 67–86. http:// dx.doi.org/10.1080/17457820500512804

Shaver, P. R., Mikulincer, M., Leary, M. R., & Hoyle, R. H. (2009). Attachment theory and attachment styles. In R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior,* (pp. 62–81). New York: Guilford Press**.**

Sherk, J. (2006). *Designing and Implementing a Group Mentoring Program*. Santa Rosa, CA: Center for Applied Research Solutions. Retrieved from http://www.carsmentoring.org/ publications/index.php?category_id=34

Shochet, I. M., Dadds, M. R., Ham, D., & Montague, R. (2006). School connectedness is an underemphasized parameter in adolescent mental health: Results of a community prediction study. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 35*(2*)*, 170-179.

Shochet, I. M., Smyth, T., & Homel, R. (2007). The impact of parental attachment on adolescent perception of the school environment and school connectedness. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 28*(2), 109–118.

Shotton, H. J., Oosahwe, E. S. L., & Cintrón, R. (2007). Stories of success: Experiences of American Indian students in a peer-mentoring retention program. *Review of Higher Education, 31*, 81–107. http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2007.0060

Sipe, C. L. & Roder, L. E. (1999). *Mentoring in School-Age Children: A Classification of Programs*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Spencer, R. (2007). "It's not what I expected": A qualitative study of youth mentoring relationship failures. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 22*(4), 331–354.

Spencer, R. (2006). Understanding the mentoring process between adolescents and adults. *Youth Society, 37*, 287–315. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0743558405278263

Spencer, R., Basualdo-Delmonico, A., & Lewis, T. O. (2011). Working to make it work: The role of parents in the youth mentoring process. *Journal of Community Psychology, 39*, 51–59. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20416

Sprinthall, N. A., & Blum, R. (1980). *Promoting Social and Psychological Development for Mainstream Classes: Peer and Cross-Age Teaching in the Social Environment of the Schools.* Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Steinman, A. H. K. (2006). Peer-mentoring for newcomer immigrant students (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.

Strasburger, V. (2007). *Teen Pregnancy Rates in the USA*. Retrieved from http://www.coolnurse.com/teen_pregnancy_rates.htm

Suarez-Orozco, C., Rhodes, J., & Milburn, M. (2009). Unraveling the immigrant paradox: Academic engagement and disengagement among recently arrived immigrant youth. *Youth & Society, 41*, 151–185. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0044118X09333647

Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. M. (1982*). Asking Questions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sue, S. (2006). Cultural competency: From philosophy to research and practice. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 237–245. doi:10.1002/jcop.20095

Tanur, J. (Ed.) (1991). *Questions about Questions: Inquiries into the Cognitive Bases of Surveys*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Taylor, S. J. & Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

Tindall, J. (2007). *Suicide Prevention and Intervention*. Speech at national Job Corps Health and Wellness Conference, Denver CO.

Tindall, J. (2006). *Evaluation of the Peer Resource Program in Kansas City, Mo*. End of the Year Report to Safe and Drug Free Schools and Community Office.

Tindall, J. A. & Black, D. (2008). *Peer Programs: An In-Depth Look at Peer Programs: Planning, Implementation, and Administration* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Tindall, J., Taylor, L., & Williams, L. (2003). NOYS Florida partnership program evaluation. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 19,* 86-88.

Tobler, N. (1986). Meta-analysis of 1,433 adolescent drug prevention programs: Quantitative outcome results of program participants compared to a control or comparison group. *Journal of Drug Issues, 16,* 537-567.

Tourangeau, R., Rips, L., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The Psychology of Survey Response.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tourangeau, R., & Smith, T. W. (1998). Collecting sensitive data with different modes of data collection. In M. P. Couper, R. P. Baker, J. Bethlehem, C. Clark, J. Martin, W. L. Nicholls II, (Eds.), *Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection,* (pp. 431-453). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Trickett, E. J., Barone, C., & Buchanan, R. M. (1996). Elaborating developmental contextualism in adolescent research and intervention: Paradigm contributions from community psychology. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 6*, 245-269.

Trickett, E. J. & Birman, D. (1989). Taking ecology seriously: A community development approach to individually based preventive intervention in schools. In B. Compas & L. Bond (Eds.), *Primary Prevention in the Schools,* (pp. 361–390). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Turner, C. F., Forsyth, D. H., O'Reilly, J., Cooley, P. C., Smith, T. K., Rogers, S. M. et al. (1998). Automated self-interviewing and the survey measurement of sensitive behaviors. In M. P. Couper, R. P. Baker, J. Bethlehem, C. Clark, J. Martin, W. L. Nicholls II, (Eds). *Computer-Assisted Survey Information Collection,* (pp. 455-473). New York, NY: John Wiley.

Tyler, J. H., & Lofstrom, M. (2009). Finishing high school: Alternative pathways and dropout recovery. *The Future of Children*, 19, 77–103. DOI:10.1353/foc.0.0019

Utsey, S. O., Howard, A., & Williams, O., III (2003). Therapeutic group mentoring with African American male adolescents. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, vol. 25, 126–139.

Valente, T. W., Ritt-Olsen, A., Stacy, A., Unger, J. B., Okamoto, J., & Sussman, S. (2007). Peer acceleration: Effects of a social network tailored substance abuse prevention program among high-risk adolescents. *Addiction, 102,* 1804-1815.

Viadero, D. (2007). Peer tutoring potential to boost IQ intrigues educators. *Education Week*, 27(b), 13. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/10/03/06peertutor.h27.html?tmp=31563036

Wang, Y., Davidson, M. M., Yakushko, O. F., Savoy, H. B., Tan, J. A., & Bleier, J. K. (2003). The scale of ethnocultural empathy: Development, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 50*, 221–234. DOI:10.1037/0022-0167.50.2.221

Weinberger, S. G. (2013). Program funding. In D. DuBois & M. Karcher (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring,* (2nd ed.), (pp. 385-396). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wentzel, K. R. (1998). Social relationships and motivation in middle school: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*(2), 202–209.

Wentzel, K. R., Battle, A., Russell, S. L., & Looney, L. B. (2010). Social supports from teachers and peers as predictors of academic and social motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 35*, 193–202.

Wheeler, M. & DuBois, D. (2009). Analysis of responses to agency practices survey for Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's community-based mentoring program. Philadelphia: Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412996907.n30

Wheeler, M. E., Keller, T. E., & DuBois, D. L. (2010). Review of three recent randomized trials of school-based mentoring: Making sense of mixed findings. *SRCD Social Policy Report, 24* (3). Retrieved from http://www.srcd.org

Whiting, M. A., & Mallory, J. E. (2007). A longitudinal study to determine the effects of mentoring on middle school youngsters by nursing and other college students. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 20*, 197–208. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6171.2007.00119.x

Whitlock, J. (2004). *Places to Be and Places to Belong: Youth Connectedness in School and Community.* New York, NY: ACT for Youth, Cornell University.

Willis, P., Bland, R., Manka, L., & Craft, C. (2012). The ABC of peer mentoring what secondary students have to say about cross-age peer mentoring in a regional Australian school. *Educational Research and Evaluation: An International Journal on Theory and Practice, 18*(2), 173–185.

Wilson, M. (1992). Peers helping peers: PHP program reduces violence and vandalism. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly, 9*, 27-28.

Wong, N., Zimmerman, M., & Parker, E. (2011). A typology of youth participation and empowerment for child and adolescent health promotion. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 46*, 100–114.

Wood, S., & Mayo-Wilson, E. (2012). School-based mentoring for adolescents: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*. Retrieved from http://rsw.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/01/03/1049731511430836

Yeh, C., Ching, A., Okubo, Y., & Luthar, S. (2007). Development of a mentoring program for Chinese immigrant adolescents' cultural adjustment. *Adolescence, 42*, 733–747. http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412996907.n24