

## ABSTRACT

Prepared Peer Mentoring in College Students

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During my time at college, I have had good mentors and not so good mentors. I myself have been a good mentor and a not so good mentor. What made this difference between my experience as a good mentor and a not as great mentor? The level of preparation I was given for each opportunity. Peer mentoring has a significant impact on the retention rate and success of college students, if they are prepared. Topics a mentor should have an understanding of include: education and career goals and appraisal, emotional and psychological support, academic subject knowledge support, being a role model, time management, study skills, civic engagement, and working with others. Mentors can also have an impact on the leadership development of a student through an understanding of consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, citizenship, and change. Mentors should also have ideas for how to support students with roommate issues, anxiety and depression, and potentially death. Finally, student mentors should use transformational, servant, and authentic leadership styles with their students. Peer mentors have an important impact upon their students. Because of this impact, they should have adequate recourses and education on how to interact with students.

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PREPARED PEER MENTORING IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments . . . . .	iii
Chapter One: Why Mentoring? . . . . .	1
Chapter Two: The significance of Mentoring: a Research Study. . . . .	7
Chapter Three: Techniques to Apply to Mentoring . . . . .	18
Chapter Four: Chapter 4: Mentoring Leadership Styles . . . . .	38
Bibliography: . . . . .	47

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## CHAPTER 1:

### Why Mentoring?

College move-in day. One of the most exciting as well as nerve-wracking days of my entire summer before my freshman year at Baylor. My whole family had come to Texas with me and we were in our rental car with all my packaged and labeled home goods. Although previously warned, it still came as a shock to me when students swarmed our car and removed all my things, carrying them to my new dorm room- my new home. I followed these students and slowly unpacked trying to unknot the feelings of unease that come with moving so far from home. Then, I heard a knock at the door, it was my mentor Jauslynn, coming to welcome me to Baylor and say "Hello". She told me about how later that night the whole dorm would have a pizza party and I would have a chance to meet the rest of our mentor group. I began to relax a little more, knowing that I would get to meet others soon. She reassured me that everything would be okay and that I would love Baylor.

Jauslynn mentored me, and a group of about eight other students. The goal was for us to meet once a week to first discuss adjusting to college and to help us succeed in our time at Baylor, then later in the year, to discuss critical issues that face society today. We also discussed how leaders can engage in issues and make a difference. This group was supposed to be one of our major supports in the first year at Baylor. This group would eat meals together, do fun

activities, talk about roommate issues, and encourage one another during difficult times.

At first, everyone was excited; we had some enjoyable bonding activities that helped us to know one another more. Yet, as the year went on, people became less and less engaged in what was going on in peer group. Jauslynn was constantly asking people to pay attention and not talk when she was talking and struggled to keep people engaged in the on-going conversation. I watched as Jauslynn slowly became discouraged about our mentor group and the outcomes she was seeing despite all her hard work.

Jauslynn became a good friend of mine, whom I felt I could talk to about many things if I needed general help. However, I never felt I developed a truly meaningful relationship with her. I could ask her about general resources on campus and ask her more basic personal questions, but once she left Baylor at the end of the year, I did not feel the need to keep in touch. Jauslynn and I were only able to build a surface level relationship based on of utility, but not the deep meaningful type of relationship that is important for lasting friendship and mentorship.

Another student mentor of mine was Scott. Scott was my peer instructor for my BIC World Cultures I course. He became someone that I felt I could talk with and share my struggles. Even today, I will still text Scott to ask him questions because I trust his advice. Scott was not assigned specifically to mentor me, he was supposed to help me succeed in my course, but was willing to work with me and invest in me to succeed as a person.

Much of mentoring college students as a college student is being someone who is available for support and care. If students feel that they have adequate support for success in their schoolwork and other college roles, they are more likely to perform well and are more encouraged to try new things. It is important that a mentor demonstrates this care, support, and encouragement to their students so they will try new things and work hard. When students move away to college, they lose their familial support group and their friends. As a mentor, one does not, and should not, have to be their students' entire support, but is a critical piece of their life.

For me, Scott was a huge help. I knew that when I approached Scott with a question he cared enough about me as a person to take the time to suggest several good possible options. I could ask him about anything from homesickness to how to achieve high grades on my exams. We were able to bond through a love for coffee and the BIC program. I think what made Scott different from my other mentors is the level of care and commitment he showed in making sure that I understood the issues we were discussing, and that I was happy and successful at Baylor.

My own mentoring experiences have had mixed results. The first time I became a mentor was in a structured setting where I met with a group of LEAD students for an hour once a week. At first, this was a strenuous experience. While I really connected with a few of my students, some of them did not want to participate in conversation. It was not that the topics were uninteresting or that the curriculum was not prepared well enough, but it seemed like no matter what I



tried to do some of the students would not engage. Yet, when I met with these same students, one on one they were engaging and talkative. They would tell me about their families, classes, friends, and the issues they were having. I eventually came to realize that it was not my personal relationship that was struggling with each student, but an inability to foster a collaborative group dynamic.

One of the biggest things that helped me improve as a leader was the mentoring course I took with Dr. Tran. During this class, we discussed how to deal with difficult situations, sometimes even practicing, and looked at how to expand upon the critical issues we were trying to discuss during our Mentor Group. During the first semester, I felt like mentor groups were often rocky, with many awkward pauses or one person doing all the talking. However, after taking this course and increasing my mentoring capabilities, I felt that second semester's mentor groups went more smoothly, with participation by most of the group. There were definitely still times where I had no clue what I was trying to do, but for the most part, I felt prepared for the difficulties I faced.

My favorite mentoring experience has always been Peer Instructing. Scott was my Peer Instructor and now I get to do the same thing for my students. I have become very close to several of my students. I enjoy seeing them and getting to know who they are and what is motivating them. I really care for my students and am willing to put their needs ahead of some other aspects of my life. I always think it is strange when my students are surprised that I am willing to meet with them at 8 pm on a school day or a Saturday morning. But, in reality, I

just want to work with them at a time that works well for both of us so that I can give them my full attention and I can have their attention.

Some of these people have become my friends and some of them still seek me out when they have questions or need help. One of the girls from the first class I peer instructed is now in my Social Dance course and we have fun learning to dance. She also often asks about how to study for different classes or seeks out comfort when she is having a particularly difficult week. Another of my students, who no longer goes to Baylor, texted me last week to send me an invitation to her wedding. As a Peer instructor, I have had the unique opportunity to mentor 30-40 students each school year. I have the chance to connect with them, encourage them, and watch them grow into who they are really going to be, even as they move beyond the classroom in which I work. I really enjoy this experience.

Mentoring is a leadership role and like all leadership roles it is a privilege. However, mentoring requires training. Mentoring is not something everyone can jump right into and be 100 percent prepared for, and it may be one of those things in life where one can never be 100 percent prepared. There are certain resources that are helpful for being a mentor. These include theories on leadership styles, support groups, information about on-campus resources, and encouraging information.

I believe mentoring requires authentic servant leadership, or transformational leadership, in order to be successful, but servant leadership is hard to learn. Sometimes putting others needs above your own is a difficult and

exhausting task. Constantly serving when you are not always wanted makes continuing even more energy consuming. Yet, when a fellow student comes to you with a complicated life issue you truly feel purpose and love. It is also important as a leader to acknowledge when you are feeling less than you normally would. It is not weak to admit when you do not know an hour you could help or are simply having a bad day.

Sometimes being a mentor means being persistent even when not desired. If you realize a student is struggling, then as a mentor you must show up and ask questions as well as be attentive to their needs. Yet, as a college student, how does one know and understand what these needs might be or how to fulfill them? How does one give good advice or adequate resources? Preparing oneself as well as others for mentoring is a difficult task.

Despite the hard work involved, mentoring is important for student success. At a college level, mentoring can help provide comfort and support that is critical for success, especially during the first year of college. Peer mentoring between college students is significant for both the mentor and the student and is an opportunity that should be encouraged.

## CHAPTER 2

### The significance of Mentoring: a Research Study

Research confirms that the first year of college is difficult for many students. They struggle in many ways but particularly in trying to find a place they belong and learning how to reach their full potential. Peer mentoring is a way for students to connect to older, more experienced, students who have learned how to be successful in this academic setting. This connection will help encourage new students to become more engaged while learning how to achieve their goals, as well as help students have a successful time during their university experience. Effective peer mentors need training, clear role definition, and a support system for success.

In his article “The Big Picture”, Joe Cuseo (Cuseo, 2010) defines peer mentors as “sophomores, juniors, or seniors who serve as role models and coaches for other students.” Cuseo discusses the importance of peer mentoring and other student positions, in that they provide a support system for younger students. Peer facilitation allows for greater individualized attention and a feeling of belonging within the university setting, potentially leading to greater retention of students (Cuseo, 2010). Students coming to college are often nervous about where they are going to fit in and whom they can ask for help. Having a mentor allows students to turn to someone their own age, someone who has recently

undergone a similar transition. These shared experiences can lead to greater bonding and a feeling of belonging for the new student.

A study of the effects of peer mentoring on student attrition completed in Australia in 2002 suggested that peer mentoring had a positive influence on student interactions with faculty members. The study also shows how the care shown by faculty to students, and the professors teaching style, positively impact student grade success (Muckert, 2002, p. ii). Students are often uncertain about reaching out to professors, especially in their first year. Peer mentors can encourage their students by giving tips about approaching their professors, or questions they might ask during office hours. This study shows that if students reach out to the caring professors, that student is more likely to be successful in that class. This study also demonstrated positive correlation between peer mentoring and peer group interactions, institutional commitments, goal commitments, and persistence intentions. Peer mentors make an important impact on new students.

The article “Building Better Peer Mentoring: Recruiting students to work with incoming freshmen benefits all” (Sanfilippo, 2014), focuses on peer mentoring and how it benefits all the students involved. Eckerd University utilizes peer mentors as part of their student retention efforts. Eckerd uses sophomore students as their peer mentors, and not necessarily the ones at the top of their class. These students are ones that are doing well, but have had their struggles. As peer mentors, these students are relatable and easy to get along with. They may not be as intimidating to the new freshmen as some of their top-achieving

peers, allowing the mentor to have a greater ability in relating to struggling students. Often, these students who are doing well but not achieving at the highest level do not receive the same level of engagement as their peers who are at the top, or those that are struggling. Choosing these students as peer mentors allows them to reengage in the university and find a place they belong. This method of peer mentoring engages both the sophomore students and freshman students further into the university.

A study done by Ward, Thomas, and Disch (2009) stated, “mentoring has a positive impact on student retention and grade point average among undergraduates.” This study looked at how student achievement differed with the use of technology in comparison to traditional mentoring methods. While this study did not show a significant difference between these methods, it did further highlight the importance of mentoring for first year students. This study supports the proposition that peer mentors have an impact on the success of freshman students.

Another study completed by Dennis, Phinney, and Chuateco (2005) looking at the effects of family and peers on first generation Latino and Asian students found that “peer support (or lack of needed peer support) is a stronger predictor of college grades and adjustment than support from the family.” The article goes on to discuss how first generation students often are unable to connect with family members about college issues, yet family interactions are still important. Students need both familial support and peer support. With first generation students, peer mentors act as a support system, someone to talk to

about difficulties with roommates, professors, or about struggling with classes. Peer support has a positive impact on first year students, while a lack of peer support has a negative impact on students. Peer mentoring helps to ensure that each first year student has the peer support needed to succeed.

More than just staying in school and doing well, students who receive mentoring are more likely to achieve their goals. This attainment may come from the positive encouragement received from a mentor. Often students who first come to college are nervous about their ability to succeed and lack the self-confidence necessary to achieve their full potential. A good mentor helps push these students past this stage of self-doubt and into greater success. All students accepted to a university have the potential to succeed, but not all students have the social network needed for encouragement in their first year, a role in which a good mentor helps fulfill.

A study completed by Levinson, Darrow, Levinson, and McKee's found "mentorship to be the single most important relationship in [protégés] psychosocial development process, influencing both commitment and self concept" (Campbell, Smith, Dugan, & Komives, 2012). Mentors have a huge influence on the students with whom they work. If a mentor commits to their mentees and willingly puts ample time and effort into building that relationship, then the student grows and achieves greatly. However, if the mentor does not put the appropriate energy into their mentoring relationship, the student will have a reduced self-concept and feel less commitment toward their studies, toward their university, and toward any extra curricular activities in which they are involved. It

is important that mentors understand the commitment they make toward this mentee and feel confident in their ability as a mentor, so that they can encourage the best outcomes for these students.

Student mentoring is also important for the responsibility of first year students. One study shows that, “student’s involvement in mentoring relationships regularly emerges as a powerful predictor of leadership gains” (Campbell et al., 2012). Part of the psychosocial development mentioned above is one’s confidence as a leader. Despite every student’s potential to be a leader, often first year students lack the confidence in their ability to become a leader. They feel as if they were not leaders in high school, so how could they become a leader in an even larger university setting? However, with encouragement from a mentor, students can find organizations and clubs they are passionate about, and through these involvements they can gain leadership experience. A mentor becomes a reminder that they have the talent and capability within them to succeed.

In the study completed by Campbell, Smith, Dugan, and Komives (2012), they reported that students mentored by a peer were just as successful as students mentored by a faculty member. Involving, older students in the mentoring process, allows each student to receive the individualized attention that is vital in student success. Having a student mentor in addition to, or instead of, a faculty member will not negatively impact these students. In order to be an accomplished mentor, students need to have an understanding of the resources available to students and the significance of mentoring on other students.



The article, “ Developing a Leadership Identity: A Grounded Theory” (Komives, Owen, Longersbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005), portrays the idea that it is through others that we determine our individual leadership capability. Leaders encourage and allow conversation that guides and increases interest in a given area (Komives et al. 2005). Peer mentors fulfill this role well, as they are role models of student success just a few years advanced in the university setting. They are often easier to hold vulnerable discussions with than professors, who seem intimidating to first year students. Leadership develops through confidence in interpersonal relationships. Peer mentoring helps students build greater confidence, and students understand the difference between dependence and interdependence, as well as being the leader and a leader (Komives et al. 2005).

All people in an organization are interdependent, but are not dependent, and all have the potential to be a leader. Interdependence means taking into account others in the group and how ones actions affect them, while dependence is limiting ones self worth based off of the validation given, or not given, by someone else. Often people think that there is only one leader in every organization, a positional leader. These ideas come from leadership theories like Great Man, Trait theory, and transactional leadership theory. These theories say that one has to be born with the qualities of a leader in order to take on a leadership role, and that the follower and leader should exchange goods or skills in order to accomplish a task. These theories do not focus on the development of leaders, or the importance of social impact upon leadership development and

outcomes. However, everyone in the organization has the potential to be a leader, someone who takes charge when needed, cares for others, and is willing to do what it takes to get the job done. Good peer mentors help their students see these differences in their own involvements.

A study completed by Komives and Dugan (2010) called “Influences on College Students’ Capacities for Socially Responsible Leadership” identified seven leadership values of: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship. They believe that all of these values together combine to achieve change. Komives and Dugan (2010) identified peer mentoring as having a positive focus on the leadership values of commitment and citizenship. Peer mentors help students feel as if they belong at the university, in their organization, or within their friend group. Good mentors encourage student commitment by reminding students of their importance and abilities during difficult times. Many students who get involved also become over-involved and are unable to commit the proper energy to each activity. Mentors help students identify the important commitments, so that students can find a true sense of belonging and put their wholehearted effort into each activity.

Komives and Dugan (2010) also stated that, “the most potent college experience . . . was the degree to which students engaged in socio-cultural conversations with peers” (p. 539). Experiencing other people’s cultures and differing opinions are huge parts of coming to college. While some classes incorporate these discussions into class time, not all course material lends itself

to socio-cultural conversation. Peer mentors can help facilitate these kinds of conversations with their mentees. Mentors hear many different kinds of opinions and should be able to facilitate these discussions in a manner that allows all students to feel as if they have an opinion, without allowing anyone to bash another's view. Understanding another's values and being able to work with other people despite differing opinions is a critical skill for leaders that mentors can develop.

“Mentoring Service Themes Emergent in a Holistic Undergraduate Peer-Mentoring Experience” by Ward, Thomas, and Disch (2014) identifies seven different aspects in which peer mentors function: guidance/direction, emotional availability, companionship/mutuality, inspiration/integrity, insight/artfulness, demanding accountability, and multidimensional responsiveness. These authors point out that each student is an individual with specific needs, and it truly takes a human to meet all of these needs. Helping students meet these individual needs is how peer mentors function as a facet of multidimensional responsiveness. Mentors, like other humans, take the other six categories and use them toward inspiring and influencing their students. A university at an organizational level, no matter how great, cannot provide the same individual attention as peer mentors; therefore, peer mentors are a great way to engage students in a personal and meaningful manner.

Among the other roles that a peer mentor might play, Crisp and Cruz (2009) in “Mentoring College Students: A Critical Review of the Literature Between 1990 and 2007” identifies mentors as a role model for students. Peer

mentors are successful and involved students that new students can build relationships with in order to understand and emulate. Students want to see that peer mentors, for the most part, understand what their goals are, how they are going to achieve them, and that their mentor is a successful member of the university society. It is important for mentors to understand that new students look to them as role models and consider this when making decisions.

The article “Building Better Peer Mentoring: Recruiting students to work with incoming freshmen benefits all” also discusses the intense three-week training program that these students engage in and the additional afternoon sessions that Eckerd peer mentors receive (Sanfilippo, 2014). The training programs teach peer mentors many different resources they need, from study tips to the signs that someone is undergoing psychological difficulty. This training is taught by four staff members and helps prepare the sophomores for the high expectations set for them. Peer mentors also have a junior student that they use as a reference. Eckerd expects much from their peer mentors, weekly events, engagement with students, and help with study skills; however, Eckerd also intensively trains these students for greater overall success.

Stephanie Budge (2006) in her article “Peer Mentoring in Post-Secondary Education: Implications for Research and Practice” identifies benefits to the peer mentor, and areas that need more focus in consideration of mentor training and practice. Budge (2006) indicates that mentors receive improved interpersonal skills, communication skills, patience, compassion, maturation, time management, and responsibility as a result of peer mentoring. This list is

significant to note because much of peer mentoring focuses on the mentee; however, studies show that the mentor benefits almost as much as the mentee. Mentoring helps improve the holistic education of an upper level student. Budge (2006) also identifies diversity and gender as areas of difficulty for mentors. These are areas in which mentors need to receive significant training and understanding in order to discuss issues with their students.

Another study, completed at Trinity College by Holt and Berwise (2012), determined that often peer mentors feel as if they provide a higher level of support than their mentees perceive receiving. While mentees in this study mostly agreed that their mentor was helpful, most did not rate their mentor as helpful as the mentor self rated. Holt and Berwise (2012) attribute this difference to a lack of defined role of peer mentoring and a lack of understanding of the mentees own need for help from a peer mentor. This study shows that mentors need to clearly define their role as a peer mentor for their students and have more frequent meetings with students. Defining their role clearly helps mentees understand exactly what role the peer mentor intends to have and the types of issues with which mentors can help. More frequent meetings allow for peer mentors to determine areas where students need help more. Often, first year students cannot identify the areas where they need help, but if a mentor meets with them often they are more likely to see their student struggle and be of more assistance to them. Mentors need to try to be aware of their mentees perception of them and receive constructive feedback from their mentee on how they can be more of an assistance.

Finally, a study completed by Black and Voelker (2008) at the University of Hartford looked at preceptor effectiveness in first year courses. Similar to peer mentoring, these students helped facilitate discussions and tutoring and found similar results in GPA and overall performance. This study also identified the importance of role definition and working with other upper level students who also work with first year students (Black & Voelker, 2008). It is important for peer mentors at any level to feel as if they have a support network. Working with students is difficult and sometimes frustrating. While some training resources, can help alleviate these frustrations, it is important not to underestimate the value of conversation with others about their frustrations as well. Faculty also serve as a support network, bringing levity and insight to a difficult situation. Peer mentors do not work alone, but as part of a team, that strives for student success.

Good peer mentors have a large impact on first year students. Peer mentors help engage first year students in the university, determine commitment, and further student success. Research shows peer mentoring has a positive effect on student GPA and retention rates at a university level. Peer mentors need to define their role with mentees, receive training and support, and be willing to have open and honest conversations with their students. Committed peer mentors help facilitate first year students into becoming leaders and successful college students, if given the right tools.

## Chapter 3:

### Techniques to Apply to Mentoring

Chapter Two demonstrated the importance of mentoring, but also the importance of adequately preparing mentors to engage with students. Mentoring makes a significant impact upon students, if the mentor is knowledgeable in the areas where the student needs assistance. This chapter discusses areas researchers identified as significant for mentors to understand and have knowledge in order to be successful. These areas include overall support, assistance with academic preparedness, leadership development, and help facing life's challenges.

#### *Overall Support:*

Nora and Crisp (2007) completed a study that looked at mentors as support system for students, and found that students not only need emotional support, but also required support in education/career goal setting and appraising, academic subject knowledge support, and a role model to guide them. These areas are significant for mentors because it demonstrates a greater need than a confidence boost and a good sounding board. Mentors must help develop improved strategies for goal setting, and understand their universities' or students' academic supports that are available. Mentors do not have to provide

all of the support a student requires, but should be knowledgeable about where students can receive more help and support.

*Education/ career goal setting/ appraising:*

College students need some goal to work toward as they progress. Whether the student knows their desired major or not, every student needs a goal. This goal helps them stay focused during college and places a higher importance upon the work they complete. Some of the most important considerations of goal setting are the feasibility and the necessary steps required in order to accomplish their goal. Moreover, it is important to encourage students to not only set career goals, but also set personal wellness and social goals during their time at college.

Mentors should remind students that goals can and should change over time. The student will not stay the same person throughout their whole time in college, and neither should their goals. Goals should be flexible and evolve with the student. It is also okay for students to decide they actually do not want to accomplish certain goals and set new goals instead. Mentors should not feel like they are setting goals for students themselves, but helping students realize their own goals and finding realistic ways to accomplish said goals.

*Emotional and psychological support:*

As students brace themselves for the adjustment to college they are often unprepared for the mental and emotional challenges that come with



independence from parental guidance. Students may struggle with confidence as university life challenges them for the first time both scholastically and socially, or they may take too many liberties with the freedom they gain. As a mentor, you are not your new mentees's parent. Although it is often difficult to allow your students to make their own decisions, they must learn to be independent on their own. Your role as mentor is to offer support and guidance to those who seek it and not to parent.

Many first year students struggle with homesickness, making new friends, and determining their own role in the world. Good mentors encourage and spend time with their students. Mentors tell students ways that mentor has overcome homesickness, by looking forward to visits home, talking with family members, or some of the fun activities to do at their university. Mentors reassure students that everyone struggles to make friends in their first year of college because everyone is new and trying to find their place. The important idea for students to understand is that they should try to be open to new opportunities as well as people. Joining a new organization or trying an intramural sport helps them find people with similar interests.

Part of offering this support recognizes the mistake the student makes and reminds them that all humans make mistakes. Their mistake makes them no less worthy of love or success. Students who attend university are typically well-meaning and hardworking. The mistakes they make will not define them. If the issue is something that requires long-term support, as a mentor, you might recommend counseling or other medical support. As a mentor, it is not your sole

role to provide psychological or emotional support, but to be the person who shows the student love and compassion. Mentors may consider attending therapy sessions with their students if needed, but should determine the right level of support based on the relationship.

*Academic subject knowledge support:*

University classes are difficult. Universities design courses to challenge students conceptually in order to expand understanding on a given topic, which can sometimes frustrate students. Students may seek mentors help to understand the course materials given. If the mentor is knowledgeable in the subject then it is advisable to attempt helping them understand. Often, students merely need to hear the material explained in another way. However, if you are not knowledgeable about a subject, it is acceptable to indicate this, but attempt to find the student support, either from another mentor or from university tutoring. Mentors can also recommend different study styles to students who struggle comprehending and retaining materials from class.

*Existence of Role Model*

A mentor is a student who completed their first year of college. These students are role models for younger students who are just beginning their college experience. As mentioned above, first year students are often attempting to determine their new role in society away from their family. These students often use their mentor, or other mentors around them, as a role model. This concept is

important for mentors to realize, because students look up to them and imitate their work ethic, attitude, and outlook. Mentors should not be afraid to acknowledge when they are struggling, but want to try to stay positive and hard working. Good mentors demonstrate that despite setbacks and bad days, life still moves forward and challenges can be overcome.

*Basic school skills:*

*Time management:*

Time management is often a difficult skill for incoming students to master. In high school, many students have sports and parents helping manage their time for them, but in college many students face decision making about their involvement and extra-curricular activities on their own for the first time. This dramatic change may cause many students to struggle under the desire to be over involved or the pull of exhaustion and trying to meet parental and self-imposed expectations. At this point, it is important for the mentor to help students find a time management plan that works for them. Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, and Phillips (1990) found that students who felt they have control, confidence, organization, and goals for their time had correlations with self-reported performance and stress. Therefore, mentors must talk to students about their involvement in the different organizations and activities they choose to join and the other personal needs they must consider.

After considering all the time demands for the student, mentors must ask how the student manages each task. Do they have enough time for their

homework? Do they feel rushed or stressed by everything they have to get done every single day? Are they sleeping a comfortable amount of time each night? A study completed by Chandra Jennings (2014) on “Characteristics and State of College Student’s Sleep” found that students poor sleeping habits affect health, perceived wellness, academics, and work related performance. This study also found that many students seek information on sleep, but not all students find adequate information. Another study found the relationship between sleep habits and GPA as accounting for differences between first year students’ academic performances, as well as eating breakfast (Trockel, Barnes, & Egget, 2000). Students who woke at the same time every day and ate breakfast after waking up performed better than their peers (Trockel et al., 2000). Finally, a study completed by Pilcher, Ginter, and Sadowsky, (1997) found that young adults need 7-8 hours of quality sleep in order to increase health and well-being. This idea means managing their stress and other expectations in order to sleep the 7-8 quality hours needed for success.

The goal for mentors is not telling the student whether they are doing too much or too little, but finding a balance that feels right to them. This balance is often the hardest part of mentoring, because even if you think they are taking on too much, if they are fully comfortable with their load you should allow them to attempt all of these things, consistently checking in with the student to see if re-assessment is in order. As a mentor, you need to support your student and give them advice, not tell them what to do or what is best for them.

### *Organization:*

First year students also struggle with organizing all the responsibilities they must complete each day, and staying up to date with all of their social engagements. It is best as a mentor to show not only your organization style, but also have an idea of how other people have successfully managed organizing their lives. Sharing these management ideas allows you to propose several different styles that might appeal to the students.

There are two basic types of organization, paper or electronic. Some students may also want a combination of the two. For a paper organizational style the organizer is critically important. Typically, students must find a paper planner that has both the monthly calendar and a weekly calendar. A daily calendar is up to the discretion of the student. Students should place the larger assignments, exams, and events on the monthly calendar, allowing for quick access. On the weekly calendar, students should place the everyday assignments that they must complete so that all the assignments are in one place, not spread out among many different syllabi. Students should also add their social engagement to their calendar, so that they only have to look in one place to know what they are doing for the day or the week. Students should not feel they have to purchase a planner as many print outs are available for free on the Internet.

Students who feel they are likely to misplace a paper planner should consider using their phone or other electronic devices for organization. Both

Apple and Google offer calendar applications that allow students to synchronize their phone and computer. Students can place items in the calendar as all day events. This organizational plan allows students to visualize all of their assignments and move an assignment to earlier in the week if they will be stressed for time in completing any assignments in a given day. Students can use different colored calendars to represent different subjects, like using different colored pens in paper planners, and can add social events to this calendar as well.

### *Study Skills*

Every student has certain subjects that are more challenging for him or her than others. It is important that students acknowledge that everyone struggles in college and the struggle itself is not a problem, but how one overcomes the struggle is significant. Many students who attend university have not had to study in the past and may not have developed the active study skills necessary to succeed. As a mentor, you should help students develop these skills and find the study styles that work best for them.

First, mentors should talk to students about how they are currently studying, and methods they have used to study in the past. Also, mentors must talk to students about what learning style works best for them. These questions help determine what kind of studying the students have been successful with, and to what level their studying can be improved in order to boost them to their desired grade. Some basics could include: skimming the chapter to look at all

the section headings before going to class, note taking while reading, and study groups.

Often students may study merely by reading the materials repeatedly; however, for many students this reading method is not sufficient to adequately retain adequately the information. Students should consider highlighting or taking notes in their own words to enhance their understanding of the work. Students can quiz themselves by either making their own flashcards or using computer or phone applications. Finally, students should consider teaching another student the material in order to test their full understanding. If a student can teach another in complete detail, without the use of their notes, then they have mastered the material.

If students struggle retaining the information in novels they read, they should consider reading and underlining the important details as they read. Dr. Alan Jacobs (2011) in his book, *The Pleasure of Reading in an Age of Distraction*, talks about responding to the reading, particularly writing question marks stating, “you are registering your puzzlement, not for the book’s sake but for your own” (p. 56). This passage highlights the importance of responsive reading. Students should not read merely to see the words, but to understand and interact with the literature at hand. Then students should create an outline or plot map of the novel based off their reading or write out their emotional responses. Finally, students can compare their outline with those of online summary sources, ensuring they retained all the important details. This

procedure gives students their own summary of the novel to study and will allow them to remember the novel in greater detail.

*Civic engagement:*

Service learning is where students go out into the community and engage with service partners. Service learning “enhances student development through active learning and participation, engagement in the community, critical thinking, and information on real-life conflictual situations” (Wells & Grabert, Christy, 2004). Students who have civic engagement are better equipping themselves to face the challenges of a career. Mentors and students working together, completing service projects and complex problems, benefit both student and mentor. Students should have a greater sense of the community around them and how they can interact within that community.

*Work with others:*

Many people come to college with their main experiences of working with others being either group projects or sports teams. Students whose only reference for working with others is group work, may be frustrated or have low expectations of their fellow students and leaders. Students who have been part of a sports team may have a more positive outlook on working with others, but they may also have some harmful mentalities. Many people consider working with others as challenging because they feel like one or a few people in the group are forced to do all the work, or score all the points.



However, in college, most students working in groups experience a new type of collaboration. Often students work with others to achieve an overarching goal, but have an individual task they are expected to manage. This new collaboration means that students have some autonomy, but are ultimately accountable to the group. A large part of success is students understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and the strengths and weaknesses of others in their group. The idea of working with others and helping students understand themselves progresses toward a larger part of overall student mentoring, leadership development.

*Leadership Development:*

A study completed by Campbell et al. (2012) looked at the effects of mentoring on student leadership capabilities. They identified seven leadership values, from the social change model, that are significant as results from mentoring relationships- consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility. These authors state, “both mentoring for leadership empowerment and mentoring for personal development were positively related to socially responsible leadership capacity” (Campbell et al., 2012), indicating that even if mentoring is not specifically focused on leadership abilities, there are still significant advances achieved.

### *Consciousness of self*

When many students come to college, they live away from home for the first time. For the first time students are complete individuals, no longer defined by their family. Many students struggle with this transition as they attempt to figure out who they are and in some cases, what they want. This is a time for experimentation with likes, dislikes, beliefs, and values. As a mentor, you must encourage students to explore and find activities that are meaningful for them. Remember that not every activity you find interesting they will find interesting. In addition, students tend to want to be involved in everything, but you can try reminding the student about time management and talking to them about why each activity is meaningful to them.

Some students take greater liberties with their newfound freedom. This decision is okay. As a mentor, try encouraging positive impactful activities that have deep meaning in their life. Also, remind students that they are loved and accepted for who they are as an individual. Despite any struggling or value variation, you, as the mentor, should support them emotionally. Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows that before students can really figure out who they are, self-actualization, belonging, and esteem needs must be met. As a mentor, you help students meet these needs by showing acceptance and celebrating achievements with your students. Students need to understand what motivates them in order to become leaders themselves.

### *Congruence*

Once a student figures out who they truly are and where they belong, mentors should encourage congruence. This concept means that students will be acting according to the beliefs they hold to be true. Not only is a student consistent with their beliefs but the student should also be consistent in how they treat other students. As a mentor, you demonstrate this with how you treat your student and other people. If you are talking about how one should respect others and having difficult conversations with others, but then ignore your student's feelings when dealing with conflict, they no longer believe in the congruence you teach. If you as a mentor are talking about time management, yet in the next breath talking about how you only slept for three hours the night before, students are less likely to listen to you. Students look to mentors to show them how to act and to help them figure out what really matters in college.

### *Commitment*

Studies, like the one completed at Eckerd University (Sanfilippo, 2014), showed that commitment is one of the values that peer mentors have the greatest effect upon. When mentors show that they really are passionate about a service project, organization, or interaction, their students become more excited. Students talk about burning oneself out during college due to taking on too many commitments. The key is not the number of commitments that a student takes on, there is no magic number of commitments, but how passionate

the student is for the activity. As a mentor, you should help your students find that passion, or encourage them by continuing to seek that passion.

This passion is also key with service projects. Often students think that once they attend a service project, they are not allowed to dislike the project. However, service is only exceptional if students truly care and feel passionate toward the projects. Peer mentors should encourage students to try several different projects before committing, because making a commitment is a big deal. As a mentor, you commit to caring for a student and should show your student the passion you have toward mentoring.

### *Collaboration*

Collaboration is the first in the group-focused values. Collaboration is the idea of working with others to achieve a set goal, which often requires trust. Mentors encourage students to gain a better understanding of themselves as group members and discuss the importance of completing a task. Often people find others frustrating. One person will not trust the other group members to make decisions that follow with the groups shared values because of this. Yet in order to achieve the greatest overall good, students must each share their strengths, creating the best possible outcomes. Mentors should remind students that all people are different and that part of collaborating with another involves understanding their strengths and weaknesses and using them to benefit the group.

### *Common purpose*

Common purpose is when a group who agrees to collaborate also agrees to work toward a common goal. Everyone works within the agreed upon value system in order to achieve the necessary work. It is important to understand that students still need to take individual initiative within the group. You and your student have a common purpose of attempting to help them succeed in school. Demonstrating to your student how you are involved and discussing how they can get involved is important. Good mentors also discuss the common purpose of the University with students, what the Universities mission is, and how the student can contribute to that mission.

### *Controversy with civility*

Every human being is different. This difference means that mentors and students are different people, which may mean that students and mentors face controversy. While controversy is normal, good mentors demonstrate civility and maturity in dealing with the controversy. Treating controversy in a dictator type style alienates or ostracizes their student. Instead, mentors should attempt negotiating and understanding their student's opinion fully.

In his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey (2013) describes empathic listening. Covey (2013) states, "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply" (p. 251). However, when listening with the intent to reply, people often do not actually hear the message the other person attempts to convey. As a mentor, it is important to

understand one's students. This idea means listening to understand, not to respond. Mentors should repeat in their own words what the student tells them and ask questions, ensuring full comprehension. This repetition is important in a disagreement with a student, because it shows the student the mentor values them and their opinion is valid. Only after listening empathically, mentors attempt to portray their own understanding and opinion. Then together both mentor and mentee can either agree to disagree, accepting the merit of both, or come to a solution that works for both parties. By demonstrating this technique, mentors show students how to empathize with others and come to civil disagreements.

### *Citizenship*

The last of the group level values, citizenship, focuses no longer on the group itself but on the world in which the group functions. Dugan et al. (2010) defines citizenship as “the process whereby an individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity.” Students and student organizations should work toward positive involvement within the entire community, not just on campus. Students developing socially responsible leadership work at improving the life and happiness around them, and help all people to feel as if they belong. Mentors help students develop this idea of citizenship through encouraging service projects, talking about the outside community, and even working through a service idea with a student. Mentors must encourage students in considering and creating new ideas, just because the service idea or organization has not

been created as of yet does not mean it cannot happen. Citizenship is more than helping others though; it is taking ownership of where one lives. It is saying I am part of this community and I will work to support this community.

*CHANGE:*

All of the above values, either individual or group values, lead to positive change. Students and groups as a whole must respond to challenges and adapt appropriately while still staying true to their core being. As a mentor, this is one area that is difficult to actually mentor through. A mentor helps develop virtues and listens while a student discusses the difficult circumstances they are undergoing, but they should not tell a student how to make the changes themselves. It is hard to take a step back, but ultimately, students must learn to react and deal with new situations in a manner that is in accordance with who they are. Students are going to face challenges in their time at college. These challenges make them more of a well-rounded individual and help continue to mold them into the individual they are meant to become. Mentors help explain concepts such as empathic listening, but not telling a student how to change or what to do. Rather mentors should help students come to best conclusions for their individual selves.

### *Specific Situations:*

#### *Student will not engage:*

Sometimes when mentors are assigned students, the students do not want to participate in a mentoring relationship. While not all assigned students immediately bond with a mentor, it is important for mentors to try to connect with their students and demonstrate caring. Having one on one conversations is important for attempting to increase that engagement. One on ones should not be looked at with dread, but rather excitement. Consider taking your students to an off campus location, like a coffee shop or the park. This atmosphere allows you to understand your student, potentially relieving some of the academic stress they hold, and potentially figure out better ways for you to engage and support your student. Also, remind the student that you care about them, want to get to know them more, and are available to support them. Do not get discouraged because of rage or anger from your student; rather do your best in caring for your student.

#### *Roommate Issues:*

When many students come to college, they receive a roommate. This roommate may not keep the same schedule as your student, or have different habits, which cause conflict. A mentor must talk to the student about the leadership development ideas discussed above. Although the student is frustrated, sometimes trying to see things from the perspective of the roommate is beneficial. It is also important that mentors encourage honest and open



communication. Students cannot assume that their roommate will immediately understand that they do not like a behavior, but should have a non-aggressive communication about that issue. Too many times students do not discuss the small issues, thinking that they are no big deal, but then over time small issues add up into larger problems. It is best that students address the issue immediately. Both roommates addressing the issue early on may even bring the two closer together.

*Anxiety/ Depression:*

Many college students experience anxiety and depression during their college experience. As a mentor, you can try to encourage healthy behaviors that help combat the stresses leading to anxiety and depression, as well as professional help. Mentors should not feel as if they are solely responsible for helping this student manage their mental health. Mentors can talk to their students about their sleeping habits, working out, eating habits, yoga, and socialization, all of which help improve mental health. However, mentors should also encourage students to seek help at the University health center, or an outside counselor, if the student does not like the Universities accommodations. It is okay if a student dislikes their first counselor, but that should not discourage them from seeking help. Mentors are a support for students and should help as much as possible, but not to a point that supporting their student compromises their own health.

## *Death*

During college, it is unfortunately not unusual for students to have someone they know pass away. Whether it is an aging grandparent or the unfortunate incident of a fellow student, death largely impacts students. Death, especially of a colleague, shakes students and their mental resolve. If a student shares with you about a death of someone they know, talk to them about what happened, reminisce on happy memories they have with the person, and reassure the student you are available to talk with them at any point. You can also mention a counseling center support if you feel the student might benefit from talking to a third party. Death is hard, there is no easy fix, but encourage your student to take the day's events one day at a time.

## *Conclusion:*

Mentors have many responsibilities, which they should not take lightly. Mentors are the first line of care for their students and should do everything possible to help the student succeed. Mentors should remember that they were chosen to mentor for a reason, that they were seen as having the skills necessary to succeed. Mentors should not forget to use their resources they are teaching to students, to consider the different values and techniques for success they are using as possibilities for their own life. Good mentors have profound impacts on a student if well prepared.

## CHAPTER 4:

### Mentoring Leadership Styles

Mentoring is a “type of developmental relationship characterized by reciprocal learning and focused on goal attainment and personal growth” (Campbell et al., 2012). Mentoring assists both the mentor and the student to progress and move to fully achieving their goals. However, mentoring requires a different mindset than being another student. No longer is the mentor thinking of just themselves in their everyday life, but they should also consider how their leadership and actions affect others. Good leaders are vulnerable and allow others into their life. Leaders should consider leadership styles like servant leadership, authentic leadership, and transformational leadership if they are going to excel. Finally, students must remember to consider their own needs and not exhaust themselves in considering the needs of others. Authentic mentoring is about balance for both the mentor and the student.

#### *Vulnerability*

Brené Brown (2012), in her book *Daring Greatly*, discusses courage and being vulnerable in order to live a wholehearted life. In order to have a wholehearted life, to be happy and really engaged, people must have the

courage to be vulnerable. This idea means giving up their shame, talking about their mistakes, and allowing others to see them for who they truly are as a person. For a mentor, this idea means being vulnerable with the students, letting students see them as a human being, and realizing the mistakes that they have made or could make.

If mentoring in an authentic manner, mentors need courage. They take responsibility to help another student through potentially one of the more difficult years of his or her life. However, mentoring can also lead to wholehearted happiness, as mentors and students can develop lasting bonds that enrich both of their lives. Mentoring has its' challenges; there is no shame in struggling to develop meaningful relationships, as people are different. Mentors must push through the hard or awkward moments so that they can fully develop their relationships.

### *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership is the theory that leaders and followers both improve their self and their morality through the relationship. James MacGregor Burns first discussed this idea in 1978. Burns (2012) stated, “ intellectual leadership brings in the role of conscious purpose drawn from values. . . intellectual leadership is transforming leadership” (p. 142). Burns suggested that the people that use transformational leadership are not extremists, but rather hopeful for humanity and those transformational leaders often bring change (Burns 2012). A mentor is not bringing about significant change in a student’s life;

a mentor helps a student navigate a significant change by making smaller changes in order to positively interact with the situation. Mentors hopefully help their students to realize that there will be setbacks in mentoring; while mentors persevere with their students to continue working toward success.

The change mentors bring is good as long it comes from a place of value, not from personal desires. Mentors cannot force their own hopes, dreams, or aspirations onto their student. The mentor must think about what is best for the student based upon who they are and what they want, which is difficult. Reform leaders, as Burns calls one type of transformational leader, use their values and experience on the job in order to lead. Similarly, much of what a mentor learns is not put into action until mentors actually connect with a student for the first time. A mentor learns through the whole mentoring process, even after the formal mentoring relationship is over. This idea is important for mentors to remember. A mentor continues to change their style and interactions with their student until they find the interaction that works best for both parties. Mentors constantly continue reforming in order to be effective.

Burns also discusses transformational leadership in contrast to transactional leadership and political power. Transactional leadership is where a mentor gives their student the resources and help needed, but does not know the student well enough to figure out exactly where the student needs help and how the help will integrate into the student's life. Political type power is when a mentor tells a student exactly what to do and forces them to do it. While in the short term, the student receives the help they needed; neither of these methods lead to

the long-term success of the student, nor the construction of a meaningful relationship between student and mentor.

Transformational leadership is an important style to consider when mentoring, as it focuses on value based leadership, long-term leadership, and the growth of both individuals. Mentors want to build lasting relationships with each student, which means they must develop a base of trust and equal understanding. Mentoring is difficult, mentors may make mistakes, but the important thing is that mentors recognize these failures and look at how to reform the situation for an improved outcome in the future.

#### *Servant Leadership:*

Servant Leadership is a theory that was developed by Robert Greenleaf (2002), which is based on the principle that leaders should serve others before serving themselves. Servant leaders listen, understand, withdrawal to find an optimum, have foresight, show awareness and perception, use persuasion, and are able to conceptualize. For mentors, servant leadership is a critical theory to keep in mind. As a mentor, one provides a service for another student and may not see immediate results of their efforts. Servant leaders accomplish their goal through merely helping their student. Servant leaders put others needs before their own and work hard to help their students in every way possible. Servant leaders, as mentors, empathize with their students and understand their needs. Servant leaders accept their students no matter what happens and continue to work with the student to improve.

Another very important part of being a servant leader is the ability to conceptualize ideas to ones followers (Greenleaf, 2002). If a mentor cannot portray their ideas to their mentees, then how can they realistically expect to help the student? Mentors must listen and understand their students in order to understand what kind of ideas their student comprehends and how their students process information. No two people are alike, so no two students are alike. By listening to students and understanding them better, mentors are more capable of meeting their student's needs. Then, mentors are better able to determine the tools needed in order for the student's needs to be met. If a mentor is unable to conceptualize information to their student then they are unable to help their student.

In many ways, mentors are present to support and serve their student. Servant leadership means being the best possible mentor for the student, understanding the student, and conceptualizing information in a way the student comprehends. Mentors should consider servant leadership as one of the many leadership styles they engage in during their interactions with students.

#### *Authentic Leadership:*

Bill George (2003) writes that "leadership is authenticity, not style," meaning that leaders focus less on what type of leader they are and focus more on how they are interacting with their followers. He writes that "authentic [leaders] use their natural abilities, but recognize their shortcomings and work hard to overcome them" (George 2003, p. 12). For mentors, authentic leadership means

mentoring to the best of one's ability, recognizing where one needs help, and being honest with the student.

Many times people hide their failings or shortcomings, especially from those who they are supposed to be leading. Yet, according to authentic leadership, showing how one struggles and working to improve oneself is actually beneficial for leadership. No mentor is the perfect mentor all the time. Mentors are real people, working with real students. New situations and interactions come up that a mentor may not have experience dealing with, such as a death in the family or mental health issues. Just because a mentor has no experience with that issue does not mean they should tell the student they cannot help the student. Authentic leadership focuses on the mentor staying with the student and working his or her hardest in order to help the student through the situations they face.

Authentic leadership also advocates for leaders to be their own person. Mentors are often tempted to imitate the mentoring of those around them. Mentoring is challenging and it is sometimes easier to act like someone else if the mentor believes that imitation is more successful. However, no two mentors are alike, and no two students are alike. If a mentor is not their individual self, then in the end they have a more difficult time interacting with their students. A mentor needs to be honest about who they are and what their student needs.

There are five dimensions of authentic leadership: purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and heart (George, 2003, p.18). These ideas are important for mentors to consider when interacting with their students. As a



mentor, it is sometimes difficult to understand ones purpose while mentoring, but ultimately the purpose is supporting the student in whatever capacity possible. Sometimes this does not feel like a grand role in the scheme of life, because it is not. Mentoring is not about being the world to anyone, but about having a heart for the student and using that heart to improve their college experience. Leading as such, with self-discipline, and solid values helps establish relationships with students that benefit both student and mentor.

Mentoring is not about being a perfect person who knows everything about every situation. Mentoring is about interacting with students to help them as best as possible. Mentoring is about struggling with ones students to improve both self and student. Authentic leadership helps remind mentors that it is okay to have shortcomings, to not know the answer, so long as a mentor continues working with the student and seek out the answers necessary for the student's success.

#### *Machiavelli:*

Contrary to the leadership styles identified above, Machiavelli advocates for self-interest. The idea of self-interest is important for mentors, because it allows them to put their best foot forward for their students. Machiavelli (1992) states, "he who has not first laid his foundations may be able with great ability to lay them afterwards, but they will be laid with trouble to the architect and danger to the building" (p.29). Good Mentors create a strong foundation for their students, the architects, allowing them successful outcomes, the building.

Mentors who do not sleep, eat, or emotionally recharge themselves are not fully capable to build a complete and strong connection with their students.

While mentors may feel that leadership styles, like servant leadership, are more in line with their perceived role, mentors must recognize that they are also students. There are times when a student needs a mentor to stay up all night with them, helping them through a difficult situation, emotionally exhaust himself or herself, and put their student before themselves. However, this idea should not be the general rule. Mentors must think about themselves, their grades and their health, and ensure that they live healthily before they adequately engage with another. Sometimes, serving oneself and building a better foundation allows for a better building to be constructed and a better mentoring relationship to result.

#### *Conclusion:*

Mentoring is not an easy undertaking. Mentoring requires an abundance of hard work and dedication from the student mentors. Mentors need training and understanding of what is required of them to be successful with their student. Mentors must educate themselves on many different topics, such as study skills and time management, in order to better assist their students. Mentors also have an effect on the leadership of their students and how students grow during their time at college. Mentoring requires growth from both student and mentor. Mentoring brings new challenges and experiences. Mentors should consider their leadership style in dealing with students. A mentor ultimately makes a huge impact on their students.

Mentors impact how students view their time in college, their acceptance into the social realm of the university, and the students' potential academic success.

College mentoring is an amazing opportunity for students to interact and grow together in a college setting outside of the classroom.

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